

# Women Graduates Certified to Teach Agricultural Science

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Changes are occurring in the role and employment of women in agriculture. At Texas universities, the enrollment of female students in Agriculture majors has increased. Also, the number of female graduates certified to teach Agricultural Science in the state of Texas has risen. The purpose of this article is to provide a base point in the traditionally male occupation of agricultural science teaching as more and more females become available to teach in the Agricultural Science in Texas.

## The Study

The Departments of Agricultural Education at Texas Tech University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&I University, Southwest Texas State University and Texas A&M University cooperated in providing data whereby female graduates certified to teach Agricultural Science in the state of Texas could be contacted in a survey. Conducted by the Agricultural Education Department at Texas A&M University during the fall semester of 1988 the study included only students graduating in agricultural education certified to teach Agricultural Science in Texas.

Data for this study was collected through a instrument that was mailed out to 310 women graduates certified to teach Agricultural Science in the state of Texas. Returns numbered 128 or 41.3% of the total. A statistical analysis was conducted on the reported data.

## Findings

Reporting women graduates certified to teach Agricultural Science will be referred to as respondents.

### Graduation Status

Fifty-six (43.8%) of the total respondents received their degree in May, twenty-eight (21.9%) in December, and twenty (15.8%) in August. 1981-1982 had the highest percentage of respondents, 23.7%. 1983-1984 had 22.8%; 1985-1986 had 17.5%; 1987-1988 had only 1.8%; 1979-1980 had 15.8%; 1977-1978 had 14%; and 1976 and under had only 4.4%.

### Degree Status

Forty-two (32%) of the total respondents hold advanced degrees. Fourteen (10.9%) of those holding Baccalaureate degrees are from another field other than agriculture or education. One hundred twelve (87.5%) of the total respon-

dents hold Baccalaureate degrees that pertain to agriculture. Forty (31.3%) of the total respondents hold Baccalaureate degrees in the field of education. Thirty-one (24.2%) hold Masters degrees in agriculture. Ten (7.8%) hold Masters degrees in education (Figure 1).

### Certification Status

Sixty-one (47.7%) of the total respondents are certified to teach other disciplines than Agricultural Science. Sixty-three (49.2%) of the total respondents are only certified to teach Agricultural Science. Four (3.1%) of the total respondents did not respond to the question. Fourteen (10.9%) of the sixty-one (47.7%) respondents are certified to teach Biology. Twelve (9.4%) are certified to teach Vocation Agricultural Horticulture; Eight (6.3%) are certified to teach Composite Science; and eight (6.3%) are certified to teach Elementary Education. The other certifications are from a various range of fields (Figure 2).

### High School VoAg Participation

Thirty (23.4%) of the total respondents were involved in a VoAg/High School Agricultural Program all four years of high school. Twenty-eight (21.9%) were involved for three out of the four years of high school. Ten (7.8%) were involved for two out of the four years of high school. Fourteen (10.9%) were involved for at least one year out of the four years of high school. Forty-six (35.9%) were not involved in a VoAg/High School Agricultural Program at all during high school.

### 4-H Participation

Sixty-seven (52.3%) of the total respondents were involved in 4-H agricultural activities at least one year. Of these, the majority put in 5 years or more.

### Years In FFA

One hundred fourteen (73.4%) of the total respondents were involved in FFA agricultural activities. Twenty-six (20.3%) were involved all four years of high school. Eighteen (11%) of the ninety-four (73.4%) respondents that were involved in FFA agricultural activities continued their participation at the collegiate level.

### Position Seeking

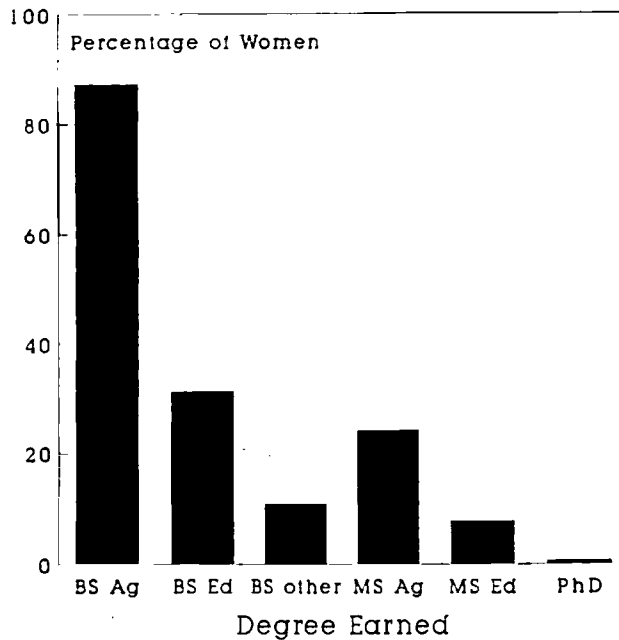
Seventy-six (59.4%) of the total respondents actively sought a position in Vocational Agriculture. Fifty-two (40.6%) of the total respondents did not actively seek a position in Vocational Agriculture.

### Position Possibilities

The respondents were asked to indicate how they were informed about positions in Vocational Agriculture/Agri-

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**Figure 1. Degree Status of Women Certified to Teach Agricultural Science.**

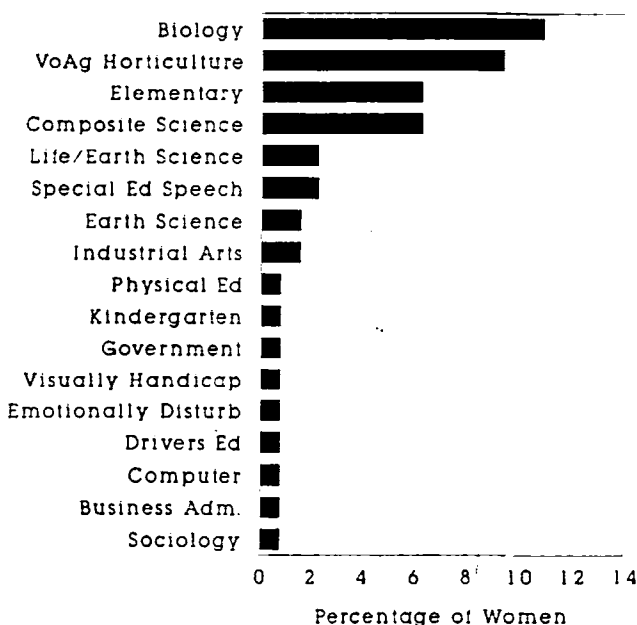


cultural Science. A list of seven choices was provided and the respondents were to mark all that applied. Fifty-five (72.4%) of the seventy-six respondents found out about possible positions through the College Agricultural Education staff. Thirty-seven (48.7%) found out from other Vocational Agriculture teachers, and twenty-four (31.6%) found out from cooperating (supervising) teachers while student teaching.

**Job Interviews and Offers**

Seventeen (22.4%) of the seventy-six respondents had at least one interview. Fourteen (18.4%) had at least three interviews. Six (7.9%) had no interviews. Twenty-seven (35.5%) of the respondents received at least one job offer.

**Figure 2. Certification Status**



Eleven (14.5%) had two job offers and six (7.9%) had three job offers. However, thirty-two (42.1%) of the respondents did not receive any job offers.

**Reasons For Not Being Hired**

Thirty-one (40.8%) of the respondents indicated that there was no reason given for not being hired. Twenty-two (28.9%) stated that another reason other than the choices listed was given for not being hired. Twenty-one (27.6%) remarked that the other candidate received the job because they had more teaching experience. Fourteen (18.4%) stated that the other candidate received the job because they had expertise in a particular subject area.

**Years Teaching VoAg/Agricultural Science**

As of June 30, 1988 only fourteen (18.3%) of the respondents had been teaching Vocational Agriculture/Agricultural Science for more than five years. Thirty-three (43.4%) of the respondents had no teaching experience as of June 30, 1988. Two years teaching experience had the highest number of respondents, eleven (14.5%).

**Number of School Districts**

Thirty-eight (50%) of the respondents had only taught Vocational Agriculture/Agricultural Science in one school district/system. Thirty-one (40.8%) had not taught in any school district/system. Only seven (9.2%) had taught in two or more school districts/systems.

**School Setting**

Seventeen (22.4%) of the respondents had taught in a small rural school setting. Fourteen (18.4%) had taught in a large urban/suburban setting. Twelve (15.8%) had taught in a small urban/suburban setting. Six (7.9%) had taught in a large rural setting. Only four (5.3%) of the respondents had taught in a large vocational school setting.

**Teaching Distance From "Hometown"**

Sixty-three (49.2%) of the total respondents did not answer the question. Twenty-six (20.3%) of the total respondents indicated that their position was 101 or more miles from their "hometown." Twenty-two (17.2%) taught or are teaching 25-100 miles from their "hometown." Only seventeen (13.3%) are employed or were employed 24 or less miles from their "hometown."

**Teaching Distance From Spouse's "Hometown"**

Twenty-three (18%) of the total respondents indicated that this question was not applicable to them. Sixty-eight (53.1%) of the total respondents did not respond to the question. Thirteen (10.2%) of the total respondents taught or are currently teaching 101 or more miles away from their spouse's "hometown." Nine (7%) of the total respondents taught or are currently teaching within 25-100 miles. Fifteen (11.5%) of the total respondents taught or are currently teaching 24 or less miles from their spouse's "hometown."

**Current Occupations**

The respondents were asked to specify their current occupation if not currently an Agricultural Science teacher. Thirty-two (25%) of the total respondents replied that they are public school teachers in another subject. Twenty-eight (21.9%) replied that their current occupation was not in agriculture or education. Eighteen (14.1%) indicated that their current occupation was something other than any of

the choices listed. Thirteen (10.2%) stated that their current occupation was a homemaker. Twenty (15.6%) of the total respondents did not reply at all (Figure 3).

### Certification Satisfaction

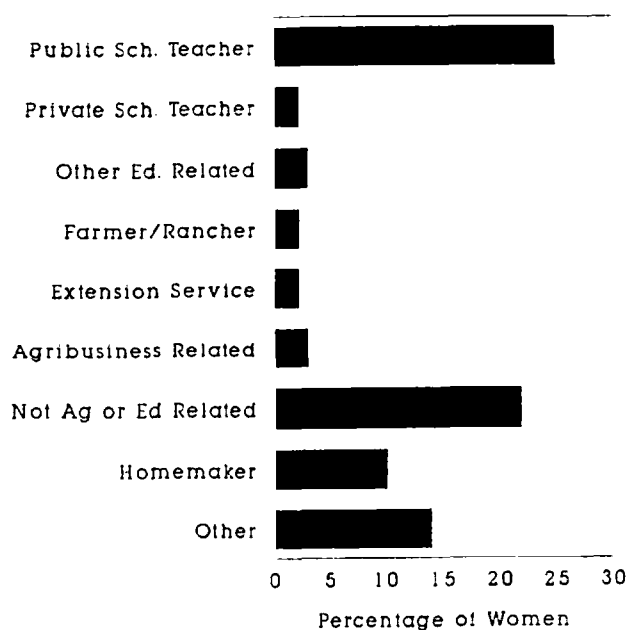
Thirty-five (27.3%) of the total respondents are satisfied fairly well with being certified as a teacher of Agricultural Science. Twenty-one (16.4%) were completely satisfied; eighteen (14.1%) were very well satisfied; sixteen (12.5%) were quite satisfied; twenty (15.6%) were very little satisfied; eight (6.3%) were not satisfied at all; and ten (7.8%) did not respond at all (Figure 4).

## Summary of Findings

The following findings were identified as significant:

1. The number of women graduates certified to teach "agricultural science" in the state of Texas increased during the late 1970s and early 1980s.
2. Nearly fifty percent (50%) of the women graduates are certified to teach another discipline.
3. About thirty-six percent (36%) of the women graduates were not involved in a Vocational Agriculture/High School Agricultural Program while attending high school.
4. Nearly fifty percent (50%) of the women graduates were not involved in any 4-H agricultural activities. Also, about twenty-seven percent (27%) were not involved in FFA agricultural activities in high school either.
5. The percentage of women graduates that did actively seek a position in Vocational Agriculture/Agricultural Science compared to those who did not actively seek a position, was clearly a 60/40 percent cut.
6. The data clearly showed that the majority of the position possibilities were relayed through the College Agricultural Education staff.
7. The number of respondents receiving no job offers was considerably high, thirty-two (42.1%) out of seventy-six respondents.

Figure 3. Current Occupations



8. Forty percent (40%) of the respondents indicated that they received no reason for not being hired for a position.

9. The percentage of women graduates, as of June 30, 1988, was relatively high, 43.4 percent.

10. In reviewing the instrument, questions seventeen (17) and eighteen (18) created a slight discrepancy. The questions pertain to the distance that a women graduate was teaching or taught from her "hometown" and her spouse's "hometown." On question eighteen (18), a choice was provided for not applicable, if the graduate was single, divorced, or widowed. However, question seventeen (17) did not provide the same choice, but pertaining to whether the graduate had ever taught at all.

11. Nearly fifty percent (50%) of the total respondents currently hold positions that are not in agriculture, education, or correspond with any of the choices provided. This includes those who chose to be homemakers.

12. Overall, about seventy percent (70%) of the total respondents were satisfied with their being certified as a teacher of Agricultural Science.

## Conclusions

Based upon the findings achieved in this study, several conclusions are possible. First, women tend to be content with the certification choices that they have made. Many of the women graduates are certified to teach two or more disciplines. Second, the opportunities for interviews available for positions teaching Agricultural Science in the state of Texas are improving. However, the actual opportunity for job offers are not as readily available. Third, the top reasons stated for the women graduates not being hired for a position are legitimate except for the top reason which was no reason given.

The findings of this study suggest that women graduates certified to teach Agricultural Science in the state of Texas have had some difficulties in obtaining positions teaching

Figure 4. Degree of Satisfaction



# Enhancing Class Attendance

Fred C. White

*Absences hinder learning by students who miss class and detract from a dynamic teaching-learning environment, adversely affecting the overall well-being of the class. When choosing to miss a class, a student takes into account only his/her own benefits and costs of attendance and ignores the impact of attendance on the overall well-being of the class. Because individual decisions lead to actions that are not best for the class, teachers have a responsibility to encourage attendance. A variety of regulations and rewards can be used to help achieve a desired level of attendance.*

With the fast pace of modern society college students are involved in many activities and are simultaneously pulled in many different directions. Academics are only one dimension of the dynamic and complex college life. Thus it should not be surprising that some students may occasionally place other activities such as current jobs, seeking employment for future careers, socializing, sports, traveling, etc. ahead of academics. Being overly attentive to non-academic activities may be manifested in poor grades and/or poor attendance in classes. The problem of poor attendance in classes is considered in this paper. Not only do non-academic activities conflict with class attendance, even those academic activities associated with one class may conflict with attending another class. For example, students may miss classes in order to attend field trips or judging trips. Furthermore, students may skip some classes in order to concentrate on other classes. What are the consequences of frequently being absent from class?

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Agricultural Science. However, these women have been able to find other positions with the degrees and certifications that they received.

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The objective of this paper is to examine the issues surrounding class attendance, drawing implications for managing class attendance. Specific objectives of the paper are as follows. The roles of attendance are examined, with some roles being rather obvious and others not being obvious. A framework for attendance decisions, which has implications for managing attendance, is developed and analyzed. Empirical evidence of an experimental strategy to manage attendance is examined.

## The Roles of Attendance

### Understanding

The basic goal of higher education is to improve students' understanding. Courses provide the fundamental mechanism through which knowledge is transmitted by teachers to the students. However, good teaching involves much more than simply passing information from the teacher to the students. A good teacher would provide insights on the materials, models and relationships, indicate the significance of this information, and help students take ownership of these ideas so that they can understand and apply them.

If students fail to attend class, they are not fully cooperating in the teaching-learning process. Even when these students copy notes from students who attended class, this behavior is not directed toward achieving a real understanding of the materials. Instead, they can generally only memorize and repeat the information from the notes. Their learning thus becomes learning by rote, which minimizes understanding and thus defeats part of the purpose for being in the course in the first place (McKeachie).

Reliance on notes from a student who attends class is a type of student-to-student tutoring program. The literature indicates that formal programs of student-to-student tutoring can be effective (Kelly and Swartz). In these formal programs, top students are identified, trained for tutoring and given incentives, such as the right to exempt exams, in order to tutor other students who need help. In contrast to these formal programs, students who fail to attend class, relying on other students to help them get the material, are faced with an informal and entirely different student-to-student tutoring program. In this informal program, the tutor is selected on the basis of willingness to help rather than academic ability. No training is given these students to help make them effective tutors. Furthermore, they have little incentive to provide any information to the student who missed class.

Students who choose not to attend class, even sporadically, may not comprehend what they are giving up in terms of understanding the material. Nonattendance results in less understanding of the material. It is difficult for students to quantify the impact of nonattendance on understanding,