

SELECTED BENEFITS OF YOUNG-ADULT FARMER
PROGRAMS IN THE NORTHWEST SUPERVISORY
DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA AS PERCEIVED
BY MEMBERS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teachers of vocational agriculture have the obligation for systematic instruction of young farmers. This obligation for programs of continuing education in vocational agriculture evolved from the Smith-Hughes Act enacted by Congress in 1917 which specified that, "Instruction in vocational agriculture should meet the needs of persons over 14 years of age who have entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon farm work."

(2) This obligation was later re-emphasized in the 1963 Vocational Education Act and the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments which stated that vocational education was to be offered "to persons of all ages in all communities of the state -- those in high school, those who have completed or discontinued their formal education and are preparing to enter the labor market, those who have already entered the labor market but need to upgrade their skills or learn new ones, and those with special educational handicaps." (18)

In spite of the increasing emphasis on such programs, the enrollment in Young Farmer programs has decreased in the past five years according to data from the United States Office of Education. These data show that enrollment in programs has declined from 359,000 in 1963-64 to 288,000 in 1968-69. However, it would appear that these decreases are coming at a time when young farmers need this additional education. According to Brunner (4) "Twenty-five million wage earners out of about 62 million gainfully employed in this country are working directly or indirectly in agriculture -- about 200,000 new farm operators enter

farming each year in the United States. Most of these new farm operators need continuous training for a period of years after leaving high school."

Teachers of vocational agriculture are committed to meeting the needs of these young farmers. A fallacy in the thinking of many vocational agriculture teachers is that there is not a sufficient number of young farmers to have a program. This is not true, as pointed out by Cook (7) when he stated: "There is present in practically every community where vocational agriculture is taught, a sufficient number of young men living on farms to justify the organization of a Young Farmer Program."

There is need to educate all farmers regardless of age in young farmer programs. This need for continuous education was stressed by Rawson (3) when he stated: "Our present national and world culture with its complexities demands adult education. We cannot wait to educate another generation. Even if we could, it is impossible to prepare for the future when changes are so rapid."

The Oklahoma Young Farmer Association realized the need for education of older farmers when they cited in their constitution that persons over 40 years of age were eligible and encouraged to be active members of their local chapters. The only limitation for older members is that they cannot hold state office or receive state awards.

A paramount need in any educational endeavor is the continuous search for new and better methods. This is true with the Young Farmer program of instruction, too. As stated by Brunner, et. al. (8): "Needed too is a great deal of research which will evaluate the effectiveness of adult education in improving the adjustments of various types of programs to meet the needs of adults of all ages, all levels of learning ability, and all major types of community experience."

Statement of the Problem

This study was undertaken because of a lack of information to aid teachers and farmers in determining the benefits of a Young Farmer program, and to aid in the further development of their program.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain what benefits young farmers derived from active, formally-organized programs of instruction in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma.

Objectives of the Study

For the purposes of this study the following objectives were formulated:

1. To determine reactions of Young Farmer members regarding social-related benefits the young farmers have obtained from the program.
2. To determine reactions of Young Farmer members regarding leadership-related benefits the young farmers have obtained from the program.
3. To determine reactions regarding improved farming practices the young farmers derived from the program.
4. To determine if the young farmers felt that their economic status was improved through participation in this program.
5. To assess reactions of participants to selected additional benefits which were received through the procedures and organization of the Young Farmer program.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations of the study were recognized by the

investigator:

1. Questionnaires were completed only by the local chapter members who were in attendance at the February meeting of their respective chapters.

2. The study was limited to the members' perceptions of intangible benefits they had received from the Young Farmer program.

Scope of the Study

This study was limited to the members of 11 Young Farmer chapters in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma in attendance at the February meeting of their respective chapters. The chapters included in this study were: Aline-Cleo, Ames, Canton, Covington, Drummond, Fargo, Fort Supply, Garber, Hennessey, Taloga, and Tonkawa.

Definition of Terms

Benefits: Benefits are increases of gains over former conditions because of a new practice.

Intangible Benefits: Those benefits which, although recognized as having real value in satisfying human needs or desires, cannot be measured in monetary terms.

Young Farmers: A young and/or adult farmer who is engaged directly or indirectly in agriculture. He must be 40 years of age or less to hold state office or receive awards, but can be any age to be an active member of his local chapter.

Young-Adult Farmer Association: An organization designed primarily for educational purposes, with local chapter programs based upon four separate divisions -- education, recreation, rural leadership, and co-

operative community service.

Procedure of the Investigation

The initial step in the development of the questionnaire, to measure the benefits young farmer members derive from their program, was to develop a list of benefits through suggestions and further comment by the Vocational Agriculture State Supervisory staff. The list of suggested benefits prepared was then mailed to the presidents of the 11 chapters selected for this study. The Young Farmer chapter presidents ranked and added further comments to the list. This step was completed by July 1, 1971. After completion of the listing of benefits young farmers obtained, a questionnaire was formed. This questionnaire, which was used to measure the degree of benefit young farmers had derived from their young farmer program, was presented to the Agricultural Education staff and the State Supervisory staff for refinement.

After refinement, questionnaires were sent to Young Farmer chapters to be completed by their members at their February meeting. The 11 chapters in this study were selected randomly from the 22 chapters in the Northwest Supervisory District, which were listed as being active chapters on March 1, 1971 by the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education. The Northwest District was chosen because it contained a greater number of chapters and covered a larger geographical area within the state of Oklahoma.

The Young Farmer chapters selected for this study were: Aline-Cleo, Ames, Canton, Covington, Drummond, Fargo, Fort Supply, Garber, Hennessey, Taloga, and Tonkawa.

Before the questionnaires were mailed to the respective chapters,

questions on the questionnaire were ranked as favorable or unfavorable and grouped under each objective by the Agricultural Education staff and the State Vocational Agriculture Supervisory staff. Also, the questions on the questionnaire were randomly selected for the order in which they were presented and were worded as to have as equal a share of negative and positive statements as possible. Twenty-five questions were put on the questionnaire because it was felt that any more questions would take too much of the young farmer's time and he would fail to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were then mailed January 15 to the vocational agriculture instructors of the 11 chapters selected to be completed by the members present at the respective chapter's February meeting.

Twenty-five questionnaires were sent to each chapter along with a letter explaining the use of the questionnaire. To further explain the procedure to use, a phone call was made to each vocational agriculture instructor.

After March 1, another letter was sent to the chapters not responding, to urge completion of their chapters' questionnaires.

Ninety-one questionnaires were returned from eight chapters in this study for an average of 11.3 questionnaires per chapter.

The benefits derived by young farmers from a Young Farmer program were obtained from the questionnaire, tabulated and expressed as percentages.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature for this study was broken down in five parts which are: Definition of Adult Education, The Need for Young Farmer Education, Advantages of Young Farmer Programs, Young Farmer Programs as an Integral Part of the Total Agricultural Program, and, the Need for More Research on Young Farmer Programs.

The following information will be very helpful in the explanation of the Young Farmer program from its inception to where it is today.

Definition of Adult Education

Basic to the understanding of young farmer programs is what adult education means. Adult education, according to Brunner, et.al. (8) "is considered to include all educational activities, usually of a non-credit nature." Another definition which is closely related to that of Brunner was given by Hergiven, et.al. (10) in Adult Education Procedure: "Adult education is to refer to any learning activity involving physically-mature people." After defining who an adult is, the teacher has to focus on the basic problem with adult education -- that of adults' opinions of themselves as learners.

Havinghurst and Orr (9) stressed the need to change adults' impressions of their learning ability when they stated: "Most adults view education as the pursuit of knowledge and information and the acquisi-

tion of abilities. In order to reach these groups of people, adult educators must focus on the problem of changing general attitudes of adults toward themselves as learners and toward education which they regard as a child's work only."

Once we as teachers have changed adults' impressions of themselves, we must show these people the need for continuous education.

The Need for Young Farmer Education

Rodgers (11) reported the need for continuous education in the results of a national training institute held in Virginia in 1968 when he stated: "The need for a program of continuing education for young farmers is greater than ever today." This need for young farmer education has been created by the demands society has placed on our farmers today. Phipps (2) pointed this out when he stated: "Our present national and world culture with its complexities demands adult education. We cannot wait to educate another generation. Even if we could, it is impossible to prepare for the future when changes are so rapid."

This need for continuous education of our farmers is greater today because of our changed living patterns. A number of opportunities for farmers of past generations have been erased from our society today. In the April 1970 issue of Agricultural Education, Rawson (3) stated it this way: "Twenty-five years ago, the primary source of information for a young farmer was his dad. Today, however, many questions about farming cannot be answered by yesterdays' farmer. He must seek his answers to his problems elsewhere." But, in many cases, the chances for a farmer to receive answers to problems elsewhere are gone, too. As Rawson (3) further stated: "The country schools, churches, Saturday nights in town,

and other places where farmers gathered in the past have been erased from many rural communities. Young Farmer courses provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas among farmers with common problems."

Advantages of Young Farmer Programs

While the Oklahoma Young-Adult Farmer Association Constitution stipulates that the primary purpose of the organization is educational, local chapters are based primarily on four separate divisions -- education, recreation, rural leadership, and cooperative community service. Young Farmer programs can offer members the type of education they need and want.

The Young Farmer program can offer instruction for the young farmer that will enable him to use mature judgement in solving the problems confronting him daily. The program can also fill a social need for the young farmer and his family. This social bond between young farmers is very important as shown by Arey (14) when he stated: "In general, groups have been shown to be more successful if they are linked together socially. It, therefore becomes very important that the Young Farmer program fill a social need for its members."

Young Farmer chapters can supply a great deal of the needed assistance for young farmers of today. The young farmers have an obligation after the help they have received to help their fellow man. Farmers today, more than ever before, have more people depending on them to supply the needed agriculture goods they produce. As Rawson (3) pointed out: "Farmers depend on more people to assist them in running the farm, and in turn more people depend on the farmer for their livelihood."

Today, one farmer produces enough food in the United States to feed

more than 40 people. These people could not survive without these farmers. This fact was stressed by Bingham (1) when he stated: "Our society depends upon their continued ability to produce the needed food and fiber."

Yet, their number is so small that without the proper training they will be unable to keep up with the increased needs of society. It, therefore is a must for vocational agriculture instructors to have Young Farmer programs as a part of their total vocational agriculture program.

Young Farmer Programs as an Integral Part of the Total Vocational Agriculture Program

Neilson (13) emphasized the need for Young Farmer programs as a part of the total vocational agriculture program when he stated: "The Young Farmer program is perhaps the most difficult phase of vocational agriculture to carry out successfully, but it is probably the most needed and apparently the most neglected."

Vocational agriculture teachers need the assistance which can be offered by having a Young Farmer program. This fact was pointed out by Jaska (6) in the December 1970 issue of Agricultural Education when he stated: "It is generally accepted that the responsibility of vocational agriculture teacher in adult education is that of providing systematic continuing education in agriculture."

In many instances in Oklahoma, teachers of vocational agriculture have received assistance in many areas by having Young Farmer programs. They have helped with local fairs, shows, and contests; with premium

sales for livestock; and aided in money raising matters for the local FFA Chapter. If a teacher of vocational agriculture has a Young Farmer program, the benefits he can receive are unlimited.

The Need for Continued Research in Young Farmer Programs

The need for continued research in Young Farmer programs is the same as for any educational endeavor in which new methods and procedures are needed. Agriculture, like the rest of the economy, is undergoing great changes in technology and more research is needed to help teachers and farmers provide and receive the needed instruction. This fact of needed research was stated by Rodgers as follows: "Additional research is needed to gain knowledge concerning critical factors involved in Young Farmer education." He further stated: "Attention should be given to developing more realistic approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of Young Farmer educational programs."

Young Farmer programs can be evaluated in many ways, as pointed out by Eckstrom (12) when he stated: "At least three possibilities exist whereby we may appraise the degree to which schools for adults meet the purposes for which they are intended: the influences which the program exerts upon the community, the changes brought about in people, and the progress made in farming by the members."

Ekstrom further pointed out that many benefits can be received through evaluations of these programs with the statement: "As a result of the procedure the program can be pointed directly toward meaningful objectives with a minimum waste of time and effort, thereby providing the maximum service to the community." Research is needed in the Young

Farmer program today to make sure they are still on the lines for which they were intended.

Summary

The literature reviewed covered five areas of investigation deemed pertinent to the study. The purpose of the review was to explain the Young Farmer program from its inception to where it is today.

The Young Farmer organization's development has been slow, and at present only fifteen states are organized on a state-wide basis. But the need for Young Farmer programs never has been greater. Today's increased technology dealing with agriculture makes it a must that farmers be educated to meet the increased demands of society.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The major purpose of the study was to ascertain what benefits a selected group of young-adult farmers derived from active, formally-organized programs of instruction in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma. To accomplish this purpose, first, personal data about the young farmers were obtained. These data included the following: Age, years of membership in the local chapter, numbers of acres presently operated, types of livestock and crop enterprises, and if the young farmer was an officer of his local chapter.

After completing the personal data, the following objectives had to be accomplished: (1) To determine reactions of Young Farmer members regarding social-related benefits they had obtained from the program; (2) to determine reactions of Young Farmer members regarding leadership-related benefits they had obtained from the program; (3) to determine reactions regarding improved farming practice benefits the young farmer had derived from the program; (4) to determine if the young farmers felt that their economic status was improved through participation in this program; and (5) to assess reactions of participants to selected additional benefits which were received through the procedures and organization of the Young Farmer program.

The data presented in this chapter were gathered from 11 Young-Adult Farmer chapters active as of March 1, 1972 in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma. Before the questionnaires were mailed to the members of the 11 chapters selected, statements on the instrument were

ranked as favorable or unfavorable by the Agricultural Education staff and the State Vocational Agriculture Supervisory staff. Also, the items on the instrument were grouped under each objective. The criterion for the grouping was whether or not the data furnished were pertinent to the objective under consideration.

The questionnaires were then mailed to the vocational agriculture teachers of the 11 chapters, to be completed by the members present at the respective chapters' February meeting. From the 11 chapters which were sent questionnaires, eight chapters replied with a total of 91 questionnaires. Returned questionnaires were collected and data were analyzed and summarized.

The personal data section of the questionnaire was designed to show the characteristics of the respondents. The five areas used were felt to be of the greatest significance to the investigator and would give a better introduction for the data presented.

In order to arrive at an average response for each statement, numerical values were assigned to the response categories as follows:

<u>Positive Statement</u>	<u>Negative Statement</u>
Strongly Agree - 5	Strongly Agree - 1
Agree - 4	Agree - 2
Neutral - 3	Neutral - 3
Disagree - 2	Disagree - 4
Strongly Disagree - 1	Strongly Disagree - 5

The numerical value of the negative statements was reversed to allow the investigator to sum all statements. A negative statement which received a "strongly disagree" rating reflected a positive attitude. The numerical values of all young farmers' responses to each statement were totaled and averaged. Prior to analysis, the investigator decided the actual numerical range for each response category would be assigned

as follows: Strongly Agree - 4.6 to 5.0; Agree - 3.6 to 4.5; Neutral - 2.6 to 3.5; Disagree - 1.6 to 2.5; and Strongly Disagree - 1.5 and below.

The first five tables are a summary of the selected background characteristics of the respondents.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO AGE

AGE GROUP	Distribution	
	N	%
20-25	5	5.49
26-30	9	9.89
31-35	17	18.68
36-40	20	21.98
41-50	30	32.97
Over 50	<u>10</u>	<u>10.99</u>
TOTAL	91	100.00

Note: Average Age = 39.67

Table I contains the responses of young farmers regarding their age. The average age of the young farmers responding was 39.67 years. The largest group of participants were between the ages of 41-50 years of age. The second largest group was the age range of 36-40. The range of age for the total group was from 20 to 71 years. Only five young farmers were under 25 years old. Sixty-seven of the respondents (73.63 percent) were between the ages of 31 and 50.

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO YEARS
OF MEMBERSHIP IN LOCAL YOUNG FARMER CHAPTER

YEARS MEMBERSHIP	Distribution	
	N	%
1	8	8.79
2	18	19.78
3	39	42.86
4	14	15.39
5	7	7.69
Over 5	<u>5</u>	<u>5.49</u>
TOTAL	91	100.00

Table II summarizes the responses of young farmers concerning years of membership in their local Young Farmer Chapter. The highest percentage of the young farmers have been members in their local chapters for three years. However, 26 of the 91 respondents have been members less than three years. Only five program participants have been members over five years in their local Young Farmer Chapter.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO ACRES OPERATED

ACRES OPERATED	Distribution	
	N	%
Less Than 100	2	2.20
101-300	7	7.69
301-500	16	17.58
501-800	16	17.58
801 and over	43	47.26
None	<u>7</u>	<u>7.69</u>
TOTAL	91	100.00

Note: Average size of farm = 1338.13 acres

To assess the size of the farming operations of the young farmers, Table III was prepared. The average size of the farms operated by the program participants was 1,388 acres. Of the 91 young farmers, 25 had farms less than 500 acres in size. However, 59 (64.84 percent) of the respondents operated farms that were over 500 acres. The remaining seven young farmers did not have farming operations. The range of the total participants farm size was from 80 to 8,000 acres.

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO TYPES OF
CROPS AND LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISES

TYPES OF ENTERPRISES	Distribution	
	N	%
Beef Cattle	5	5.49
Small Grains and Beef Cattle	58	63.73
Pastures, Small Grains, Beef, and Hogs	13	14.29
Small Grains and Dairy Cattle	2	2.20
Small Grains	3	3.30
Sheep, Beef Cattle, and Small Grains	3	3.30
No Crop or Livestock Enterprise	7	7.69
TOTAL	91	100.00

In order to evaluate the types of crops and livestock enterprises operated by the young farmers, Table IV was prepared. A very high number, 58 of the 91 respondents, had small grains and beef cattle as their combined operation. Eleven of the program participants had these three categories of operations: beef cattle, 5; small grains, 3; and sheep, beef cattle, and small grains, 3. The lowest number, 2 respondents, had the combined enterprises of small grains and dairy cattle.

TABLE V
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO WHETHER
OR NOT THEY WERE OFFICERS OF THEIR LOCAL
YOUNG FARMER CHAPTER

OFFICERS	Distribution	
	N	%
President	6	6.59
Vice-President	4	4.40
Secretary	6	6.59
Reporter	2	2.20
Treasurer	1	1.10
None	<u>72</u>	<u>79.12</u>
TOTAL	91	100.00

According to the data in Table V, 19 of the young farmers were officers of their local Young Farmer Chapters. The highest number of the officers completing the questionnaire were presidents and secretaries with six each. Four vice-presidents responded to the questions, with two participants being reporters. Only one treasurer completed the information sent to the selected chapters.

The following five tables were the findings of the data reported by the young farmer participants of the 11 chapters selected. The five tables are broken into five divisions which were felt to be pertinent to the study. The study was to determine young farmers reactions to selected benefits of a Young Farmer program. The five divisions of benefits are: social-related, leadership related, improved farming practices, economic status, and additional benefits. Cumulative scores and mean

TABLE VI

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING SOCIAL-RELATED BENEFITS BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

STATEMENT	PATTERNS OF RESPONSES BY CATEGORIES										Cumulative Response	\bar{X} Response
	SA		A		N		D		SD			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Businessmen in the community take an active interest in our Young Farmer program. (N=91)	8	8.79	43	47.25	22	24.18	14	15.38	4	4.40	310	3.41
The Young Farmer families have not enjoyed a closer social relationship because of this organization. (N=91)	2	2.20	15	16.48	20	21.99	44	48.35	10	10.99	318	3.49
The Young Farmer program presents an opportunity for farmers in the community to become better acquainted. (N=91)	24	26.37	65	71.43	2	2.20	-	-	-	-	386	4.24
Young Farmer Organization members have a closer relationship with the vocational agriculture teacher than farmers who are not members. (N=90)	17	18.89	47	52.22	7	7.78	15	16.67	4	4.44	328	3.64
Community recognition is given to Young Farmer Organization members. (N=90)	3	3.33	38	42.22	37	41.11	10	11.11	2	2.22	300	3.33

ratings were given for each of the statements in the following tables.

Table VI is a summary of the reactions of young farmers regarding social-related benefits derived from the Young Farmer program. Overall, it was found that most young farmers were undecided about benefits of this type received from the program; however, two of the benefit statements received an agree response.

The young farmers agreed with the statement that the Young Farmer program helps them become better acquainted as indicated by the group's mean rating of 4.24. The young farmers slightly agreed that the program presented them an opportunity to become better acquainted with the vocational agriculture instructor than farmers who were not members. In the areas of interest shown by businessmen in the Young Farmer program and families enjoying a closer social relationship with other young farmers were undecided toward these statements. The lowest mean response of 3.33, a neutral response, was expressed by the young farmers on the statement concerning community recognition given them because of the Young Farmer organization.

According to the data summarized in Table VII, the young farmers indicated their opinions relating to leadership-related benefits received from the Young Farmer program. The statement, "participation in regular educational programs through discussion and regular attendance," received the highest level of agreement. An agree response was given to the statement, "officers of the local chapter develop leadership ability." The lowest mean response of 3.57, which is barely a disagree response, was given to the negative statement that the members of the local chapter had not improved their leadership ability. Fifty-four of the young farmers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Because of the

TABLE VII

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING LEADERSHIP-RELATED BENEFITS BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

STATEMENT	PATTERNS OF RESPONSES BY CATEGORIES											Cumulative Response	\bar{X} Response
	SA		A		N		D		SD				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Being an active member of our local Young Farmer Chapter has not helped members improve their leadership ability. (N=83)	3	3.61	13	15.66	13	15.66	42	50.60	12	14.46	296	3.57	
The Young Farmers Organization enables officers of the local chapter to develop leadership ability. (N=91)	10	10.99	72	79.12	6	6.59	3	3.30	-	-	362	3.98	
Young Farmers benefit from participation in regular educational programs through discussion and regular attendance. (N=91)	21	23.08	63	69.23	7	7.69	-	-	-	-	378	4.15	

reversed numerical values this statement appears to be an agree response but since the values were reversed it is a disagree response with the statement. In effect, by this response the young farmers said they had improved their leadership ability through the program.

Inspection of Table VIII, reveals the responses of young farmers regarding benefits to their farming practice. The highest mean response of 4.04, an agree, was indicated for the statement, "young farmers learn a great deal about the prevention of livestock diseases." An agree response on the average was given to the statement, "farmers are encouraged to try new farming practices because of the program." The negative statement concerning small grains and crops information not being beneficial, received a 3.72 mean rating indicating a slightly disagree response. New farming practices implemented because of other farmers suggestions and young farmers do jobs more efficiently on their farms because of the program received neutral responses on the average. The lowest mean rating of 3.38, a neutral response, was given to the statement, "resource people sometimes present information that young farmers cannot apply to their farming operation."

Table IX contains data regarding responses of young farmers relating to economic benefits derived from the program. A high agree average rating was assigned to the statement, "The young farmer program can benefit all farmers regardless of age." The statements concerning increased livestock gains and the young farmers standard of living not being improved received responses of neutral on the average. Also a neutral rating was given to the statement concerning increased crop yields young farmers had received. The lowest mean response of 2.60, which was slightly neutral, was on the statement, "members total farming operation

TABLE VIII
SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING IMPROVED FARMING PRACTICES BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

STATEMENT	PATTERNS OF RESPONSES BY CATEGORIES										Cumulative Response	\bar{X} Response
	SA		A		N		D		SD			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Resource people sometimes present information that Young Farmers cannot apply to their farming operation. (N=90)	3	3.33	26	28.89	13	14.44	30	33.33	18	20.00	304	3.38
Information concerning small grains & crops received as a result of Young Farmer meetings was not beneficial to our chapter's members. (N=89)	4	4.49	7	7.87	20	22.47	37	41.57	21	23.60	331	3.72
The Young Farmers program encourages young farmers to try new farming practices. (N=91)	9	9.89	61	67.03	19	20.88	1	1.10	1	1.10	349	3.84
In my farming operation I have implemented new practices as a result of other farmers' suggestions during our young farmers meetings. (N=90)	5	5.56	46	51.11	23	25.56	16	17.78	-	-	310	3.44
Young farmers do jobs more efficiently on their farms because of the Young Farmer program. (N=90)	3	3.33	52	57.78	26	28.89	7	7.78	2	2.22	317	3.52
Young Farmers learn a great deal about the prevention of livestock diseases at our meetings. (N=90)	18	20.00	61	67.78	8	8.89	2	2.22	1	1.11	364	4.04

TABLE IX

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING ECONOMIC STATUS BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

STATEMENT	PATTERNS OF RESPONSE BY CATEGORIES										Cumulative Response	\bar{X} Response
	SA		A		N		D		SD			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Most of the members' total farming operation has not changed since they became members of this chapter. (N=91)	4	4.40	47	51.65	24	26.37	13	14.29	3	3.30	237	2.60
The Young Farmer standard of living has not improved because of the new ideas they have received from the Young Farmer program. (N=90)	4	4.44	18	20.00	25	27.78	40	44.44	3	3.33	290	3.22
Young Farmers have not increased their livestock gains because of new practices they have learned while in the Young Farmer program. (N=91)	9	9.89	16	17.58	13	14.29	42	46.15	11	12.09	303	3.33
Our members have not increased their crop yield since they joined the Young Farmer Chapter. (N=91)	1	1.10	27	29.67	33	36.26	26	28.57	4	4.40	278	3.06
The Young Farmer program can benefit all farmers regardless of age. (N=91)	36	39.56	54	59.34	1	1.10	-	-	-	-	399	4.39

has not been changed because of the program."

In order to assess the responses of young farmers regarding additional benefits received from the Young Farmer program, Table X was constructed. Four statements of the six concerning additional benefits received, on the average, an agree response. The statement, "our local vocational agriculture instructor was a key factor in starting our program," received the highest mean response of 4.22. The other statement concerning the local vocational agriculture instructor was a negative statement that the instructor had not helped contact speakers or provided other assistance received a high disagree response. This indicates the overall agreement that the vocational agriculture instructor was a key factor in organizing and maintaining the Young Farmer program. The negative statement, "educational programs are not relevant to the time of the year they are presented," received a disagree response on the average.

A disagree response was also indicated on the negative statement, "educational tours are not very well planned thus making them not of benefit," This indicates that the young farmers did feel the tours were worth while and were well planned. A mean rating of 3.27, a neutral response, was indicated on the statement that help had been received from the state Young-Adult Farmer Organization in securing speakers. The lowest mean score was received for the statement, "the County Extension Director helped in securing speakers and providing other assistance." This statement received a mean rating of 2.77, a low neutral response on the average.

TABLE X

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES REGARDING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS BY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

STATEMENT	PATTERNS OF RESPONSES BY CATEGORIES											Cumulative Response	\bar{X} Response
	SA		A		N		D		SD				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Help has not been received from the State Young-Adult Farmer Association in securing speakers for educational programs. (N=88)	1	1.14	19	21.59	34	38.64	23	26.14	11	12.50	288	3.27	
Our County Extension Director has helped contact speakers and provided other assistance for educational program. (N=88)	2	2.27	27	30.68	20	22.73	27	30.68	12	13.64	244	2.77	
Our local vocational agriculture instructor has not helped contact speakers and provided other assistance for our educational program. (N=90)	4	4.44	3	3.33	4	4.44	41	45.56	38	42.22	376	4.18	
Educational tours sponsored by the Young Farmer Chapter are usually not very well planned thus making them not of benefit. (N=86)	4	4.65	5	5.81	7	8.14	55	63.95	15	17.44	330	3.84	
Our local vo-ag instructor was a key factor in starting our Young Farming program. (N=90)	31	34.44	54	60.00	1	1.11	2	2.22	2	2.22	380	4.22	
Young Farmer educational programs are often not relevant for the time of the year they are presented. (N=91)	-	-	3	3.30	12	13.19	54	59.34	22	24.18	368	4.04	

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to ascertain what benefits selected young farmers derived from active, formally-organized programs of instruction in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma. To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives had to be achieved: (1) To determine reactions of young farmer members regarding social-related benefits the young farmers have obtained from the program, (2) to determine reactions of young farmer members regarding leadership-related benefits the young farmers have obtained from the program, (3) to determine reactions regarding improved farming practices the young farmers derived from the program, (4) to determine if the young farmers felt that their economic status was improved through participation in this program, (5) to assess reactions of participants to selected additional benefits which were received through the procedures and organization of the Young Farmer program.

Procedure

Data were collected by the use of a mailed questionnaire that was sent to the young farmer members of 11 chapters randomly selected from

the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma. The instrument used consisted of a personal data section and an opinionnaire to determine the young farmers reactions to selected benefits of the Young Farmer program. Ninety-one questionnaires were received from eight of the 11 chapters selected.

Findings

A summary of the personal data gathered concerning the background characteristics is as follows:

1. The age of the young farmers ranged from 20 to 71, with the average being 39.67 years of age. The major portion of the young farmers were in the 41-50 age group. Only five young farmers were under 25 years of age.
2. Membership of the participants in their local chapters varied from one to over five years. Thirty-nine of the 91 participants had been members for three years.
3. Young farmers operated from 80 to 8,000 acres with the average size of operation being 1,338 acres. Forty-three of the 91 farmers had over 800 acres.
4. Farming programs of participants varied from single enterprise operations to combined operations of from two to four enterprises. Of the respondents, 63.73 percent had a beef cattle and small grain type operation.
5. Nineteen of the respondents were officers of their local chapters. Presidents and secretaries made up 12 of the 19 total respondents.

The following is a summary of the young farmers' reactions to selected statements designed to determine benefits of the programs.

1. The young farmers indicated that they had received social-related benefits with an overall mean response of 3.62, or agree. They felt the highest benefit they had received was becoming better acquainted with other young farmers because of the Young Farmer program.

2. The program participants agreed that they had received leadership-related benefits. Their overall mean response for the statements under this heading was a 3.90 which would be an agree response. The statement concerning participation and regular attendance benefits the young farmers received was accorded the highest agree response.

3. Young farmers agreed that the program had benefited their farming practices. Their mean response for statements in this area was 3.66. They felt that they had benefited the most in the area of prevention of livestock diseases.

4. Program participants were undecided toward their economic status being improved from the program. Their mean response on the statements concerning economic status was 3.32 on the average. However, the young farmers gave the highest rating on the total questionnaire to the statement that the program can benefit all farmers regardless of age, a mean response of 4.39.

5. Additional selected benefits to young farmers from the Young Farmer program received a 3.72 mean response. The two questions concerning the vocational agriculture instructor being a key factor in organizing and maintaining the Young Farmer program received the highest mean rating of the additional benefits selected.

An overall summary of the finding showed that young farmers received the highest degree of benefit, as indicated by the 3.90 mean response, in leadership-related benefits. The divisions of additional benefits,

improved farming practices, and social-related benefits all received on the average an agree response, with the mean scores of 3.72, 3.66, and 3.62 respectively. The lowest mean rating was in the area of improved economic status with a mean response of 3.32. However, the highest rating, a 4.39, was given to a statement in this division concerning the young farmer program benefiting all farmers regardless of age.

Conclusions

Using the analysis of data collected in this study, certain conclusions can be presented indicating the benefits of a Young Farmer program. The investigator feels he is justified in concluding the following about young farmers in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma.

1. The typical young farmers age in this area is slightly over 39 years. He operates 800 or more acres of land and has small grains and beef cattle as his major combined farming operation. He has been a member of his local chapter for three years.
2. Young Farmers have received social-related benefits from the Young Farmer program. Relationships with other young farmers is closer because of this organization.
3. Being an active member of his local young farmer chapter has helped young farmer leadership ability through discussion and participation in regular meetings. The organization has also helped the officers develop their leadership ability.
4. The Young Farmer program has helped the young farmer improve his farming practices. The program has especially helped in the prevention of livestock diseases.

5. The young farmer expressed that his economic status has not changed. However, he feels that the Young Farmer program can benefit all farmers regardless of age.

6. The vocational agriculture instructor has been a key factor in organizing and maintaining the Young Farmer program. Young Farmer tours and educational programs have been of additional benefit to the program participants.

Recommendations

After completing this study, the writer feels that the following recommendations should be made:

1. An increased emphasis should be placed on recruiting more young farmers into the Young Farmer program.
2. Programs should be presented to the young farmers in the Northwest District concerning the combined enterprises of beef cattle and small grains on a scale to meet the needs of the larger operators.
3. The Young Farmer program should emphasize programs that will increase the gains of livestock and improve crop yields, thus improving the young farmer economic status.
4. A continued effort should be made toward improving the young farmer leadership abilities through discussion and participation in regular Young Farmer meetings.
5. A stronger emphasis should be placed on community recognition of the Young Farmer members.
6. The Young Farmer program should continue to encourage young farmers to try new farming practices.
7. The vocational agriculture instructor should continue to be the

key factor in organizing and maintaining Young Farmer programs.

8. An effort should be made for the continuation of the Young Farmer program in the Northwest Supervisory District of Oklahoma.

9. Increased effort should be made to encourage all teachers of vocational agriculture to have a Young Farmer program.

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APPENDIX

YOUNG FARMER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your age? _____
2. How many years have you been a member of your local Young Farmer Chapter? _____
3. Total number of acres you presently operate? _____
4. Describe your farming operation by listing the major crops and/or livestock enterprises you now produce.
5. Are you currently an officer in your local Young Farmer Chapter? Which office do you hold?

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as it applies to your local Young Farmer Chapter by circling the appropriate response to the right of the statement. The response categories are as follows:

SA=Strongly Agree
A=Agree
N=Neutral
D=Disagree
NA=Does not apply to me

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Resource people sometimes present information that Young Farmers cannot apply to their farming operation. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 2. Information concerning small grains and crops received as a result of Young Farmer meetings were not beneficial to our chapter's members. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 3. Most of the members' total farming operation has not changed since they became members of this chapter. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 4. Being an active member of our local Young Farmers Chapter has not helped members improve their leadership ability. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 5. The Young Farmers organization enables officers of the local chapter to develop leadership abilities. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 6. Young Farmers benefit from participation in regular educational programs through discussion and regular attendance. | SA A N D SD NA |

7. Businessmen in the community take an active interest in our Young Farmer program. SA A N D SD NA
8. Help has not been received from the State Young-Adult Farmer Association in securing speakers for educational programs. SA A N D SD NA
9. The Young Farmer families have not enjoyed a closer social relationship because of this organization. SA A N D SD NA
10. The Young Farmers standard of living has not improved because of the new ideas they have received from the Young Farmer program. SA A N D SD NA
11. The Young Farmer program presents an opportunity for farmers in the community to become better acquainted. SA A N D SD NA
12. The Young Farmers program encourages Young Farmers to try new farming practices. SA A N D SD NA
13. Young Farmers have not increased their livestock gains because of new practices they have learned while in the Young Farmer program. SA A N D SD NA
14. Our County Extension Director has helped contact speakers and provided other assistance for our educational programs. SA A N D SD NA
15. Our members have not increased their crop yields since they joined the Young Farmer Chapter. SA A N D SD NA
16. Community recognition is given to Young Farmer organization members. SA A N D SD NA
17. Our local Vocational agriculture instructor has not helped contact speakers and provided other assistance for our educational programs. SA A N D SD NA
18. In my farming operation, I have implemented new practices as a result of other farmers' suggestions during our Young Farmer meetings. SA A N D SD NA
19. The Young Farmer program can benefit all farmers, regardless of age. SA A N D SD NA
20. Young Farmer Organization members have a closer relationship with the vocational agriculture teacher than farmers who are not members. SA A N D SD NA

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|---|--------------------------|
| 21. Educational tours sponsored by the Young Farmer Chapter are usually not very well planned, thus making them not of benefit. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 22. Our local vocational agriculture instructor was a key factor in starting our Young Farmer program. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 23. Young Farmer educational programs are often not relevant for the time of the year they are presented. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 24. Young Farmers do jobs more efficiently on their farms because of the Young Farmer program. | SA A N D SD NA |
| 25. Young Farmers learn a great deal about the prevention of livestock diseases at our meetings. | SA A N D SD NA |

VITA

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Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: SELECTED BENEFITS OF YOUNG-ADULT FARMER PROGRAMS IN THE NORTH-WEST SUPERVISORY DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA AS PERCEIVED BY MEMBERS

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