



Manheim Central High School

Manheim, PA

NAAE Outstanding Secondary Program

Narrative and Supporting Materials

Narrative for NAAE Outstanding Secondary Program Recognition

Manheim Central Education Program
Manheim Central School District, Manheim, PA

A. Overview-10%

The Manheim Central School District is in the northwest corner of Lancaster County, in South Central Pennsylvania. Our school district encompasses some of the richest and most expensive non-irrigated farmland in the nation. The agriculture industry in Manheim is composed mainly of dairy, livestock and crop production. The livestock enterprises are very diverse with poultry (broilers and laying hens), swine, beef finishing and sheep grown together on many farms. Contracting of swine and poultry is a common vertical integration partnership with feed mills and slaughterhouses. Dairy is the primary livestock enterprise raised with herds ranging in size from 25 to 1,600+ milking cows. Crops grown are as diverse as the livestock with the major crops including corn for grain and silage, tobacco, alfalfa and other hay crops, soybeans and small grains. To generate more dollars per acre, many of our farmers are adding alternative and value added enterprises such as exotic animals, cut flowers, vineyards and vegetable produce stands. To accompany this diverse agricultural production system we have hundreds of supporting agribusinesses.

Manheim Central High School has an enrollment of 1,100 students in grades 9-12. Our Agriculture Education Program was organized in 1938. We are a three teacher department with an average yearly agriculture class enrollment of 600-700 students in a Block Schedule format. We currently have an opening for our Ag Mechanics position so this application will reference our two teachers: Deb Seibert-24 years at Manheim Central and Heather Anderson-15 years at Manheim Central.

We have a 125+ member Adult Young Farmer program. Our Agriculture Education program partners with the Adult Young Farmers to provide an excellent outreach program to our rural farming community. We offer a variety of meeting topics, member recognition and community interactions to meet the diversity of our members. Our Young Farmer program was recognized by NAAE in 2006 as the Region VI winner of the Postsecondary/Adult Program and Deb was recognized as the 2009 PA Outstanding YF Advisor.

Highlights of our Agriculture Education program history and development:

- Change from full year Vo-Ag I, II, III, IV courses to semester length electives
- Requirement of all 9th grade students to successfully complete an Ag Exploration course
- Addition of a third agriculture instructor in 1994
- Team teaching with academic subject and elective teachers

- Change to four period Block Schedule and nine week electives
- Designed and implemented renovation of our Ag Department doubling our square footage
- Addition of a *Land Lab* and *SAE Livestock Stable*
- Renovation of hobby greenhouse into 22'x 45' production/research greenhouse
- Enhancement of horticulture program with a 2,000 square foot shaded tree nursery
- Addition of hydroponics/aquaculture system
- Addition of Agriculture Adult Education assistant
- Currently offering nineteen Ag Science and Ag Mechanic pathway electives
- Developed www.ManheimAg.org website

B. Teaching Philosophy-10%

Our Ag-Ed program strives to provide students with a diversity of opportunities that are built on the rich traditions of our agriculture heritage. In doing this, the agriculture education teaching professional has to be flexible to change not only with the agriculture industry but also with societal expectations, government interventions and daily personal issues that our students are facing. The livelihood of being a vocational teacher is very rewarding and always challenging. No two days are the same. Our daily professional teaching goal is to make every student feel like their time in our classroom made a difference in preparing them for the future- whatever it may be. We strive to provide agriculture instruction to our school students and adult students that combine academics and applied learning. It may be a life lesson as simple as showing respect for others or as complicated as new business practices to increase profits. We may never know how what we do or say will impact a student, now or in the future, so we must do our very best every day for all students.

C. Instruction-20%

Our current nineteen agriculture course offerings are always in a state of flux and revision. Through our school district's Task Force process and our Agriculture Advisory Board's guidance we have undergone four major reviews and updates of our agriculture curriculum and program since 1985. The Task Force review team includes our agriculture department staff plus teaching staff in grades K-12, the administration and community representatives. This two year critical review process has been an excellent tool to not only improve our program but also to help other teachers find ways to help incorporate agriculture concepts in their curriculum.

We are proud to say that our Ag-Ed program is known for being on the cutting edge in Pennsylvania as far as developing new agriculture curriculum and designing innovative delivery of the curriculum. We were one of the first schools to research and write curriculum for a required high school agriculture literacy course. Over the past twelve years we have continually updated the materials and added new labs to the required 9th

grade *Ag Life Essential Group of Studies (LEGS)* course. The next transition for our 4 ½ week *Ag LEGS* course is to move it to the 10th grade year and team teach it with a science teacher for nine weeks to help students meet the state Science and Technology and Environment and Ecology learning standards.

To keep our Ag-Ed courses current with societal technology changes we have incorporated a wide array of teaching and technical strategies learned in numerous teacher in-service sessions into our daily teaching. We are a Pennsylvania *Classroom for the Future School (CFS)* which allows us to use a wide array of technology equipment and resources in our ag classrooms and shops. Governor Rendell's comment about CFS:

"The new technology will nurture students' minds and feed their appetite for learning and it will prepare them to use equipment and machines that are commonplace in colleges and universities, corporate offices, production plants and just about anywhere they will go after graduating."

Highlights of our School District's Agriculture Program Instructional Offerings:

- Twelve month planned agriculture education program for high school and adult students including field days, farm visits, field trials, monthly meetings and award programs
- Academically weighted Honors Ag Sci and Ag Mech courses
- Incorporation of Learning Focused Schools lesson planning and other teaching strategies
- Industry survey of 125+ agribusinesses to help develop ag industry appropriate curriculum
- Provide Ag-Ed materials to K-8 teachers in our school district
- Work with Science and Technology department teachers to meet new PA Science & Technology and Environment & Ecology State Standards
- Ag-Ed students plan and host *Wetlands and Watershed Day* for our entire 4th grade class
- Apply reading, writing and math teaching strategies into our daily lesson plans
- Third grade teacher have made agriculture the theme of their year long science curriculum
- Agribusiness *College in the Classroom* course offered in conjunction with Harrisburg Area Community College to offer college credits to student taking high school courses
- Successful completion of year long PA Department of Education program review leading to accreditation as a vocational agriculture program
- Ag-Ed staff attends professional and technical improvement workshops and conferences

D. Experiential Learning-10%

Experiential learning is the key to the success of our agriculture program. Our founding agriculture education fathers were way before their time when they integrated the classroom curriculum with learning outside the classroom. Three years ago the state of Pennsylvania added a Graduation Project to our list of State Standards. We have guided students through the process so they can draw on their experiences with their SAE programs for their Graduation Project. A requirement of the project is to find a mentor. We have matched up numerous agribusinesses and Young Farmers members with our students to enhance both their SAE projects and their Graduation Projects. Many of these mentorships have the potential to turn into agriculture career

opportunities in all aspect of agriculture. It is a win-win experience for our high school students and community agribusinessmen.

The seniors on our Co-Op Work Experience program work half days at their places of employment. For the student to get the most out of their final year in our ag program we require them to work with their employers to develop a list of approved practice skills they want to learn while on their Co-Op job. Some students choose the Co-Op program to gain employment after graduation and others choose to gain skills which they will use in ag careers after college.

Our Young Farmer program allows us to make employment connections with our agribusinessmen and our agriculture students. We keep the lines of communication open with our employers by recognizing them at our FFA Banquet and providing a bulletin board to post job openings to other students.

SAE's makes the agriculture program unique over any other curricular area in public education. The Supervised Agriculture Experience Program continues to be a requirement of all our agriculture students. Our local Manheim Community Farm Show provides an opportunity for our FFA members to sell their market animals to local business. Deb serves as a director of the Farm Show and secretary of the Livestock Sale committee. Our Ag-Ed staff and the Livestock Sale committee helps make our Livestock Sale a special event for our students and our buyers. We decorate the show ring, put up educational signs in the barns, give all buyers an embroidered FFA hat and offer all buyers a free beef, pork and lamb dinner. Our sale has one of highest, if not the highest, sale averages of any youth livestock sale in PA including the State Farm Show. The strong sale is due to the generous support of our buyers and the rapport our student have developed with them. Many of our students have been able to pay for a good portion of their college education thanks to the sale of their SAE animals at the Manheim Community Farm Show and/or later gained employment with a sale supporter.

E. Student Organizations-10%

Our advisory role to students and farmers has evolved over the years. We have been honored to work with many extremely hard working and talented students and their families. Many of these students go on to join our Manheim Adult Young Farmers. Our Ag-Ed program treats our YF program as a alumni arm of our chapter. Our alumni offer their leadership and agriculture knowledge to both the YF and FFA groups.

We have had the opportunity to coach numerous state winning FFA CDE teams and individuals from our chapter and prepared them for the Big E in Massachusetts and the National FFA Convention. The state winning-national level FFA CDE's that we have coached has included: *Ag Sales, Meats, Ag Mechanics, Creed, Livestock Judging, Horse Judging, Farm Business Management, Tractor Driving, Small Gas Engines and Extemporaneous Public Speaking.*

Coaching CDE teams requires a pool of people who are current with agriculture trends in that CDE area. We are blessed in Manheim to have some of the leading agriculture producers and industry representatives in Pennsylvania. They serve as coaches and judges for county, regional and state CDE's that our students compete in. Deb has served as chairmen of the PA Ag Sales CDE the last twelve years and Heather serves on the PA Horse Evaluation CDE committee. Our Ag-Ed program has hosted the PA Spring Eastern Regional CDE Day the last fifteen years at our Manheim Community Farm Show grounds. We average over 500 FFA members from 25+ schools who are competing in twelve different CDE areas.

We have had the honor of preparing ten of our FFA members to lead the state as PA FFA state officers and we have many good prospects for the upcoming years.

F. Partnerships-10%

We have been able to keep up with the ever changing agriculture industry by creating valuable partnerships with community people, community service groups and industry support groups. We have an active Adult Young Farmer program that not only includes farmers but also agribusinesses to use as resource people.

We both serve in leadership positions with the Manheim Community Farm Show. Deb serves on the executive committee as the Assistant Secretary and Heather serves on the Publicity committee. The Farm Show is a week long celebration of the community spirit and agriculture found in Manheim. We found this to be our most beneficial partnership in teaching Ag-Ed in Manheim. Many of the Farm Show directors are alumni of the Manheim FFA or Manheim Adult Young Farmer programs. During the Farm Show each year we work in cooperation with the Farm Show Board to offer agriculture education to 2,000+ Lancaster County elementary school children as they visit our Manheim FFA Children's Farm Show agriculture literacy exhibit.

Another critical partner is our Manheim Central school board and administration. They understand the importance of meeting the educational needs of our rural community by providing a premier agriculture education program for both students and our Adult Young Farmers. To supplement our school district's financial support of our program we have written grants totaling more than \$125,000 to purchase instructional tools and equipment and capital building (greenhouse and stable) expenditures. Some of the funding sources for these grants include: McFEE (school district foundation), PA Department of Agriculture, PA Department of Education, PA Department of Environmental Protection, National Gardening Association, Pioneer International, Federal Perkins Funds, MC School District Task Force curriculum funds and matching moneys from hundreds of local businesses.

The complexity of an ag program's partnerships can be found in their "Rolladex". The most important tool we have found to maintain connections between the agriculture industry and our agriculture program is our Annual Young Farmer Agribusiness Directory. The directory is a listing of over 150 local/county companies that supports Lancaster County agriculture. The directory is also posted on our website. We use this directory of industry leaders as FFA CDE judges, class speakers, SAE resource people and future employers for our students.

Educational and Financial Partnerships we have developed:

- Penn State University Cooperative Extension and Research Farm (In Manheim)
- Manheim Historical Society
- Ag-Ed Student Scholarships Established With: *Manheim Chamber of Commerce, Manheim FFA, Elizabethtown Grange, Farm and Home Center and Manheim Rotary.*
- Lancaster Farm Safety Coalition
- Lancaster County Conservation District
- Chiques Creek Watershed Alliance
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Landis Valley Museum-Heirloom Seed Project
- PA Game Commission
- PA FFA Foundation
- McFEE: Manheim Central Foundation For Education Enrichment
- PA Farm Show
- Young Farmer Ag Business Directory

G. Marketing-10%

It is said that it is easy to sell something that you believe in. This is our story when it comes to selling our agriculture education program to students, parents, administrators, school board members and who ever else will listen to us. Marketing our program is a never ending image building process. We believe we are

succeeding in overcoming the "bib overall and straw hat" image stereotyping of farmers. Our three agriculture education teachers are specialist in different areas of agriculture so we work with students and community people in areas that match our strengths. Our SAE program gives our students an advantage in earning job placement and college entry by putting them in direct contact with our agribusinessmen and producers. There is no better marketing tool than career preparation through skill development.

Marketing endeavors that we have implemented to promote our Manheim agriculture program:

- Middle School FFA membership and agriculture literacy opportunities
- PDE approved Ag Advisory Board
- Incorporated an Ag Literacy committee in Manheim Young Farmers Program of Activities
- Established a Manheim FFA Scholarship
- Own and maintain a milk vending machine in the high school lobby
- Share Ag-Ed program good news with School Board and media sources
- Information flyer about our Ag program is sent to all incoming 8th grade students
- www.ManheimAg.org website partnership with Manheim Ag Program, Manheim Adult Young Farmers, Manheim FFA and the Manheim Farm Show.

H. Professional Growth-15%

Just paying dues in an organization is not good enough. You need to find what attributes you have that will benefit the group. Our Ag-Ed staff has been active members of the PA Agriculture Education Association, National Agriculture Education Association and PA Young Farmers Association's since we started our teaching careers. Deb and Heather both served as President of the Lancaster County Agriculture Teachers Association and as an advisor of our Lancaster County FFA with an FFA membership of 1,500+. Our Lancaster County Agriculture Teacher Association meets monthly and represents eleven high schools with agriculture programs with twenty four ag teachers. Heather and Deb have also been elected as Eastern Region Vice President of the PA Association Agriculture Educators (PAAE) and we have each been the chairmen of a Summer PAAE Institute, four day conference, when it was hosted by our region.

Heather attended the summer Delta Conference in Indy. Deb has organized and hosted several Ag-Ed teacher workshops including: water quality, welding, internet access, Ag Sales CDE prep and pesticide safety training. She also organized two trips to visit Ag-Ed programs in Virginia, New Jersey and Connecticut. As the Manheim Young Farmer advisor she has chaired the conference planning for three PA Young Farmer Winter Institutes as well as attending four National Young Farmer Institutes.

Snap Shot of Activity in Professional Agriculture Organizations:

Pennsylvania Young Farmers

- State YF Advisory Committee
- Hosted three PA Young Farmer state conventions

Manheim Central Education Association

- Negotiation team, Scholarship Committee, Mentoring Program, Administration Interview Teams

Lancaster County Agriculture Teacher Association (LCATA)

- Chairmen numerous county and regional FFA CDE's and Freshmen Livestock Judging Contest
- President, Vice President and Secretary
- PA Council of Cooperative committee and chaperone

PAAE Committee and Leadership Roles

- Eastern Regional Vice President
- Eastern Region Spring CDE Day Chairmen
- PAAE Representative to PA Farm Show
- Summer Institutes Committee and Chairmen Commercial Exhibit committee
- Legislative Action Committee
- State Record Book Contest
- Mentored numerous beginning agriculture teachers
- Cooperating teacher for five PSU student teachers

NAAE

- Harvest of Ideas State award winner
- PA and Region IV Outstanding Young Ag Teacher and Postsecondary Program award winner
- Delta Conference participant
- Bio-Tech teacher workshop
- The Council in services for new curriculums: Ag Sales, Food Processing, Aquatics, Life Knowledge
- Participated in taping of National FFA video at Milton Hershey School and Alexandria , VA

PA Department of Education

- Review Team for the PRAXIS teacher certification test
- PA Review Team for NOCTI Ag Production student test
- Recognized by PDE as Exemplary Program for our Ag-Ed curriculum writing activities

PA FFA Association

- PA FFA Mid-Winter and Summer Convention State Officer "back stage" assistant
- Twelve years state chairmen Ag Sales CDE and ten years state chairmen Horse Evaluation CDE
- Made For Excellence and State Legislative Leadership Conferences
- PA FFA Foundation Golf Tournament and Auction assistant

Livestock Associations

- Beef and Pork Quality Assurance programs-Certified teacher educator