

Agriculture Teacher Longevity

by

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Retention, Agriculture Education, Burnout, Agriculture Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture Education teachers are leaving the profession at an astounding pace. Being over worked, loss of family and personal time, stress & burnout, feeling of being underpaid are some of the hardships that contribute to this ongoing problem. I felt that conducting interviews with former Agriculture teachers who had completely left the profession would help me gather the information that would be needed to determine the exact causes of why this is continually happening. Researching the exact causes of why the teachers have left may lead to ways that can be implemented for helping retain Agriculture Education teachers.

Focusing on Job satisfaction, how can this research help teachers feel more appreciated in our profession? How can the FFA & POW requirements help the teacher more by making some changes to the standards? How can we help administration and counselors be more knowledgeable about what all the Agriculture teacher does on a daily basis? How can stress and burnout for the Agriculture teacher be changed so that there is not as much stress on the teacher?

The purpose of this study was to identify the main factors that cause Agriculture Education teachers to leave the profession. To achieve this purpose six objectives guided this research. I wanted to identify the factors that influenced former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia to enter the profession. Determine why former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia felt the need to leave the profession. Determine the roll of administration and oversight played on the decision to leave. Determine the roll SAE, FFA, and how the Georgia Agriculture Education program of

work played on the decision to leave. Determine the rolls that parents and students played on teacher's decision to leave. Determine what former teachers believe would have needed to change for them to be able to stay or return to the classroom.

I recorded all of the interviews on Zoom and had them transcribed, followed by coding, and using a step-by-step approach to the constant comparative model to analyze data. Findings were more and more of the same as teachers missed their personal and family time. Many expressed how they wished some things would change on the POW for the betterment of their stressful lives. I found that it seemed they all had the drive and best of intentions of staying in the profession until retirement, but they could not outlast the factors that the stress and burnout placed on them. Without down time in any profession you soon become burned out from many factors and end up wondering what you ever loved about it in the beginning.

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my nieces and nephews. You guys know I love you and I hope that this will always remind you that no matter how long it takes or what you have to do to make it happen, you too can make all of your dreams become a reality. Maggie and Morgan, you both know how hard it is to make it, and keep fighting the good fight, it will all be worth it one day, I promise! Amelia, Ian, & Elliott, always know that I am here for you and I will always be a cheerleader in your corner. May you all have dreams and visions that will come true for you. Aunt Malone will always have your back! I love you all!

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NOMENCLATURE

CTAE	Career, Technical, Agriculture education
POW	Program of Work
SAE	Supervised Agriculture Experience
GVATA	Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association
FFA	Future Farmers of America
SBAE	School Based Agriculture education
CCM	Constant Comparative Method

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture education is a vital part of our education system that is offered to students. Students learn many different subjects relating to real life situations, leading them into career choices. There are pathways ranging from horticulture, animal science, forestry science, veterinarian science, & agriculture mechanics, just to name a few. There is something for everyone to learn in agriculture. Teachers who teach these subjects are able to take some students who don't have the drive, want to be at school, or excel with academic achievement, and navigate them towards a trade that interest them. The student almost transforms in front of them from a kid no one wants in their class to a respected productive worker. This is why agriculture teachers have student relationships that carry on for many years after the student's school career.

There are many benefits to having agriculture education in schools. The students have a class where they can get hands on experience, learn a new trade that they can turn into a career, and break the day up from the traditional academic learning. The CTAE departments of schools lead the students and give them more of a drive to attend school and learn new things.

Teachers have a way of helping students and building relationships when the student feels that they have a leader in a teacher. Teachers spend a lot of time with agriculture education students when it comes to training them for contests after school, helping take care of livestock projects at a school barn, preparing an animal for a show, etc. The teacher becomes more like a mentor than a teacher in most situations. Teachers

who teach agriculture classes spend a lot of afternoons into the night to help students with different things. They could be at their house with their parents working on SAE projects, helping get an animal home on the livestock trailer because the student does not have one, etc. The agriculture teacher becomes irreplaceable once the bond is made between the student and the teacher. These are relationships that most other teachers do not understand, along with administrators. Sometimes teachers are asked why they spend so much time with their students and question the time commitment that the teacher gives to the students. New teachers take some time to get established and understand how the agriculture teaching profession works. Within the first year, teachers are navigating dates, time schedules, leave paperwork, bus request paperwork, FFA contest sign up deadlines, parent permission forms, & accomplishing the FFA Program of Work requirements. Along with teaching classes all day, having a prep planned for each class taught, preparation for extra accommodations for students who may need them in their classes. The teacher evolves with every passing year to become more accustomed to the time, clerical, and commitment demand. The teachers who continue to learn to navigate the profession continue to grow and have a better grip on their whole career. Conflicts with administrators do arise with agriculture teachers and can cause teachers to leave the profession.

According to Doss & Rayfield teacher conflicts & poor administration is a major driving force of why teachers leave the profession. The Agriculture education profession has had a known shortage of teachers for half a century according to Kantrovich. Sometimes administrators add a science teacher or a history teacher to replace an

agriculture teacher who has left the program. Although they may remember living on a farm as a child, they may not be the right person to take from the academic field and place them in an agriculture teaching position. An agriculture teacher does not get to leave the school every day at 3:30 pm, or when all of the other teachers leave. They have more trips, more paperwork to turn in, and in these situations, the band aid of taking someone we have in our system and putting them where the administrator needs an opening filled may seem like the right thing to do, but can turn into complete chaos. The added stress on the teacher, who is not accustomed to the demand for the job could make them leave the profession quickly. The lack of being qualified results in programs being shut down. If a qualified teacher is not moved to the needed position, and an academic teacher is moved into a position like this it could result in students not wanting to be in the program. If they see a teacher every day that is unhappy, along with the student's parents, and they see that the teacher has no desire to help with livestock projects or greenhouse production, etc. this could bring about concern for a program to stay competent and running. In some case's administrators do not care about the agriculture programs and they just want it to be a class where they can send unruly, disruptive students and get them out of other teachers' classes. Some teachers have left the profession within their first couple of years because of feeling that their class did not matter. When administrators ignore the agricultural teachers request to help them with a disruptive student and they don't, this makes the teacher feel even more removed from having any help. This results in the teacher feeling the need to not ask the administrator

for help at all in the future, which usually leads to the teacher leaving. According to Doss & Rayfield communication is key when working with teachers and administrators. There is a strong need to improve communication between teachers and principals.

Having a family and work balance relationship while being an agriculture education teacher is hard. You plan your days with your family around your career and student's needs. Being an Agriculture teacher is more than just a job, it is a way of life (Clemons et. al., 2020). According to Traini Agriculture teachers have trouble with balancing a professional career, personal life, and practicing effective ways of dealing with stress. According to Murray Georgia agriculture teachers encounter as they balance family and career expectations. In Murray's work there were many teachers who's own personal children were present every day in their program, well before they were officially "in the program" based on age and grade. In most cases it was necessary for parenting, but Murray suggested that the agriculture teacher's children's presence are able to be a positive influence to so many students who may not have a positive figure in their lives. Sometimes knowing this keeps one in the position as they begin to do the work for the outcome and not the income. According to the agriculture teachers creed being an agriculture teacher means exerting a positive influence in the lives of young people.

Agriculture education teacher retention is an issue with many factors as to why teachers seem to leave the profession, or never enter. Agriculture education graduates are qualified for a number of private sector and government positions. According to Hovatter 50% of certified graduates were employed in a profession other than teaching.

The heavy workload, lack of administrative support, burnout, the inability to balance work with family life all take a toll on some and they leave the teaching profession all together.

According to Roberts cooperating teachers have an effect on how student teachers view the profession Roberts et. al, (2004). Cooperating teachers exert a strong influence on the teaching practices of student teachers (Roberts et. al, 2006; Rozelle & Wilson, 2012) and the manner in which they “come to know and participate in the profession” (Clarke et al., 2014, p. 182; Roberts et al., 2006). Some cooperating teachers help progress the student teacher while others may change their desire to want to teach. Rozelle and Wilson (2012) explained that values and behaviors exhibited by cooperating teachers exerted “a dominant influence” (p. 1204) on the practices adopted by the student teachers.

The lack of administrative support plays a big role as to why teachers leave the profession so soon. Boone et. al., (2007) showed that the number one problem for beginning teachers was a lack of administrative support. Guidance counselors as part of the administrative team have a direct effect on a teacher’s class makeup. According to Sproles counselors may advise students to explore academic programs or vocational programs, which could lead to different careers. Counselors, through their power of scheduling can change the dynamic of a classroom either intentionally or unintentionally filling the rolls with students with low motivation or who have strong adversarial relationships with teachers. Does this lack of experience with agricultural education lead to an empathy or misunderstanding of what and who agricultural education is?

According to Croom one of the worst things that can happen to an Agriscience program is for it to become a dumping ground for incorrigible and lazy students (Croom et al., 2004). The programs are not meant to be a parallel to in school suspension. Do they simply look at agriculture classes as a “dumping ground” for unwanted students as Croom & Moore (2004) suggests? Uninformed administration and counselors not having a deep understanding attitude of the program could be the underlying cause in some situations for administration/principals to undervalue or overlook agricultural education courses as simply a place to put kids. Developing a good relationship with guidance counselors and educating them in what you teach could help in the placing of students for your class. When Agriculture teachers develop a good working relationship with guidance counselors and show them what the agriscience program can accomplish, there is growth that can be obtained. According to Martin principals need information on agriculture programs to make good decisions in order to help programs succeed. (Martin et al., 1986 pg.18-26). According to Rayfield & Doss principals that are interested, knowledgeable, view the agricultural education program positively are likely to support it (Doss et. al., 2021).

As agriculture education teachers we keep letting the job add more tasks to our plate that is already running over. We do not want to take anything away from the students, we like to have students participate in what they are interested in. Many teachers experience the weight of school requirements that simply cannot satisfy administrators expectations. “I had too many class preparations per day”, “I had too many laboratories to manage,” “administration constantly changed the style of lesson

plans required,” “it was difficult to include hands-on activities in my lessons,” and “it was difficult to prepare effective lessons.” (Boone et. al., 2007). Many teachers face funding problems like FFA fundraisers not being approved by administration, ideas that could promote their FFA chapters are turned down. “Budget cuts were a problem for my program,” “the administration did not provide adequate financial support for my program,” “there was little funding for equipment replacement,” financing FFA activities was a problem,” and “fundraising for the FFA chapter was a problem.” (Boone et. al., 2007).

There are many reasons that contribute to teachers leaving the profession, as this normally occurs in the first 1-3 years. These can vary from their lack of family time, the requirement of extended day hours, etc. According to Cole (1985), teachers left the vocational agriculture classroom due to one or more reasons, including low salary, lack of family time, evening responsibilities, extended hours, and certification requirements. Some teachers feel the need to leave the profession due to not having the feeling that they can grow and become better in the profession. According to Berman (2004), “Talented teachers will not last long in a culture that undermines or is neutral to their needs and interests, leaves them isolated, or fails to promote their growth” (p.118). Beginning teachers need mentors and help in their first years of teaching. In year one, attention should be focused on helping teachers identify their challenges early and develop coping mechanisms prior to the middle of the fall semester when they become more overwhelmed. Special attention should be paid to the teachers when preparing them to enter the mid-Spring semester stretch of increased job demands. In year two, the

teachers need help doing self-analysis of their performance and their program and get connected with the specific resources they need. In year three resources specific to the areas of growth they are seeking as teachers and relate to the long-term goals for the agriculture program. (Disberger, et. al. (2022). Mentoring programs allow for novice teachers to gain confidence in their teaching abilities to connect with other teachers by providing a mentor to help guide and support their work in the classroom (Ingersoll et. al., 2004; Ingersoll et. al., 2011). Teacher mentoring programs have been found to simultaneously increase novice teacher performance in the classroom and intentions to remain in the profession (Ingersoll et. al., 2011).

According to Smith due to lack of available professional development specifically designed for mid-career agricultural education teachers, NAAE developed an institute called eXcellence in Leadership for retention (XLR8). This program was designed to meet the needs of agricultural teachers with 7 to 15 years of teaching experience. (Smith et. al., 2018).

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that have lead to former Agriculture Education teachers leaving the profession.

Objective

To achieve the purpose of this study several objectives were used.

1. To identify the factors that influenced former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia to enter the profession.

2. Determine why former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia felt the need to leave the profession.
3. Determine the roll of administration and oversight played on the decision to leave.
4. Determine the roll SAE, FFA, and the Georgia Agriculture Education program of work played on the decision to leave.
5. Determine the rolls of parents and students played on teachers' decision to leave.
6. Determine what former teachers believe would have needed to change for them to be able to stay or return to the classroom.

Problem Statement

Over half a century has been filled with agriculture teacher retainment issues. According to Solomonson the challenge to recruit and retain teachers has never been greater Solomonson et al., (2003). Retaining effective teachers is a necessity to keep the profession alive. Dutton and Heaphy (2003) explored the role of workplace connections and found the level (or degree) of connections workers perceived was directly related to job satisfaction and organizational success. According to Clemons the importance of curricular connectivity, with higher teacher autonomy and knowledge of the curriculum relating to increased job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the classroom (Clemons et. al., 2019; Kauffman et al., 2002). According to Ingersoll a majority of turnover occurs during the first five years on the job. According to Myers beginning teachers are faced with many challenges and demands that contribute to the decision of leaving the

profession (Myers et. al., 2005). Poor or challenging working conditions and frustration associated with the school environment have been identified as significant factors in a teacher's decision to leave the profession (Sucher et al., 2016). According to Boone the teachers views of failure to succeed in mastering the classroom, FFA, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) and other program management duties can result in teacher frustration, isolation, & increases in teacher shortages (Boone et. al., 2007; Fritz et. al., 2003; Grieman et al., 2005). If we are going to get at root of the teacher shortage, we are going to have to ask those that leave, why.

Significance of the study

Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia have to satisfy a list of requirements known as the (POW) in order to be fully funded by their extended day and year salary. Along with the expectations outlined in the POW they have to perform the regular school duties at the school they are employed, working with community leaders, helping FFA members with contest, helping students with applications, supervising students SAE projects, taking students and their projects to livestock shows and many more "duties" as assigned. Georgia Agriculture Education teachers are also required to be members of the GVATA organization, attend summer and winter conferences held twice a year. The burnout rate for Agriculture Education teachers is high and many leave the profession because of this.

The demands of the schools, POW, travel to contests, late nights, early mornings continually throughout the school year attribute to the low retention rate of Agriculture Teacher. They simply start out loving what they do, turn it into a beast and even though

they want to help every student who wants to succeed, they slowly eat away at their self. Without help from a teaching partner, administrative support, community support, state staff, they are sure to drown.

Definition of Terms

1. Agriculture Education teacher- A qualified individual that educates students on agriculture, food, and natural resources and serves as an FFA advisor.
2. FFA-Future Farmers of America, youth organization preparing members for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture.
3. Agriculture Education-systematic program of instruction available to students desiring to learn about science, business, technology of plant and animal systems.
4. High School Agriculture Education-Instruction in the field of agriculture, food, & natural resources, that provides students with knowledge and skills in grades 9-12.
5. SBAE-School Based Agriculture education
6. POW-Program of work, document setting a sequence & timeline of specified work.
7. SAE-Supervised Agriculture Experience, where an agriculture teacher oversees the work of a students at his or her home or working facility.
8. GVATA-Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association. This organization provides agriculture education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy and service.

9. Agriculture Educator: A qualified teacher of Agriculture Education at the high, middle, or elementary school level.
10. Agriculture Education: A program of instruction regarding agriculture and related subjects normally taught in secondary schools (Talbert, 2014).

Limitations of Study

The study was done by conducting interviews from teachers who had left the Agriculture Teacher Profession. The data was limited to interviewing twenty-three teachers and taking their perspectives from the questions about their experiences teaching only in the state of Georgia.

Basic Assumption

The basic assumptions of this study are that the answers given by the participants are accurate and free of bias. Every effort has been taken to ensure this to be the case.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review covers aspects as to what research has shown to be the contributing factors that face agriculture teacher retention. The retention of Agriculture education teachers has been the subject for many researchers. This chapter will focus on (1) Job satisfaction, (2) FFA & POW requirements, (3) Administration and counselor's impact on the Agriculture education teacher, (4) Stress and burnout for the Agriculture teacher.

Job Satisfaction

According to Perie and Baker workplace factors/problems such as administrative support, parental involvement, and teacher control over the classroom were significant contributors to teacher satisfaction. According to Doss & Rayfield it is imperative to maintain effective communication and keep administrators informed to better improve the chances of student achievement. The quality of this relationship is also important to keep agricultural education teachers in the field (Doss et. al., 2021).

According to Solomonson and Retallick teacher retainment is hard to achieve when you look at job satisfaction. Although many factors contribute to this being satisfied with the job is pertinent. They studied a group that included Agriculture teachers possessing between six and fifteen years of teaching experience with a goal of increasing teacher longevity and job satisfaction. According to Moser & McKim there are numerous psychological factors that affect teacher career commitment. These include

self-efficacy, knowledge, beliefs, and emotions. Moser and McKim (2020). According to Moser & McKim teachers exiting the profession results in instability, program closures, and reduced opportunities for students” Moser and McKim (2020). According to Foster the top three barriers perceived by women in the field, include acceptance by peers, other males in industry, balancing family & career and acceptance by administrators” Foster (2003). Wicks and Lindner determined that “research has shown that agricultural education professionals have perceived that they are not being fairly compensated” (p.115).

FFA

Many Agriculture education teachers went through an agriculture education program and were FFA members in high school. Some were not, and when you become an agriculture education teacher there is a bit of a shock when you realize what all an agriculture education teacher does. There are many FFA contest, fundraising activities, camps, livestock shows, professional development meetings, and a lot of these require overnight stays. Essentially a lot of time spent away from home and family. The National FFA Organization is a student-led youth organization designed to promote positive youth development by engaging youth in leadership activities, which are focused on careers in agriculture (National FFA Organization, 2003). The FFA is also founded on the principles of providing members with opportunities to further agricultural leadership, cooperation, and citizenship (Townsend et. al., 1983). Teachers teach courses in animal science, plant science, power systems, food products and processing, natural resources management, agribusiness, and environmental

systems, providing laboratory experience in animal science, plant systems, and power systems, participating in professional organization, engaging in professional development, lesson planning, conducting parent/teacher conferences, filing local reports and keeping records, and engaging public relations through social media”. (Doss et. al., 2021). Community relationships sometimes help with everyone pulling together with student projects. Given the structure of the three-circle model for SBAE, there are numerous opportunities for community member engagement in SBAE programs (Croom, 2008). The use of SAEs and the National FFA Organization allows for teachers to implement community service projects and include community partners (e.g., local businesses, community members, FA alumni) to provide input and support (Croom, 2008; National FFA Organization, 2019a, 2019b). Agriculture education is often described by the three-component model with classroom and laboratory instruction, FFA participation, and SAE participation as the three components (National FFA Organization, 2020). Students learn through a variety of ways in an agriculture classroom setting. Not only do they have classroom instruction, they get to experience that learned instruction through hands on tasks. Our students learn by doing, and retain the necessary skills to complete these tasks. Students have the opportunities through contest where they can achieve recognition at the National level. These events often require travel and funding but give students opportunities to serve as voting delegates, compete for higher offices, engage in the leadership process, be recognized for success such as the National Chapter Award, and sometimes participate in various Leadership Development Events (LDE), Career Development Events (CDE), Speaking

Development Events (SDE), and agriscience fair competitions (National FFA Organization, 2020). Students have the opportunity to earn FFA scholarships, earn FFA degrees, compete for FFA Star awards, and compete for FFA SAE proficiency awards (National FFA Organization, 2020). Through FFA participation, students achieve their different needs through personal gains in public speaking, working with others, life skills, and skills transferrable for college (Bird et. al., 2012).

Students also get to work with livestock as SAE projects, as they learn valuable life skills. Boleman et al. (2004) found parents suggested their children's life skills are developed through participation in livestock projects. Heavner et al. (2011) found significant correlations between the number of years students had livestock projects and their parent's perception of their child's development in decision making, knowledge of the livestock industry, development or oral communication skills, and their development of self-discipline. (Huston, 2020). Industry experts identified 31 different technical skills they expect students to learn through a livestock SAE (Ramsey et. al., 2011). (Huston, 2020) Many scholars have stated that SAE projects allow students to practice what they learn in the classroom thus providing them with mastery experiences (Talber et al., 2007; Camp et al., 2000; Phipps, 1980). Holmgren & Reid (2007) found students identified showing, animal care, feeding an animal, animal grooming, and maintaining animal health as the top skills they learned through participating in a livestock project. (Huston, 2020).

Program of Work (POW)

The POW is the program of work that is a checklist of what is required of you as an FFA advisor (appendix A). The document is set from the state department of education and the state FFA administration. It is a point-based system where teachers ensure their programs are completing a minimum number of the points. Many of these events are hard to complete or achieve and are often at the mercy of student desire for involvement and fall on the teacher to complete them when a student member does not. These tasks time sensitive and often are a “one shot” activity, if they are not completed you receive a “no” on that standard, despite your efforts of trusting a student member will complete it, or that all of your student member teams will show up on the day of the practiced contest. Teacher pay is directly associated with the completion and adherence to this document. When a teachers’ livelihood is tied so closely to a teenagers desire and whim to participate are we setting our teachers up for stress and failure? When “others” in this case teens and pre-teens, have control over our day to day lives, we lose agency. According to Solomonson a past teacher indicated discomfort with some of the expectations put on her by others, “...I have to deal with having a principal that wants you to do things that you don’t feel comfortable with, or having parents that are upset with you about something that their kid is doing or not doing”. (Solomonson et. al., 2019). Adults, especially those with high levels of independence as agriculture teachers are said to not last long when agency is removed. “One man revealed the high probability he would have never left the profession if he had additional assistance with his agricultural program and FFA chapter the last few years. He indicated that

employment within a multiple-teacher program might have prevented him from leaving the profession, “I felt that [teaching was only] a part-time job and then the other... was preparing all the activities, all the paperwork, getting the school buses lined out, talking to the athletic director, all the FFA contests, the practices. I think if you could get help somehow...I know there’s probably people who leave that have two teacher programs too”. (Solomonson et al., 2019). “One former teacher provided the following advice, “I think culturally, we’re going to have to get to a position to where we really say, you don’t have to do everything. Right? You can concentrate on just a few things and still be amazing.” (Solomonson et al., 2019).

Administration and Counselor’s

Woodard and Herren focus on the perceptions and attitudes of high school counselors towards agriculture programs. Their research covered the state of Georgia with a questionnaire covering whether or not they supported their local agriculture programs or not. The counselors that did see them as quality programs, supported the idea of them being a science credit and the course content of being valuable to college bound students. Boone & Boone articles are very relevant with situations that many agriculture teachers are faced with on a day to day basis. Some of the responses from agriculture teachers in their research include, “my administration was not interested in my program”, “I did not receive support from my administration”, “my administration did not understand my program”, “school policies made hands-on learning more difficult”, and “I experience a lack of communication with my administrators”. (Boone et. al., 2007).

Walker, Garton, & Kitchel research finds that teachers who left the profession expressed that they were as satisfied as those who remained in the profession with the exception of working with school administrators. Different perspectives range here in researching the answers to teacher retainment in Agriculture education. Lack of administrative concern & counselor support could be a highly regarded problem in convincing one to stay in the career. One teacher said, “Administration...they don’t understand what we do.” Another indicated, “Things have gotten worse because of administration”. Solomonson & Retallick, (2018). Furthermore, Lack of administrative support is commonly cited as a disincentive to teachers persisting in the field (Kelsey, 2006; Sutchter et al., 2016; Walker et al., (2004) while positive administrative support tends to motivate teachers to stay in the profession (Clark et al., 2014; Rice et al., 2001).

Doss & Rayfield’s research purpose was to compare agriculture education teacher and principal viewpoints concerning this topic. They address that in a study of Mississippi administrators, principals viewed components of agricultural education programs more negatively than agricultural education teachers (Shoemake 1972). While the study did not identify reasons why, it did point out that as principals age, their attitude toward vocational education becomes more positive. (Doss et. al., 2021). Dowell (1980) also found that principals located in rural schools had a more positive attitude toward vocational education compared to those in suburban and urban schools.

Stress and Burnout

While stress and burnout are some of the highest contributing factors in non-retainment of Agricultural education teachers, research by Frost & Rayfield (2020)

shows that conflicts between family and work also have a great impact on the profession. Their study is based on expectancy-value theory (EVT), which is a psychological series of constructs that describe the impact of motivation on choice and persistence. These models show perception on self-efficacy, teaching ability, student expectations for success, and the perception of agriculture educators. This study was grounded from persons who have experienced a common phenomenon or lived this experience. Across different states, data shows that fewer teachers are entering the profession, and more are not staying in the profession for 5, 10, 20 years or even up to retirement age. Most show a concern that once they are in 5-10 years, they have more concern for their personal and family life than they do for the compensation. Additionally, if a teacher remains in the profession more than five years the likelihood of them leaving declines dramatically (Allen, 2005). While the highest teacher attrition rates occur within the first five years (Ingersoll et. al., 2014), the profession should also be concerned with the growing number of experienced teachers, specifically mid-career teachers, leaving the profession. Some SBAE teachers leave teaching for other positions because of factors associated with compensation, such as salary, health benefits, retirement plans, and extended contracts (Solomonson et al., 2018). Ingersoll and Smith 2003 found more than three-quarters of teachers sampled who left the profession were dissatisfied with their salary. Allen (2005) confirmed most educational research supports the notion that increased compensation would help to retain quality teachers.

The study done by Solomonson, Thieman, Korte, & Retallick interviewed a man that compared his self to his agriculture education teacher, whom he perceived to

prioritize his career over his family, “I watched my Ag teacher...I watched him raise everybody else’s kids, and make his kids sometimes feel like they were in the backseat, compared to his FFA kids. I can’t let that happen to my own family...I don’t know that it was that [dramatic]. You know, that family, his kids, are good, they’re a real good family and everything. But you feel like you have to choose your school over your own family”. (Solomonson et. al., 2019). One woman that was interviewed relayed, “she never felt like she could manage to get ahead due to pressure to keep adding things to her plate. I felt like by year five, I had finally gotten a handle on it. The thing that I did not have a handle on is, well every year, you’re wanting to do more and more. And, it’s hard to keep that pace for a long period of time”. (Solomonson et al.,2019). The teaching profession has been previously described as “emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating: (Lambert et al., 2006, p. 105), which can eventually lead to stress and burnout, major contributors to teacher attrition (Chenevey et al., 2008; Croom, 2003; Kitchel et al., 2012; Myers et al., 2005).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methods of data collection and analysis will be highlighted. Reasons for choices made and discussions on the ramifications of those decisions will be discussed.

The purpose of this study was to identify the main factors that cause Agriculture Education teachers to leave the profession. To achieve this purpose six objectives guided this research.

1. To identify the factors that influenced former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia to enter the profession.
2. Determine why former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia felt the need to leave the profession.
3. Determine the roll of administration and oversight played on the decision to leave.
4. Determine the roll SAE, FFA, and the Georgia Agriculture Education program of work played on the decision to leave.
5. Determine the rolls of parents and students played on the teachers decision to leave.
6. Determine what former teachers believe would have needed to change for them to be able to stay or return to the classroom.

In pursuant to these objectives a qualitative research approach was used informed by the Naturalistic paradigm as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Specifically, my

research utilized a constant comparative method which is derived from grounded theory (Glaser et. al., 1967; Lincoln et. al., 1985).

Tesch (1990 pg. 85) suggests that there are three overarching types of qualitative analysis dependent upon the philosophical approach. The first is when the interest is in the characteristics of language as communication or as the cognitive representation of culture. Content analysis is commonly used for this approach. This procedure involves designing relevant categories and sorting words, sentences, phrases, and paragraphs into these categories. Dooley (2007 pg. 37)

The second type of analysis is when the interest is in the discovery of regularities and the patterns or connections between and among these regularities. The *constant comparative method* is an example of this type of analysis. Dooley (2007 pg. 37). In theory construction, concepts are first identified through open coding by looking at the “data line by line for empirical indicators consisting of behavioral actions and events, observed and described in documents and in the words of the interviewees” (Tesch, 1990, p. 85).

A third type of analysis is when the interest is in the comprehension of the meaning of text or action Tesch (1990). In order to check research bias in this case, a technique called bracketing can be used to suspend the researcher’s meanings and interpretations and enter into the world of the unique individual who was interviewed Tesch (1990). The researcher reads the entire set of data and immerses in it holistically. Meaningful units relevant to the research questions become the theme and the process continues similarly to the constant comparative method. Dooley (2007 pg. 37).

To operationalize with positivistic terms, internal validity is the extent to which the findings of the research display a relationship with reality (the truth) Dooley (2007 pg. 38). This “truth value” is based upon one reality; qualitative research assumes that there can be multiple realities (Erlandson et al., 1992; Lincoln et. al., 1985). Thus, the term internal validity is not appropriate. The concept of truth value is nonetheless important. In qualitative research it is called credibility, Credibility is achieved by representing those multiple realities adequately. Dooley (2007 pg. 38)

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is designed to build a substantive theory regarding some aspect to practice in the real world (Merriam, 1998). The theory is focused on understanding the nature and meaning of an experience for a particular group of people in a particular setting (Glaser et. al., 1967). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), grounded theory should be true to everyday reality, make sense to those involved, and be applicable to a variety of related contexts. Originally established as a formal research theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967) grounded theory researchers continually question gaps in the data and stress open processes. According to the original text on grounded theory, a grounded theory is one that will be able to work with the data when put into use rather than the data needing to be fit into the theory and the theory will explain the behavior being studied (Glasser et. al., 1967).

In the grounded theory construct, context and social structure are important in order to generate theory from the data rather than theory driving the structure. Data collection, coding, analysis, and theory development do not happen in a strictly linear or

independent fashion, they occur simultaneously (Lincoln et. al., 1985). It is an inductive process where theory must be grounded in the data Moustakas (1994).

Constant Comparative Method

According to Glasser and Straus (1967) as a “means for deriving (grounding) theory, not simply a means for processing data” (Lincoln et. al., 1985, p. 339). In constant comparative methodology there are said to be four main phases (Glasser et. al., 1967, p. 105):

- 1) Comparing incidents applicable to each category
- 2) Integrating categories and their properties
- 3) Delimiting the theory
- 4) Writing the theory

While these are described as distinct stages, it is suggested that each of these leads seamlessly into the next and back again as the data are analyzed and the research is conducted (Lincoln et. al., 1985).

Glasser and Strauss suggest that as the data are collected it is the obligation of the researcher to begin to make the judgements based on “gut feel” to which category or in this case, “semantic spheres” the data should be classified. That classification should also help inform the next data’s collection and subsequent classification (Lincoln et. al., 1985). This repetitive and iterative processing of data leads into the second step suggested integrating categories and their properties”, and likely gives the name for the research method “constant comparative”. Step three is subsequently bound up in the previous steps of the research methodology informing and reinforming in a form of

hermeneutic cycling (Lincoln et. al., 2013). The culmination of the process is the articulation or writing of the theory, however the use of culmination is not to say final step, as this step too informs the examination of the data and could result in the collection of more data but is used in the way of height or zenith and represents the bringing together of all the other stages.

Data collection

The recommendations made by Dooley (2007) regarding the proper and effective use of qualitative methods in agricultural education. Dooley's suggestions were primary sourced from best practices as described in Lincoln and Guba (1985). Purposeful sampling was used to ensure that the phenomena being explored was best represented. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Dooley, 2007, Merriam, 1998, p. 61). For a typical sample, the researcher is seeing the "average person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 1998, p. 62). Subjects were identified based on the criterion that were needed to ensure the phenomena being studied, in this case agriculture teachers leaving the classroom, was present.

An interview protocol was developed with the help of research faculty and a set of guiding questions was decided upon. Those questions utilized a post-positivistic paradigm to ensure that the interviewer did not lead the subjects into sharing only the negative or harmful experiences. Post-positive researchers, and the research they conduct believe that the researcher can no more be objective about the research than the

subject being researched could. Post-positivistic researchers believe that, in sharp contrast to positivist researchers the researcher's own ideas, constructs and identity must influence the interactions they have and thus influence the outcomes of the research (Lincoln et. al., 1985). Knowing these questions were intentionally focused on the influence of support systems, school level administration, state level administration, fellow staff members, parent, students, and personal families. The questions were framed in a way to ask subjects what these groups could have done to change the situation in a way that would have led to the teacher (subject) to continue teaching.

Interviews have been called a conversation with a purpose (Erlandson et. al., 1993). According to Merriam interviews can be structured in an order of questions with a mix of more and less structured questions, or with open-ended questions that provide flexibility (Merriam, 1998). According to Dooley most qualitative researchers ask basic questions and issues but deviations may occur in order to capture nuances and emerging trends not previously determined. Questions that stimulate longer answers will produce richer data. (Dooley, 2007)

As interviews were conducted commonalities emerged and protothemes began to be developed, as Lincoln & Guba, Glaser & Straus, Spradley, and Dooley all suggested would be appropriate. Questions and interview protocols weren't substantively changed as a result of these protothemes but focus on sections of the interviews and allowing for the conversation to drift farther in those directions was allowed in later interviews. At the conclusion of the interviews the researcher compiled all notes, transcripts, and began

to formally identify themes. These themes lead to constructs and those constructs informed the conclusions made.

Following the suggestions of Dooley (2007) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), special interest were given to establishing trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is based in how well readers can believe the statements being made by the researcher (Lincoln et al., 1985). They suggest four ideas that can inform trustworthiness; 1) Truth value, How can one establish confidence in the “truth” of the findings, 2) Applicability, How can one determine the extent to which these findings can be applied to other contexts, 3) Consistency, How can one determine whether the findings would be replicated if the study was conducted again, and 4) Neutrality, How much of the findings are derived from the participants rather than the influence of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290).

Methodologists suggest that there are basic criterion for the establishment of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba summarize these as credibility, transferability, confirmability and give techniques for the establishment of each. Credibility: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks. While it would be best to be able to complete all of these, that is rarely the case. For this study, due to the low availability of the subject population, we were not able to complete negative case analysis or referential adequacy. To accomplish transferability, the use of “thick rich description” is suggested as the best method. Every attempt was made to fully and completely describe every interview and every subject. An audit trail was completed during the research process to

ensure the development of dependability and confirmability. In addition, a thorough reflexive journal has been kept to ensure the establishment of credibility (Lincoln et. al., 1985).

Data Analysis

Utilizing the process outlined in Lincoln and Guba (1985) for data analysis each interview was transcribed and reread by the researcher. The interviews were unitized by dividing portions of the transcripts allowing for those units to be moved or sorted based on their contents. Those units were then categorized into piles based on the conformity to other units. If no conformity was found a new category was made. If the unit fit into more than one category, the unit was copied and the unit was given over to both categories. From these categories, themes were quickly noticed. The units were then resorted based on these themes. During the sorting of the units derived directly from the interviews, notes and observations from the reflexive journals were also unitized as they conformed to the themes. These themes were then developed further into findings. The findings were used to revisit the units to determine if the lens developed by the discovery of that theme changed decisions on any other units, categories, or themes. As Lincoln and Guba say, qualitative inquiry can be “daunting”.

Population

The population for this research study included past Agriculture Education Teachers in the state of Georgia (N=23) instructing grades 5-12. The initial analysis generates a number of results. The first result is a summary of each interview. The second is a list of potential codes (a code tree) which is the beginning of the process of

conceptualization. The third result is the distillation of the interview into an inventory of provisional codes or a conceptual profile. The fourth result consist of memos which describe the analysis process. Boeije, (2002). Memos, codes, and codings increase as a result. As soon as more than one interview has been conducted the interviews are compared. (Boeije, 2002). Firstly, it is important to compare fragments from different interviews that the researcher has interpreted as dealing with the same theme and that have been given the same code (axial coding). Boeije (2002). For instance, which teachers had the same feelings towards the time commitment that made them leave the profession? In the research these ‘themes’ function as criteria for the systematic comparison of the interviews. By comparing it becomes evident that some interviews can be grouped together because they are similar with regard to certain criteria.

The aim of this step is to further develop the conceptualization of the subject. To this end, axial coding is used. This means searching for indicators and characteristics for each concept in order to define that concept. A second aim is to discover the combinations of codes which exist. This procedure clusters or a typology. Boeije (2002).

Instrumentation

The primary focus of this study was to find the reason(s) that Agriculture Teachers completely leave the profession. An interview protocol was developed with consultation of faculty researchers and informed by best practice. Saldonia (2011). The research protocol including guiding questions, interview script, recruitment letters, and duration of interview was all reviewed and approved by Auburn Institutional Review

Board (protocol #22-318 EX 2207). The approved list of guiding questions used for this research were:

1. What brought you to teaching ag? Why did you want to be an ag teacher?
2. Why did you choose where you taught?
3. What did you like the most about being an ag teacher?
4. What did you like the least about being an ag teacher?
5. What was your relationship with your teaching partner like?
 - a. Did that person make being an ag teacher easier?
6. What was your relationship with your counselor like?
7. What was your relationship with your principle like?
8. What was your relationship with your school board like?
9. What was your relationship with your community like?
10. What was your family's relationship with your school like?
11. Did you family like you being an ag teacher?
12. If we asked your family what you liked about being an ag teacher what would they say?
13. If we asked your family what you didn't like about being an ag teacher what would they say?
14. Did you have to travel?
 - a. Did you bring your family with you?
 - b. How much did you travel?
 - c. Was that your choice or the schools?

- d. Could you have increased or decreased the amount of travel without repercussions?
 - e. What was the community's expectation of travel?
15. Describe the culture of the school for me.
 16. Describe the culture of the town for me.
 17. How did the school fit in the town? Was it central, or not noticed?
 18. Where did the ag teacher sit in the eyes of the town? School?
 19. Tell me about the ag teachers that were there before you.
 20. How close was home to your last school?
 21. Tell me a little of your work history outside of teaching?
 22. What do you define as successful program?
 23. Was your ag program successful? Why or why not?
 24. Where you from a successful ag program?
 25. How would your school (principal, board, booster, kids, etc.) define a successful program?
 26. If you had to give one reason for leaving, what would it be?
 27. What would it have taken to make you stay?
 28. What would it take to make you go back?
 29. What do you miss the most about being an ag teacher?
 30. Are you still involved in ag education in some way?
 - a. If so, Why?

Who's voices are we going to hear?

This research is the sum of the responses of 23 former agriculture teachers in the state of Georgia. These individuals brought their own experiences and their own lives to this research and it's in the shared and unique experiences of these teaches that we find answers, or glimpses of reason in to why they left. What they are is in Table 1 but who they are will be seen through the findings of this research.

Table 1

Personal Demographics of Agriculture Education Teachers

		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Female	18	78.3
	Male	5	21.7
Age	Less than 30	5	21.7
	31-35	11	47.8
	36-40	7	30.4
Highest degree earned	Bachelor's	10	43.5
	Master's	9	39.1
	Education Specialist	4	17.4
	Doctorate	0	0
Years Taught	0-5	5	21.7
	6-10	13	56.5
	11-15	4	17.4
	16-20	1	4.3

Note. N = 24, Ethnicity was 100% Caucasian.

Lara was a 30-year-old female former teacher. She taught grades 9-12. She was in the classroom for 6 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in Ag

Ed. She was very “active” in FFA while in high school. She now has her own greenhouse business. She is married and is starting a family. She left Ag Ed teaching because she wanted to start a family.

Robert was a 29-year-old male former teacher. He taught grades 9-12. He was in the classroom for 7 years. He attended the University of Georgia for his BS in AG Ed. He completed his MS from Murray State, and his Ed.S. from West Georgia. He was in a very active FFA chapter in high school. He is now an assistant principle. He left Ag Ed teaching because he lost his passion for it, It became just a job.

Joann was a 40-year-old female former teacher. She taught in both middle school and high schools in her career. She was in the classroom for 18 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed. She now works in Extension. She left Ag Ed teaching because of the stress level and the overall educational system.

Julie was a 25-year-old female former teacher. She taught in two high schools. She was in the classroom for 3 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed. She was very active in FFA growing up showing livestock. She now works in a agriculture related business. She left Ag Ed teaching because of administrators and lack of discipline.

Anna was a 26-year-old female former teacher. She taught in two middle schools. She was in the classroom for 3 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., and her MS. She was active in her FFA chapter in high school. She now teaches at a college. She left Ag Ed teaching because of discipline problems.

Anne was a 32-year-old female former teacher. She taught at a high school. She was in the classroom for 7 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS. She was a very active member in FFA and showing livestock. She now teaches a different subject at the high school level. She left Ag Ed teaching to spend more time with her children.

Lisa was a 37-year-old female former teacher. She taught at high school. She was in the classroom for 14 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., followed by her MS and Ed.S. She was very active in FFA as she was a state officer and holds the FFA state degree. She is now a CTAE director. She left Ag Ed teaching to spend more time with family, and move into a professional upgrade with her new job.

Josh was a 38-year-old male former teacher. He taught in middle and high schools. He was in the classroom for 13 years. He attended the University of Georgia for his BS in AG Ed. He was in a very active FFA chapter in high school. He is now an education specialist for the state of Georgia. He left Ag Ed teaching because nothing was ever good enough at the school or state level.

Bo was a 39-year-old male former teacher. He taught at two high schools. He was in the classroom for 12 years. He attended the University of Georgia for his BS in AG Ed. He was active in his FFA chapter in high school. He is now the owner of his own agriculture business. He left Ag Ed teaching because of the stress level.

Sue was a 35-year-old female former teacher. She taught high school. She was in the classroom for 3 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed.

She was very active in her FFA chapter in high school. She now works for an agribusiness. She left Ag Ed teaching because her children were her priority.

Becky was a 39-year-old female former teacher. She taught middle and high school. She was in the classroom for 6 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., followed by her MS. She came from a very successful FFA chapter in high school. She now teaches a different subject at a middle school. She left Ag Ed teaching to spend more time with her children.

Sarah was a 32-year-old female former teacher. She taught middle and high school. She was in the classroom for 12 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed. She was active in her FFA chapter in high school. She now teaches a different subject at a high school. She now teaches a different subject at a middle school. She left Ag Ed teaching because of being on call 24/7, no time for herself.

Jessica was a 35-year-old female former teacher. She taught middle and high school. She was in the classroom for 10 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., followed by her MS at Troy State, & Ed.S. at Kennesaw State. She was active in her FFA chapter in high school. She now works with a community organization. She left Ag Ed teaching to spend more time with her family.

Hannah was a 32-year-old female former teacher. She taught at three high schools. She was in the classroom for 7 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., and her MS. She was a member of a FFA chapter in high school. She now works for extension. She left Ag Ed teaching because of the time commitment that it took away from her.

Donna was a 36-year-old female former teacher. She taught at high school. She was in the classroom for 5 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., and her MS. She was the secretary for her high school FFA chapter. She now works from home for a agribusiness. She left Ag Ed teaching because she was burned out.

Barbara was a 32-year-old female former teacher. She taught at two high schools. She was in the classroom for 8 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed., and her MS. She was a member in her FFA chapter in high school. She now teaches at a college. She left Ag Ed teaching because she was not challenged enough, there was no room for improving herself.

Bubba was a 35-year-old male former teacher. He taught at a high school. He was in the classroom for 10 years. He attended Clemson University for his BS in AG Ed., and his MS. He was a member in his FFA chapter in high school. He now owns his own agriculture greenhouse business. He left Ag Ed teaching because of the whole teaching environment of today.

Leann was a 33-year-old female former teacher. She taught middle and high school. She was in the classroom for 6 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed. She was a member of her FFA chapter in high school and showed livestock. She now runs a full-time cattle operation with her husband and kids. She left Ag Ed teaching because she wanted to spend more time with her family.

Linda was a 32-year-old female former teacher. She taught middle school. She was in the classroom for 10 years. She attended the University of Georgia at the ABAC

campus in Tifton for her BS in AG Ed., followed by completing her MS at Auburn University. She was an active member in her FFA chapter in high school. She is a stay at home mom now. She left Ag Ed teaching because she wanted to spend more time with her family.

Jane was a 34-year-old female former teacher. She taught at two high schools. She was in the classroom for 6 years. She attended the University of Georgia for her BS in AG Ed. She was not in FFA in high school. She is teaching a different subject at a high school now. She left Ag Ed teaching because of administration/superintendent.

Personal Statement and Lens

While each of these 23 past teachers give the words and experiences to this research, the voice we will hear most is my own. While I tried to remove all bias out of my work, Lincoln would tell us, in research as in life we construct a unique understanding based on our own life experiences.

I am a 46-year-old female Agriculture teacher, let me get that out of the way. When I started as an Agriculture Education teacher, I was proud beyond my dreams. I was excited to help students learn everything related to Agriculture. After the first year of teaching, I realized that as an Ag teacher I had students who were excited that there was rigor in the class, but some who just wanted an easy A grade. I struggled with this and as a new teacher thought I should ask the why's of how things were done. When I went to administration or mentors about this I received responses with far less concern than I could imagine. How could my career mean so little to the teaching profession in their eyes? I began to realize that I was nothing more to them than a maintenance

employee and my class should follow suite. Of course, I fought the issue some, as anyone who wanted to stand up for their program should. My CTAE director fought for me in times of need, but they also saw that it was running my life. I began to realize that the fight was not worth it. I simply lost my passion for trying to fight for a better program. I was doing too much for one person, I could barely keep the wheels turning.

As each passing year came and went, the more teachers I talked to, the more I realized this was a real problem. Why is everyone wanting to quit and do something else? We are like parents to some of these students and they need us. Throughout my first eight years of teaching, I realized that people leave because of the demands, stress, and feeling of no support from administrators at their school, time involved, and less time spent with their families.

The participants that I chose to interview had completely left the Agriculture Education profession. I felt that these participants would be more truthful in their reasoning for leaving the profession. They all displayed different emotions when I asked certain questions. I could read their body language and if a certain question touched a nerve in them, they would respond differently. They all gave me information that I expected and more of what I did not expect. I also lived through similar situations while being an Agriculture teacher and FFA advisor, I could relate to a lot of their experiences. I normally worked anywhere from 11 to 14 hour days and on FFA CDE contest days, 16 hours were not uncommon. Paperwork, livestock shows, greenhouse production, classroom learning, keeping a livestock facility running, community involvement, CDE contest, & traveling. Honestly, I could not do it all myself and I began to find out that I

was not the only one who was going through this as I first thought. The less concern for me on the administrator level always shocked me, if you were not winning, well you were not a good teacher. That to me just showed they had no idea what all we accomplished in the classroom and what relationships were built with these students. Nothing was ever good enough, and quite frankly, you get tired of trying.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to determine the reasons why agriculture education teachers left the classroom and more importantly what would have need to change to have them stay. To achieve this, objectives were developed.

1. To identify the factors that influenced former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia to enter the profession
2. Determine why former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia felt the need to leave the profession.
3. Determine the roll of administration and oversight played on the decision to leave.
4. Determine the roll SAE, FFA, and the Georgia Agriculture Education program of work played on the decision to leave.
5. Determine the rolls of parents and students played on teachers decision to leave.
6. Determine what former teachers believe would have needed to change for them to be able to stay or return to the classroom.

To achieve these objectives a qualitative research project was undertaken utilizing constant comparative methods.

In order to properly get answers from the interview process guiding questions were asked by the interviewer and all interviews were conducted on Zoom.

Objective one: To identify the factors that influenced former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia to enter the profession.

What brought you to teaching Agriculture and why did you want to be an Agriculture teacher? This question started the interviews positively and in an energetic manner. Most teachers had great experiences in their FFA programs in high school and wanted to pursue a career; teaching students about agriculture. Robert talked about how his Ag teacher in high school and he had a strong bond. “We were together a lot, spent a lot of time together, that resulted in me becoming a FFA state officer”. Bo stated that, “When I won my proficiency degree in high school, that is when I decided”. Becky talked about the deep impact her Ag teacher had on her in high school. “We had that connection, a deep relationship, so it made me learn a lot”. Hannah expressed her love for horses, and all animals. “I knew that was what I wanted to do once I found it”. Leann expressed that her Ag teacher had a passion for showing beef cattle as she did. “This made their job become a dream of mine”. Lara explained that “in high school her agriculture teachers were great and invested a lot of time into her”. She also said that “once she got into college she loved spending time with students helping out back home at her high school with FFA events”. Her Ag teachers “always pushed her to stick with the things that were hard”. Another interviewee, Leann explained that she “loved seeing the light bulb go off when I student finally understood what she was teaching”. She “loved the drive that she got from students”. Linda explained that, “she knew it was the perfect fit for her, as she grew up on a cattle farm and was involved in the middle and high school Ag programs”. She wanted to, “keep being a part of FFA and go into Agriculture education”. One former teacher, Lisa said that “in high school one of her friends asked her, who do you go ask a question about something”? She immediately

responded, “my ag teacher”, that’s when she told her you will probably impact a lot more lives by being an ag teacher. Julie explained that she “grew up showing animals and never gave anything much more thought than she just always wanted to be an ag teacher. It just seemed to always be the right fit”. All of the teachers who were interviewed had this passion for students in their eyes that they wanted filled.

Unfortunately, something along their endeavor changed for them.

Objective two: Determine why former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia felt the need to leave the profession.

The objective was aimed to determine what they liked the least about being an Agriculture Teacher? The responses to this question ranged from I missed my kids, to not being able to spend time with my family. Robert said, “The same thing I loved is also the thing I hated. I always wanted to do a great job with my students, and I always wanted to devote my time to them. But from a personal standpoint, I was dedicating a lot of my time to relationships with students and with contest and pushing as far as they can go. And my personal life kind of suffered for that. That was the downfall of my first marriage. I was gone all of the time, national convention, state convention, contests, getting home very late on weeknights. I was missing fundamental moments that were important to my family. That is something that I did not want to lose, was the time and loving connection with my own flesh and blood. Between that and some of the standards in the POW it was just too much”. Sue also expressed, “The personal demands on me were too much. I loved my job, and I loved my kids, but mostly when I got home, there was very little left of me for anybody else, and that was hard because I always felt like I

needed to give both teaching and FFA my very best effort, and to do that the way that I felt like it needed to be done required 100% of me mentally, physically, and emotionally”. Another former teacher Tina said, “The hours, the hoops you have to jump through, the paperwork, and the bureaucracy of the school systems today”. Lara expressed, “The weekends, late nights, would be like boom, boom, boom, all right on top of each other. Then I’m gone for the next six weekends, or I have to be gone for three or four nights next week, that really took a toll on my marriage”.

For some of the teachers the one thing that they did not like was having to deal with the state standards. Bo said, “Deadlines, award applications, proficiencies, we had four or five deadlines stacked into one month. On top of that SAE visits”. Becky said, “Just the stress level of it all, state standards can weigh heavy on you and just the ability to manage time and have time for everything that you need to get done. It did not bother me as much until I became a mother. And then you start thinking about all the time that you could have with your family that is now at school with other people’s kids. I was definitely tugged in too many directions at the end”.

Some teachers felt that they were playing a numbers game. Giving the check marks and the state what they wanted, so they could get their credit. Donna also said, “It was a numbers game, a numbers game you had to have. I think when Ag Ed said you have to have this amount of CDE’s done, you need to have this many SAE projects, and have this many applications complete and then they would take away your pay if you did not meet that. On top of all of that time, the amount of standards that you had to teach in

the classroom, you had to be stellar during the day, and you had to be stellar after school”.

Other teachers expressed their need for more compensation of their time. Joann said, “All of the extra stuff, I understand that there were extra parts of it, and that was fine, but it seemed like it was just getting to be more and more expected without necessarily the support for the compensation. And yeah, we’re always told it’s not about the money, but it is. Yes, I can love what I do, but if I’m only getting paid for 20 extra hours a month, and I’m putting in 80, I feel like that is a little bit of a rip off”. Wicks and Lindner determined that “research has shown that agricultural education professionals have perceived that they are not being fairly compensated” Wicks & Lindner (2003) (p.115).

The reasons from teachers about leaving the profession ranged from “only one”, to “just one”? Josh said, “I got tired of the headache and being continually told that I was not good enough. At both the state and local school systems, it’s constant. We need you to do more, I didn’t mind doing the work, there was not a lot of appreciation involved. We had students having successes here and there, but I got tired of, “hey you need to do this”. Especially when it was coming from administrators that had not been in the classroom for five plus years”. Several interviewees expressed that they have left because of discipline problems in the classroom. Anna said, “The discipline problems in my classes had to be addressed at home. And that’s just the battle that I knew I couldn’t win, especially at that age in their life. If you haven’t figured out how to be a decent human being at that age, I don’t know where you’re going to end up. I’ll pray for you

but I don't know". Julie said, "I don't know if it's more of parents' lack of discipline or administrator's lack of discipline, so we'll just call it a lack of discipline".

Many expressed the time commitment as being too much and needing to spend more time with their own families. Lara said, "I wanted to be a mom, I knew once I got to thinking about it, I did not see it, the career, being sustainable. I think it took me a while to realize that I was not married to teaching AG". Another quote from Sue said, "My reason for leaving was that I needed a work family balance and that my own children were my priority and that I needed to be able to give them the best of me and also be able to give my very best at a job. And I did not feel like at that point in my life that I could do both".

Most expressed stress and burnout as their main reason for leaving the profession. Donna said, "I was burned out. It is a twelve-month gig with students. It doesn't stop. I don't have any idea how these mama's do it, taking their children along with them to contests. I had to change because of the requirements that are taxed on your personal life". While Joann said, "The stress level. The expectation of everything. With that side of it, coupled with the education system in general, it gets to be too much to me. I felt like we were constantly being asked to do more or change things for all of this stuff, but we weren't necessarily given the support or the materials or the training that we needed to do it. So, it was, "hey we need you to do this, good luck".

One interviewee simply stated his loss and drive to attack the job every day. Robert said, "Bad as it sounds, I lost my passion for it. I did not feel like I would be doing the kids justice anymore. It became a job instead of a career that I loved. I just did

not have the drive that I used to. I didn't want to spend every waking moment with my students and everything focused on FFA. The initial spark that I had left".

One former teacher Leann expressed to me, "When I told my husband that you were interviewing about Ag teacher longevity, he simply said, "You cannot have a family, and have family time with that job". He would come to all of the cattle shows we attended, helped out, but in the end we were always gone, there was never enough time for our little family". Boleman et al. (2004) found parents suggested their children's life skills are developed through participation in livestock projects. Heavner et al. (2011) found significant correlations between the number of years students had livestock projects and their parent's perception of their child's development in decision making, knowledge of the livestock industry, development or oral communication skills, and their development of self-discipline. Huston (2020)

Objective three: Determine the roll SAE, FFA, and the Georgia Agriculture Education program of work played on the decision to leave.

When asked how much they traveled and how the POW requirements affected them the answers ranged from, "I completed my POW requirements", "I did a few more than the POW required", Sarah said, "I did not get any pay for the 30 extra Saturdays that I worked with my students at Livestock shows. "We have the extended day, extended year contract. Count out ten Saturdays or ten days outside of the normal school year beyond the summer. When I counted up all of my time, I gave an additional thirty Saturday's to my work". I asked the question, "how often were you gone"? Julie responded, "God. I was gone all of February, all of October, during normal months I

traveled five or six times a month more than half an hour away from the school”. Jane talked about how the school fought her on her travel POW requirements. “They did not want me to be gone at all, I explained to them that I had a POW and that it was required for my program. They fought me on it, and that is why I had to leave”. Linda explained that “in the beginning of the year, I was only given six days of travel. I had to meet with my CTAE director and administrators to make them understand that there would be more days taken than that. This caused issues from there on out until I left”. Barbara expressed that the Ag Ed team at the time made things very hard on her. “I was trying to accomplish everything and there was no help from them, no understanding. It was all male and part of the good ol’ boy system. I felt I had no other choice but to leave, because there was no way that I could fight them”.

Some former teachers talked about their time during the summers, along with the rest of the travel for the year. Robert said, “the travel got to be more and more every year. No one wants to be gone every weekend away from home and their family”. Anne expressed, “From December to March I traveled two or three weekends a month, stayed overnight, and then at least once a month during the year I would have to stay overnight. Of course, when you have camp in the summer, you’ve got five days gone there. I can’t effectively do my job and carry my own children everywhere. I would have to bring them when my husband could not be home from his job to take care of them, this made things even more difficult”.

Jessica stated concern about there being no flexibility in the POW. “The fact that there was not a lot of flexibility. You’re staying late every single day. You’re working

with kids all the time, you're overworking your hours because you can only count one hour a day. So, if you have a three hour meeting, kids stay after school, you're there until seven or eight at night. You're really only counting 1 hour. I missed a lot of things with my family because of those responsibilities". Sue talked a lot about new teachers having to meet the same standards as a 10 year veteran teacher. "This should not be like that, you should not be held to the same standards as a veteran teacher. It is not fair to someone starting out and even though they tell you at the high school level you have three years to have a student prepared to accomplish a FFA state degree, there are many other things that you are trying to learn, how to juggle everything. I've never understood how they could not have more leniency with that".

Objective four: Determine the roll of administration and oversite played on the decision to leave.

The question was asked what their relationship was like with their principle. The responses to this question ranged from he was supportive, he knew nothing about the Ag program, to he and I did not get along. According to Doss & Rayfield relationships with administrators could be an area of improvement to help with the ongoing teacher attrition problem Doss et. al., (2021). Linda explained, "Dealing with the students, the lack of support from my administration that my class was not important, word gets back to the students and they don't take the class seriously. There was such a lack of seriousness, and the feeling of this class doesn't count. That's probably what I came home crying the most about". Robert said, "The principal told me that he did not want an Ag program, that they gave him one, and I needed to be the least inconvenienced person

at his school system”. Another former teacher, Barbara stated, “My principal told me that I really shouldn’t have high expectations of my classes turning in any work, and I should accept late work on time because my class wasn’t an academic class, and he didn’t want those kind of expectations in an Ag class”. Jane said, “My principal told me you just need to make sure that everything looks good on the outside and on paper, but it doesn’t really matter what’s actually going on in the classroom”. He actually told her that he was only planning to be there for four years and then move on”. Linda talked about how she had serious discipline issues in her classes. “There was no support from administration as they did not care about discipline issues or if the students passed”. Another woman described, “Another factor of leaving was the administration, I just feel like I wasn’t supported when it came to discipline. It was kind of like you’ve got to deal with your own stuff, and I didn’t have any help, and I felt like there was always a culture that I wasn’t able to change...And inside too, incidents in the shop, and discipline issues that I did not enjoy dealing with”. Solomonson, et. al., (2019). Bubba expressed that his administration simply, “doesn’t know what we do or why we do it”. I tried to explain to them and help them understand and they just did not care”. Sarah explained that “neither of her principals knew what the three ring model was. That is such a vital part of Ag Ed and I tried to explain it to them”. Barbara talked about a different aspect of what she went through teaching. “I was caught up in a good ol’ boy system where my teaching partner who was a male did nothing but let the kids play video games in class. Everything I did was by the book and the correct way and he would downplay me to the students. When I spoke to administration about it, they simply ignored me. That is when

I knew it was time to go”. Determining why some administrators view agriculture education components negatively could also be beneficial to the profession to curb any negative views on agriculture education programs that would inadvertently lead to lower program support and student achievement Doss et. al., (2021).

Objective five: Determine the rolls of parents and students played on teachers decision to leave.

Sarah described how she would have phone calls all of the time late at night from upset livestock parents about simple things that she could do nothing about. “That is definitely not missed”. “A lot of people don’t understand what follows us everywhere as ag teachers. You really never get away from it”. The parents sometimes were handled by administration in different situations at different schools, but overall the administrators wanted the ag teacher to handle any conflicts. Bubba said that “his principal told him to handle things the way he wanted them to be handled, but once the parent went and complained to the principal, he did not back his decision”. Julie expressed that the parents of students with discipline problems gave her trouble. “I would call them and explain issues I was having with their child in my class and they would throw everything back on me. Sometimes they would not believe what I was telling them”. Anne traveled a lot with students’ beef cows to shows. She said, “Most of the time the parents did not help with anything. It was all me and my students with going non-stop for like nine weekends in a row”.

Objective six: Determine what former teachers believe would have needed to change for them to be able to stay or return to the classroom.

Joann expressed that it would take a “complete overhaul, & major changes in the education system.” “I left because of the bureaucracy, there is so much of it, you can’t just teach anymore”. Julie explained that “nothing could make me stay or go back after this past year”. Anna said, “the discipline problems, I will not go back the way it is now”. Anne said that she would think about returning to ag teaching, “if my kids get older and they offer more money and there is less time required away from home”. Lisa expressed, “if my children were older and I was not hounded by every little thing”. Josh said that “I would go back if I knew I was not going to be micro managed by my principal. I know what I’m doing, I don’t need that”. Becky said that, “I would probably go back if the state standards were less demanding”. Donna talked about how she had so many preps for her classes every week. “If I only had one or two preps for the whole week, I would go back. But have six is just too much with everything else that you are required to do for the school and the FFA”. Bubba said, “I would not go back. The lack of administration, the bureaucracy of the school systems, there is no way”. Leann expressed something that I think is sad that a lot of teachers probably face. “A lot would have to change, especially in the classroom. I don’t think I will keep my teaching certificate active, no need to”. Jane said, “I’m not going back, I love teaching a different subject and the time I get to spend with my family is worth it”.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

There have been numerous studies done on why Agriculture Teachers leave the profession. Not many have come with conclusions of hard evidence as to why Agriculture Teacher retainment is so hard to achieve. The problems seem to lie within the fact that there is not enough time to spread around between the school, paperwork, students, and families. If there was a happy medium that everyone could follow there would be much happier teachers and families. If qualitative methods were employed at a point in time immediately after the decision to leave was made, a researcher may be able to paint a clearer picture of the “true” reasons why the teacher is leaving the profession. Walker et. al., (2004). The profession is great and everyone who was interviewed expressed their love for the students, but at the same time they were saddened by events in their family life that were missed due to a contest or meeting they had to attend. Agriculture Education teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates. The pressure of completing POW requirements, satisfying school requirements, and dealing with complex discipline issues in the classroom are having a detriment effect to the Ag teaching profession. Agriculture teachers simply cannot raise their children when they are spending almost all of their time at the school with students. The feeling of not being good enough for their jobs, feeling that they don’t spend enough time with students practicing for contests because they are ready to get home to their own families puts a large feeling of neglect on them from both sides of the spectrum.

Summary of Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that cause the Agriculture Education teacher to leave the profession. Six objectives were addressed in this research.

1. To identify the factors that influenced former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia to enter the profession.
2. Determine why former Agriculture Education teachers in Georgia felt the need to leave the profession.
3. Determine the roll of administration and oversight played on the decision to leave.
4. Determine the roll SAE, FFA, and the Georgia Agriculture Education program of work played on the decision to leave.
5. Determine the rolls of parents and students played on teachers decision to leave.
6. Determine what former teachers believe would have needed to change for them to be able to stay or return to the classroom.

Objective Level Conclusions, Implications & Recommendations

Objective One Conclusions

Teachers that were interviewed were asked the question, “what made you become an ag teacher”? The responses ranged from I was involved in my high school FFA program, I was involved in showing livestock, I had a great mentor for an ag teacher, to I was not involved in my high school FFA. Most wanted to be someone that students could connect with. Almost all of the teachers expressed a desire to teach and see the light bulb go off when the student got something. Leann explained that she

“missed the connection she had with the kids”. She always wanted to become the person that her ag teacher was to her in high school. They were heavily involved in cattle and it was what I loved too, so we got along well and he was a person that I looked up to.

Objective One Implications

Becoming an agriculture teacher takes a lot of time commitment. Sometimes the only rewards are for a student to express how much it means to them that you care, or that you took the time when you did not have to with them. What was difficult for all of these teachers was knowing that they were leaving some students who actually did need them. “That was the hard part”, Sue expressed. “I knew that they needed all of me and I wanted to give them 100% of me. But I knew that I could not do that for them and me give 100% at home to my own family. You have to decide what is more important”. Another teacher talked about how it was hard to leave her students. “Even though most days were not good because of discipline issues, I knew some of the kids were enjoying the class and learning. It was hard to leave them after seeing them grow over the years”.

Objective One Recommendations

All of the teachers started out with the excitement, the drive, the passion for teaching agriculture to students. Depending on where they go to teach, how much the administrators, CTAE directors, and counselors know about their ag programs really makes a difference. I interviewed teachers who went to teach at schools who were great, understanding and would work with the ag teacher. I also interviewed teachers who lost their passion for teaching, their ambition to even be in a classroom. Some left to pursue personal business endeavors, others to teach another subject, or work in a different agri-

business related field. I believe changes need to be made across the schools in the views of the programs, training for administrators, changes in the standards on the state level. We are losing teachers every year who are passionate about going into the agriculture education field. Not only that, but we are encouraging the younger generation that we teach to become ag teachers. What does it say about us if we don't stay in the careers that we are promoting?

Objective Two Conclusions

Objective two asked about why they felt the need to leave the Agriculture teaching profession. The highest percentage reported was 40.9% with family being the reason. Followed by stress and burnout with 18.1%. Discipline having 91%, along with lost passion, cannot grow as an Ag teacher, time commitment, and administration. 34.8% reported having difficulty meeting the state standards along with needing flexibility in the POW. Family issues resulted in 30.4%, as many missed seeing their family during the week and weekends. 13% reported having discipline issues that were never supported by administration. While 13% reported having direct administrative issues with principles and or administration. 8.7% reported that the paperwork was just too much. There has been a lot of growth in women joining in the Agriculture Education field over the past 30 years. The population of this study had 78% female compared to 21% male. This could be representative of the makeup of those leaving the classroom, and if true this means women are disproportionately leaving teaching. Many respondents said that part of why they left was related to not being able to spend time with their families held the most cause followed by stress and burnout. Common Stressors of

teachers, characteristics of psychological burnout, and the lack of a work-life balance were also variables within the Personal Factors construct. Lambert et al., (2006) described the teaching profession as, “Emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating” (p. 105). Does this problem affect women more than men? Is society still harder on working mothers than working fathers related to their time away from family?

Objective Two Implications

The support from the interviews shows that most teachers felt the need to leave the profession due to the overwhelming pressure of completing the POW standards. According to Hannah, “The POW needs attention, the time commitment needs to be updated with what time the teachers actually put into their work. Yes, we meet our standards but almost all of us go way over the time requirements, and there is no credit given for it, especially if you have a livestock program. This is when teachers realize they are not being paid for it all, and get burned out and leave. There definitely needs to be more flexibility in the POW”. As the former teachers discussed these expectations, many disclosed the additional time needed to complete these activities were at the expense of their personal lives. The hours put in as an agriculture teacher forced these former teachers to question the viability of their current position and reevaluate their career choice. The excessive hours and responsibilities beyond the school day have been listed as a prevalent variable in an agriculture teachers’ struggle to attain a work-life balance Hainline et. al., (2015); Lambert et. al., (2011); Murray et. al., (2011); Sorensen et al. (2016); Torres et al. (2016); Torres et al., (2008) Interestingly, in our study this factor was deemed enormously influential by both novice and experienced teachers.

However, those individuals with young families indicated the excessive hours worked were the most influential factor in their decision to leave, and that they just wanted their time back. Solomonson et. al., (2019). Furthermore, researchers found a predictive relationship between teachers' perceptions of increased workload that interferes with family life and the probability of leaving the profession of teaching Sorenson et. al., (2016). Researchers reported that 81% of all teachers indicate their job must allow adequate time for family obligations in order for them to remain in the profession Farkas et al., (2000); however, due to an increased workload, their family time often suffers. Quite simply, many teachers choose to leave the profession due to family commitments Tippens et al., (2013).

Every program has its challenges, and some have it easier than others. Unfortunately, there are factors beyond an advisor's reach sometimes that cannot be resolved. Such as a principle not approving a fundraiser, a trip, or a social. Anything that the students want to do that is school appropriate and the advisor sends it to the principal for approval, if he denies that one and the next one, this can cause a program to never grow and be successful. At the end of the day who wants to keep trying if everything gets shut down that the students want to do within school boundaries? I know my FFA members used to have some great school appropriate ideas and when I would send them in to be approved, they would be denied. Before organizational changes take place, the anticipated sensitive factors for employees need to be identified and analyzed. By identifying and analyzing these factors, administrators will have an understanding, of what their employees want from their work. Understanding what their employees want

from work can help administrators develop in-service trainings that will meet the needs of their employees, thus keeping job satisfaction at a maximum while simultaneously reducing job dissatisfaction Scott et. al., (2005). Many teachers are simply unhappy in their jobs as there is no job satisfaction. Satisfaction can be described as approval, pleasure, happiness, fulfillment, contentment, agreement, or liking. All of these terms describe feelings that are formulated about the work environment that influences one's perceptions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction Wood, (1973). Kelly defined satisfaction as the perceived difference between accomplishments and the reward that the individual received for those accomplishments (1980). Crucial issues of teacher attraction and retention face the field of agriculture education today. The overarching premise of many of these issues may be directly related to levels of job satisfaction Delnero et. al., (2000).

Objective Two Recommendations

A board outside of an agriculture teacher position should be made and be able to suggest changes to be voted on at GVATA. This should not be made up of Agriculture Education employees or GVATA members. One former male teacher described how in hindsight, his life in the corporate world is much more flexible than when he was a teacher, allowing him to fit life with his family and personal needs within his workday if needed. Solomonson et. al., (2019). N=(23) teachers suggested a complete overhaul of the state's mentoring program, for both the novice and mid-career agriculture educators. The former teachers also recommended increasing professional development opportunities on achieving a work-life balance with a focus on prioritization and time management strategies. Specifically, one teacher disclosed the importance of

differentiating professional development for various career stages, and to cater to the personal and professional needs of subgroups. Moreover, additional training and professional development for provisionally-licensed teachers were suggested to assist in making the transition into teaching secondary agricultural education. Full-disclosure of the job responsibilities to provisional teachers was also recommended to provide a more realistic view of the job they were taking on. Solomonson et. al., (2019). Some teachers expressed their concern with a new beginning teacher being held to the same standards as a veteran teacher. We as a profession, should not be encouraging novice teachers to fill anyone's "shoes", but for novice teachers to build their programs slowly so that they can achieve a more sustainable balance and allow for prioritizing of both professional and personal needs and goals. Solomonson et. al., (2019). Through anecdotal evidence obtained via informal conversations, a common practice of teacher education programs is to encourage their preservice teachers only to observe the more experienced and outstanding teachers in the field. This over-exposure to excellent and outstanding experienced teachers seems to be contributing to a highly unrealistic, idealized version of what a novice teacher will look like in the classroom and be able to accomplish as an FFA advisor. According to the literature, these unrealized expectations may lead to symptoms of depression Reynolds et. al., (2010) throughout a career, which may contribute to novice teachers leaving the profession. We recommend that future teachers observe younger, less experienced teachers, in addition to experienced teachers, so that preservice teachers can see real-life examples of novice teachers. This exposure to teachers who do not make everything appear effortless and have occasional struggles

will hopefully help the preservice teachers build a more realistic vision and expectations for who they will be as beginning teachers. Solomonson et. al., (2019).

Agriculture Education will continue to face teachers leaving the profession without having a system in place to provide flexibility between the working parent and their time spent with family. When you are one person trying to run a program efficiently, and be a parent at home, time is too thin, there are not enough hours in the day. Consequently, it is reasonable to believe many teachers experience high levels of psychological, health, and family stress that conflict with their responsibilities as a school-based agriculture teacher. Solomonson et. al., (2018). One man described the overwhelming stress he experienced due to these expectations. He indicated, “It’s not just the overall mental drain of never leaving the job. You’re always doing something.” Solomonson et. al., (2019). There was pressure to get proficiency awards, and do well at judging contests, and those types of things. Nothing directly, but it just... You know, expectations. Get stuff in the paper. Those kinds of things.” Solomonson et. al., (2019). Analysis revealed themes stemming from unrealized expectations and the belief that being an excellent agriculture teacher is incompatible with a personal life that is satisfying. Several former teachers discussed the pressure they felt to do more outside of the classroom and typical instructional day. Solomonson et. al., (2019). Jones-Carey (2016) suggested the, “Dramatic increase in those leaving the profession with eight to twelve years of experience should be sounding a siren” (p.65). Researchers and practitioners agree that in addition to investigating novice teachers, the profession should

begin examining specific job satisfaction factors related to mid-career teacher attrition Doan et. al., (2009); Graham et. al., (2014); Hartsel, (2016); Tye et. al., (2002).

Objective Three Conclusions

Principals can make some teachers feel like they are not worthy with what they teach, or make them feel like their program is great. When a teacher is told that their program is pretty much a dumping ground, babysitting class, that can hurt the teacher professionally and emotionally. Teachers also reported frustrations with their administration, school policy, and lack of autonomy as important reasons to leave the profession Sutchter et al., (2016). I for one have experienced very rude principals who had no idea how much work, time, and commitment I had in growing my program. For them to act as if I did not matter, because of their ignorance in everything I could teach and do affected me. “The most significant workplace conditions associated with teacher attrition are teachers’ perceptions of their principal, collegial relationships, and school culture” Sutchter et al., (2016), (p.51). Students grew and learned in my classes and now years later, I know I had a positive impact on their lives because they stay in touch with me and have careers in agriculture businesses.

Objective Three Implications

We recommend that state agriculture education policymakers and other leaders in the profession be cognizant of the additional expectations and pressures they place on teachers. Modification of essential deadlines and consolidation of events should also be considered to reduce the number of events and activities outside of the typical school day, which will also reduce travel time and preparation for travel. Solomonson et. al.,

(2019). Most administrators don't realize the time it takes in preparing for a trip, the paperwork, the approvals, going back and asking why if something is not approved, when you have to do it to satisfy your POW requirements. Then you have the actual travel time, depending on where the contest is at, how long will it take you to get home after it is over. When it is late, you have to stop and get the students something to eat, that adds another hour to the trip. I am not over exaggerating when I tell you that a lot of teachers don't get back to schools sometimes until after 11pm at night on a week night. Then you have to make sure all of the students are picked up by their parents before you can go home. Then you are back to work at 7am the next day. This takes a big toll on the ag teacher and just adds more to the list of reasons they do not stay in the profession. Modification of essential deadlines and consolidation of events should also be considered to reduce the number of events and activities outside of the typical school day, which will also reduce travel time and preparation for travel. Solomonson et. al., (2019).

Principals often say that they love the students so much that is why they wanted to be an administrator. I believe most just wanted the position, the title, & the higher pay. There are some that are probably genuine in wanting to be a principal. But in my experience, and almost all of the past teachers that I interviewed, they had a problem of some sort with their principals, or assistant principals. Mostly because the principal simply did not know what an agriculture program consisted of. So, instead of learning and contributing to the betterment of the program, it is easier for them to ignore the program, and have a class to route all of the trouble kids to go into. Having support and

backing from a principal is very important. The interviews I conducted showed that there were some who left simply because their principal did not back them on discipline issues. Hannah stated, “He simply took all of the ambition and excitement I had for teaching and killed it, just ruined my drive to teach and want to grow. There simply was no way that I could grow as a teacher there”.

Objective Three Recommendations

There should be classes recommended for administrators, counselors, and CTAE directors during the summers to help them understand what the agriculture teacher does on a daily and yearly basis. Most teachers have eleven or twelve month contracts; the teachers who have ten month contracts, they all work over the hours that are required. Along with them not knowing what the ag teacher does, one simply cannot do their job when they are constantly fighting discipline issues. Once the ag teacher confronts the issues of discipline, and gets no help from administration several times they stop asking for help. One man noted a desire for a stronger support within his school. He directly stated that his administration “wouldn’t follow through with anything” and would often cave when confronted by parents. Solomonson et. al., (2019). The teachers interviewed that had problems with their principals talked about these situations. Linda expressed several times during her interview that “administration did not care about the discipline issues I had in my class”. Dealing with administration and the lack of administrator support are commonly identified reasons teachers choose to leave the profession Kelsey, (2006); Lemons et al., (2015); Rice, LaVergne, & Gartin, (2011); Walker et al., (2004).

Objective Four Conclusions

The support from the interviews shows that most teachers felt the need to leave the profession due to the overwhelming pressure of completing the POW standards. According to Hannah, “The POW needs attention, the time commitment needs to be updated with what time the teachers actually put into their work. Yes, we meet our standards but almost all of us go way over the time requirements, and there is no credit given for it, especially if you have a livestock program. One SAE activity frequently conducted by teachers is attending livestock shows with their students to exhibit their SAEs Huston, (2020). This is when teachers realize they are not being paid for it all, and get burned out and leave. There definitely needs to be more flexibility in the POW”. There has been a lot of growth in women joining in the Agriculture Education field over the past 30 years. The population of this study had 78% female compared to 21% male. This could be representative of the makeup of those leaving the classroom, and if true this means women are disproportionately leaving teaching. Many respondents said that part of why they left was related to not being able to spend time with their families held the most cause followed by stress and burnout. Does this hit problem hit women more than men? Is society still harder on working mothers than working fathers related to their time away from family?

The extra time spent with completing these standards throughout the year takes a toll on their family time. Some past teachers expressed that was the reason that they left the profession. Some expressed that they thought about their career choice or even knew teachers that made a career change once they took part in student teaching. Jane said, “After student teaching my friend decided to get her masters and go into another Ag

related field. She said there was no way that she could be gone almost every night of the week and weekends too. She barely made it through her student teaching experience”.

The teachers love and care for their students and do what is asked and beyond. They should be equally compensated for it and there should be more flexibility on the POW to maybe swap out standards. One key finding in this study is that many mid-career agriculture teachers value their time above compensation. While they acknowledge the importance of being adequately compensated for their time and effort, they indicated they value their time more at this stage of their career. The literature acknowledges compensation as a leading attrition factor Boone et. al., (2009); Ingersoll et. al., (2003); Lemons et al., Sutchter et al., (2016); Warnick et al., (2010), but that may not be the only factor for those in the middle part of their career.

Objective Four Implications

Family time is very important as it should be. Having a job that takes away special times in a family leaves a void that cannot be re lived. Most teachers do leave the profession because they are tired of not getting to see their family, or they know that starting a family with the career is not a viable option. Some have left because they knew they would not be able to make it work. If being an Ag teacher was a 7am to 3pm job every day, most probably would have stayed in the career. Once you factor in the late nights, children going to bed early, teachers go to work before their children get up, they never get to see them during the week. Now add in the weekend duties, that would definitely cause me to leave the profession too. Every teacher expressed concern with the POW. Many used the term, “flexibility” when the interview turned to the travel

question. Most at first responded with, “well we had to, because of our POW requirements”. Followed by most saying that they did not hold any students back from contest, that wanted to do more. The teachers love and care for their students and do what is asked and beyond. They should be equally compensated for it and there should be more flexibility on the POW to maybe swap out standards. One key finding in this study is that many mid-career agriculture teachers value their time above compensation. While they acknowledge the importance of being adequately compensated for their time and effort, they indicated they value their time more at this stage of their career. The literature acknowledges compensation as a leading attrition factor Boone et. al., (2009); Ingersoll et. al., (2003); Lemons et al., Sutchter et al., (2016); Warnick et al., (2010), but that may not be the only factor for those in the middle part of their career.

The agriculture teacher wears many hats throughout the day, weeknights, and on weekends. When it comes to traveling and how much they have to travel, it all depends on their program, how it is set up and their program needs. If a program does not have a livestock program, there may be less time and travel on the Ag teacher, where as the one that has the livestock program may not have a greenhouse to run, so as you can see depending on where you teach at, each program is different. Some programs have both livestock and greenhouse plant production, as the one system that I taught in. When you factor in livestock shows, making sure animals are taken care of every day, seven days a week, you travel a lot. Plants need to be watered on holidays, weekends, etc. You are constantly traveling to and from the school and to practices, agriculture community

meetings during the week, etc. Once you add all of that to the POW travel requirements, you are on the go all of the time.

Objective Four Recommendation

There should be changes made in the POW that will decrease the travel brought on teachers and the late nights spent with students during the week traveling. Teachers that were interviewed all stated that they did the POW requirements while others said they did more than was required because students were interested in different contests, as this resulted into traveling to more contests. Add in the livestock students who are showing animals, and the fact the POW does not count any of the livestock showing to complete any standards. This is where the teachers encounter a problem. None of them want to tell students no, and I feel the same way. On the other side of the equation, it is not right for a teacher to go above and beyond and not be compensated for it. Even if it is just the ability to swap out a show that you spend all day with your students at in place of a contest. Maybe the FFA does not consider showing livestock as something that can be counted for? Maybe it is a numbers game and that is why we have to attend so many contests, etc.? Satisfying the FFA requirements from the state, so the state of Georgia meets their requirements?

Objective Five Conclusion

The fact that teachers are faced with such bad discipline issues in schools and are leaving because of it should scare everyone. Society has allowed bad behavior to become the norm and it has followed into the classroom and teachers are leaving because of it. Some of the teachers I interviewed expressed some concern with discipline

issues while other left the profession because of it. I have dealt with discipline issues as many other teachers have, but I never thought it would be bad enough to leave your career over it. The interview with Barbara put things into a whole new perspective. She had a teaching partner and he would talk her down in front of students and once they realized that he was sort of over her in a way, she had no control over her class. The students would make comments like, “he doesn’t make us do any of this”. While she was teaching the way things should be done, but was constantly having to justify herself to her class as to why she was teaching and not letting them play video games. It is hard enough to keep a class on task much less having a co teacher go against you.

Objective Five Implication

Julie expressed, “there is no way I would go back. Not as long as the students act the way that they do in the classroom”. Barbara stated that “as long as they have no home training any better than what I have seen, I will not be going back. It is sad when the parents can’t see when their child has done wrong”. Linda responded with “discipline is why I left the classroom after 10 years. I don’t think it will ever change enough for me to go back”. We are losing great experienced teachers at alarming rates and society has become complacent with this. Some schools have a process where the teacher has to call the parents of the student with discipline issues before turning it into an administrator. This places one more thing on the teacher to do, one more let down if something doesn’t get resolved with the student. One more task the teacher has to face every day knowing that a particular student will still be in the class causing disruptions and problems.

Objective Five Recommendation

Teachers should have more support when it comes to discipline in the classroom. Too many teachers are faced with unruly children that hinder the lessons that are being taught. This results in classroom interruptions, wasted instructional time, and more work on the teacher. Complicated with this is an administrator that may not want to be bothered by any discipline issues and even more pressure is put on the teacher to try and handle it with a parent phone call. The interviews proved that this is happening in the classroom and the teacher is faced with parents who are less than concerned about their student.

Objective Six Conclusion

Teachers that were interviewed expressed their concerns with what should happen for them to think about coming back to the agriculture teacher profession. Many of these teachers were well beyond five years invested in their agriculture teaching career. I could almost see a remorse when some of them were asked this question, “what would it take to make you go back”? They all wanted to be there for the kids, but the politics of the job, they just could not deal with it anymore. A few expressed that they would never go back, but most seemed to actually want to.

Objective Six Implication

Standards, the word that every agriculture teacher knows that if they don't satisfy the standards, they will not keep their current pay as it will be cut. This adds pressure on the teacher to do all that you are required to do, and in many cases more because of student interest. Should the teacher not do more when they have student interest? I don't think that is the answer, as any teacher who cares will help students who are interested. The

interview responses to the question, “what would it take to make you stay or go back” ranged from “I’m not going back”, to “if some things changed I would go back”. Becky responded with, “If my kids were older and the state standards were less demanding, I would consider it”.

Objective Six Recommendation

There should be changes made in the amount of time that teachers have to spend away from their home life. I can only imagine how the revolving door could stop and a young teacher could plan on retiring from the career that they started out feeling so passionate about. What things should change, this is the burning question. I believe standards that have to be met should be allowed for swapping out when needed.

Overall conclusions

Overall recommendations for state staff and faculty

The following quotes are from my interviews concerning the demands for the standards to be met by the teachers. The quotes reflect the concerns of meeting the POW standards to be completed by the teacher every year. Robert said, “Some of the state standards were just too much”. Bo said, “Deadlines, award applications, proficiencies, we had four or five deadlines stacked into one month, on top of that SAE visits”. The contests are sometimes bulked together to have multiple contest competed in one day. Becky said, “Just the stress level of it all, state standards can weigh heavy on you and just the ability to manage time and have time for everything that you need to get done. Some teachers expressed concerns with playing the numbers game of giving the state what they wanted in order for the state to meet their requirements. Donna also said, “It

was a numbers game, a numbers game you had to have. I think when Ag Ed said you have to have this amount of CDE's done, you need to have this many SAE projects, and have this many applications complete and then they would take away your pay if you did not meet that. Joanne said, "Yes, I can love what I do, but if I'm only getting paid for 20 extra hours a month, and I'm putting in 80, I feel like that is a little bit of a rip off".

These concerns from past agriculture teachers touch on changes that need to be made in the POW. Overall recommendations would be to have a board outside of Ag Ed teachers that are active in agriculture businesses to hear from past teachers about why they left. This would help the members understand why there are so many ag teachers leaving and help propose changes that could help the ag teacher juggle and maintain all that is required of them. The possibility of other minds from the agriculture corporate field could see options for changes that would suffice the requirements of the POW.

Overall recommendations for practicing teachers and new/preservice teachers

New teachers dive into agriculture teaching with a passion for agriculture. A passion to teach the younger generation everything about agriculture. Sue explained that "new teachers should not be held to the same requirements as a veteran teacher. They soon realize that there is a lot more to this than expected. There is just too much to learn on the day to day operations of being a teacher on top of the FFA and POW requirements". Meeting the POW requirements, satisfying all of the school requirements, practicing for CDE's and scheduling travel for all of the contests is very taxing on a new teacher. Soon enough they start to realize, what if I can't handle all of this? Barbara explained that

“after year three and starting at a different school I thought it would get easier, but it did not. I found myself feeling like I could barely stay on top of the paperwork, much less the classroom discipline and contest that had to be done”. Joanne taught for 18 years and she expressed, “every year it became more and more work, even as long as I had been teaching, it was still very stressful. I finally just decided it was not worth it anymore”.

Most new teachers will be assigned a mentor on the school level. Sometimes this may be beneficial, but when I started they paired me up with the head football coach. Needless to say, that decision was useless. I know the feeling of being left all alone and feeling that you cannot do it all by yourself. Recommendations for all new and preservice teachers would be to have an established teacher with them in the classroom for their first year of teaching. Not someone on call or in a different county, but someone in the same classroom with you every day. There are situations and circumstances that can only be handled in person as they unfold. This could help get the new teacher started and resolve problems as they happen and not as they pile up. Without the established teacher being in the classroom with the new teacher, they would be handling their own (separate) ag programs, and it would be a lot more efficient if they were tackling the same program together while the new ag teacher was receiving valuable training & learning. The Agriculture Education teacher profession graduates many graduates every year now from the University of Georgia and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. There are more than enough new teachers to be placed with experienced agriculture teachers for a whole year before they are placed in jobs at different schools of their own. The problem I foresee with this is having adequate pay for these new teachers at these

schools they would be paired up with established teachers. When I went through student teaching the spring semester of my last year in college, we were not paid. I can imagine how difficult it would be for a new teacher to go a whole year of learning with no pay. Something would definitely have to be done for compensation for these new teachers. Some schools may be open to the idea of adding a second teacher, and actual hire them for a year. This is a possibility of a recommendation that I believe could help with teacher retention.

Recommendations for Further study

Many of the teachers that were interviewed expressed great concern with missing family time. Teachers were asked what would have made them stay in the career? According to Hannah, “The POW needs attention, the time commitment needs to be updated with what time the teachers actually put into their work. Yes, we meet our standards but almost all of us go way over the time requirements, and there is no credit given for it, especially if you have a livestock program. I feel that if changes were made to incorporate more time off for the Agriculture teacher, they would be more open to staying in the career. One teacher explained that her kids would be in the bed when she would get home and not be up the following morning when she would leave for work. She would go four days at a time without getting to see her kids. This is also a big reason why we are losing Agriculture teachers. I feel that teachers would stay in the profession and deal with school administrator problems & class discipline if they knew they would have more family time.

More research should be done on how much school administrators & counselors actually know about what the Agriculture teacher does. I feel that without educating all of them; not just the administrators & counselors in counties that have strong and supportive Agriculture programs, maybe that would help more teachers stay in the profession. An administrator who is supportive of the Agriculture program would surely be vital to the teacher. Linda expressed several times during her interview that “administration did not care about the discipline issues I had in my class”. Several teachers expressed discipline problems as their reason for leaving, but I feel that discipline is as much of a society problem in the times we live in now. Teachers try to maintain their class in a productive environment, but it is very hard with some of the students we are assigned to.

I wish I could have really asked more questions about why they left the profession. I did ask the question a certain way, I feel that they gave me an answer, but some would have told me more if they were asked more about it. I just feel that there were probably situations that really put the nail in the coffin for some of the teachers to know they had to leave.

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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM OF WORK



Georgia Agricultural Education
 Program of Work and Performance Evaluation
2022-2023 High School Program of Work

Argene Claxton
 aclaxton@gaaged.org

Recruitment and Retention
 Georgia Agricultural Education
 478-997-9604

Employment Begin Date
 7/1/2022

Employment End Date
 6/30/2023

Program of Work
 Teacher Meets Standards: **NO**
 System Meets Standards: **NO**

Evaluation
 Teacher Meets Standards: **NO**
 System Meets Standards: **NO**

POW	Item	POW Professional Accomplishments/Requirements	Evaluation
No	1	The teacher holds a valid teaching certificate in agricultural education or a provisional certificate in agricultural education.	No
No	2	The Teacher does not have any after school duties and responsibilities that would conflict with the FFA and SAE activities. *The Agricultural Education Program has three components. The classroom, FFA, and SAE combine to make the complete and balanced program. Students must be trained for Career Development Events and supervised at these activities. The students must have an SAE that requires home and worksite visits by the Agriculture Teacher. These activities occur throughout the school year and during the summer. As a result the Agricultural Education Teacher should not have any after school duties and responsibilities that would conflict with the FFA and SAE activities for which they receive extended day and extended year. This would include athletic and administrative duties or assignments.	No
No	3	The teacher will comply with the Agricultural Education Teachers Creed.	No
No	4	The teacher will be actively involved in the professional teacher organization, Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association (GVATA), which is dedicated specifically to agricultural educators in the state.	No
No	5	The teacher will attend all area meetings for agricultural education teachers (summer, fall, winter, spring).	No
No	6	The teacher will attend and participate in the GVATA Summer Leadership Staff Development Conference.	No
No	7	The teacher will attend and participate in the GVATA Mid-Winter Staff Development Conference.	No
No	8	The teacher will conduct at least two advisory committee meetings. Membership of the advisory committee will include agricultural industry and community leaders (minimum of seven). The teacher will keep proper advisory committee minutes.	No
	8A	Proposed advisory committee meeting location/dates.	
	8B	List Advisory Committee Members. Name/Title/Occupation (Minimum of Seven).	
No	9	The teacher will complete and submit detailed monthly reports by the 10th day of each month. Reports should include contacts, extended day and extended year hours which reflect participation in the 3-Component Model.	No
	10	The teacher will attend a minimum of one Professional Learning activity conducted by the Agricultural Education Staff (minimum of 8 contact hours) in which the teacher registered for the PLU through the CTAERN. The Summer Leadership Conference and Mid-Winter Leadership Conference do not satisfy this requirement. Please list AgEd related PLU classes that they have taken the previous 2 years.	
No	11	All agricultural courses taught will be listed on the Agricultural Education Courses list approved by the Georgia Department of Education.	No
No	12	The teacher will teach no more than 1 out-of-field segment.	No
No	13	The teacher will develop a course calendar and syllabus for each course.	No
No	14	The teacher will develop practical lesson plans and file plans for each course taught.	No

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No	15	The teacher will include systematic instruction on FFA in the instructional program.	No
No	16	Each course taught will include a minimum of one unit on leadership and personal development.	No
No	17	The teacher will provide students with systematic instruction on record keeping.	No
No	18	The teacher will insure that a minimum of 60 percent of students have in place an approved Supervised Agricultural Experience Program.	No
No	19	The teacher will provide students with a state approved SAEP recordbook appropriate for their Supervised Agricultural Experience Program. The AET Record Book is an approved option.	No
No	20	The teacher will provide project supervision for each student with an approved Supervised Agricultural Experience Program per Monthly Report documentation.	No
No	21	The teacher will submit at least one proficiency application for regional consideration by the due date on the state calendar.	No
No	22	The teacher will maintain an FFA Chapter & serve as advisor.	No
No	23	Each teacher will comply with FFA Affiliation standards by including each student enrolled in their agricultural education classes on their FFA roster and pay their chapter's Affiliation fee by the due date on the state calendar.	No
No	24	The chapter and current year fiscal officers will complete an FFA Program of Activities and Budget and submit to the Region office by the due date on the state calendar.	No
No	25	The chapter officers will participate in the Georgia FFA Official Chapter Officer Leadership Training Workshop or conduct a chapter officer leadership planning retreat.	No
No	26	The chapter will hold a minimum of ten chapter meetings during the year using the official opening and closing ceremonies. Official minutes should be recorded for each meeting.	No
No	27	The chapter will conduct activities in recognition of National FFA Week.	No
No	28	The chapter will conduct a community service project.	No
No	29	The teacher will have two official delegates that register for and participate in the entire State FFA Convention.	No
No	30	The chapter will have at least one qualified applicant per teacher for the State FFA Degree (newly established departments will have three years to fulfill).	No
No	31	The chapter will conduct an FFA parent/member awards banquet.	No
No	32	The Chapter will submit a National Chapter Form I application and two of the following applications to the region office:	No
No		American FFA Degree	No
No		National Chapter Application (Form II)	No
No		National FFA Week Recognition	No
No		WLC Scholarship Application	No
No		State Star Application	No
No		American Star Application	No
No	33	Each teacher will have students participate in a minimum of five CDEs. (A minimum of two CDEs must be Leadership CDEs (*); and a minimum of two CDEs must be team events.)	No
No		Agricultural Communications CDE	No
No		Agriculture Education CDE*	No
No		Agricultural Marketing Plan CDE*	No
No		Agricultural Sales CDE*	No
No		Agricultural Technology & Equipment ID CDE	No
No		Agricultural Mechanics CDE	No
No		Area Forestry Field Day	No
No		Agriscience Fair	No
No		Creed Speaking CDE*	No
No		Conduct of Chapter Meetings CDE*	No
No		Dairy Cattle Judging CDE	No

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No		Discussion Meet CDE*	No
No		EMC Wiring CDE	No
No		Environmental Natural Resources CDE	No
No		Extemporaneous Public Speaking CDE*	No
No		Farm Business Management CDE	No
No		FFA Quiz CDE	No
No		Floriculture CDE	No
No		Floral Design CDE	No
No		Forestry CDE	No
No		Horse Judging CDE	No
No		Employment Skills CDE*	No
No		Land Judging CDE	No
No		Lawnmower Driving CDE	No
No		Livestock Judging CDE	No
No		Meats Judging CDE	No
No		Nursery / Landscape CDE	No
No		Parliamentary Procedure CDE*	No
No		Poultry Judging CDE	No
No		Prepared Public Speaking CDE*	No
No		Tractor Operation & Maintenance CDE	No
No		Wildlife Management CDE	No
No		Vet Science CDE	No
No	34	The teacher will participate with students in one or more of the following FFA Leadership activities. Please indicate projected number in attendance.	No
		Area Awards Banquet	
		Greenhand Jamboree	
		National FFA Convention	
		FFA Success Conference	
		Georgia FFA Summer Leadership Camp	
		Region Rally	
No	35	The teacher will maintain all facilities in a safe, neat, and aesthetically pleasing condition.	No
No	36	Local system will provide transportation and/or travel funds to meet the Agricultural Education program of work standards at no expense to the local FFA Chapter.	No
No	37	Teacher will have a planning period during school hours.	No
No	38	The local system will provide adequate budget for supplies.	No
No	39	The local system will provide adequate budget for equipment.	No
No	40	The local system will provide adequate computers.	No
No	41	The local system will provide adequate office space.	No
No	42	The local system will provide access to audio/video equipment.	No
No	43	The local system will provide for specialized facilities or have an approved plan for addressing specialized facility needs.	No
No	44	The local system will provide adequate classroom facilities.	No

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APPENDIX B

IRB EXEMPT REVIEW APPLICATION

Revised 02/01/2022

AUBURN UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM (HRPP)

1

EXEMPT REVIEW APPLICATION

For assistance, contact: **The Office of Research Compliance (ORC)**

Phone: 334-844-5966 E-Mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs>

Submit completed form and supporting materials as one PDF through the [IRB Submission Page](#)

Hand written forms are not accepted. Where links are found hold down the control button (Ctrl) then click the link.

1. Project Identification

Today's Date: June 8, 2022

Anticipated start date of the project: July 1, 2022 Anticipated duration of project: 1 Year

a. **Project Title: Ag Teacher longevity**

b. Principal Investigator (PI): Catherine Malone Harrell Degree(s): MS
Rank/Title: Graduate Student Department/School: Curriculum and Teaching
Role/responsibilities in this project: **data collection, correspondence, data analysis**
Preferred Phone Number: 979-587-1065 AU Email: cmh0089@auburn.edu

Faculty Advisor Principal Investigator (if applicable): Jason McKibben
Rank/Title: Assistant Professor Department/School: Curriculum and Teaching
Role/responsibilities in this project: **Oversight**
Preferred Phone Number: 334-844-4434 AU Email: jdm0815@auburn.edu

Department Head: Paul Fitchett Department/School: Curriculum and Teaching
Preferred Phone Number: 334-844-6838 AU Email: pgf0011@auburn.edu
Role/responsibilities in this project: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- c. **Project Key Personnel** – Identify all key personnel who will be involved with the conduct of the research and describe their role in the project. Role may include design, recruitment, consent process, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. ([To determine key personnel, see decision tree](#)). *Exempt determinations are made by individual institutions; reliance on other institutions for exempt determination is not feasible. Non-AU personnel conducting exempt research activities must obtain approval from the IRB at their home institution.*

Key personnel are required to maintain human subjects training through [CITI](#). Only for EXEMPT level research is documentation of completed CITI training NO LONGER REQUIRED to be included in the submission packet. NOTE however, **the IRB will perform random audits of CITI training records to confirm** reported training courses and expiration dates. Course title and expiration dates are shown on training certificates.

Name: C. Harrell Degree(s): MS
Rank/Title: Graduate Student Department/School: Curriculum and Teaching
Role/responsibilities in this project: **project lead**

- AU affiliated? Yes No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? Yes No
- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Completed required CITI training? Yes No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update the revised Exempt Application form.
- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed: Human Sciences Basic [Expiration Date](#)
[Choose a course](#) [Expiration Date](#)

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Name: Jason McKibben
communications.

Degree(s): PhD agricultural leadership, education, and

Rank/Title: Assistant Professor

Department/School: Curriculum and Teaching

Role/responsibilities in this project: project oversight

- AU affiliated? Yes No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? Yes No
- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Completed required CITI training? Yes No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update the revised EXEMPT application form.
- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed: IRB #2 Social and behavioral emphasis- AU Personnel 10/22/2023 IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher 10/22/2023

Name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)Degree(s): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)Rank/Title: [Choose Rank/Title](#)Department/School: [Choose Department/School](#)Role/responsibilities in this project: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- AU affiliated? Yes No If no, name of home institution: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Plan for IRB approval for non-AU affiliated personnel? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Do you have any known competing financial interests, personal relationships, or other interests that could have influence or appear to have influence on the work conducted in this project? Yes No
- If yes, briefly describe the potential or real conflict of interest: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- Completed required CITI training? Yes No If NO, complete the appropriate [CITI basic course](#) and update the revised EXEMPT application form.
- If YES, choose course(s) the researcher has completed: [Choose a course](#) [Expiration Date](#)
[Choose a course](#) [Expiration Date](#)

d. Funding Source – Is this project funded by the investigator(s)? Yes No Is this project funded by AU? Yes No If YES, identify source [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)Is this project funded by an external sponsor? Yes No If YES, provide name of sponsor, type of sponsor (governmental, non-profit, corporate, other), and an identification number for the award.Name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Type: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Grant #: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)**e.** List other AU IRB-approved research projects and/or IRB approvals from other institutions that are associated with this project. Describe the association between this project and the listed project(s):
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)**2. Project Summary****a. Does the study TARGET any special populations?** Answer YES or NO to all.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Minors (under 18 years of age; if minor participants, at least 2 adults must be present during all research procedures that include the minors) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Auburn University Students | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Pregnant women, fetuses, or any products of conception | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Prisoners or wards (unless incidental, not allowed for Exempt research) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Temporarily or permanently impaired | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

b. Does the research pose more than minimal risk to participants? Yes No

If YES, to question 2.b, then the research activity is NOT eligible for EXEMPT review. Minimal risk means that the

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probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research is not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or test. 42 CFR 46.102(i)

c. Does the study involve any of the following? *If YES to any of the questions in item 2.c, then the research activity is NOT eligible for EXEMPT review.*

Procedures subject to FDA regulations (drugs, devices, etc.) Yes No

Use of school records of identifiable students or information from instructors about specific students. Yes No

Protected health or medical information when there is a direct or indirect link which could identify the participant. Yes No

Collection of sensitive aspects of the participant's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or alcohol use. Yes No

d. Does the study include deception? Requires limited review by the IRB* Yes No

3. MARK the category or categories below that describe the proposed research. Note the IRB Reviewer will make the final determination of the eligible category or categories.

1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices. The research is not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn or assessment of educators providing instruction. 104(d)(1)
2. Research only includes interactions involving educational tests, surveys, interviews, public observation if at least ONE of the following criteria. (The research includes data collection only; may include visual or auditory recording; may NOT include intervention and only includes interactions). **Mark the applicable sub-category below (i, ii, or iii). 104(d)(2)**
- (i) Recorded information cannot readily identify the participant (directly or indirectly/ linked);
OR
 - surveys and interviews: no children;
 - educational tests or observation of public behavior: can only include children when investigators do not participate in activities being observed.
- (ii) Any disclosures of responses outside would not reasonably place participant at risk; **OR**
- (iii) Information is recorded with identifiers or code linked to identifiers and IRB conducts limited review; no children. **Requires limited review by the IRB.***
3. Research involving Benign Behavioral Interventions (BBI)** through verbal, written responses including data entry or audiovisual recording from adult subjects who prospectively agree and ONE of the following criteria is met. (This research does not include children and does not include medical interventions. Research cannot have deception unless the participant prospectively agrees that they will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature and purpose of the research) **Mark the applicable sub-category below (A, B, or C).** 104(d)(3)(i)
- (A) Recorded information cannot readily identify the subject (directly or indirectly/ linked); **OR**
- (B) Any disclosure of responses outside of the research would not reasonably place subject at risk;
OR
- (C) Information is recorded with identifies and cannot have deception unless participants prospectively agree.

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Requires limited review by the IRB.*

- 4.** Secondary research for which consent is not required: use of identifiable information or identifiable bio-specimen that have been or will be collected for some other 'primary' or 'initial' activity, if one of the following criteria is met. Allows retrospective and prospective secondary use. **Mark the applicable sub-category below (i, ii, iii, or iv).** 104 (d)(4)
 - (i)** Bio-specimens or information are publicly available;
 - (ii)** Information recorded so subject cannot readily be identified, directly or indirectly/linked investigator does not contact subjects and will not re-identify the subjects; **OR**
 - (iii)** Collection and analysis involving investigators use of identifiable health information when us is regulated by HIPAA "health care operations" or "research" or "public health activities and purposes" (does not include bio-specimens (only PHI and requires federal guidance on how to apply); **OR**
 - (iv)** Research information collected by or on behalf of federal government using government generated or collected information obtained for non-research activities.
- 5.** Research and demonstration projects which are supported by a federal agency/department AND designed to study and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i)public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or service under those programs. (must be posted on a federal web site). 104.5(d)(5) (must be posted on a federal web site)
- 6.** Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives and consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The research does not involve prisoners as participants. 104(d)(6)

**Limited IRB review – the IRB Chair or designated IRB reviewer reviews the protocol to ensure adequate provisions are in place to protect privacy and confidentiality.*

***Category 3 – Benign Behavioral Interventions (BBI) must be brief in duration, painless/harmless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on participants, and it is unlikely participants will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing.*

**** Exemption categories 7 and 8 require broad consent. The AU IRB has determined the regulatory requirements for legally effective broad consent are not feasible within the current institutional infrastructure. EXEMPT categories 7 and 8 will not be implemented at this time.*

4. Describe the proposed research including who does what, when, where, how, and for how long, etc.

a. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to interview individuals about their experience being an agricultural education teacher in the secondary schools. They will be asked questions about what they enjoyed about being a teacher, who helped or supported them in the process of being a teacher, and what they believe was the reason they continued to be a teacher. Data will be collected to help inform how we recruit and retain agriculture teachers in the future.

- b. Participant population, including the number of participants and the rationale for determining number of participants to recruit and enroll. Note if the study enrolls minor participants, describe the process to ensure more than 1 adult is present during all research procedures which include the minor.
Participants include agriculture education teachers in the state of Georgia. They are a known group of adults (over 18). The potential population consists of 615 teachers. We will use a publicly available list for contacting potential participants. Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers association maintains an open and available list of all agriculture teachers in the state of Georgia. This list of contacts is available freely on the internet. A randomized list of the 615 agriculture teachers will be sampled from until 20 interviews are conducted. The first 20 agriculture teachers who agree and complete their interviews will be the study sample. Using experienced 50% of those contacted will not agree to complete the interviews. No other criteria will be used to determine eligibility for participation.
- c. Recruitment process. Address whether recruitment includes communications/interactions between study staff and potential participants either in person or online. *Submit a copy of all recruitment materials.*
Participants will be recruited through an email asking if they wish to participate. If no response is made through email a phone call will be placed to recruit. See attached letter.
- d. Consent process including how information is presented to participants, etc.
Consent will be done through a page sent to the participants when the request for participation is sent via email. They will be asked at the beginning of the interviews if they have read the consent form and be told that by continuing in the interview, they are giving their consent to participate in the evaluation. The consent document will outline that all information will be held as confidential as law allows, that all data will be aggregated for any dissemination and all identifying markers will be removed. If names are needed for reporting, pseudonyms will be used. A coding sheet, held by the project leader will be used and will be the only link between the participant and their data.
- e. Research procedures and methodology
Naturalistic inquiry will be used based on Lincoln and Guba (1985) to collect data. This method calls for loosely scripted interviews and hermeneutic questioning. Questions will be asked of the participants and their responses written down. Constant comparative method, a variant of grounded theory will be used to compare and report responses.
- f. Anticipated time per study exercise/activity and total time if participants complete all study activities.
Each participant's interview should last no more than one hour.
- g. Location of the research activities.
Online. Participants will be sent a "zoom" link and interviews will be done using this platform.
- h. Costs to and compensation for participants? If participants will be compensated describe the amount, type, and process to distribute.
no costs nor compensation will be offered for the participants.
- i. Non-AU locations, site, institutions. *Submit a copy of agreements/IRB approvals.*
none
- j. Additional relevant information.
NA

5. Waivers

Check applicable waivers and describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

Revised 02/01/2022

- Waiver of Consent (Including existing de-identified data)
- Waiver of Documentation of Consent (Use of Information Letter, rather than consent form requiring signatures)
- Waiver of Parental Permission (in Alabama, 18 years-olds may be considered adults for research purposes)

<https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/orc/irb/IRB 1 Exempt and Expedited/11-113 MR 1104 Hinton Renewal 2021-1.pdf>

- a. Provide the rationale for the waiver request.
This evaluation uses standard survey methodology and provides no more risk than would be experienced in an average day. All potential participants are 18 or older and can opt out of the evaluation at any point with no ramification. Data will be collected confidentiality, and any identifiable information will be removed at all points. Pseudonyms will be used to describe individual participants, a coding sheet will be maintained by the primary researcher that provides the only link between the pseudonym and the participants. that sheet will be maintained on the Auburn Box under password protection.

6. Describe the process to select participants/data/specimens. If applicable, include gender, race, and ethnicity of the participant population.

The participants are chosen solely for their having held a teaching position in Agricultural Education no other selection criteria will be considered.

7. Risks and Benefits

- 7a. Risks - Describe why none of the research procedures would cause a participant either physical or psychological discomfort or be perceived as discomfort above and beyond what the person would experience in daily life (minimal risk).

The research is provided online. No discomfort higher than would be normal in an average day will occur. Participants are free to opt out at any time with no ramifications.

- 7b. Benefits – Describe whether participants will benefit directly from participating in the study. If yes, describe the benefit. And, describe generalizable benefits resulting from the study.

NA

8. Describe the provisions to maintain confidentiality of data, including collection, transmission, and storage.

Identify platforms used to collect and store study data. For EXEMPT research, the AU IRB recommends AU BOX or using an AU issued and encrypted device. If a data collection form will be used, submit a copy.

All data will be collected confidentiality. No recordings of the interviews will be held. If at any point the participant decides to end the interview the researcher will thank the participant and immediately end the interview with no ramifications. The name or contact information will never be associated with the data collected. All participants will be given pseudonyms and will be referred to in data collection and writing as those pseudonyms. The primary researcher will maintain a coding sheet that will be the only connection between the pseudonym and the participant. That sheet will be kept on the Auburn Box password protected.



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- a. If applicable, submit a copy of the data management plan or data use agreement.

9. Describe the provisions included in the research to protect the privacy interests of participants (e.g., others will not overhear conversations with potential participants, individuals will not be publicly identified or embarrassed).

All interviews will be conducted online via the zoom platform. Researcher will ensure that only the individual to be interviewed will be sent the link, the office where the researcher will be conducting the interview will be empty of other persons other than the researcher. The participant being interviewed has the choice to conduct the interview in the manner they see fit.

10. Additional Information and/or attachments.

In the space below, provide any additional information you believe may help the IRB review of the proposed research. If attachments are included, list the attachments below. Attachments may include recruitment materials, consent documents, site permissions, IRB approvals from other institutions, data use agreements, data collection form, CITI training documentation, etc.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Required Signatures (If a student PI is identified in item 1.a, the EXEMPT application must be re-signed and updated at every revision by the student PI and faculty advisor. The signature of the department head is required only on the initial submission of the EXEMPT application, regardless of PI. Staff and faculty PI submissions require the PI signature on all version, the department head signature on the original submission)

Signature of Principal Investigator: Catherine Harrell Date: July 22, 2022

Signature of Faculty Advisor (if applicable): Jason McKibben Date: 21/July/2022

Signature of Dept. Head: Paul Fitchett Date: July 26, 2022

Version Date: 7/18/2022

Dear Catherine,

Your protocol titled "Ag Teacher Longevity" was reviewed by the IRB. Before your protocol can be approved, additional information and revisions are requested.

The IRB's comments are as follows:

Additional information and revisions are required before protocol approval can be issued. Via [IRB Submission Page](#), submit the requested information.

Required Department Head signature needed. **Signature Received**

4.c. Please provide the text of the recruitment email and the text of the telephone script for verbal recruiting. **Text provided for email (see letter on letter head).**

Telephone script provided (Harrell telephone script for recruitment.).

4.d. Describe use of a pseudonym and coding sheet, linking the participant and their data. In the Information Letter you describe the information as anonymous. If there is any link to data and the participant, the information is confidential and should be described as such. **Necessary changes have been made to the application to reflect the nature of confidentiality. Anonymous has been removed throughout.**

5.a. It appears the data is being collected confidentially, not anonymously. **Changes have been made to reflect this** "Provide the rationale for the waiver request.

This evaluation uses standard survey methodology and provides no more risk than would be experienced in an average day. All potential participants are 18 or older and can opt out of the evaluation at any point with no ramification. Data will be collected confidentially, and any identifiable information will be removed at all points. Pseudonyms will be used to describe individual participants; a coding sheet will be maintained by the primary researcher that provides the only link between the pseudonym and the participants. that sheet will be maintained on the Auburn Box under password protection."

8. Anonymous data vs. confidential? **Confidential. Changes have been made.**

"All data will be collected confidentiality. No recordings of the interviews will be held. If at any point the participant decides to end the interview the researcher will thank the participant and immediately end the interview with no ramifications. The name or contact information will never be associated with the data collected. All participants will be given pseudonyms and will be referred to in data collection and writing as those pseudonyms. The primary researcher will maintain a coding sheet that will be the only connection between the pseudonym and the participant. That sheet will be kept on the Auburn Box password protected."

Information Letter:

Paragraph 6 – Your protocol describes confidential data, not anonymous. Please adjust your protocol and Information letter to be consistent. If you use a pseudonym and code list, it should be noted here. **Letter has been adjusted. Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by not recording**

your interview, not recording your name or any specific data intended to identify you individually. If we need to describe or refer to you as an individual, we will use a pseudonym. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/ or presented at a professional meeting.

CITI Documentation:

Ms. Harrell needs the IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group)

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel (Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course (Stage)

When responding to an IRB review, submit documents **as a single PDF** via [IRB Submission Page](#) in this order.

1. A memorandum addressing the IRB reviewer's notes (include any changes not specifically requested by the reviewer);
2. Revised documents, (as applicable) **highlighting** all revisions requested in the documents in order as below:
 - Application;
 - Consent documents (consent form, information letter, etc.);
 - Recruitment materials (flyers, emails, telephone script, etc.);
 - Study instruments (survey, questionnaire, etc.);
 - Other study documents (data collection form, additional information, etc.);
 - Agreements/other IRB approvals; and
 - CITI training documentation.
3. A "**clean copy**" of all revised documents for the IRB approval stamp (in order as shown in item 2 above);
4. Other study materials.

If this study will be led by a Student Principal Investigator (PI) under oversight by a Faculty Advisor PI, the Student PI should discuss any questions first with the Faculty Advisor and, if questions remain after that discussion, contact the Office of the IRB at irbadmin@auburn.edu or 334-844-5966.

Please note: You are not authorized to initiate any part of your protocol involving human subjects until you receive final IRB approval.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

** IRB policy is that if revisions have not been received in 3 months, the protocol will be administratively withdrawn.

IRB Admin
Office of Research Compliance

540 Devall Drive, Suite 200
Auburn, AL 36832
334-844-5966



Completion Date 14-Jan-2021
Expiration Date 14-Jan-2024
Record ID 40356712

This is to certify that:

Catherine Harrell

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel
(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Auburn University



Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w77dce7a5-3fd3-4aa1-bbd3-c8503f3c1de6-40356712