

Public Abstract

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Title:Perceptions of Agricultural Education Professionals Regarding the Purpose and Current Outcome of School-Based Agricultural Education

The purpose of this study was to identify if a discrepancy exists between agricultural education professionals' perceptions regarding the purpose and current outcome of school-based agricultural education (SBAE) curriculum.

The target population for this national study was agricultural education professionals (N=13,049). The stratified sample used in this study included homogeneous subgroups of SBAE teachers (n=12,701), teacher educators who concentrate on SBAE teacher development (n=218), and state agricultural education program leaders who are engaged with continuing professional development efforts of SBAE teachers (n=130). The resulting sample (n=533) consisted of 310 SBAE teachers, 127 teacher educators and 96 state agricultural education program leaders. The resulting sample consisted of individuals from every state in the nation.

These professionals identified teaching leadership skills as the top purpose and were unsure as to whether teaching traditional production agriculture should be a purpose.

The Borich Needs assessment identified needs of agricultural education professionals regarding the purpose of SBAE curriculum. The study found that agricultural education professionals indicated a need for improvement in 16 of the 17 competencies utilized in this study, of which, increasing the awareness of global agricultural issues and developing higher-order thinking skills were found to be the most important.

Furthermore, this study employed factor analysis to create five, concentrated groups of teaching leadership skills, "agricultural awareness," "post-secondary preparation," "vocational skills," and "agriculture science" that were used in a multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to explain the significant differences that occur in agricultural educational professionals' perceptions regarding the purpose of SBAE curriculum among different roles within agricultural education and regional locale. "Teaching leadership skills" was found to have the highest discrepancy among the five factors.

The study also concludes that regional locale and role within agricultural education are significant indicators regarding the purpose of SBAE curriculum. The findings of this study also indicate that there are significant differences regarding agricultural education professionals' perceptions regarding the purpose and current outcome of SBAE curriculum.