

An Assessment of Program Factors Influencing California FFA Proficiency Award Participation

Matthew T. Portillo, Murray State University
James D. White, Oklahoma State University

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify selected program factors influencing California FFA Proficiency Awards program participation and to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads regarding Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs and FFA Proficiency Awards. Specific objectives were: (1) to determine selected program factors relative to California FFA chapters participating in the FFA Proficiency Awards program; (2) to determine the perceptions of department heads concerning SAE programs; (3) to determine the perceptions of department heads concerning the FFA Proficiency Awards program; (4) to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads regarding the SAE program; and (5) to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads regarding the FFA Proficiency Awards program. The scope of this study included all California Agricultural Education program department heads during the 1999-2000 academic year. The survey was administered during the spring of 2000.

An overwhelmingly majority of California FFA members received instruction, supervision, and participated in SAE programs and the FFA's Proficiency Awards program. Department heads were in agreement with SAE and FFA Proficiency Awards program theory and demonstrated evidence of their commitment by their advocacy for SAE program participation, SAE instruction, SAE program supervision, and high level of FFA Proficiency Awards applications at the sectional, regional, state, and national levels. It was concluded California FFA members demonstrated a high level of participation in SAE and FFA Proficiency Awards programs. It was further concluded that strong support by California's Agricultural Education department heads toward SAE program supervision, classroom SAE program instructional components, written SAE policies, and student SAE and FFA Proficiency Awards program involvement have been largely responsible for the number of California finalists and winners in National FFA Proficiency Awards competition during the five-year period, 1994 to 1999.

Introduction

Over the 83 years of legislative existence, examination of the Agricultural Education program has focused on preparing the student for occupational success. Instrumental in support of the vocational agricultural student, the FFA recognizes students with superior Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs through the FFA Proficiency Awards program (Arrington, 1984). Members are recognized at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

Within the Western Region, California has experienced a “boom” in FFA Proficiency Awards finalists and winners at the national level. During 1994 to 1999, California had 68 of 243 finalists, almost 28%, and achieved a 26% success rate with 18 winners (National FFA Organization, 1994-99). However, this successful involvement of California FFA members participating in SAE programs over the past five years may portray a pretty picture for the state, but reality is that student participation nationally has declined. In 1998, the National FFA Organization reported that participation in SAE programs nationwide involved only 47% of students that were enrolled in secondary agriculture classes during the 1997-98 academic year.

The successful vocational Agricultural Education program revolves around the achievement of its students. It is that achievement born out of SAE program success that leads to student success and quality programs (Long & Israelsen, 1983). Therefore, if there exists a philosophical agreement to the value of SAE (Noxel & Cheek, 1988), then why do some FFA members have SAE programs and others do not? Herren and Cole (1984) found philosophical agreement among Agricultural Education instructors concerning the value of the SAE program, but disagreement concerning whether or not all students should have a SAE and the level of commitment by Agricultural Education instructors.

Some California FFA chapters have members who submit state FFA Proficiency Award applications on a regular basis, while others rarely have students apply. This is especially important due to the overlapping relationship of SAE to classroom instruction and FFA within the framework of Agriculture Education. Adams (1994) found that instructor perceptions of quality SAE programs affected the number of students submitting state FFA Proficiency Awards applications and instructors having the necessary time to teach students. Kotrlik (1987) found that less than 15% of the instructors in Louisiana had students apply for these awards. Therefore, a need exists to study those programs whose members participated in the FFA Proficiency Awards program to determine the factors that influence chapter members to participate in the FFA Proficiency Awards program.

Since 1944, the FFA Proficiency Awards program has been regarded as a supplement to the SAE program acting as a motivational and rewards incentive (Clark & Scanlon, 1996). "The role of career development events and awards is to motivate students and encourage leadership, personal growth, citizenship and career development" (National FFA Organization, 1995, p. iii). The FFA Proficiency Awards program has had continued support among vocational agricultural educators, industry, and the community for its educational value and recognition of students with outstanding SAEs (Herren, 1987). "...awards should reflect instruction that currently takes place in the entire agricultural education program, including classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, individualized instruction and/or supervised agricultural experience" (National FFA

Organization, 1995, p. iii). Recognizing students transferring and applying knowledge from the classroom to their SAE, the FFA Proficiency Awards program encourages students to set high personal and professional goals (Balfe, 1989).

The National FFA Organization recognizes three objectives of the FFA Proficiency Awards program (National FFA Organization, 1981): (1) stimulate interest in the instructional program; (2) stimulate interest in agricultural occupations; and (3) reward FFA members at the local, state, regional and national levels for exceptional accomplishments in progressing toward specific occupational objectives in agriculture. Boggs and Yokum (1991) believe the purposes of the FFA Proficiency Awards program and the SAE program are essentially the same. For Boggs and Yokum (1991), both programs list similar objectives: (1) stimulate interest in the instructional program; (2) stimulate interest in agricultural careers; (3) enhance and stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving through the hands-on learning-by-doing principle; and (4) reward students by exceptional accomplishments (p. 10). Addressing the dynamics of the agricultural industry, Boggs & Yokum (1991) pointed out that vocational agricultural education must stay focused on the needs of its clientele. This means that if less than two percent of the nation's population is employed in production agriculture, vocational agricultural education must accurately reflect the agricultural industry.

Striving to reflect the agricultural industry with the needs of the community, "it is appropriate for the national organization to develop ... and awards which stimulate instruction in emerging areas which reflect both current and future community, national and global work force needs" (National FFA Organization, 1995, p. iii). The FFA Proficiency Awards program can be classified into production agriculture and non-production agriculture. Listing benefits of the FFA Proficiency Awards program, the *Agricultural FFA Proficiency Awards Handbook* (National FFA Organization, 1990) lists the following: (1) make intelligent career choices; (2) provide realistic and basic education in agriculture; (3) develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to enter some type of agricultural occupation; (4) complements broad educational objectives of the public school system by making practical application of academic subjects; (5) develops self-confidence and encourages FFA members to take on added responsibilities; (6) promotes active FFA membership; and (7) teaches FFA members to make and follow through with plans that will effect their future (p. 6).

Factors with the greatest effect and influence on the FFA Proficiency Awards program were investigated through the research of Balfe (1989), Blakely et al. (1993), Bowen and Doerfert (1989), Clark and Scanlon (1996), Herren (1987) and Kotrlik (1987). These researchers identified various characteristics associated with participation in the FFA Proficiency Awards program. The author chose to categorize the identified characteristics into four main factors: (a) teacher; (b) student; (c) chapter; and (d) instruction. These four main factors were then identified as program factors.

Kotrlik (1987) stated that many agricultural educators continually support the FFA Proficiency Awards program for its educational value. However, Kotrlik identified a lack of participation in the FFA Proficiency Awards program in the state of Louisiana. Kotrlik (1987) found teachers who had students apply for FFA Proficiency Awards were more likely to perceive

proficiency awards: (a) as helping students to learn skills; (b) motivating students; (c) resulting in favorable publicity; (d) providing opportunity for recognition of student achievement; and (e) resulting in improved self concept for students. He also found that the number of students applying for FFA Proficiency Awards increased as the number of teachers in a department increased and as the number of years teaching experience decreased. For those teachers who did not have students applying for FFA Proficiency Awards, Kotrlik (1987) found the quality of the students' SOE programs and knowledge of how to fill out awards applications may be limiting factors.

According to Herren (1987), FFA Proficiency Awards have been used as a means of recognition for those students with outstanding SOE programs. Herren (1987) noted that the FFA Proficiency Awards were based on the student's individual SOE and career objective which relates back to classroom instruction. Therefore, assessing how close FFA Proficiency Awards were associated with classroom instruction, Herren (1987) and Smith (1982) found that vocational agricultural instructors and programs appear to have been instrumental in influencing the direction of a student's SOE, however, not all SOEs were derived from the classroom/laboratory setting. Herren (1987) noted experiences with SOE influences occupational choice and helps students gain employment skills. Furthermore, parents and teachers were found as being the most influential in providing encouragement.

Balfe (1989) reported the FFA Proficiency Awards program was an important complement to a successful Supervised Experience Program and provided student recognition to those students who utilize classroom-learned skills. Evaluating national FFA Proficiency Awards finalists of 1988, Balfe (1989) found: 1) 65% of finalists waited to apply during their last year of eligibility; 2) 83% of finalists grew up on farms; 3) FFA Proficiency Awards program attracted academically motivated students; 4) 87% would pursue an agricultural career; 5) 90% have participated in other Proficiency Awards areas; and 6) Student success was attributed to their advisors. Since the FFA Proficiency Awards program is based on recognition, Balfe (1989) also found 73% of finalists were motivated by national recognition.

According to Bowen and Doerfert (1989), Agricultural Education instructors profess classroom/laboratory instruction, the FFA and SOE were interrelated. An extension of this relationship incorporated the belief that "students who advance in FFA contest [sic] or award programs are progressing toward occupations in agriculture" (p. 49). Bowen and Doerfert's (1989) findings showed state winners of speaking contests and the computers in agriculture contest were active in FFA activities, sought education beyond high school, and tended to be males living on farms or in rural, non-farm areas. Interestingly, Bowen and Doerfert's (1989) findings showed winners of the speaking contests aspired to occupations in agriculture, whereas, the FFA Proficiency Awards winners in computers sought employment opportunities outside agriculture.

The successful vocational Agricultural Education program revolves around the success of its students. It is the achievement born out of SAE program success that leads to student success and quality programs (Long & Israelson, 1983). Therefore, if there exists philosophical agreement to the value of SAE (Noxel & Cheek, 1988), then why do some FFA members have SAE programs and others do not? Why then do some FFA chapters have FFA members applying for FFA Proficiency Awards and on a consistent basis while others do not on a consistent basis?

A review of the literature revealed that there existed philosophical agreement among Agricultural Education instructors as to the value of SAE programs, but disagreement concerning whether or not all students should have a SAE and level of commitment by Agricultural Education instructors. Furthermore, factors related to teacher, student, chapter, and instruction were identified as elements that contributed to student accomplishment or the result of student activity in a particular SAE program area.

Purpose Objectives

The purpose of this study was to identify and verify program factors influencing California FFA Proficiency Awards program participation. In addition, the purpose was to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads, regarding Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs and FFA Proficiency Awards. To accomplish the purpose of this study, the following objectives were established: (1) to determine selected program factors related to California FFA chapter participation in the FFA Proficiency Awards program; (2) to determine the perceptions of department heads concerning the supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program; (3) to determine the perceptions of department heads concerning the FFA Proficiency Awards program; (4) to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads regarding the Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program; and (5) to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads regarding the FFA proficiency awards program.

Methods and Procedures

The population for this study consisted of 312 California secondary Agricultural Education program department heads during the 1999-2000 school year. This population was defined by reviewing Agricultural Education departments in the *1999-2000 California Vocational Agriculture Directory*.

A census of California Agricultural Education department heads was conducted using a Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000). It was determined that a self-administered email survey would be used to collect data from department heads with email address listings in the *1999-2000 California Vocational Agriculture Directory*. A hard copy of the cover letter and a self-administered questionnaire were sent via U.S. Mail to those department heads without email address listings in the *1999-2000 California Vocational Agriculture Directory*.

Content for the survey instrument was based on a review of the literature. After initial development, the instrument was then sent to a panel of experts to be evaluated for validity and content. After responses from the panel of experts were collected, a pilot test of the instrument was conducted with a group of Agricultural Education instructors from California via email. Reliability of the pilot instrument was obtained by determining an initial Cronbach's Alpha of 0.71 for instructor perceptions about SAE programs and 0.84 for instructor perceptions concerning FFA Proficiency Awards.

The survey instrument included three sections consisting of 36 select-response items with ordered categories and one open-ended question. Section one of the instrument was designed to determine and identify selected demographic information about the respondents. This section consisted of eight questions using nominal and interval scales to ascertain the following data: (a) gender; (b) level of formal education; (c) age; (d) teaching experience; (e) agricultural experience; (f) were they a FFA member; (g) did they have an SOE/SAE in high school; and (h) had they ever applied for a proficiency award.

Section two of the instrument consisted of 14 items using both nominal and interval scales to determine and identify program demographics. The program demographics included: (a) region; (b) number of instructors in the department; (c) number of FFA members; (d) number of sectional FFA Proficiency Awards applications submitted; (e) number of regional FFA Proficiency Awards applications submitted; (f) number of state FFA Proficiency Awards applications submitted; (g) number of national FFA Proficiency Awards applications submitted; (h) percentage of students with SAE programs; (i) a written departmental SAE policy statement; (j) percentage of courses with a SAE instructional component; (j) number of instructors supervising SAE programs; (k) program supervision during school hours; (l) length of extended contract; and (m) access to a school vehicle for SAE home supervision.

Section three of the instrument included 14 items using interval scales to determine the study respondents' perceptions of SAE programs and FFA Proficiency Awards. The respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of the statements using ordered responses on a five-point Likert-type scale, where one (1) equaled "strong disagreement," and five (5) equaled "strong agreement." The last section of the instrument asked respondents for additional comments and suggestions/observations. This section was open-ended in which study participants were asked to write their response in the space provided.

Data in this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 9.0. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe teacher and program demographic information. In determining department head perceptions of SAE programs and FFA Proficiency Awards means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were calculated. In describing department head perceptions regarding SAE programs and FFA Proficiency Awards, numerical values were assigned and established. Real limits were set at 1.0 to 1.49, "strong disagreement;" 1.5 to 2.49, "disagreement;" 2.5 to 3.49, "neutral;" 3.5 to 4.49, "agreement;" and 4.5 to 5, "strong agreement." Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to describe the strength of the relationships and levels of significance between instructor perceptions to teacher and program demographics (Shavelson, 1988). Descriptors used to report the strength of the relationships and levels of significance between instructor perceptions and teacher and program demographics included: (a) 0.99-0.70, "very high;" (b) 0.69-0.50, "substantial;" (c) 0.49-0.30, "moderate;" 0.29-0.10, "low;" and (d) 0.09-0.01, "negligible" (Davis, 1971).

Since this research was ex post facto by design, Chi-square tests helped the researcher decide whether there were differences between study respondents. Chi-square tests were utilized to examine data between early respondents and late respondents. A statistically significant difference was found at the 0.05 confidence level between early respondents and late respondents regarding the teacher demographic of "Gender." Since the significant difference was found in

teacher demographics and not instructor perceptions, data between early and late respondents were combined. Chi-square tests were also utilized to examine data between study respondents replying via email and U.S. Mail. A statistically significant difference was found at the 0.05 confidence level between study respondents. The variable was identified as a program demographic; "SAE program supervision during school hours." Since the significant difference was found in a program demographic and not in instructor perceptions, the difference between study respondents replying via email and U.S. Mail was not reported.

Results

Objective one was to determine selected program factors related to California FFA chapter participation in the FFA Proficiency Awards program. These demographics described characteristics of department heads and programs. Profiles typical to department heads and programs were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
A Profile of Department Heads and Programs

Demographic	Characteristic(s)
Department Heads	
Gender	Male
Level of education	Master's
Age	41-45
Teaching Experience	13-15
Ag experience	Livestock
FFA member in high school	Yes
Participated in a SAE	Yes
Applied for a FFA Proficiency Awards	No
Program	
Region	Superior
# of instructors in the dept.	2
# of FFA members	151-200
# of submitted sectional FFA Proficiency Awards	11-15
# of submitted regional FFA Proficiency Awards	6-10
# of submitted state FFA Proficiency Awards	1-5
# of submitted national FFA Proficiency Awards	0
% of students with SAE programs	75
Written SAE policy statement	Yes
% of courses with a SAE instructional component	85
# of instructors supervising SAE programs	2
SAE program supervision during school hours	No
Type of summer contract	31-60 days
Access to a school vehicle for SAE supervision	Yes

Objective two was to determine the perceptions of department heads concerning the Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program. Instructor perceptions regarding selected factors of the SAE program were summarized in Table 2. In general, department heads were in

agreement about perceptions regarding selected factors of the SAE program except for the perception that “classroom instruction is not needed due to SAE supervision.” In addition, department heads were neutral regarding the perception that the “quality of SAE depends on school facilities.”

Table 2.

A Summary of Instructor Perceptions Regarding Selected Factors of the SAE Program

Selected Factors	Category of Agreement	Mean Score
SAE program supervisors should be reimbursed for SAE travel	Agreement	4.17
Classroom instruction is not needed due to SAE supervision	Disagreement	1.72
Quality of SAE depends on school facilities	Neutral	2.95
All FFA members must have a SAE program	Agreement	3.85
All FFA members are required to maintain a SAE record book	Agreement	4.19
SAE programs should be counted as part of the student's grade	Agreement	4.10
SAE is an integral part of the curriculum	Agreement	4.29
SAE programs enhance creative thinking	Agreement	4.15

Objective three was to determine the perceptions of department heads concerning the FFA Proficiency Awards program. Instructor perceptions regarding selected factors of the FFA Proficiency Awards program were summarized in Table 3. In general, department heads were in agreement about perceptions regarding selected factors of the FFA Proficiency Awards program. However, department heads were neutral concerning the perception that “more teacher in-service education should be provided for FFA Proficiency Award application.”

Table 3.

A Summary of Instructor Perceptions Regarding Selected Factors of FFA Proficiency Awards Program

Selected Factors	Category of Agreement	Mean Score
More teacher in-service education should be provided for FFA Proficiency Award applications	Neutral	3.34
Assisting students applying for FFA Proficiency Awards is part of my job	Agreement	4.22
FFA Proficiency Awards stimulate student interest in SAE programs	Agreement	3.82
FFA Proficiency Awards stimulate problem solving	Agreement	3.80
FFA Proficiency Awards reward students with exceptional accomplishments	Agreement	4.21
FFA Proficiency Awards stimulate interest in agricultural careers	Agreement	3.94

Objective four was to determine the relationship between selected teacher and program demographics and instructor perceptions held by department heads regarding the SAE program. Using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, one statistically significant correlation of moderate strength (0.313) was found between the program factor, "Percent of students with a SAE program," and the instructor perception, "All FFA members must have a SAE program." However, no correlation coefficients were found describing "substantial" or "very high" relationships.

Objective five was to determine the relationship between selected teacher and program demographics and instructor perceptions held by department heads regarding the FFA Proficiency Awards program. Using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, no correlation coefficients describing at least moderate relationships were found.

Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications

Examination, analysis, and interpretation of the findings provided the opportunity for the author to draw the following conclusions:

- 1) California FFA members strongly participated in SAE programs and received SAE program instruction and supervision during and after normal school hours and during the summer. Furthermore, it was concluded that department heads in California Agricultural Education programs strongly influenced participation in the FFA Proficiency Awards program;
- 2) California Agricultural Education department heads were in substantial agreement with SAE program theory. Furthermore, it was concluded department heads demonstrated real evidence of their agreement in SAE program theory through measurable praxis involving student SAE program participation, classroom SAE instructional components, and SAE program supervision;
- 3) California Agricultural Education department heads were in substantial agreement with FFA Proficiency Awards program theory. Furthermore, it was concluded department heads demonstrated real evidence of FFA Proficiency Awards program theory through measurable praxis involving FFA Proficiency Award application submittals at the sectional, regional, state, and national levels;
- 4) This study of California secondary Agricultural Education programs supported the findings of other research (Dyer & Osbone, 1995; Dyer & Williams, 1997; Herren, 1987; Kotrlik, 1987) regarding program factors influencing the SAE program and FFA Proficiency Awards program. Therefore, it was further concluded California Agricultural Education students demonstrated a much larger participation in SAE and the FFA Proficiency Awards program, than findings from Leising and Zilbert (1983), Herren, (1987), and Kotrlik (1987); and
- 5) It was concluded that strong support by California's Agricultural Education department heads toward SAE program supervision, classroom SAE program instructional

components, written SAE policies, and student SAE and FFA Proficiency Awards program involvement have been responsible for the increase in of California finalists and winners in the national FFA Proficiency Awards competition during the period 1994 to 1999.

The following recommendations were made based on the conclusions drawn from the data analysis:

- 1) Based on the major findings and conclusions concerning student SAE participation and written SAE policy standards, it was recommended that all teacher training institutions and the California Agricultural Education Unit address and emphasize SAE as a vital curriculum component in pre-service education and continuing education involving updates in computerized record books and applications, new proficiency award areas, and SAE program theory changes;
- 2) It was recommended regional supervisors inform and promote the importance of SAE program supervision during the school day to local school administrators. Furthermore, it was recommended that regional supervisors inform and promote the importance of the school district providing transportation specifically for student SAE supervision, and explaining the benefits accruing to students as a result of their teacher(s) having an extended contract;
- 3) It was recommended regional supervisors promote the benefits of the local school district reimbursing its teachers to local school administrators for SAE travel representing the local school at FFA activities/events;
- 4) It was recommended California Agricultural Educators continue to include the SAE program as an integral component of their program curriculum. Furthermore, it was recommended that California Agricultural Educators continue to require all students enrolled in Agricultural Education to keep a SAE record book and to inform all local school administrators and Agricultural Education students that the SAE program will be counted as a portion of their semester grade;
- 5) It was recommended California Agricultural Education seriously consider the benefits accruing to their students for providing assistance outside of school time in assisting and encouraging their application for FFA Proficiency Awards above the chapter level; and
- 6) It was recommended the local teacher promote and require all students to maintain a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program and record book. Furthermore, it was recommended that all Agricultural Education instructors teach the SAE program as an integral part of the program's curriculum.

This study documents active student SAE program participation, available SAE program supervision by instructor(s), FFA Proficiency Awards application submittals, and agreement among perceptions regarding the SAE program and FFA Proficiency Awards program. However, if California Agricultural Education continues to prepare students in and about agriculture and

remains competitive in national FFA Proficiency Awards competition, therefore pre-service and in-service education for student teachers and current teachers concerning the SAE program and FFA Proficiency Awards program must be addressed. Failure to provide instruction for student teachers and current teachers about the SAE and FFA Proficiency Awards program will negatively influence California's student involvement in the SAE program and achievement in the FFA Proficiency Awards program. More importantly, failure to provide for instructor needs, concerning the SAE and FFA Proficiency Awards programs, will ultimately effect California Agricultural Education students contrary to Agricultural Education's founding theoretical philosophy of social efficiency.

Because part of Agricultural Education's foundation revolves around the "supervised-project" concept; specific questions should be asked. Are FFA Proficiency Awards relevant today? Is too much emphasis placed on the award rather than SAE program accomplishment? Does the SAE program motivate students to want to apply for the award? Should the number of proficiency awards students earn be the basis of instructor evaluation?

If Agricultural Education is to meet the goals of "Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020," Agricultural Education must challenge local programs to incorporate strong student SAE program involvement, FFA Proficiency Awards program participation, and SAE program supervision outside the normal school day and traditional school year. Meeting these challenges will support Agricultural Education's mission to "prepare students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture and natural resource systems" (NCAE, 1998).

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An Assessment of Program Factors Influencing California FFA Proficiency Award Participation

A Critique

B. Allen Talbert
Purdue University

In the total secondary agricultural program model of classroom/laboratory instruction, FFA and SAE, the SAE component may be the least understood one. The authors are commended for following the advice of Barrick (19XX) by examining an exemplary program in order to better understand the phenomenon under study. The purpose of this study was to identify selected program factors influencing California FFA Proficiency Awards program participation and to determine the relationship between selected program factors and perceptions held by department heads regarding SAE programs and FFA Proficiency Awards. A key question asked was “If there exists a philosophical agreement to the value of SAE, then why do some FFA members have SAE programs and others do not?”

The paper is well organized with an appropriate review of the literature. The methodology followed accepted protocol with an interesting twist. It was encouraging to see the researchers successfully use email as a data collection tool. The researchers are to be commended for comparing email respondents and U.S. mail respondents and reporting the results. This reader could not find the response rate reported, but assumed that it was less than 100% because an early versus late respondents comparison was made. Seeing a reported response rate would have been helpful in interpreting the tables, as frequencies were not reported either. The reader was disappointed to see Cronbach’s alpha reported as a measure of internal reliability, but individual items reported on in Tables 2 and 3.

The six recommendations provide a charge not only to California, but all of Agricultural Education. If SAE is to maintain its status as one of the three circles, we would be wise to put these recommendations into practice. The authors provide four questions to guide future discussion.

1. Are FFA Proficiency Awards relevant today?
2. Is too much emphasis placed on the award rather than SAE program accomplishment?
3. Does the SAE program motivate students to want to apply for the award?
4. Should the number of proficiency awards students earn be the basis of instructor evaluation?