

NACTA Yesterday

40 years ago. Vol. XII (4), 1967

In a short piece titled "Meat for Future Agriculturists", Dr. Murray Brown, (NACTA president 1969-1970) and past NACTA Secretary-Treasurer, stressed to readers the need for instructors to remain current in their subject areas. Agronomy classes should contain important discussions of the production and use of high-lysine corn and high protein wheat and oats and animal nutritionists should discuss the use of ground oyster shells as a substitute for a portion of the roughage normally included in finishing cattle rations. Meat gives humans strength and stamina, and to get the most out of it we need fresh meat. Likewise, good information gives our students what they need to succeed in careers, but it must be fresh information, not stale, to allow them to achieve their greatest potential. Instructors owe it to their students and to their professions to provide fresh meat to each class.

Professor Norman Merwine of Mississippi State University believed that all classes should contain morale building efforts to help students to achieve their greatest potential. He relates how the typical ag student places great emphasis on the practical, is more interested in what to do and when to do it, than the "why" of doing it. The ag student generally lacks confidence in his own ideas but has high regard for authority. Therefore, rather than working out the answer for himself and possibly coming to the wrong conclusion, the student would rather be told the answer by his instructor.

Then as now, agriculture faculty worried about decreasing student numbers. R.B. Flood of Central Missouri State gave some pointers on what worked for him. He urges his colleagues to visit high school career days, to participate in senior/parent days on campus, to visit high school classes regularly, and to make home visits to potential students. Do faculty have the time to make home visits today?

30 years ago. Vol. XXI (4), 1977

NASULGC reported that over 30% of students in agriculture were women, certainly a dramatic shift in demographics since colleges of agriculture began over a hundred years before.

Prof. Foth of Michigan State University waxed eloquent about the design of a new learning center for agriculture students. The center contained five major areas, including a coffee bar near the entrance, a resource center with lockers for dispensing and checking in learning materials, a station for a tutor and displays, a wet lab, and a multi-purpose lab. Faculty used the center in combination with a lecture section that met thrice weekly and found improvement in the quality of their teaching.

Strong preparations were being made for the 24th Annual NACTA meeting, to be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba 11-14 June 1978. And...Journal editor Jack Everly proudly reported that the NACTA Journal was now available on Microform.

20 Years Ago. Vol XXXI (4), 1987

The most baccalaureate degrees ever awarded in colleges of agriculture were presented in 1986, but students seemed not to wish to specialize. Most degrees were awarded in general animal science, general soil science, agronomy, agricultural economics, agricultural education, and wildlife management.

Dr. Gerry Posler (NACTA president 1991-92) shared his teaching philosophy with the readership, stressing that students can only learn if they are motivated to do so. Dr. Chuck Stufflebeam (NACTA president 1980-81) reported that student evaluations of professors are valid and reliable. Still, even today, many faculty take issue with that finding and schools are moving beyond using such evaluations of teaching as the sole criterion for evaluating faculty performance in the classroom. And Dr. William Chaney of Purdue wrote an interesting piece on the use of postage stamps as visual aids to teach students about the history of conservation.

Dr. Doug Pals (NACTA president 1993-94) then served as Western regional Director and Dr. Wayne Banwart (current NACTA president) was the chair of the Government Affairs Committee.

10 years ago. Vol 41 (4), 1997

Dr. Jean Gleischsner (NACTA president 2000-2001) served as Central Regional Director.

Dr. Tracy Hoover and her colleagues reported that international students were more dissatisfied with health care and lack of campus employment opportunities than their domestic counterparts while Dr. M. Susie Whittington and colleagues urged agriculture professors to offer their students more academic challenges than simply a midterm, a final, and a paper or two. More quizzes, more short papers, more oral presentations may be the key to increasing learning and fighting student boredom.

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