

"Straight from the Owl's Mouth"

NCATA News

November 2006



Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Brantley Murphy
NCATA President

What can we do as an association to help recruit and retain new teachers? This question has been the hot topic at our local, regional and national meetings recently. We know how challenging teaching agriculture and carrying out all of our duties can be. What keeps us on the job? Think about your first years as an teacher. Was there a special person or mentor who helped you through those early frustrations? Did you rely on your university faculty as advisors? How important are our professional organizations at recruiting and retaining the best and the brightest?

Many agricultural education graduates delay entering the teaching field while they pursue a master's degree. As a result, many of these qualified graduates get sidetracked and never come to the classrooms where we so desperately need them. Many school systems offer tuition reimbursement for graduate coursework. Online courses allow teachers to fulfill their classroom duties while advancing their own educations. Often graduate courses are more meaningful when the teacher/ student is on the job and can apply concepts and ideas immediately. As an association, NCATA needs to promote the idea of bringing graduates into the classroom immediately and working on advanced degrees while on the job.

Experienced teachers have a tremendous impact on the new teachers in their districts and regions. Mentors offer advice and guidance that can be priceless for beginning teachers. NCATA members are a valuable resource to each other and we already have a mentor network in place. NCATA needs to strengthen our existing mentor program, and focus on supporting all of our new teachers. Experienced teachers can offer lesson plans and classroom and lab management ideas, and insight that can inspire beginning teachers to stay in the classroom.

Finally, our professional organizations offer leadership and professional development opportunities that can enrich us as teachers. Teachers who are members of their professional organizations are more likely to continue their careers as teachers. Members can travel to conferences and participate in workshops. NCATA members are needed to serve in leadership positions at these conferences and represent our state. New teachers should be encouraged to serve in local and state leadership positions. Involved teachers bring recognition to their schools and school systems and are more likely to be retained as classroom teachers. We all must work together to recruit and retain the best and can continue to make positive differences in the lives of our students.

Reminder:

Honorary State and Honorary American Degrees are due on **January 17th**. Are there people in your alumni or friends of your FFA chapter that deserve this recognition? Make time to show them how

much you appreciate them with recognition beyond your chapter level.



LISTSERVE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

We are in the process of organizing a listserv for NCATA members. While the NC FFA listserv is great, we would like a way to communicate with members exclusively. More information will be available soon. Stay Tuned.



Southeast Region Update

Glenn Howell
Southeast Region Vice
President

Greetings from the Southeast Region!

As I prepare this issue for the winter newsletter, I find it difficult to focus on one thing for more than just a few moments. The life of an agriculture teacher can really be hectic. There is a greenhouse full of poinsettias that need to be sold, Christmas floats to prepare, parties and FFA meetings, school events and activities at home and at church. It's a wonder that we find time to plan lessons and teach. Our profession has definite busy seasons, and for me, this is one of them. And when you consider all the real-world learning opportunities that go along with each event, I suppose we are fortunate that we offer such great opportunities for our students to be involved and learn.

My life has changed drastically since the last issue of this newsletter. Many of you know that my mother passed away suddenly in early October. She was helping our students get ready for our FFA Seafood Festival booth and she worked all day with her sister preparing food for our annual event. After school I worked with her for a couple of hours and then she cleaned up the dishes and swept the floor. She hugged my co-worker, told the students good-bye and slapped me on the shoulder as she told me

she loved me one last time. She stopped by the grocery store and grabbed a few items, ate supper at Bojangles and announced to the crowd gathered that it was time to head home. As she was getting in the truck with her sister, her heart stopped and she was gone. Thanks to all you that sent flowers, cards, e-mails and phone calls. It was such a comfort to know so many people were thinking about us. She was a great supporter of FFA, my best friend and a terrific mom and many people are going to miss her. Please keep me in your prayers.

I am hoping to soon report that the Southeast Region of Agricultural Professionals has 100% membership in our organization. We are very close to being a unified region and I trust that each of you will encourage your coworkers to join NCATA.

There have been some exciting things happening in our region. The Farmers Days Celebration and 2nd Annual West Carteret FFA Barbecue Cook-Off was a huge success and FFA from East Carteret, West Carteret and Richlands competed during the November 10-11 competition held in Newport. We honored farmers from the present and the past while cooking forty pigs during the celebration.

I hope that each of you will find happiness in the New Year and great success in your classes as 2nd semester begins.

Welcome back to one of my heroes, Mr. Wayne Proffitt, interim director of NCATA Widows' Fund. We should have some good jokes at teachers' conference!

Submit information for the retired teachers' section of the NCATA newsletter to:

MR. CY VERNON
cyvernon@hotmail.com
2937 Marshall Graves Road
Yanceyville, NC 27379

Q: Why did the farmer call his pig "Ink?"

A: Because he kept running out of the pen!

Email: lambermd@rss.k12.nc.us

Fax: 704.857.3485

Deadline for Submissions: March 1



Update

Dale Cochran
NCATA Secretary Treasurer

I have processed the dues that have been paid since summer conference. Vice

Presidents: please continue to send dues and membership forms to me or you may encourage teachers to send dues to me directly. If any vice presidents need more forms or stationary let me know and I will mail them to you. If you paid for the *Agricultural Education* magazine and do not receive issues in the next month or two, let me know and I will check on this.

My address is:

Dale Cochran, NCATA Secretary/Treasurer
6640-I Old Monroe Road Suite 203
Indian Trail, NC 28079-5360

Two cows are standing in a field.
One said to the other, "Are you worried about Mad Cow Disease?"
The other responded, "No it doesn't worry me, I'm a horse!"

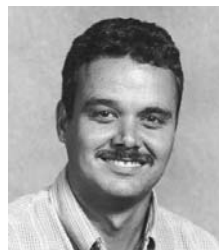
WIDOW'S FUND

Mr. Wayne Proffitt

There has been a change in the management of the Widows' Fund. Welcome (Back) to Mr. Wayne Proffitt as manager of the Widows' Fund. Mr. Proffitt is an expert, having managed the fund for nearly 33 years. Please contact Mr. Proffitt to join the widow's fund, change your address, remit payment or inform him of a members' death. His address is:

P.O. Box 446
Franklin, N.C. 28744
Phone: 828-524-3267

To submit information for Publication in the next NCATA newsletter, contact:
Misty Lambert, Editor
Jesse Carson High School
290 Kress Venture Drive
China Grove, NC 28023



Some thoughts

Chuck Michel
NCATA President Elect

I would like to thank the agriculture teachers in North Carolina for

considering me to serve the NCATA as President elect. It will be hard for me to measure up to the legendary agriculture teachers who have previously served in this capacity. I believe that we have an outstanding organization and that we have been fortunate to have strong leadership to look out for our interests as agriculture teachers which in turn will allow us to provide quality programs for our students. Although we have extremely busy schedules, the agriculture teacher family still needs to be vigilant and ready to act on any obstacles that may hinder our ability to be successful. If confronted with such concerns don't hesitate to contact anyone on the NCATA officer team.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Danny, Brantley and Dale as well as the eight vice-presidents from across our state. I feel that one of our major issues is to obtain final approval of our evaluation system in which many people have provided hours of time and energy. This is a good instrument for measuring the total agriculture education program. I also encourage you to contact your agriculture teacher neighbors and friends and encourage them to become NCATA members if they have not done so already. The investment is minimal for what we receive.

In closing I would like to wish everyone a happy and productive new school year. I look forward to visiting with you through out the year at the numerous FFA activities. Above all else thanks for your confidence in my ability to serve you in this capacity.

Thanks to Carrie Hoffner, South Rowan FFA member and Southwest Region FFA Secretary for the Jokes!!!

You might be a redneck if:

You have ever lost a loved one to kudzu.