

Why Agriculture Teachers are 12-Month Teachers

Agricultural Education programs are unique from other CTE program areas in that they are designed and recognized by various state agencies as exclusive year-round programs. It would do irreversible damage to the 46,000 students being served if the teachers were reduced from 12-month employment. The rationale for conducting agricultural education programs on a 12-month/year-round basis emerges from the unique “year-round” educational opportunities made available to agriculture students. These opportunities include, but are not limited to the following areas.

Supervised Agricultural Experience (Work-based Learning Experience)

Since its beginning in 1917, one of the three core elements of an agricultural education program has been Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). SAE is a model of the school-to-work transition/work-based learning approach to education. All agricultural education students are expected to have year-round, work-based learning programs that are monitored by the agriculture teacher. Agriculture teachers are expected to conduct on-site visits with employers, students, parents/guardians and other partners involved in the students’ work-based learning experience throughout the year and maintain an accountability assessment which includes SAE accountability. Time during the summer involved directly with SAE student training is normally 3 weeks.

Student Organization Activities (FFA)

FFA began in 1928 and is one of the three core elements of an agricultural education program. These activities require the agriculture teacher to focus a great amount of time and energy on FFA if the students are to truly benefit. Many state FFA activities are scheduled in the summer months to reduce days away from school for students and teachers. They include: student preparation for the FFA State Convention 1 week, State FFA Convention – 1 week, State FFA Leadership Conference – 1 week, State FFA Teamwork and Personal Development Conference – 1 week. Also, strong FFA chapters have chapter and FFA alumni activities being conducted at the local level year-round, including the summer months.

Facility/Laboratory/Project Maintenance

Agricultural education facilities and laboratories require year-round maintenance and oversight. Furthermore, quality agricultural education requires the use and maintenance of live animal and plant projects (i.e. aquaculture, biotechnology, greenhouse, floriculture, forestry, animal science projects, etc.). Both of these factors provide an excellent opportunity for the agricultural education program to serve the local community’s educational and agricultural needs on a year-round basis. As science and biotechnology becomes more and more a part of our curriculum, it is vital that laboratories and live projects be maintained on a 12-month basis.

Community-Based Adult Education

Leadership, delivery and/or facilitation for community-based adult education programs in agriculture is expected to occur during the summer months. These activities include working with such groups as agricultural education/FFA Alumni groups.

Professional and Instructional Improvement

Throughout the summer months, agriculture teachers have the opportunity to participate in various professional and instructional program enhancement activities and workshops. Different workshop topics are offered in various locations around the state topics related to agricultural technology and improved teaching methodology. Agriculture teachers are expected to participate in the Annual Agricultural Education Conference conducted in the summer. This time is also critical for the agriculture teacher to modify, revise and update curriculum for the next year and to articulate their curriculum with the community college and/or university system. This requires 1 week.

Historical Perspective

To be effective and maximize opportunities for students enrolled in agricultural education, secondary agricultural education programs in North Carolina must be offered on a 12 month basis. This position has been supported historically by educational and agricultural leaders and policy-makers.

On March 4, 1976, the State Board of Education approved a resolution which stated: “... **AND WHERE POSSIBLE, that vocational agriculture teachers be employed and work with their students on a 12 month basis ...**”

This position was supported in 1983 by the North Carolina General Assembly in Chapter 115 C-302 of General Statutes of North Carolina which states: **“Provided, that local boards shall not reduce the term of employment for any vocational agriculture teacher personnel position that was 12 calendar months for the 1982-83 school year for any school year thereafter.”**

This position was further supported in 2004 by the North Carolina General Assembly in G.S. 115C – 302.1(b) which states: **“However, local boards shall not reduce the term of employment for any vocational agriculture teacher personnel position that was 12 calendar months for the 1982-83 school year for any school year thereafter. In addition, local boards shall not reduce the term of employment for any vocational agriculture teacher personnel position that was 12 calendar months for the 2003-04 school year for any school year thereafter.”**