

# 2009 National FFA Delegate Process

## Committee Research Findings

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### Committee #1: Inclusion and Engagement of all Students

*The purpose of this committee is to investigate methods of attaining the levels of engagement and inclusion of all agricultural education students.*

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### What programs are available on the consumer and technological side of agriculture?

#### 1. FIRST

*"To transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology heroes."*

- Dean Kamen, Founder

#### **Mission**

Our mission is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership.

Dean Kamen is an inventor, entrepreneur, and tireless advocate for science and technology. His passion and determination to help young people discover the excitement and rewards of science and technology are the cornerstones of *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology).

*FIRST* was founded in 1989 to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. Based in Manchester, NH, the 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit public charity designs accessible, innovative programs that motivate young people to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math, while building self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills.

FIRST has an alliance partnership with 4-H.

Website: <http://www.usfirst.org/>

**Research report on FIRST's program to involve and impact underserved students:**  
[http://www.usfirst.org/uploadedFiles/Who/Impact/Brandeis\\_Studies/2006\\_FRC\\_Underse\\_rved\\_Report.pdf](http://www.usfirst.org/uploadedFiles/Who/Impact/Brandeis_Studies/2006_FRC_Underse_rved_Report.pdf)

## 2. SkillsUSA

### **Are classes being shut down because of a national issue or because of the state's decision?**

Agricultural education programs are primarily being shut down due to fiscal concerns and lack of funding, which is largely from state and local funding sources, but does relate to federal Perkins funding as well. Other local issues also cause programs to close including lack of qualified teachers, low enrollment numbers, and/or poor management of the program. In addition, misunderstandings related to agricultural education and bias toward basic general education classes, such as Language arts, Math, Science and Social Studies and not including agriculture as developing this knowledge and these skills have hurt us for some time. This is a national issue that manifests itself in many different forms on state and local levels. Passing high stakes tests is at a premium, not developing skills to allow students to function well in society.

### **What current marketing strategies are in place to increase FFA student involvement?**

The FFA Marketing and Communications department has the following events, activities and strategies in place:

- **Social Networking**

Effective use of FFA Nation, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs and other social networking tools to reach current and potential students where they already hang out online. FFA Nation, in particular, allows members to exchange information and contribute to FFA-specific discussions. This summer, we used Twitter tweets, Facebook, MySpace and FFA Nation to give hints about the convention keynote speaker and concert act. We also routinely ask these groups what they'd like to see at convention and in our print publications.

- **FFA Today Television Show**

The FFA Today television show on RFD-TV *is also available online* and bundled onto DVDs and distributed to current FFA advisors for classroom use. This weekly half-hour show features active FFA members engaged in different activities to highlight the diversity (location, age, interests, SAE projects) of FFA across the nation. In the past two years, the show has featured members from 40 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- **Broadcast Media**

This summer, we were able to land a feature spot for an FFA member on *Channel One*, and efforts continue to build FFA awareness and visibility through this popular educational broadcast channel. We supply content to and ensure that FFA members are routinely featured in stories on *America's Heartland*, a nationally syndicated television show. We are also posting online videos on *SchoolTube* and *Cable in the Classroom*. *America's Heartland* and *SchoolTube* will be attending the convention and filming convention activities for future stories. In addition, the marketing and communications

department has developed a project plan for a *national public service announcement campaign*, but will need funding to proceed with implementation.

- **FFA Week**

We provide every local FFA chapter with an FFA Week kit that includes a DVD of public service announcements, promotional spots and short informational “commercials” on key FFA events and activities. We also encourage local chapters to use these materials not only in celebrating current FFA members, but in attracting new ones.

- **FFA New Horizons**

Every active FFA member – along with thousands of former members, sponsors and supporters – receives six copies of the *FFA New Horizons* magazine per year. In this member publication, we highlight FFA members from different backgrounds, include FFA news, provide officer information and promote opportunities, activities and events such as the national FFA convention, FFA Week and Washington Leadership Conference.

- **Media Relations**

FFA issues more than 10,000 news releases each year to promote the accomplishments national award finalists and winners. In addition, FFA Marketing and Communications works with local, regional and national media to place stories and interviews in print, radio and television for the national FFA convention, FFA Week and other prominent FFA events.

### **To what degree can we enforce all three parts of agricultural education in classrooms?**

Nationally, we have no means by which to ‘force’ implementation of anything at the local or state level – this does not prevent us from trying to promote and find ways to encourage programs to deliver the entire program. The new National Quality Program Standards, developed and endorsed by the National Council for Agricultural Education and available the past two years, sets a basis for making a difference in implementation of the total program. Some states have standards which must be implemented for receipt of state funding and those tied to funding are the most successful for implementation.

### **What methods is National FFA using to ensure that all three components of agricultural education are being implemented within the classroom?**

One of the primary directives of the Local Program Success team (which is a Team Ag Ed initiative) is to provide professional development, resources, promising practices, support and technical assistance in implementing and improving the total program at the local level. National professional development programs, national staff participation,

state professional development and strategic planning efforts and efforts to develop Team Ag Ed at state and local levels have assisted in improving the number of programs using the total program. The National Quality Program Standards pilot project has brought attention to re-establishment of the total program on agricultural education; this too, is being implemented through the LPS staff.