

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

ROBERT HARRISON ELDEN for the MASTER OF EDUCATION  
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Title: A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF CRATER HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATES

Abstract approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Henry A. Ten Pas

Changes in educational programs should be implemented only after a careful evaluation of the product. Information about the product in education is often not available to planners of vocational education programs. A follow-up study of former students is a means by which information about graduates may be collected and used as a basis for making curriculum changes.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the present program of vocational agriculture is meeting the occupational needs of Crater High School students.

A total of 121 former male students from Crater High School, covering a three year period from 1965 through 1967, were selected to participate in a follow-up study through a mailed questionnaire interview. Seventy-six former students with two or more years of agricultural training were compared with a group of 45 students

without agricultural training. The specific criteria on which the comparisons between the two groups are based were: occupational status, post high school training, job satisfaction, value of high school training, income, and the number of jobs held. Also being analyzed were persons influencing graduates occupational choice, value of additional vocational training, and the location of employment.

The following conclusions are based on the findings of the study.

1. Agricultural students do become employed in agricultural occupations with most of them entering business and lumbering occupations in agriculture, while over one-half of the comparison group entered the agricultural occupations of lumbering.

2. The current program of vocational agriculture at Crater High School is serving 75 percent of the students entering agricultural occupations.

3. Less than 42 percent of the male Crater High School former students have obtained some type of civilian post high school education.

4. Students trained in agriculture are more satisfied with their jobs than students with no specific vocational training.

5. Vocational agriculture is a meaningful program for students planning to enter agricultural occupations.

6. Study results indicate that counselors are not actively influential in directing patterns of occupational choice for students.

7. Former students of Crater High School feel that additional vocational training would be helpful to them in their jobs.

8. Agricultural graduates of Crater High School do remain in Jackson County for employment.

A Follow-Up Study of Crater High  
School Graduates

by

Robert Harrison Elden

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Professor of Education  
in charge of major

*Redacted for Privacy*

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Chairman of the Department of Education

*Redacted for Privacy*

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Dean of Graduate School

Date thesis is presented

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Typed by Susie Kozlik for Robert Harrison Elden

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# A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF CRATER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

## INTRODUCTION

Offerings in occupational education must continuously be validated by data concerning enrollment, employment opportunities, placement of students, occupational success of students placed, and student needs and satisfactions (25, p. 19).

In education, evaluation is the means through which progress toward the attainment of educational objectives is measured. Objectives of vocational education programs should be established in light of desired program outcomes, for they are the standards of comparisons against which the outcomes are measured. In education as in business the outcomes are generally expressed in terms of the product. In the field of education, the product of the system is the student. Schools, like industry, must continually evaluate their product. This evaluation should be based on criteria that are in step with the rapid pace of our modern society.

Generally evaluation is thought of as the force which brings about changes in educational programs, but because the present pace of our modern society is so great, quite often change occurs with little thought given to evaluation. Evaluation and change are inseparable as Galbraith states:

The two must go hand in hand, for without evaluation we forsake change and improvement. Because of the pace of life, and our ever changing society, evaluation becomes increasingly important, for we have so much to repair if our change is not for the betterment of the product (13, p. 1).

Vocational agriculture is an integral part of the educational system. Its contribution to the betterment of our standard of living cannot be overlooked as indicated by Bishop and Talley as cited by the Panel of Consultants (28, p. 94).

Certainly, by increasing the productivity of farmers and by enabling agriculture to release labor to the non-farm sectors of the economy, the agricultural education programs have made it possible for our society to enjoy unparalleled variety and volume of non-farm goods and services as well as an abundance of food and fiber.

To many people the terms "agriculture" and "farming" are one and the same. In reality farming consists of only the production segment of agriculture. This production segment employs seven million individuals (1). The other non-farm segment of agriculture employs sixteen million workers (1). It is true that because of increased productivity as previously stated, the number of workers in production agriculture is declining; however it must not be overlooked that the employment opportunities in the non-farm segment are on the increase (26). In reality, agriculture is not a decaying industry as popularly believed by many, but a healthy, growing industry which continues to contribute to the general welfare of society.

As changes brought on by advancing technology occur within the agricultural industry itself, so must changes occur in vocational agricultural programs in order to keep pace with industry requirements. These educational program changes must be based on product oriented evaluation.

National and state surveys are available to provide guidelines for program improvement, but in order to zero in on local program improvement, local surveys must be conducted to obtain data on which to make decisions on local program changes. A student follow-up survey is an evaluative tool that if properly used can provide significant local data to aid in making decisions concerning philosophy and curriculum changes for Crater High School.

### Statement of the Problem

The focusing of the educational spotlight on vocational education has revived interest in making occupational training a meaningful part of the curriculum in the comprehensive high school. Because of the constant and increasing rate of change in our society and technology, curriculum planners are faced with the perplexing problem of keeping pace. In many instances training programs now in existence will be obsolete by the time the student graduates. It is clear that occupational training programs in secondary schools must be developed with the concept of providing a solid occupational base.

This foundation must be based on broad career patterns or clusters in order to provide a lifelong sequence of employment opportunities (28). At Crater High School the objectives of the vocational agriculture program have been developed with this in mind: the primary objective is to provide the student with the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledges to become a satisfied, successful, and contributing worker in the agricultural industry.

One of the major criterion useful in evaluating vocational programs is data on the student after leaving school. All too often this data is not available since evaluation ceased when the product left school. If the general objective of the program is to provide the student with the opportunity to become employed in a chosen occupation it would then follow that one must have the necessary follow-up data in order to determine the effectiveness of the program.

The Jackson County Intermediate Education District conducted a study of vocational education in the high schools of the county in 1965. The only follow-up data available on graduates of Crater High School was that obtained by this study. It consisted of follow-up information on the graduates of the class of 1964. Data obtained included information on graduates' post high school training, employment status, and marital status (16). The general nature of this data tends to limit its use in the evaluation of specific programs.

The problem of obtaining follow-up information is compounded by the time lapse between high school graduation and job entry. Since many students either enter the military service and/or pursue some form of post high school education, several years may elapse before any formal evaluation of the student's high school training may begin. Initial follow-up data only gives a glimpse as to the occupational success of the individual, for in today's society it is expected that the average youth of today will shift occupations five times during his working life (30).

Another problem facing vocational agricultural program planners is the extreme mobility of our contemporary society. No longer can we be content to design programs only for the local community needs. We must instead concentrate on the individual's occupational needs along with local, regional, and national labor force requirements.

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and answer the following specific question: Is the present vocational agricultural program meeting the occupational needs of youth attending Crater High School? In order to provide the necessary data for answering this question a follow-up study must be conducted involving two groups of former students. Students having received vocational agricultural

training will be compared with former students having received no vocational agriculture training to determine if any difference exists between the two groups as to occupational choice, success in employment, happiness, post high school training, and location and duration of employment. The manner in which their high school training has influenced their careers, what they feel their training lacked, and their ideas for improvement are also important considerations for comparison.

Through a follow-up study of former students, answers to these types of questions can be obtained. These answers can then be used as a basis for making decisions to bring about changes in the vocational agricultural programs that will result in a curriculum which satisfies the individual's occupational requirements.

#### Location of the Study

Jackson county, located in southern Oregon comprises an area of 2,812 square miles with a population of 95,000 (22). Its topography is mostly hilly and mountainous. The county joins with Klamath county on the east, Douglas county to the north, Josephine county on the west, and with the state of California to the south. The Rogue River valley, a bowl shaped valley surrounded by mountains, is the population and commerce center for the county. The largest city, and county seat, Medford, with a population of 30,600 is located

three miles south of Central Point and twenty-five miles north of the California border (22).

Forest products are the major sources of employment and income for the county. Other agricultural products contributing to the income of the area are fruit and livestock. The valley is one of the major producing areas of pears in the United States (14). An industrial park under development is permitting a more diversified economy for the region.

Jackson county has ten public school districts located within its borders (14). Medford District 549C is the largest with an enrollment of 9,537 students (15). Central Point District 6 is second in size with 2,662 students (15). Crater High School, located in school district 6 in Central Point, has a student body enrollment of 768 (15). Crater High School as presently organized is a three year high school. Also included in district 6 are seven elementary schools and a junior high school. School district 6 serves a large geographical area. Included in the boundaries of the district are the small cities of Central Point (population 3,850) and Gold Hill (population 600) along with the unincorporated community of Sams Valley (22).

#### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to those former students from the classes of 1965, 1966, and 1967 in order to obtain data which would more

accurately reflect the current vocational agricultural program. Earlier classes were excluded to insure that data be current; later classes were left out because the students are not yet firmly acclimated to the "world of work".

The subjects involved in this study are limited to former male students. Comparisons will be made between all the former male students having two or more years of vocational agricultural training and a random sampling of those male students with no vocational agricultural training.

The method used to survey former students was a mailed questionnaire. The disadvantage of using a mailed questionnaire is its impersonal nature, the possible lack of understanding, and the incompleteness of responses.

### Procedure

Former students with two or more years of vocational agricultural training were compared with those without such training. During the period under study, there were 351 male students on the senior class rolls. Of these 351 students, seventy-six had received two or more years of vocational agricultural training. (It is a widely held opinion that students with less than two years of agricultural training do not possess the necessary competencies to become successfully employed in agricultural occupations.)

All former students from the three classes mentioned who had received two or more years of vocational agricultural training were included in the study.

In the comparison group, those former students having received no agricultural training, the following sampling procedure was used. From an alphabetical list of each class of former students every sixth was chosen as a subject to be included in this study. Fifteen students were selected from each of the three classes in this manner. By sampling the comparison group in this way, a 16.36 percent sample of the male non-agricultural student population was obtained.

After the sampling procedure was determined, the names, class and last known addresses of the former students were obtained from school records. Every attempt was made to secure the most current address of former students. This was accomplished by contacting parents, friends, and relatives through personal contact or telephone.

A three page follow-up questionnaire was developed and, together with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, was mailed to 104 students at their last known addresses. Approximately two weeks after the original mailing, a follow-up letter, along with another questionnaire, was sent to those students not responding. In an attempt to secure as large a return as possible, a third follow-up letter and questionnaire was mailed and in some cases telephone calls were made.

For the present study, data were analyzed through the procedure of comparing percentages. These percentages represented the responses to specific questions asked the subjects of the study. This procedure of data analysis was chosen over other methods because it was considered as the best available means of presenting the data.

### Definition of Terms

In education, as in other fields, a common understanding of terminology used in the profession is lacking. The following definition of terms is included in order to clarify the meaning and prevent the misinterpretation of terminology used in this study.

Agricultural Business: Businesses providing services and products to the farmer or involved in processing, marketing, or transporting of agricultural products.

Agricultural Education: Consists of the sum total of experiences gained from systematic and organized instruction in agriculture given at any grade level.

Agricultural Student: A former student who has completed two years or more of vocational agriculture.

Comparison Group: One of two groups in this study consisting of non-agriculture students.

Farm Labor: Those individuals working as full time hired labor for farmers.

Farmer: For the purposes of this study, persons meeting the criteria for this category are full time farmers deriving their sole support from farming.

Forestry: Includes those occupations dealing with the production and management of forest resources.

Laborer: Occupations not requiring additional training other than that provided on the job.

Lumber: Those occupations involved with the harvesting, transportation, processing, and marketing of forest products.

Managerial: Those occupations in which a person is involved with the manipulation of production resources such as capital, labor, etc.

Non-Agricultural Student: A former student who has received less than two years of vocational agriculture training.

Non-Farm Agriculture: Pertains to that segment of the agricultural industry on which the farmer must depend for essential services. The fertilizer, seed, feed, and farm machinery industries are examples of non-farm agricultural industries.

Occupational Education: Education which is designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits, and appreciations needed to enter and make progress in an occupation.

Post High School Training: Any educational training that furthers an individual's occupational pursuit with the exception of military operated schools.

Production Agriculture: Pertains to that segment of the agricultural industry involved in the growing, harvesting, and marketing of agricultural products. This segment of agriculture is commonly referred to as farming.

Professional: Those occupations requiring a degree from a four year college or university.

Questionnaire: A survey form that was sent to former students selected as subjects for this study.

Respondent: Those former students selected as the sample in this study that returned the questionnaire.

Service: Those occupations in which an individual is engaged in providing services to consumers such as retail sales, law enforcement etc.

Skilled or Technical: Occupations which require specialized training through vocational school training or an apprenticeship program.

Vocational Agriculture: Organized and systematic instruction, grades 9 through 12 that prepares individuals for entry into occupations in the field of agriculture.

Vocational Education: For the purposes of this study, vocational education shall have the same meaning as occupational education.

## Summary

Change in educational programs should be brought about by a careful evaluation of the product of the program. One method of evaluating the product in light of the stated objectives of the program is through a follow-up study of former students.

Complete and adequate follow-up data on former students of Crater High School is lacking. The purpose of this study is to determine if the present vocational agricultural program is meeting the occupational needs of the students.

Selected as a sample in this study were 121 former students of Crater High School from the classes of 1965, 1966, and 1967. One hundred and four former students were located and were mailed a questionnaire. Those students in the sample that had received two or more years of agricultural training were compared with those having received no agriculture.

Information obtained from this study will be used to help determine program adequacies and future possible directions to take in planning programs of vocational agriculture.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Significance of a Follow-up Study

Evaluation of educational programs is presently receiving considerable attention from many segments of our society. Congress has emphasized the importance by providing increased emphasis on evaluation in the 1963 Vocational Education Act and the 1968 Vocational Education Amendments (5).

Byram points out that administrators are becoming more aware of the need for evaluation of vocational education programs brought about by public pressure for schools to do something to prepare youths for the world of work (5). The national advisory council on vocational education has made strong recommendations to improve evaluating techniques on a national level (29). The council further suggests that:

The Office of Education be responsible for establishing procedures to evaluate and collect data concerning vocational students, benefits of program to students, future vocational education needs, placement, follow-up, etc. (29, p. 203).

They go on to say that --- "the need for this information is obvious. Virtually none is being collected now" (29, p. 203).

The follow-up study is one of many evaluative tools available to the educator. Its purpose is to make available information on former students to help in determining whether or not educational objectives for the program under consideration have been met. Numerous writers in recent years have emphasized the importance of conducting follow-up studies of former students (5, 13, 28, 30, 31).

Brandon and Evans suggest that one of the best techniques of evaluation has been the follow-up of former students to determine the extent in which they were placed in the occupations for which they were trained (2). Venn (30) has established the follow-up of former students as a major issue in establishing a firm and continual relationship between students, schools, and the world of work. He states that: "Follow-up must become a recognized responsibility of all schools and colleges if education is to achieve its purposes in a technological society" (30, p. 150).

Follow-up studies are included as a part of the total evaluation process for vocational education programs in Oregon (27). The State Board of Education has developed a self-evaluation instrument for use by local staff in assessing local programs. A suggested approach to a follow-up study has been developed for incorporation into this self-evaluation procedure (27). In addition, data concerning

all vocational education graduates are collected annually to provide further state wide follow-up information (27).

The importance of follow-up studies being conducted on the local level is recognized by the national advisory council. The council places the responsibility for follow-up of students after placement on local school districts. This tends to insure that local schools will use the information to continually evaluate their vocational programs (29).

#### Choice of Occupations

A major criterion in the evaluation of any vocational education program should be whether or not students trained in a particular occupation do in fact enter and succeed in those occupations.

Nation wide studies show that high school graduates are being placed in occupations for which they were trained. Eighty percent of those persons completing vocational education programs in all fields in 1966 were employed in either the field for which they were trained or a closely related field (29). In the same study, 67 percent of those students completing vocational agricultural programs were employed in agricultural occupations (29). A Connecticut study of former graduates were employed in occupations related to their training (7). This study also reported that 53 percent of the vocational agricultural graduates were placed in jobs related to agriculture (7).

In Farrer's eighteen year study of vocational agricultural graduates in Utah, 53.75 percent were employed in agriculture (11). A Wisconsin report reveals that 64 percent of the vocational graduates were employed in occupations related to their high school vocational training (17). Skidmore found that 51 percent of former agricultural students were employed in agriculture (24).

A 1967 state wide follow-up of 400 former vocational agricultural students in Oregon indicated that 30 percent were employed in the agricultural industry (27). This study was made in the fall following graduation, allowing very little time for students to become established in a job. An additional Oregon study showed 55 percent of the agricultural graduates employed in agriculture (13).

The point is often brought up where, with the continual decrease in the number of farmers, a demand still exists for training individuals for occupations in production agriculture. Eggenberger in a study of Texas agricultural students found that 28.4 percent were employed as farm operators (10). Jones further indicated in a Wisconsin study that 28 percent were engaged in farming (17). Farming employed 25 percent of the former Nebraska agricultural students according to Deunk (8). These data seem to indicate that even though the total numbers of farmers are decreasing, a significant number of agricultural graduates are finding employment in farming.

The President's Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education indicate that for every ten persons now involved in agricultural training, 100 will be employed in the field six years later (28). This data points out that we are only presently training 10 percent of the agricultural work force.

### Success and Satisfaction in Employment

The success and satisfaction a person experiences in a chosen career can and should be an important criterion in the evaluation of the training a vocational education graduate has received. In our contemporary culture, the most important thing that determines man's worth to society is his job. Venn emphasizes this in the following way:

A man's occupation in American society is now his most significant status conferring role. Whether it be high or low, a job status allows the individual to form some stable conception of himself and his position in the community (30, p. 11).

In comparing job satisfaction between agricultural and non-agricultural graduates, Galbraith found that 83.34 percent of the agricultural students were either well or highly satisfied with their jobs as compared with 80.36 percent for non-agricultural graduates (13).

Factors that can be used to determine satisfaction and success

in employment are earnings, number of jobs held, and the rate of advancement. In a national study, vocational education programs were identified as a factor in increased graduate earnings (28). In a ten year follow-up study conducted in Oregon, Galbraith reports that 11.40 percent of the agricultural graduates had monthly incomes of \$400 or less compared with 16.67 percent for the non-agricultural graduates. In the same study, 56.96 percent of the agricultural graduates indicated monthly incomes of between \$400 and \$600 as compared with 37.03 percent for non-agricultural graduates (13). The survey further revealed that only 9.52 percent of the agricultural students were dissatisfied with their jobs while 10.71 percent of the non-agricultural students fell in this category (13). Fiffield found that job satisfaction was related more to the nature of the work than to the amount of income (12).

The constant movement of an individual from one job to another without a specific purpose tends to indicate a lack of occupational satisfaction. Beneker found that over 75 percent of the graduates he surveyed in Wisconsin considered their occupations as being permanent. At the same time, less than one-third had attained the occupation which was their 10 year goal (3). A follow-up study conducted in Colorado three years after graduation revealed that the former students surveyed had averaged two jobs since graduation (6).

### Mobility of Graduates

It is common knowledge that our population is much more mobile now than in past years. The search for employment is often given as a major reason for the increase in migration from the home community. The holding power a community has on its young people is directly dependent on the availability of employment within that community and on the ability of the youth to fill the community's occupational needs.

A Wisconsin report shows that 56.9 percent of the 1957 high school graduates had left their home community by 1963. It was also pointed out in this study that county to county migration accounted for most of this movement (3). A Colorado study reported that 15 percent of the high school graduates were living out of the state at a time when Colorado was experiencing a large in-migration of people (6).

In a follow-up study of agricultural graduates in Ohio conducted five years after graduation, 80 percent of the graduates (excluding those in military service) were living within 25 miles of their home communities. The study further found that less than 10 percent were living more than 100 miles from home (23). Over 85 percent of the agricultural graduates in a Nebraska study had migrated less than 300 miles (8). Ditmer reported that 69.2 percent of the

agricultural graduates he surveyed had remained to work in the state (9). An Idaho study revealed that while most of the college and technically trained people are leaving the state, those individuals with no post high school training are remaining in the state. These people are working primarily in semi-and unskilled jobs (12). Galbraith reports that in Hood River County, Oregon, 47.62 percent of the agricultural graduates remain in the county for employment, while 21.42 percent are reported to be working out of state (13).

Traditionally, vocational education programs have been geared to the local community's manpower needs. With the increase in the mobility of our population, schools must look beyond the needs of the local community. Venn supports this viewpoint in this way:

The industrial complex of the nation is being made and remade so swiftly and plant and worker mobility are so high that narrow local training may have short relevance for the new worker. This points to the importance of a more broadly based vocational-technical education, one consonant with long-term regional and national manpower demands. (30, p. 33).

### Post High School Training

Post high school education has long been stressed as an extremely important segment in the individual's total educational program. Professional, technical, and vocational training after high

school is essential in many types of occupations. Each year more students are contemplating the possibilities of further education after high school graduation. Even though more students are considering college, evidence seems to indicate considerable difference exists between what students say they plan on doing and what they actually do. Kantola found that 83.3 percent of the high school seniors in an Arizona study planned to continue their education beyond the high school level (19). In comparison, an Oregon survey reported that 37 percent of the high school graduates actually entered a four year college or university (31). An additional point of interest in the Oregon study was that one-half of those who entered college dropped out before completion (31).

A follow-up of 1964 graduates of Crater High School in Oregon found 41 percent enrolled in some form of post high school education (16), while a Michigan study revealed 40 percent of the graduates are continuing their education (21).

It is clear that some type of post high school education is needed to meet the needs of those individuals that either do not desire or are not capable of obtaining a baccalaureate degree.

In the previously mentioned Oregon study, 51 percent of the graduates had not entered into any form of continued education and only 12 percent had or were attending a non-degree granting institution (31).

Evidence from several follow-up surveys seems to indicate that fewer vocational agricultural students than non-agricultural students continue their education. In Skidmore's thirty year follow-up of West Virginia agricultural graduates, he found that 24.3 percent attended college. At the same time he found that only 6.5 percent of those agricultural graduates starting college did not finish (24). Galbraith reported that 30 percent of the agricultural graduates attended college compared to 56 percent for non-agricultural students (13).

In North Dakota, Ditmer discovered that 18.1 percent of the former agricultural students surveyed continued their education and majored in agriculture (9). Deunk has reported that 25 percent of the agricultural graduates surveyed in Nebraska entered college and studied agriculture (8).

As occupations in agriculture become more technical and sophisticated in nature, additional post high school agricultural education programs must be developed to provide individuals seeking employment in the field the competencies necessary to become successfully employed. Venn's statement that ---- "education is placed squarely between man and his work" (30, p. 1) has considerable significance here.

## Unemployment

It is a paradox of our society today that we have both people unable to secure employment and jobs going unfilled because of the lack of qualified workers. Technology has advanced so rapidly as to be almost beyond a layman's understanding. According to a U. S. Office of Education publication, "half of what a graduate engineer studies today will be obsolete in ten years" (29, p. 157).

Because of the dynamic nature of society and advancement in technology, increasing emphasis must be placed on developing a continuous educational opportunity for workers. Swanson and Kramer state that:

The fluid nature of our workaday world and the very real possibility that a significant number of the individuals in tomorrow's labor force will have more than one occupation during their working life places a new importance on education and on the need for retraining workers and updating and upgrading skills of those employed (2, p. 181).

Venn states that "there are now more than one million young men and women under twenty-two who have left school and are not at work" (30, p. 12). He goes on to say that "at any given time, 30 percent of the high school dropouts will be unemployed; even high school graduates average 15 percent unemployed" (30, p. 12).

Kahn and Backman suggest three possible environments for youth; attendance in school, employment, or unemployment (18).

The third possibility is disapproved by society but occurring more and more frequently.

Apparently unemployment among individuals who are graduates of vocational education programs is not of the magnitude previously suggested. A U. S. Office of Education report points out that in 1966 the unemployment rate for vocational graduates was 3.9 percent (29). A follow-up study of high school graduates in Connecticut indicated a 1.06 percent unemployment (7). Follow-up data on 1964 graduates from Crater High School in Southern Oregon revealed a four percent unemployment figure (16).

Unemployment rates for graduates of vocational agriculture programs appear to be low. Magisos reports a .33 percent unemployment rate among former agricultural students in Washington (20) while one Oregon study indicated no unemployment among former agricultural students (13).

The consideration of unemployment must be a major factor in conducting a follow-up study and the subsequent evaluation of vocational agricultural programs.

### Adequacy of High School Training

The attitude held by high school graduates with regards to the quality of their high school occupational training is an important criterion in the evaluation of any vocational education program. The

fact that many high school graduates felt their training was less than desired was brought to the forefront in a Colorado study. In a random sample of 500 graduates out of a total of 19,297 in the state in 1963, over 50 percent indicated that their high school education was of no help in obtaining a job (6). Fiffield stated that --- "educational programs were not meeting students' needs in terms of occupational information, vocational training, and post high school job placement" (12, p. 45).

Studies seem to indicate that former vocational agricultural students look with favor on their high school agricultural training. Eighty percent of the agricultural graduates in a Wisconsin study who were employed in an agricultural occupation felt their training was of great value to them in their present occupations (17). In a follow-up of former agricultural students, Boehm found that 76.3 percent indicated that they would enroll again in the vocational agricultural program (4). These same students said that record keeping, shop instruction, and FFA participation was beneficial in developing the personality traits, responsibility, and dependability necessary in their present employment (4). Ninety-seven percent of the former students responded favorably concerning experiences in vocational agriculture and the Future Farmers of America as reported by Skidmore (24). An Oregon Report revealed that 72.62 percent of the former agricultural graduates looked upon vocational agriculture as their most meaningful course (13).

## Summary

The significance of the follow-up study seems to be well established as a criterion in evaluating the attainment of objectives of vocational education programs. Whether a vocational graduate becomes successfully established in the occupation for which he was trained is the major question to be answered. Other important considerations that can be reflected in follow-up surveys are post high school training, migration patterns, unemployment, and the former student's rating of the adequacy of his training.

It must be remembered that the follow-up study is not an evaluative panacea for vocational education programs. It is but one tool that can be used to determine program direction in the attempt to keep vocational education programs current with student needs.

## CHAPTER III

## PRESENTATION OF DATA

Questionnaire Returns

In conducting any study using former students as subjects, a major task to be accomplished is the locating of the graduates. Even though only four years had elapsed since the earliest class graduated, many former students had moved from the home community. Service with the armed forces accounted for much of this migration. A detailed presentation of returns from the questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

Occupational Status of Former Students

Data collected from the returned questionnaire indicated that 43.39 percent of the agricultural students were either employed full time or self employed in comparison to 29.63 percent for the non-agricultural students.

Unemployment of former students seems to be of little significance with low percentages being reported for both comparison groups. Unemployment of former agricultural students was reported to be slightly less than with the non-agricultural group.

Both groups reported about the same percentages of former

Table 1. Tabulation of Questionnaire Returns

Crater Agricultural Students					
Year	Number Students	Address Unknown	Number Sent	Number Returned	Percent Returned
1965	32	4	28	20	71.42
1966	32	1	31	24	77.42
1967	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>90.00</u>
Totals	76	7	69	53	76.81
Crater Non-Agricultural Students					
1965	15	5	10	7	70.00
1966	15	4	11	7	63.64
1967	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>92.86</u>
Totals	45	10	35	27	77.14
Total Both Groups	121	17	104	80	76.92

students still serving in the armed forces. Approximately one-third of the respondents of both groups indicated they were still serving military obligations. This is not surprising considering the short time lapse since the earliest class in the study has left school.

The responses from the survey revealed that 21.25 percent of all the subjects from both groups were attending school on either a full or part time basis. Table 2 presents the data obtained from this component of the survey in detail.

Table 2. Occupational Status. (By Percentage)

	Agricultural Students	Non- Agricultural Students
Employed Full Time	39.62	29.63
Employed Part Time	3.77	0.00
Self Employed	3.77	0.00
Unemployed	0.00	3.71
Military Service	37.74	33.33
Attending School Full Time	13.21	33.33
Attending School Part Time	1.89	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00

### Types of Occupations Selected

Data obtained from the questionnaire indicated that former agricultural students tend to go into agricultural occupations. Business and lumbering were the categories of agricultural occupations employing most of the agricultural students.

Data indicate that the present program of vocational agriculture is serving 75 percent of those students entering agricultural occupations. Table 3 indicates in detail the types of occupations selected by both samples in this study.

Table 3. Types of Occupations Held By Former Students Full Time or Self Employed (By Percentage)

	Agricultural Students	Non-Agricultural Students
<u>Agricultural Occupations</u>		
Farmer	4.35	0.00
Farm Labor	8.70	0.00
Agricultural Business	17.40	0.00
Forestry	8.70	0.00
Lumber	<u>26.09</u>	<u>55.56</u>
Total	65.24	55.56
<u>Non-Agricultural Occupations</u>		
Professional	4.34	0.00
Managerial	4.34	0.00
Service and Distributive	13.04	11.11
Technical and Skilled	8.69	33.33
Laborer	<u>4.35</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total	34.76	44.44

### Post High School Education

Information obtained from the survey revealed that 87.50 percent of the respondents had pursued some type of post high school education in the years since leaving high school. In considering all of the respondents as a total group, 46.25 percent obtained their post high school education through military specialist schools. By disregarding all the former students who indicated that military training programs were the only types they had obtained, the percentage of respondents obtaining further education is reduced to 41.25 percent. The percentage of students receiving some type of post high school education is shown below in Table 4.

Table 4. Students Receiving Post High School Education Including Military Specialist Training (By Percentage)

Agricultural Students	83.02
Non- Agricultural Students	96.30

An analysis of data reported in Table 5 illustrates the type of post high school education obtained by the two comparison groups.

### Job Satisfaction

In determining the job satisfaction level of the survey respondents, only those individuals presently classed as self employed or

Table 5. Types of Post High School Education (By Percentage)

Types of Training	Agricultural Students	Non-Agricultural Students
Armed Forces Specialist School	49.06	40.74
Apprenticeship Training	11.32	7.41
Vocational or Trade School	0.00	3.70
Business School	0.00	3.70
Correspondence Course	13.21	11.11
College or University	32.08	55.56
Community College	7.55	3.70
Adult Education	9.43	0.00
Other	5.66	0.00

employed for wages on a full time basis were considered in computing the figures seen in Table 6. It should be pointed out that in combining the figures for the first two categories, the data reveal that 84 percent of the agricultural graduates were either highly or well satisfied with their job as contrasted to 50 percent for the non-agricultural group. It was also noted that 50 percent of the non-agricultural respondents were less than satisfied with their current occupation as compared to only eight percent for the agricultural students. Since the tables do not reveal it, it is important to note that the majority

of individuals from both groups who indicated they were very dissatisfied with their current occupational status were in the military service.

Table 6. Job Satisfaction (By Percentage)

	Agricultural Students	Non-Agricultural Students
Highly Satisfied	48.00	37.50
Well Satisfied	36.00	12.50
Indifferent	8.00	0.00
Somewhat Dissatisfied	4.00	50.00
Very Dissatisfied	4.00	0.00

#### Value of High School Training

In tabulating the data collected on the value of high school training, responses from subjects of the survey from all occupational status categories were included. Data computed from responses of the agricultural graduates indicated that 88.68 percent felt their high school training was exceptional or satisfactory in preparing them for present or future occupations as compared to 62.97 percent for the non-agricultural group.

Fewer agricultural students were less than satisfied about the value of their high school training than was expressed by the

non-agricultural group. Table 7 presents in detail the tabulation of data collected from responses to this component of the questionnaire.

Table 7. Value of High School Vocational Preparation All Respondents (By Percentage)

	Agricultural Students	Non- Agricultural Students
Exceptionally Well Prepared	24.53	7.41
Satisfactorily Prepared	64.15	55.56
Poorly Prepared	3.77	22.22
No Help At All	7.55	14.81

Table 8 presents data computed from responses of the two groups reflecting which courses in their high school education were the most meaningful. For example, 56.60 percent of the agricultural students indicated that agriculture was a meaningful course in preparing them for their present occupation; hence, it was given a rank of one in the table. It is somewhat surprising that metal shop ranked so low in the ratings, especially in the agricultural group, as the course has been a popular one with students in school. It is interesting to note that the agricultural group of former students tended to place classes vocational in nature high in the rankings while the non-agricultural group tended to place high the more academically oriented classes. Both groups placed the traditional mathematics and

English courses high in the rankings, indicating their follow-up through value to individuals in their later jobs.

Table 8. Most Meaningful High School Courses (All Respondents)

<u>Agricultural Students</u>			<u>Non-Agricultural Students</u>		
Rank	Course	Percent	Rank	Course	Percent
1.	Agriculture	56.60	1.	Mathematics	44.44
	Mathematics	56.60	2.	English	25.93
2.	English	35.85	3.	Social Studies	22.22
3.	Business Education	28.30		Business Education	22.22
4.	Wood Shop	20.75	4.	Speech	18.52
5.	Speech	16.98	5.	Physics	11.11
6.	Mechanical Drawing	15.09		Weed Shop	11.11
7.	Metal Shop	13.21		Mechanical Drawing	11.11
8.	Social Studies	11.32	6.	Science	7.41
9.	Science	9.43		Metal Shop	7.41
10.	Physics	7.55	7.	Chemistry	3.70
11.	Journalism	5.66		Agriculture	3.70
12.	Foreign Languages	3.77		Journalism	3.70
13.	Chemistry	1.90	8.	Foreign Languages	0.00

### Income of Former Students

In comparing the monthly income of the two respondent groups, only those former students classifying themselves as self employed or employed for wages full time were considered in computing the data presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Monthly Income of Former Students (By Percentage)

Wage	Agricultural Students	Non-Agricultural Students
Under \$150	0.00	0.00
\$151-200	4.35	11.11
\$201-300	4.35	11.11
\$301-400	8.70	11.11
\$401-500	13.04	22.22
\$501-600	21.74	22.22
\$601-700	13.04	11.11
Over \$700	34.78	11.11

Responses from former agricultural students indicated that 69.56 percent were receiving an income of over \$500 per month compared to 44.44 percent for the non-agricultural group. Tabulated responses from the agricultural students revealed that 30.44 percent were employed for less than \$500 per month while 55.55 percent of

the non-agricultural students reported less than \$500 per month in income. The most frequently listed income categories indicated by the non-agricultural group was a combination of the \$401-600 categories.

#### Number of Jobs Held Since Graduation

In computing the figures for this component of the follow-up, only those jobs that were classed as full time and one month or more in duration were considered. The exceptions to this were summer jobs held by college students as they were not considered in tabulating the data. Table 10 shows the findings of the survey for both groups. The reason so large a percentage of both groups had never held a full-time job was primarily due to involvement in continued schooling or military service.

Table 10. Number of Jobs Held Since Graduation from High School  
(By Percentage)

Number of Jobs	Agricultural Students	Non- Agricultural Students
None	30.19	33.33
1	16.98	37.04
2	32.08	11.11
3	13.21	7.41
4	1.89	3.70
More than 4	5.67	7.41

Persons Influencing Occupational Choice

Former students included in the study were asked to rank the three individuals having the most influence on their occupational status. The results obtained from the questionnaire are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Persons Influencing Occupational Status All Respondents (By Percentage)

Agricultural Students				
	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Total
Parents	41.51	15.09	7.55	64.15
Businessmen	15.09	18.87	18.87	52.83
Friends	5.66	15.09	15.09	35.84
Teachers	1.89	11.32	16.99	30.20
Other relatives	5.66	9.43	7.55	22.64
Others	9.43	3.77	3.77	16.97
Counselor	0.00	0.00	3.77	3.77
Non- Agricultural Students				
Parents	29.63	18.52	7.41	55.56
Teachers	22.22	11.11	7.41	40.74
Friends	0.00	25.93	7.41	33.34
Other relatives	7.41	3.70	18.52	29.63
Businessmen	3.70	3.70	11.11	18.51
Other	3.70	11.11	3.70	18.51
Counselor	3.70	0.00	11.11	14.81

It is interesting to note that school counselors were ranked the lowest of all categories by both groups with the agricultural students ranking counselors the lower of the two.

#### Value of Additional Vocational Training

Graduates of the two comparison groups were asked to rate the value of additional vocational training in four categories as shown in Table 12. Results from the agricultural group indicated that 69.82 percent felt additional vocational training would be either extremely helpful or of some help. Non-agricultural students had 62.96 percent of their group indicating additional training would be of some help or extremely helpful. Many former students in both groups that indicated additional occupational training would be helpful were individuals employed on a full time basis or in college. It is notable that students in both groups that ranked the value of additional training low were currently in the armed forces.

Table 12. Value of Additional Vocational Training All Respondents (By Percentage)

	Agricultural Students	Non- Agricultural Students
Extremely Helpful	37.74	33.33
Some Help	32.08	29.63
Little Help	15.09	18.52
No Help	13.21	14.81

### Location of Employment

In computing the responses of former students on the location of employment of individuals working on a full time basis, three location categories were used as shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Location of Employment (By Percentage)

	Agricultural Students	Non- Agricultural Students
Jackson County	72.00	55.56
Within Oregon*	4.00	22.22
Out of Oregon	24.00	22.22
*Excludes Jackson County		

### Summary

Full time employment was reported by 43.39 percent of the agricultural group as compared to 29.63 percent for the comparison group. Of those agricultural students employed full time, 65.24 percent were employed in agricultural occupations. The analysis of data also reveals that the present vocational agriculture program is serving 75 percent of the students entering agricultural occupations.

Fewer agricultural students pursue post high school training than former students in the non-agricultural group. Armed forces

specialist school training was the most common type of post high school training reported by agricultural students. More non-agricultural students sought college educations than any other type of post high school training. Fewer agricultural students went on to college than non-agricultural students.

Agricultural students as a group were more satisfied with their jobs than were non-agricultural students.

Students in the agricultural group rated the adequacy of high school training higher than did the non-agricultural students. More agricultural students tended to feel that additional vocational training would be helpful than did students in the comparison group. More agricultural students were employed within Jackson County than were non-agricultural students.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

An analysis of the follow-up questionnaire returned by former students and the review of current literature in the field has provided data about former students. The conclusions listed below are based on this data.

Conclusions

1. Former agricultural students do in fact become employed in agricultural occupations. They reported 65.24 percent of their group were employed in agriculture.
2. The current program of vocational agriculture at Crater High School is serving 75 percent of the former students entering the field.
3. High percentages of agricultural students become employed in the agricultural fields of lumbering and business.
4. Over one-half of the non-agricultural students employed on a full time basis enter the agricultural occupation of lumbering, thereby indicating a need for training in this specific field.

5. Fewer agricultural students seek post high school education than non-agricultural students.
6. Students trained in vocational agriculture as a group are more satisfied with their jobs than students with no specific vocational training.
7. Vocational agriculture is a meaningful program for students planning to enter occupations in agriculture.
8. Additional vocational training is needed at Crater High School as evidenced by this study.
9. Jackson County has a strong holding power over former Crater High School agricultural students.
10. The results indicate that counselors are not actively influential in directing patterns of occupational choice for students at Crater High School.

### Recommendations

The real value of a follow-up study lies in the practical considerations which are forthcoming as a result of the conclusions. The recommendations listed below are suggested as steps which can be taken to improve the quality of the educational program at Crater High School.

1. Vocational agriculture should continue to be an integral part of the total educational program at Crater High School.

2. The agricultural education program at Crater High School should include more emphasis on the lumber and agricultural business occupations.
3. Agricultural education programs should be made more readily available to students of Crater High School.
4. More efforts should be made to make post high school agricultural education programs available to agricultural graduates.
5. Since counselors do not appear to be influential in occupational choice decisions of students, the guidance department should attempt to be more active in this area.
6. Additional vocational education programs need to be made available to students at Crater High School.
7. A follow-up program of former students must be a part of the school's evaluation system.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

CRATER HIGH SCHOOL  
4410 Rogue Valley Blvd.  
Central Point, Oregon 97501

June 16, 1969

Dear Former Student:

A follow-up study is being conducted of male students who graduated from Crater High School in the classes of 1965, 1966, and 1967. A follow-up questionnaire is being sent to all graduates of Crater who have had two or more years of vocational agriculture and to a representative sample of former students who did not have vocational agriculture in high school.

It is hoped that the results of this study will provide us with the necessary information to more adequately evaluate and improve the vocational education offerings for students at Crater High School.

The need for sound programs of occupational education in our schools is drastic. Your help is needed to make evaluations to aid us in future planning. The experiences and needs you have met since graduation will be invaluable to us in such planning.

You can help by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it promptly in the envelope provided. If there are questions that you do not wish to answer, please omit them and return it as completely filled out as you desire. All the information will be kept strictly confidential.

Sincerely,

Robert Elden  
Vo-Ag Instructor  
Crater High School

slr

Enclosures

APPENDIX II  
CRATER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT FOLLOW-UP

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Year graduated from high school \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status: \_\_\_ single, \_\_\_ married, \_\_\_ divorced or separated

If married, number of children \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your present occupational status?

\_\_\_ Employed for wages full time

\_\_\_ Employed for wages part time

\_\_\_ Self employed

\_\_\_ Unemployed

\_\_\_ In armed forces

\_\_\_ Attending school - part time

\_\_\_ Attending school - full time

\_\_\_ Other (Please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Indicate below the positions you have held since high school graduation. (one month or more in duration) Start with your present job and go back.

Job Title	Part time or Full time	Employer and Location	Length of Employment
-----------	------------------------------	-----------------------------	----------------------------

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

3. Indicate below how long it took you to obtain full time employment after you graduated or left high school.

\_\_\_ 0-2 months

\_\_\_ 10-18 months

\_\_\_ 3-5 months

\_\_\_ Over 18 months

\_\_\_ 6-9 months

\_\_\_ Was not seeking a full time job

4. Following graduation or your leaving high school, were you able to obtain full-time employment as soon as you expected?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

5. If it took longer than two months for you to find your first full-time job, which one of the following reasons best describes what you think was the most important reason?
- No jobs available
  - Was not interested in jobs available
  - Continued your education (college, trade school, etc.)
  - Lacked skills or other qualifications for jobs available
  - Was not looking for a job
  - Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Considering all of your occupational experiences since leaving high school, how well do you feel your high school prepared you?
- Exceptionally well prepared
  - Satisfactorily prepared
  - Poorly prepared
  - No help at all
7. How well satisfied are you with your present work?
- Highly satisfied
  - Well satisfied
  - Indifferent
  - Somewhat dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied
8. From the list below, rank in order the three individuals that have influenced you the most in your choice of an occupation. (example: 1 equals first choice, 2 equals second choice, and 3 equals a third choice)
- Parent
  - School counselor
  - Teacher (What subject \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Your friends
  - Relatives
  - Businessmen or other workers
  - Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

9. What high school courses have meant the most to your present occupational status?

<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Physics
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Math	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shop
<input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocational
<input type="checkbox"/> Business education (bookkeeping, typing, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical drawing	<input type="checkbox"/> Journalism
<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign languages	<input type="checkbox"/> Speech
	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal shop
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (list)

10. Have you had additional education or training since high school?

Yes  No

11. If the answer to number ten was yes, please complete the following by checking the training or education you have had.

Armed forces, specialist school

Apprenticeship training

Vocational or trade school

Business school

Correspondence course

College or university (4 year program) Obtained degree;  
 yes;  no

Community or junior college, graduate;  yes,  no

Adult education

Other - please describe \_\_\_\_\_

12. If you checked one or more of the items in number eleven, please describe the type and length of each type of education or training.

13. If you are employed full-time, what is your monthly wage before deductions?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 150	<input type="checkbox"/> 401-500
<input type="checkbox"/> 151-200	<input type="checkbox"/> 501-600
<input type="checkbox"/> 201-300	<input type="checkbox"/> 601-700
<input type="checkbox"/> 301-400	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 700

14. How helpful do you feel additional vocational training would have been in preparing you for employment? (check appropriate space)

Extremely helpful  
 Some help  
 Little help  
 No help

15. Please indicate below your specific recommendations to the schools to improve the vocational preparation needed to secure and hold a job.

## APPENDIX III

CRATER HIGH SCHOOL  
4410 Rogue Valley Blvd.  
Central Point, Oregon 97501

July 5, 1969

Dear Former Student:

Recently you received a questionnaire on the vocational survey being made of Crater High School graduates.

The survey is progressing nicely, however, it would be desirable to obtain your questionnaire so we may complete the study.

In case you have misplaced the form I am enclosing another copy. If you have already returned the questionnaire, please disregard this letter.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Robert Elden  
Vo- Ag Instructor  
Crater High School

slr

Enclosure