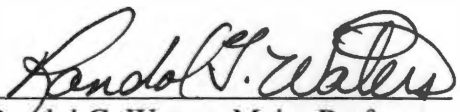
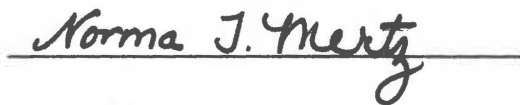


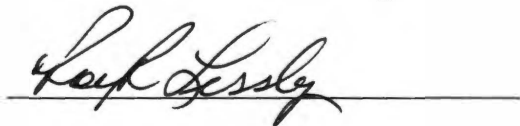
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Gary Lee Blackwell, Jr. entitled "Teachers' Perceptions and Concerns of Year-Round Education in Tennessee High School Agriculture Programs." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Agricultural and Extension Education.

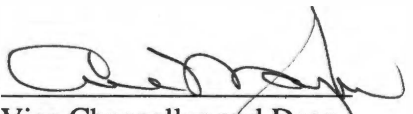

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Teachers' Perceptions and Concerns of Year-Round
Education in Tennessee High School
Agriculture Programs

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Gary Lee Blackwell, Jr.

August 2004

AG-VET-MED.

Thesis
2004
.B62

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would first like to thank God for the opportunity and ability to complete this study.

Sincere appreciation is given to Dr. Randol G. Waters, Professor of Agricultural & Extension Education, for his time and guidance throughout the development and completion of this study.

Appreciation is also given to Dr. Roy Lessly and Dr. Norma Mertz for their advice and the commitment of their time and expertise.

Appreciation is given to all Tennessee high school agriculture education instructors that took time to complete this survey. Without you this study would have not been possible.

Finally, a special thank you to my wife Rebecca, parents Gary and Shelby Blackwell, and in-laws Gary and Sue Sanders, for their continuous support and love throughout my academic career.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to focus on the emergence of year-round education and its possible effects on agricultural education programs throughout the state of Tennessee. The study collected perceptions of teachers who currently teach in a Tennessee high school agriculture program regarding the implementation of a year-round program at their school.

A survey was designed and sent to all 284 teachers identified in the 2002-2003 Tennessee Agriculture teacher directory. Findings were based upon a 69% response rate.

Findings

- The total number of survey respondents was 197; of these 93.1% taught in schools operating on a traditional schedule, while 6.9% taught in schools that operate on a year-round schedule.
- Of the 197 respondents 73.9% stated no schedule change was being proposed by their respective school district, 25% are proposing a change from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule, and 1.1% stated their school system is proposing a change from a year-round to a traditional schedule.
- The majority (59.1%) of the agriculture education instructors at schools on traditional schedules showed some level of concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school.
- Of the respondents on a traditional schedule the largest percentage (38.7%) showed some level of agreement with the statement: 'If a year-round schedule is implemented at my school my instructional methods would not change.' However, the largest number (41.7%) of teachers on a year-round schedule were neutral regarding this statement.
- The largest percentage of respondents on a traditional schedule felt that both teacher (43.4%) and student burnout (45.7%) would increase following the implementation of a year-round schedule. The largest number (50%) of teachers on a year-round schedule felt that teacher burnout would decrease even though the respondents were evenly divided regarding increased/decreased student burnout.

- The majority (59.8%) of respondents on a traditional schedule felt that student discipline problems would remain the same following the implementation of a year-round schedule. The largest percentage of respondents (41.7%) on a year-round schedule felt that discipline problems would increase.
- Of the teachers on a traditional schedule 39.5% felt that the time students spend on S.A.E.'s would decrease while 39% were neutral. The majority of the respondents on a year-round schedule were neutral.
- The majority (68.2%) of respondents on a traditional schedule as well as those on a year-round schedule, felt that it would be more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp.

Conclusions

- Forty-nine (26.1%) teachers stated their schools are proposing schedule changes indicating that schedule changes may be forthcoming for some Tennessee high school agriculture programs.
- The majority of teachers on a traditional schedule are concerned about the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school while the majority of teachers on a year-round schedule are not concerned. This possibly makes the concerns of teachers on a traditional schedule unwarranted and influenced by inexperience with the schedule itself.
- There are differing "biggest concerns" regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule between the two statistical groups. This raises the question, "Are changes in curriculum and instruction the biggest concern of teachers beginning to teach on a year-round schedule?"
- The largest number of teachers on a traditional schedule feel that teacher burnout would increase following the implementation of a year-round schedule at the school where they currently teach. However, the largest number of teachers on a year-round schedule feel that teacher burnout would decrease reaffirming the data given from Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf (1987).
- The largest number of respondents currently on a year-round schedule stated that student discipline problems would increase, contradicting the data collected from the Oxnard School District (Oxnard, 1992).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The typical high school student had a six- or seven-period class schedule each day before the 4X4 block schedule was instituted. The 4X4 block schedule gives students four classes each semester with the opportunity to earn eight credits toward graduation each year. High schools in many areas are considering yet another schedule change by exploring the option of year-round education.

Year-round education, however, is not a new idea. Records show year-round schools existed in a variety of communities in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Rodgers, 1993). Year-round schools soon became very popular with the heightened need for facilities due to an increasing student population, as well as budget constraints, following World War II (Inger, 1994). As of 1991-92, twenty-three states had year-round programs consisting of “204 school districts [including] 1281 elementary schools, 142 middle/junior high schools, 18 special schools, and 205 high schools, totaling 1646 public schools in year-round education” (Bradford, 1991). The majority of year-round schools are located in Nevada, Utah, and California. However, Arizona, Florida, and Texas are quickly growing with regards to the number of schools on a year-round schedule (Bradford, 1991). The term “year-round school” intimidates students, parents, and teachers alike because they believe students in year-round schools may go to school much longer each year than their counterparts on the traditional schedule. However each schedule lasts approximately 180 days each year (NAYRE, 2002).

The year-round schedule can be set up in two different manners with some slight variations. The first basic type of year-round education is single-track year-round education. This system uses a balanced calendar for a more continuous period of instruction, however it does not decrease class sizes. The other basic type of year-round education is multi-track year-round education. This system was instituted primarily to alleviate overcrowding in schools (NAYRE, 2002).

Several issues communities were facing brought about the change from the traditional calendar to the year-round calendar. One issue was that intersessions, made available by year-round scheduling, provide time for “students who failed during the nine weeks [to] have an opportunity to make up the failing grade” (Sanders, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

The research previously done on year-round education has pertained to either the entire school or a specific subject. Unfortunately, the vast majority of this research has not included agricultural education, possibly making it very difficult for agriculture teachers to build an honest opinion about the year-round schedule.

Significance of the Study

As changes occur in any educational institution, the attitudes and morale of the teachers, parents, students, and all of those involved in the educational process also change either for better or worse. The population increases in the United States have forced districts and states to look for ways to meet the needs of a growing number of students with the same funding. “Ultimately, administrators must make decisions about YRE based on both the best available information and on their intimate understanding of their district’s characteristics, knowing that what may be right for one district may be

wrong for another” (McChesney, 1996). The research that was conducted provided quantitative data on current Tennessee high school agriculture teachers’ perceptions and concerns about the implementation of a year-round schedule at the school where they currently teach. This information could contribute to the decision-making process of school and government officials as they try to make the best decision for the students in their area concerning the year-round school schedule.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to focus on the emergence of year-round education and its possible effects on agricultural education programs throughout the state of Tennessee. The study focused on the perceptions of teachers who currently teach in a Tennessee high school agriculture program regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school.

Objectives

The objectives for this study were:

1. To describe the schedule on which Tennessee high school agriculture programs currently operate.
2. To determine if schedule changes are being considered for high schools in Tennessee that have agriculture programs, as well as the reason for proposing any schedule changes.
3. To determine the methods that will be used to inform the community or school staff of schedule changes.
4. To describe the level of concern of Tennessee high school agriculture educators regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule.
5. To determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers concerning curriculum and instructional changes caused by the implementation of a year-round schedule.

6. To determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding increased or decreased student and teacher burnout due to a year-round schedule.
7. To describe Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions of increased or decreased student discipline problems related to year-round scheduling.
8. To describe agriculture teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on student Supervised Agricultural Experiences (S.A.E.'s).
9. To describe the perceptions of agriculture teachers regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on FFA camp and various other FFA summer activities.
10. To determine the willingness of Tennessee agriculture teachers who are currently on a 9-10 month contract to move to a 12 month contract.
11. To characterize the respondents demographically.

Definition of Terms

1. Block Schedule

Students go to four 90-minute classes each day instead of six 50-minute classes. Due to the increased time in a course, students can complete a course in one semester rather than one year (Iredell-Statesville Schools, 2003).

2. Single-track Year-Round Education (YRE)

Single-track year-round education is a system of year-round education using a balanced calendar. Students and all school personnel use the same instructional and vacation calendar. This method does not reduce the size of classes or allow the school to accommodate more students (NAYRE, 2002).

3. Multi-track Year Round Education (YRE)

Multi-track year-round education is typically used to reduce the problem of overcrowding. This method was specifically designed for schools with a shortage of classroom space, eliminating the need to build additional schools (NAYRE, 2002).

4. Intersession

The period of time occurring between full semesters (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Sacramento, 2000).

5. Supervised Agricultural Experience (S.A.E.)

“An SAE program is the actual, hands-on application of concepts and principles learned in the agricultural education classroom. Students are supervised by agricultural education teachers in cooperation with parents, employers, and other adults who assist them in the development and achievement of their educational and career goals” (National FFA Organization, SAE, 2002).

6. FFA

A national organization “dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education” (National FFA Organization, 2002).

7. FFA Camp

“...A place for students across the state to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success...” (Tennessee FFA Online, 2002).

Scope/Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the 284, non-duplicate, agricultural education teachers currently teaching in high schools in Tennessee (as listed in the 2002-2003 Tennessee Agriculture Teacher Directory). The high schools studied presented different versions of school schedules. The data collected in this study dealt primarily with teachers and their perceptions of the impact that a change to a year-round schedule would make on them, their students, and schools as a whole.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term year-round education is often misunderstood by both educators and others in the community. Basically, year-round education pertains to the restructuring of the school year breaking up the summer vacation into shorter vacation periods throughout the year for the purpose of providing more continuous learning (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf, 1987).

In this literature review the possible effects of year-round education (YRE) on the agricultural education departments at Tennessee high schools will be discussed. While there has not been much research conducted to determine the effects of year-round education on agricultural education students, much of the support used in this section concerns activities that may be mirrored by a student in agricultural education. A large number of the references used in this section were obtained from the reference list in D. Kevin Smith's doctoral dissertation (Smith, 2002).

Current Calendar

A study published by the Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond, in 1992, discussed the evolution of the current school calendar as used in the State of Virginia (Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond, 1992). "The structure of the American school calendar reflects the values and interests of society. Schools in the nineteenth century reflected the economic needs of the citizenry" (Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond, 1992). At that time, 85% of the population held jobs in the agriculture industry, causing schools to be open in rural areas for only four to

six months each year in an effort to meet the agricultural needs of the country. “In contrast, city schools were open for eleven to twelve months per year, although attendance was voluntary and few students attended school for the entire year” (Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond, 1992). By the 1900’s, the calendar length for rural schools had increased to 140 days per year, and city schools decreased their calendar to 195 days per year. “Lengthy school vacations were scheduled during the summer in response to the country’s agricultural needs” (Virginia State Department of Education, Richmond, 1992).

What is Year-Round Education (YRE)?

As illustrated by the National Association for Year-Round Education (NAYRE), “year-round education centers on reorganizing the school year to provide more continuous learning by breaking up the long summer vacation into shorter, more frequent vacations throughout the year” (NAYRE, 2002). This new schedule does not eliminate the students’ summer break, but reduces the time students are out during the summer by redistributing the other days throughout the rest of the year. “Students attending a year-round school go to the same classes and receive the same instruction as students on a traditional calendar” (NAYRE, 2002). The calendar used by year-round schools is organized into instructional periods and more evenly distributed vacation periods. “The balanced calendar minimizes the learning loss that occurs during a typical three-month summer vacation” (NAYRE, 2002).

History

The 1800's saw students in urban areas such as Chicago, Boston, Washington D.C., Cleveland, Buffalo, and Detroit attending school for 48 weeks each year. This was called a 12-1 plan (students would attend school for 12 weeks and then have one week off). This schedule was later modified to a 12-4 plan in which schools would be closed for four weeks and would then run consecutive 12-week sessions for the rest of the year.

Following the Civil War, summer schools were often available for students in urban areas. The first recorded summer school began in 1865 at the First Church of Boston, Massachusetts. By 1894, New York City had summer schools established by the Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor (Shepard and Baker, 1977). From 1910-1938, "various forms of year-round and extended calendars were used to increase space, improve the quality of education, provide a setting in which European immigrant children could learn English, and offer 12-month access to vocational training" (NAYRE, 2002).

However, during the Great Depression many year-round schools were cut back and often discontinued. The traditional nine-month calendar became the norm during World War I. This trend would continue through World War II. However, following World War II, an increase in student population due to the "baby boom" displayed a need for additional educational facilities (Zykowski, Mitchell, Hough, and Gavin, 1991). "By 1950, 80 percent of school districts in cities of over 100,000 population had summer programs of some form" (Shepard and Baker, 1977). Renewed interest in education and a need for educational facilities was brought about in 1957 when Russia successfully

launched Sputnik (Zykowski, Mitchell, Hough, and Gavin, 1991). "...The message was obvious, Russia was emerging from the "dark ages" and was challenging the scientific and educational leadership of the United States" (Hermanson and Gove, 1971).

Year-round scheduling, however, did not get wide-spread support until 1968, when Valley View, Illinois, developed and implemented the 45-15 plan. As of 1974, 19 states had rewritten old laws to incorporate year-round programs into current statutes (Shepard and Baker, 1977). In 1999, the year-round program accelerated with over 3,000 schools on the year-round schedule. (NAYRE, 2002). Currently, the American society is moving away from the agrarian society, with less than 3% of the workforce now involved in agriculture, that brought about the traditional school calendar (Bradford, 1991).

Types of Year-Round Education

Single-Track Year-Round Education

Single-track year-round education "provides a balanced calendar for a more continuous period of instruction" (NAYRE, 2002). The students and all of the school's personnel follow the same vacation and instructional schedule. Unlike other methods, this method does not reduce class sizes, nor does it allow the school to accommodate more students. There are three typical calendar structures for the single-track method (NAYRE, 2002).

1. Balanced/Modified—"Summer vacation is divided throughout the school year with staff and students at school at the same time" (NAYRE, 2002).
2. Extended School Year—Lengthened school year from the current 170-180 days up to 240 instructional days (NAYRE, 2002).

3. Flexible All-Year Calendar—"School is open for instruction approximately 240 days each year and students are required to attend the minimum number of days designated by each state" (NAYRE, 2002).

Multi-Track Year-Round Education

This method is typically used to alleviate overcrowding in schools. Schools using the multi-track methods are aided by avoiding the increased cost of new, larger buildings due to the shortage of classroom space. "Multi-track divides students and teachers into groups, or tracks of approximately the same size. Each track is assigned its own schedule...Multi-track creates a 'school-within-a-school' concept" (NAYRE, 2002). There are also three calendar structures used by the multi-track method with each structure containing several substructure options for the calendar schedules.

1. Three-Track—The students attend school 163 instructional days, however the school days are lengthened to meet the state requirements for instructional minutes. The schedule may be designed so the students and teachers would have two vacations consisting of forty-one days each or four vacations consisting of twenty days each. The three-track calendar can increase the school's student capacity up to 50% (NAYRE, 2002).
2. Four-Track—The school schedule can be set-up in several different ways. The students attend school for forty-five days at a time and then have a fifteen-day vacation. Using this schedule the students will have four breaks over the course of the year. The school schedule could also be sixty instructional days with three twenty-day vacations or ninety instructional days with two thirty-day vacations

over the course of the year. The four-track calendar can increase the school's student capacity up to 33% (NAYRE, 2002).

3. **Five-Track**—The five-track schedule is setup with sixty instructional days with fifteen-day breaks. Using this schedule, there could be up to 197 instructional days, in such case a three week vacation is typically given during the summer in addition to the other fifteen day vacations throughout the year. The five-track schedule can increase the school's student capacity up to 25% (NAYRE, 2002).

Year-Round Schedule Implementation

“Any person, committee, or agency contemplating year-round education as a possible alternative to the existing program is confronted with two broad strategic considerations: the feasibility of change and a plan for implementation” (McLain, 1973). Initially, it is important to develop a vast information base, yielding quality information concerning year-round scheduling. This includes finding appropriate data, reviewing the information, and interpreting the findings.

The implementer(s) must also be aware of the fact that year-round schedule not only affects teachers, students, and parents, but the entire community as well (McLain, 1973). The conversion of a school to a year-round program “has a significant impact on families and communities that must be considered in order to gain public support rather than resistance to implementation” (Mutchler, 1993). Family life is directly affected by a change in the school schedule, subsequently affecting the community. These issues must be factored into the decision-making process to ensure a smooth implementation process as well as community buy-in (Mutchler, 1993).

Most districts have a 30-40-30 division of opinion when the concept of year-round education is first introduced (Glines, 1994). “A minimum of 30 percent of the families will volunteer for a year-round calendar, 40 will be uncertain, and 30 will be opposed” (Glines, 1994). During the first and second years of year-round schedule implementation, the maximum number of volunteers is typically 70%; however, the average usually is between 45-55% (Glines, 1994). In California, most year-round education communities have made an effort to offer the students the option of a nine- or twelve-month calendar. Giving the students a choice is the favored way of implementing the concept (Glines, 1990). In the implementation process, a variety of plans have been used; however, four have become most common in the process (Glines, 1994).

- School-within-a-school plan—a nine-month and year-round option is offered in the same building (Glines, 1994).
- Pairing of geographically-near schools—families are given the option of a neighborhood nine-month or year-round schedule (Glines, 1994).
- “Neighborhood cluster”—one of three or four buildings offers the option of a year-round schedule design (Glines, 1994).
- “...Develop a structure that can accommodate either a nine-month or continuous year option within the same calendar...” (Glines, 1994).

Year-Round Education Impacts

Positive Impacts on Teachers

On a year-round schedule, teachers actually have several advantages that may not be obvious to those not in the education profession. In a schedule where teachers are

only in school for a limited time and then receive short frequent breaks, the incidence of teacher burnout is less (Gitlin, 1988). Presently, many teachers in a traditional schedule are only paid on a ten-month basis. However, teachers in a year-round, single-track system can teach intersession to try and minimize the amount of time they are unpaid. Multi-track systems offer a twelve month contract (Kneese, 2000), making finances easier for teachers on this schedule. Teachers not only benefit from the additional contract time, but librarians and counselors are offered a twelve-month contract in many situations (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Sacramento, 2000). While it may seem time is limited for teachers on a year-round schedule to further pursue their education, time is still available for a five week summer course or night school (Sheane, Donaldson, and Bierlein, 1994).

Negative Impacts on Teachers

While the year-round schedule is a positive change in many aspects of teachers' lives, it is a negative change in others. In multi-track schools teachers often have to pack all of their supplies at the end of their session to give way to another teacher, which increases the workload on all of the teachers involved (Yaffe, 1978). Another problem faculty members are faced with in a multi-track, year-round situation is the overlap of schedules. The overlapping of schedules puts all students and teachers in the school at one time, making it difficult to create an environment conducive to learning (Yaffe, 1978). The teacher is faced with additional challenges because by the time they get their students into a routine, it is time for another break (Sanders, 2001). Teachers are also

faced with another problem due to the short, frequent breaks--a lack of personal time (Greenfield, 1994). On the other hand, teachers have differing perceptions of this issue.

Issues Regarding Year-Round Scheduling

Curriculum Changes

Curriculum revision is an area where the year-round schedule offers promise to teachers. The schedule change leads to great alterations in curriculum. These changes have to be made so rapidly that administrators must have the help of the teachers to aid in the process. It is not often the case that teachers are included in curriculum planning in schools operating on a traditional calendar. This is not a planned outcome of year-round scheduling, but due to the time constraints that often accompany schedule implementation, it does happen (Shepard and Baker, 1977).

In the late 1960's, the Valley View school district in Illinois went to a 45-15 year-round program. When the program was in the planning stages, no major curriculum changes were planned. However, the curriculum was eventually streamlined with changes proposed by the faculty members. The changes included reorganization of curriculum to divide teaching materials into 45-day durations, allowing formal assessment at the end of the 45-day period before the students began their 15 day vacation. The faculty also proposed the offering of 15-day (vacation) classes to help students who had fallen behind "catch up." Some of the course offerings included English, speed reading, and mathematics skills (Hermansen and Gove, 1971).

Burnout

Teacher stress and burnout is an increasing problem for school administrators (Bradford, 1991). Initially, some teachers were concerned about the probability of

eventual burnout on the part of the faculty, as well as the students, due to their high school operating on a year-round schedule. However, this has not happened and teachers have reported the year-round calendar gives them opportunities which were previously not possible. For example, winter vacations to go skiing or tours to see the changing fall colors are vacation options not previously possible during a school year with a traditional schedule. Year-round education cuts the long summer break of the traditional calendar into shorter, more frequent breaks. This calendar gives teachers breaks during every season, not only the summer months when a large number of people vacation (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf, 1987). "With more frequent breaks teachers can relax, travel, study, and pursue a variety of other recreational activities, which may reduce the stress factors that lead to eventual burnout" (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf, 1987).

Discipline

For three years, the Oxnard School District in California (K-8 school system serving approximately 12,000 students in Oxnard, California) maintained both year-round and traditional schedules (Oxnard, 1992). During this time period, "it was found that student suspensions had decreased by 30% in YRE schools compared to the rate of pupil suspensions at traditional schools" (Oxnard, 1992). Further analysis of this data showed the frequency of discipline problems in traditional schools was less in the earliest months of the school year (September, October, and November), as well as January following the winter vacation. March through June showed a significant increase in the frequency of student suspensions (Oxnard, 1992). "In the YRE schools, with **three**

‘Septembers’ and less of the “March through June” stress, students struggling academically and those with an inclination toward misbehavior experience three well-placed opportunities for rejuvenation and relaxation” (Oxnard, 1992).

Student Employment

Competition for jobs among students during the summer months in a year-round schedule is perceived to be much the same as that in a traditional schedule (Sheane, Donaldson, and Bierlein, 1994). Students attending schools operating on a year-round schedule are available for jobs throughout the year, not just the summer when there is a large number of students competing for few jobs, which potentially improves their opportunities for employment (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeau, 1987).

Summer Camps

Changes in school calendars are unlikely to have an impact on most camps. With the variations in schedules, the participants at camps may be different as one-group goes back to school, another goes on break. Camps have participants from more than one school; this helps keep students coming to the camps and often times helps alleviate overcrowding problems the camps may have (Marsh, 2000). Schedules that provide multiple two- or three-week vacations encourage camping experiences in the spring and fall (Thomas, 1973). “...YRE would present the opportunity for more efficient use of camp facilities by establishing year-round camps rather than just summer camps” (Shepard and Baker, 1977). During the summer months, FFA members in Tennessee have the opportunity to attend FFA camp at Camp Clements for a week.

Contracts

Following the implementation of the Vocational Education Act of 1917, the local agricultural education programs have required the services of a teacher for twelve months because the instruction and guidance provided by the teacher goes far beyond the four-walls of the classroom. In 1976, Harold R. Binkley wrote an article discussing employment contracts for agriculture teachers and the problems presented by making the contract change from 12 to 9-10 months. Several problems were presented; however, only a few are applicable in today's society as well. The first problem entails being paid for only $\frac{3}{4}$ of the calendar year (Binkley, 1976). This required some teachers to take summer jobs which they considered degrading or being paid poorly in comparison to their professional careers as teachers (Thomas, 1973). Next, the agriculture teacher being the counterpart of the county extension agent, has a 9-10 month contract while the county extension agent has a 12 month contract (Binkley, 1976). Both professionals have generally the same training in agriculture, but the contract difference, "...tends to cause the teacher and the community to feel that his services are not as important as those of the county agent and in turn relegates him to a second-class role as an agricultural leader in the county" (Binkley, 1976).

If the school schedule is changed to a year-round format, teachers will not be faced with the problem of noncontinuous employment each year due to the schedule format. Teachers can work during their vacations, often as substitutes. Due to salaries in the teaching profession being traditionally lower than those of other professions, many college students have been deterred from choosing teaching as a career. Extended year

contracts and more instructional days lead to higher salaries that could potentially attract “higher caliber” college graduates. If the salary of teachers increases, then more people will enter the profession helping to alleviate the problem of teacher shortages (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf, 1987).

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

The overall purpose of this study was to focus on the emergence of year-round education and its possible effects on agricultural education programs throughout the state of Tennessee. The study focused on the perceptions of teachers who currently teach in a Tennessee high school agriculture program. This study addressed the following objectives:

- To describe the schedule on which Tennessee high school agriculture programs currently operate.
- To determine if schedule changes are being considered for high schools in Tennessee that have agriculture programs as well as the reason for proposing any schedule changes.
- To determine the methods that will be used to inform the community or school staff of schedule changes.
- To describe the level of concern of Tennessee high school agriculture educators regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule.
- To determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers concerning curriculum and instructional changes caused by the implementation of a year-round schedule.
- To determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding increased or decreased student and teacher burnout due to a year-round schedule.
- To describe Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions of increased or decreased student discipline problems related to year-round scheduling.
- To describe agriculture teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on student Supervised Agricultural Experiences (S.A.E.'s).
- To describe the perceptions of agriculture teachers regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on FFA camp and various other FFA summer activities.

- To determine the willingness of Tennessee agriculture teachers who are currently on a 9-10 month contract to move to a 12 month contract.
- To characterize the respondents demographically.

Research Design

This study was an ex post facto, descriptive-correlational study; therefore, it had no design. Data were collected to determine the perceptions and concerns of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers with respect to the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school. After the survey had been created, it was given to a panel consisting of 3 professors, also serving as graduate committee members. Minor changes were made to the survey as requested by the committee members.

Population

The population for this study was all of the non-duplicate, high school agricultural education teachers in the state of Tennessee, as listed in the 2002-2003 Tennessee Agriculture teacher directory, making this study a census. In the state of Tennessee, there are approximately 190 high school agriculture programs. Many of these have multiple-teacher departments; therefore, the total number of instructors surveyed was 284. The teachers were surveyed using a mail survey. Follow-ups were conducted in an effort to handle non-respondents.

Instrumentation

A survey (Appendix A) was mailed to the participants containing a series of questions accompanied by a cover letter briefly explaining the study (Appendix A). This survey was developed using Don A. Dillman's book, Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method, as a reference. The survey itself was designed to reach a variety of

the respondent's sensory channels. For example, many of the participants prefer ordered responses to open-ended questions while others prefer open-ended questions to ordered responses. The first three questions yielded categorical data determining the types of schedules on which the respondents' schools currently operate. The next question was a close-ended question followed by two open-ended questions providing information on possible schedule changes at the schools being surveyed. The next series of seven questions were all close-ended. These questions produced quantitative results which were used to determine the perceptions and concerns that current Tennessee agriculture teachers have regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule. The next five questions yielded quantitative results based on questions asked on a Likert-Scale. The responses to these questions range from 1-5 with 5 indicating the instructor strongly agrees with the statement, 1 indicating the instructor strongly disagrees with the statement, while 3 allows for a neutral response. The final three questions yielded demographic information, which was used to characterize the respondents. After the survey was designed, it was sent to the Institutional Review Board (I.R.B.) for approval. After the I.R.B. granted approval, the study was mailed to all of the non-duplicate high school agriculture teachers in the state of Tennessee.

Procedures

The initial survey was mailed out to the active high school agriculture teachers in the State of Tennessee early in the spring of 2003. Each survey contained a participant identification number that was only used to send a follow-up survey to non-respondents in an effort to give everyone an equal opportunity to respond. This participant

identification number was also used to separate early from late respondents. However, it was not used to relate responses to the person that provided them. Enclosed with the survey was an index card for participants to write their e-mail address if they would like a summary of the results when the survey was completed.

One week following the initial mailing, a postcard or e-mail (Appendix B) (for the Tennessee high school agriculture teachers with active e-mail accounts) was sent in an effort to remind respondents of the survey and to submit it when they had completed. Approximately 134 participants (47.2%) were sent post cards and 150 (52.8%) were sent reminders via e-mail. In the first three weeks following the initial mailing, 145 surveys were returned. A second survey and cover letter (Appendix C) was mailed to the participants who had not yet returned their initial survey at three weeks. This mailing yielded 34 completed surveys. The third and final survey and cover letter (Appendix D) was mailed out six weeks following the initial mailing. There were 18 surveys returned following this mailing. The survey was returned by 197 agriculture teachers (approximately 69.4% of the total number mailed).

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Release 11.0) on a computer in the Agricultural & Extension Education office at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. To assess potential response, bias statistical tests were conducted in an effort to determine if differences existed between early and late responders. Using Chi Square and t-tests, differences between early and late responders were analyzed for the following key independent variables:

- Level of Concern
- Biggest Concern
- Increased/Decreased Student Discipline
- Teacher Burnout
- Student Burnout
- Contract Type
- Willingness to Change Contract
- Type of Schedule
- Time spent on Supervised Agriculture Experience's (S.A.E.'s)
- Scheduling Camps
- Ability to have trips approved
- Instructional Changes
- Curriculum Changes

No significant statistical differences were determined to exist between early and late responders and the variables listed above. Since late respondents are “assumed typical of non-respondents” (Miller and Smith, 1983), it was deemed unnecessary for an additional follow-up to be conducted. It was assumed that responses from the respondents could be generalized to the entire population of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers. Therefore, the findings in this study were generalized to the entire population of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to focus on the emergence of year-round education and its possible effects on agricultural education programs throughout the state of Tennessee. The study focused on the perceptions of teachers who currently teach in a Tennessee high school agriculture program.

This chapter is divided into eleven sections addressing each of the study's objectives. The initial section describes the school schedules on which Tennessee high school agriculture programs currently operate. The second section addresses any school schedule changes and the reason these changes are being proposed in Tennessee high school's with agriculture programs. The third section discusses the methods that were used to inform the community or school staff of schedule changes. The fourth section describes the level of concern of Tennessee high school agriculture educators regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule. The fifth section describes the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding curriculum and instructional changes caused by the implementation of a year-round schedule. The sixth section discusses Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions of increased or decreased student and teacher burnout due to the implementation of a year-round schedule. The seventh section describes Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions of increased or decreased student discipline problems related to year-round scheduling. The eighth section describes agriculture teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on student Supervised Agricultural Experiences

(S.A.E.'s). The ninth section describes the perceptions of agriculture teachers regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on FFA camp and various other FFA summer activities. The tenth section addresses the willingness of Tennessee agriculture teachers who are currently on a 9-10 month contract to move to a 12-month contract in order to accommodate a change to a year-round schedule. The final section characterizes all of the respondents resulting from the demographic information collected.

School Schedules on which Tennessee High School Agriculture Programs Operate

The first objective addressed was: To describe the schedule on which Tennessee high school agriculture programs currently operate. Data in Table 1 describes the schedules on which the Tennessee high school agriculture teachers who participated in this study currently operate. Respondents were asked to circle the statement best describing their current school schedule (traditional or year-round). A total of 197 agriculture teachers responded to this survey. Of these 175 (93.1%) taught in schools operating on a traditional schedule, while 13 (6.9%) taught in schools that operate on a year-round schedule (nine people chose not to answer this question).

The respondents teaching in a school operating on a year-round program were then asked to circle the statement that best described the schedule on which their school operates (single-track or multi-track). As presented in Table 2, of the 13 participants describing their school schedule as year-round, 11 characterized their year-round schedule as single-track year-round education. The other 2 did not answer this question. Additionally, respondents teaching at a school operating on a year-round schedule were

Table 1: Schedule Types of Tennessee High School Agriculture Programs

<u>Type of Schedule</u>	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Traditional	175	93.1%
Year-round	<u>13</u>	<u>6.9%</u>
	188	100.0%

* Although there were 197 respondents in this study 9 chose to not answer this question.

Table 2: Type of Year-Round Education Schedules in Tennessee High School Agriculture Education Programs

<u>Type of Year-round Schedule</u>	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Single-track Year-Round Ed.	11	100.0%
Multi-track Year-Round Ed.	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
	11	100.0%

* Although there were 13 respondents teaching in a school operating on a year-round schedule, 2 chose to not answer this question.

asked to verbally describe the schedule on which their school operates. Most frequently, respondents answered they were on 180 day instructional schedules or they were on block schedules. A complete list of responses that was given is presented in Table 15 (Appendix E).

Schedule Changes

The second objective addressed was: To determine if schedule changes are being considered for high schools in Tennessee that have agriculture programs, as well as the reason for proposing any schedule changes. This objective was accomplished by asking the respondents if the school district they currently teach in is proposing a change from a year-round schedule to a traditional schedule, from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule, or if no schedule change is being proposed. As reported in Table 3, of the 197 respondents 139 (73.9%) stated no schedule change was being proposed by their respective school district, 47 (25%) are proposing a change from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule, and 2 (1.1 %) stated their school system is proposing a change from a year-round schedule to a traditional schedule. The other 9 respondents who returned their survey did not answer this question. As a follow-up to this question respondents were asked the reason given for the proposed schedule changes. Forty-seven of the 49 respondents that stated a schedule change is being proposed at the school where they currently teach answered this question giving a variety of responses. Most frequently, respondents answered that increased student test scores, student retention, and student attendance was the reason given for the proposed changes, a complete list of responses given is presented in Table 16 (Appendix F).

Table 3: Proposed Changes in Tennessee High School Schedules

<u>Type of Change</u>	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Year-round to Traditional	2	1.1%
Traditional to Year-round	47	25.0%
No Proposed Changes	139	73.9%
	188	100.0%

* Although there were 197 respondents in this study 9 chose to not answer this question.

Methods of Informing the Community

The third objective addressed in the survey was: To determine the methods that were used to inform the community or school staff of schedule changes.

This objective was accomplished by asking Tennessee high school agriculture teachers to tell how has/will the administration and/or school board officials inform the teachers, students, parents, and the community in general regarding proposed changes. Most frequently, respondents answered they were notified of schedule changes by newspapers, radio, and letters sent home; 81 (41.1%) Tennessee high school agriculture teachers answered this question. A complete list of responses given is presented in Table 17 (Appendix G).

Levels of Concern

The fourth objective addressed in this study was: To describe the level of concern of Tennessee high school agriculture educators regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school. As reported in Table 4, out of the 175 respondents on a traditional schedule, 40 (24.0%) reported being very concerned, 57 (34.1%) reported being somewhat concerned, 50 (29.9%) reported not being concerned, 8 (4.2%) reported being somewhat unconcerned, and 12 (7.2%) reported being very unconcerned. The respondents currently on a year-round schedule answered the question with 2 (16.7%) reported being very concerned, 3 (25%) reported being somewhat concerned, and 7 (58.3%) reported being not concerned. The participants were then asked to list their biggest concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule from a list of ordered responses. As reported in Table 5, from the 175 respondents on a traditional schedule, 166 agriculture teachers answered this question currently teaching on a traditional schedule, with 52 (31.3%) reported being concerned about curriculum or changes in instruction, 42 (25.3%) reported being concerned about increased student/teacher burnout, 7 (4.2%) reported being concerned about increased discipline problems, while the remaining 65 (39.2%) listed other concerns. In the “other” category, respondents answered that extracurricular activities were their biggest concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule, a complete list of responses given is presented in Table 18 (Appendix H). The respondents teaching at schools currently operating on a year-round schedule identified curriculum or changes in instruction as their biggest concern (25%), 2 (16.7%) marked increased student/teacher burnout, 1 (8.3%) marked increased discipline problems, and 6 (50%) stated other

Table 4: Level of Concern of Tennessee High School Agriculture Teachers Regarding the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

<u>Level of Concern</u>	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number *</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number **</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Very Concerned	40	24.0%	2	16.7%
Somewhat Concerned	57	34.1%	3	25.0%
Not Concerned	50	29.9%	7	58.3%
Somewhat Unconcerned	8	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Very Unconcerned	12	7.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	167	100.0%	12	100.0%

* Although there were 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule 8 chose to not answer this question.

** Although there were 13 respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule 1 chose not to answer this question.

Table 5: Biggest Concern of Tennessee High School Agriculture Teachers Regarding the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

<u>Biggest Concern</u>	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number *</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number **</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Curriculum Changes/ Changes in Instruction	52	31.3%	3	25.0%
Increase Discipline Problems	7	4.2%	1	8.3%
Increase Student/Teacher Burnout	42	25.3%	2	16.7%
Other	<u>65</u>	<u>39.2%</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>50.0%</u>
	166	100.0%	12	100.0%

*Although there were 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule in this study 9 chose to not answer this question.

** Although there were 13 respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule 1 chose not to answer this question.

concerns which included none, contests on vacation days, student performance, all of the above, and childcare during intersessions.

Curriculum and Instructional Changes

The fifth objective addressed in this study was: To determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture educators concerning curriculum and instructional changes caused by the implementation of a year-round schedule. This objective was met by asking the Tennessee high school agriculture teachers the following questions based on a Likert-Scale (1=You strongly disagree with the statement, 2=You disagree with the statement, 3=Neutral, 4= You agree with the statement, 5-You strongly agree with the statement):

- If a year-round schedule is implemented at my school my instructional methods will not change.
- A change in curriculum would be necessary if my school operated on a year-round program.

The participants were also asked two open ended questions:

- If you feel that your instructional method will change what changes do you anticipate?
- If you feel that it would be necessary to change your curriculum how would the curriculum be revised?

As reported in Table 6, of the 175 agriculture teachers surveyed currently teaching on a traditional schedule, the mean score was 3.12 (s.d.=1.21) when given the statement: "If a year-round schedule is implemented at my school my instructional methods will not change." Sixty-seven (38.7%) showed some level of agreement, 55 (31.8%) were neutral, and 51 (29.5%) of the respondents currently teaching on a

Table 6: Teacher's Perceptions of Changes in Instructional Methods and Curriculum Due to the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Mean *</u>	<u>s.d.=</u>	<u>Mean *</u>	<u>s.d.=</u>
If a year-round schedule is implemented at my school my instructional methods will not change.	3.12	1.21	3.08	1.31
A change in curriculum would be necessary if my school operated on a year-round program.	3.10	1.09	2.92	.90

* 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agrees, 5=strongly agrees

traditional schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule, the mean score was 3.08 (s.d.=1.31). Four (33.3%) showed some level of agreement, 5 (41.7%) were neutral, and 3 (25%) of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement.

The respondents were then given the statement: "A change in curriculum would be necessary if my school operated on a year-round program." As reported in Table 6, of the agriculture teachers currently teaching on a traditional schedule, the mean score was 3.10 (s.d.= 1.09). Fifty-nine (34.3%) of the respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule showed some level of agreement with the preceding statement, 64 (37.2%) were neutral, and 49 (28.5%) showed some level of disagreement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule, the mean score was 2.92 (s.d.=0.90). Three (25%) of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement, 6 (50%) were neutral, and 3 (25%) showed some level of agreement.

Two open-ended questions followed the Likert-Scale-based questions, yielding a variety of responses. Most frequently, respondents answered they anticipated changes in the timing of competencies, and project work would have to be put on hold. A complete list of responses that was given is presented in Table 19 (Appendix I). When asked to list what curriculum revisions they anticipated following the implementation of a year-round schedule, the respondents answered, most frequently, more course offerings and

competencies. A complete list of responses was given is presented in Table 20 (Appendix J).

Teacher and Student Burnout

The sixth objective of the study was: To determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding increased or decreased student and teacher burnout due to the implementation of a year-round schedule. Respondents were asked if they felt the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school would increase or decrease **teacher** burnout. As presented in Table 7, out of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 72 (43.4%) answered teacher burnout would increase, 51 (30.7%) answered teacher burnout would decrease, and 43 (25.9%) answered that the implementation of a year-round schedule would have no effect on teacher burnout. The respondents currently on a year-round schedule answered the question with 6 (50%) answering teacher burnout would decrease, 4 (33.3%) that teacher burnout would increase, and 2 (16.7%) that the implementation of a year-round schedule would have no effect on teacher burnout.

Respondents were then asked if they felt that the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school would increase or decrease **student** burnout. Out of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 75 (45.7%) answered student burnout would increase, 45 (27.5%) that student burnout would decrease, and 44 (26.8%) the implementation of a year-round schedule would have no effect on student burnout. Of the respondents currently on a year-round schedule, 5 (41.65%) answered student

Table 7: Perceptions of Increased/Decreased Teacher/Student Burnout as Given by Tennessee High School Agriculture Teachers

	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Teacher Burnout Increase	72	43.4%	4	33.3%
Teacher Burnout Decrease	51	30.7%	6	50.0%
No Effect on Teacher Burnout	<u>43</u>	<u>25.9%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>16.7%</u>
	166	100.0%	12	100.0%
Student Burnout Increase	75	45.7%	5	41.65%
Student Burnout Decrease	45	27.5%	5	41.65%
No Effect on Student Burnout	<u>44</u>	<u>26.8%</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>16.7%</u>
	164	100.0%	12	100.0%

burnout would increase, 5 (41.65%) student burnout would decrease, and 2 (16.7%) that the implementation of a year-round schedule would have no effect on student burnout.

Student Discipline

The seventh objective addressed in this study was: To describe Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions of increased or decreased student discipline problems related to the implementation of a year-round schedule. As reported in Table 8, of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 98 (59.8%) felt that with the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school, student discipline problems would remain the same, 45 (27.4%) student discipline problems would increase, and 21 (12.8%) student discipline problems would decrease. From the 13 respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule, 5 (41.7%) felt student discipline problems would increase, 4 (33.3%) student discipline problems would decrease, and 3 (25%) that student discipline problems would remain the same.

Supervised Agricultural Experience (S.A.E.)

The eighth objective was: To describe Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on student Supervised Agricultural Experiences (S.A.E.'s). This objective was met by asking the Tennessee high school agriculture teachers a question with answers based on a Likert-type scale (1=You strongly disagree with the statement; 3=Neutral; 5=You strongly agree with the statement):

- Students spend more time working on their S.A.E.'s when the school is operating on a year-round schedule.

Table 8: Perceptions of Increased/Decreased Student Discipline Problems as Given by Tennessee High School Agriculture Teachers

	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number **</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Increase Discipline Problems	45	27.4%	5	41.7%
Decrease Discipline Problems	21	12.8%	4	33.3%
Discipline Problems Would Remain the Same	<u>98</u>	<u>59.8%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>25.0%</u>
	166	100.0%	12	100.0%

*Although there were 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule 9 chose to not answer this question.

** Although there were 13 respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule 1 chose not to answer this question.

As reported in Table 9, of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule the mean score was 2.61 (s.d.= 1.22) in response to this statement. Sixty-eight (39.5%) of the respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement, 67 (39%) were neutral, and 37 (21.5%) showed some level of agreement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule the mean score was 3.09 (s.d.= 0.83). Two (18.2%) of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement, 7 (63.6%) were neutral, and 2 (18.2%) showed some level of agreement.

Camps

The ninth objective of this study was: To describe the perceptions of agriculture teachers regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on FFA camp and various other FFA summer activities. This objective was accomplished by asking the following two questions based on a Likert-type scale (1=You strongly disagree with the statement; 3=Neutral; 5=You strongly agree with the statement):

- Year-round school makes it more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp.
- It is more difficult to get lengthy trips (State Convention and FFA Camp) approved by school administration when the school is operated on a year-round schedule.

As reported in Table 10, of the 175 agriculture teachers surveyed who currently teach on a traditional schedule the mean score was 3.94 (s.d.= 1.23) when given the statement:

“Year-round school makes it more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp.” One hundred eighteen (68.2%) showed some level of

Table 9: Teacher's Perceptions of S.A.E.'s Regarding the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Mean*</u>	<u>s.d.=</u>	<u>Mean*</u>	<u>s.d.=</u>
Students spend more time working on their S.A.E.'s when the school is operating on a year-round schedule.	2.61	1.22	3.09	.83

* 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agrees, 5=strongly agrees

Table 10: Teacher's Perceptions of Camps Regarding the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Mean*</u>	<u>s.d.=</u>	<u>Mean*</u>	<u>s.d.=</u>
Year-round school makes it more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp.	3.94	1.23	3.85	1.28
It is more difficult to get lengthy trips (State Convention and FFA Camp) approved by administration when the school is operated on a year-round schedule.	3.51	1.24	3.08	1.32

* 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agrees, 5=strongly agrees

agreement, 31 (17.9%) were neutral, and 24 (13.9%) of the respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule, the mean score was 3.85 (s.d.=1.28). Nine (69.2%) showed some level of agreement, 2 (15.4%) were neutral, and 2 (15.4%) of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement.

The respondents were then given the statement, "It is more difficult to get lengthy trips (State Convention and FFA Camp) approved by school administration when the school is operated on a year-round schedule." Of the agriculture teachers surveyed who currently teach on a traditional schedule, the mean score was 3.51 (s.d.=1.24). Eighty-seven (50.6%) showed some level of agreement, 54 (31.4%) were neutral, and 31 (18%) of the respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule showed some level of disagreement with the preceding statement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule, the mean score was 3.08 (s.d.=1.32). Five (38.5%) of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule showed some level of agreement with the preceding statement, 4 (30.75%) were neutral, and 4 (30.75%) showed some level of disagreement.

Contract Length

The tenth and final objective for this study was: To determine the willingness of Tennessee agriculture teachers who are currently on a 9-10 month contract to move to a 12 month contract. Respondents were asked if they were on a 9-10 month contract, a 12-month contract, or other (i.e., 11 month contract). As reported in Table 11, out of the 175

Table 11: Contract Types of Tennessee High School Agriculture Teachers

Contract Type	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	Number*	Percent (%)	Number	Percent (%)
9-10 Month	44	25.3%	4	30.8%
12 Month	124	71.3%	8	61.5%
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>3.4%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7.7%</u>
	174	100.0%	13	100.0%

* Although there were 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule 1 chose to not answer this question.

respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 44 (25.3%) are on a 9-10 month contract, 124 (71.3%) are on a 12-month contract, and 6 (3.4%) other. Of the respondents currently on a year-round schedule, 4 (30.8%) are on a 9-10 month contract, 8 (61.5%) on a 12 month contract, and 1 (7.7%) other. Respondents currently on a 9-10 month contract were then asked if they would be willing to change to a 12-month contract following the implementation of a year-round school. As reported in Table 12, out of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 125 (73.1%) said they were already on a 12-month contract, 40 (23.4%) said they would be willing to change to a 12-month contract, and 6 (3.5%) said they would not be willing to change to a 12-month contract. Of the respondents currently on a year-round schedule, 5 (38.5%) said they would be willing to change to a 12-month contract, and 8 (61.5%) said they were already on a 12-month contract.

Table 12: Willingness of Tennessee High School Agriculture Teachers to Change to a 12-month Contract

	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number*</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Yes	40	23.4%	5	38.5%
No	6	3.5%	0	0.0%
Currently on 12 month contract	<u>125</u>	<u>73.1%</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>61.5%</u>
	171	100.0%	13	100.0%

* Although there were 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule 4 chose to not answer this question.

Demographic Data

The final three questions on the survey yielded demographic data. The first question simply asked if the respondent was male or female. As reported in Table 13, 147 (85.0%) of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule were male, while 26 (15.0%) were female. Of the 13 teachers currently teaching on a year-round schedule, 12 (92.3%) were male and 1 (7.7%) was female.

The next question asked the respondents to mark the phrase that best described their school size: small rural, large rural, small urban, or large urban. As reported in Table 14, of the 175 respondents currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 96 (54.9%) taught at small rural schools, 40 (22.8%) at large rural schools, 7 (4.0%) at small urban school, and 32 (18.3%) at large urban schools. Of the teachers currently teaching on a

Table 13: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number *</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Male	147	85.0%	12	92.3%
Female	<u>26</u>	<u>15.0%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7.7%</u>
	173	100.0%	13	100.0%

* Although there were 175 respondents on a traditional schedule in this study 2 chose to not answer this question.

Table 14: Size of School Where Respondents Currently Teach

School Size	Teachers Currently Teaching on a Traditional Schedule		Teachers Currently Teaching on a Y-R Schedule	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
Small rural schools	96	54.9%	10	76.9%
Large rural schools	40	22.8%	3	23.1%
Small urban schools	7	4.0%	0	0.0%
Large urban schools	<u>32</u>	<u>18.3%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
	175	100.0%	13	100.0%

year-round schedule, 10 (76.9%) described their school size as small rural, and 3 (23.1%) as large rural. The final question on the survey asked the respondents, 'How long have you been teaching (years)?' As reported in Table 21 (Appendix K), length of time teaching ranged from 1 to 38 years with an average of 14.6 years.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

This chapter will provide an overview of the study that was conducted, as well as conclusions, implications, and recommendations. This chapter was formatted for submission to the Journal of Agriculture Education.

Introduction

Before the 4x4 block schedule allowed students to gain eight credits toward graduation annually, the typical high school student had a six- or seven-period class schedule each day. High schools are considering altering the school schedule again by exploring the option of year-round education.

Year-round education has been proven to exist in a variety of communities in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Rodgers, 1993). Following World War II, year-round schools became very popular due to the increased need for facilities (Inger, 1994). As of 1991-1992, twenty-three states had year-round programs consisting of “204 school districts [including] 1281 elementary schools, 142 middle/junior high schools, 18 special schools, and 205 high schools, totaling 1646 public school in year-round education” (Bradford, 1991). The term “year-round” school intimidates many people; however, each schedule lasts approximately 180 days each year (NAYRE, 2002).

A year-round schedule can be set up in two different manners with minor variations. Initially, single-track year-round education uses a balanced calendar for a more continuous period of instruction. Students and all school personnel use the same instructional and vacation calendar. However, class sizes are not reduced, allowing the

accommodation of additional students. The other basic type of year-round education is multi-track year-round education. This system was designed for schools with a shortage of classroom space, eliminating the need to build additional schools (NAYRE, 2002).

When a school system is considering converting from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule, it should be noted that the schedule change “has a significant impact on families and communities that must be considered in order to gain public support rather than resistance to implementation” (Mutchler, 1993).

Impacts of Year-Round Education

Teachers on a year-round schedule have several advantages over their counterparts on a traditional schedule. For example, teachers on a year-round schedule have short frequent breaks. Therefore, the incidence of teacher burnout is decreased (Gitlin, 1988). Also, those teachers that teach on a single-track year-round schedule may teach intersession, giving them the opportunity to increase their earnings over the typical ten-month contract that teachers on a traditional schedule hold (Kneese, 2000). While there are advantages to a year-round schedule, there are also disadvantages. One disadvantage to a year-round schedule includes overlapping schedules of students and faculty members at schools operating on a multi-track schedule. This concept puts all students and teachers in a school at one time, making it difficult to create an environment conducive to learning (Yaffe, 1978). Short frequent breaks, while an advantage, are also a disadvantage because by the time teachers get their students into a routine it is time for another break (Sanders, 2001).

Issues Regarding Year-Round Scheduling

When moving to a year-round schedule great alterations in curriculum result. These changes have to be made so rapidly that administrators must have the help of teachers to aid in the process (Shepard and Baker, 1977). Next, while the eventual burnout of students and faculty was an initial concern, it was later proved that burnout was not a problem because it allowed both students and faculty members to experience opportunities that were typically unavailable in traditional schedules. Discipline problems have also been found to decrease. For three years, the Oxnard School District in California maintained both year-round and traditional schedules (Oxnard, 1992). During this time period, “it was found that student suspensions had decreased by 30% in YRE schools compared to the rate of pupil suspensions at traditional schools” (Oxnard, 1992).

Students that attend schools on a year-round schedule also have an advantage over students on a traditional schedule when seeking employment. Students attending year-round schools are available for employment throughout the year, not just the summer when there are a large number of students competing for few jobs. This situation potentially improves their opportunities for employment (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf, 1987). School calendar changes also present students at year-round schools the opportunity to attend camps during the spring and fall (Thomas, 1973), helping extend the season for camps (Shepard and Baker, 1977), while also reducing overcrowding problems that the camps may have (Thomas, 1973).

Statement of the Problem

The research previously done on year-round education has pertained to either the entire school or a specific subject. Unfortunately, the vast majority of this research has not included agricultural education, possibly making it very difficult for agriculture teachers to build an honest opinion about the year-round schedule.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to focus on the emergence of year-round education and its possible effects on agricultural education programs throughout the state of Tennessee. The study focused on the perceptions of teachers who currently teach in a Tennessee high school agriculture program regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Describe the schedule on which Tennessee high school agriculture programs currently operate.
2. Determine if schedule changes are being considered for high schools in Tennessee that have agriculture programs, as well as the reason for proposing any schedule changes.
3. Determine the methods that will be used to inform the community or school staff of schedule changes.
4. Describe the level of concern of Tennessee high school agriculture educators regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule.
5. Determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers concerning curriculum and instructional changes caused by the implementation of a year-round schedule.
6. Determine the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding increased or decreased student and teacher burnout due to a year-round schedule.

7. Describe Tennessee high school agriculture teachers' perceptions of increased or decreased student discipline problems related to year-round scheduling.
8. Describe agriculture teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on student Supervised Agricultural Experiences (S.A.E.'s).
9. Describe the perceptions of agriculture teachers regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on FFA camp and various other FFA summer activities.
10. Determine the willingness of Tennessee agriculture teachers who are currently on a 9-10 month contract to move to a 12 month contract.
11. Characterize the respondents demographically.

Procedures

The population for this study was all of the non-duplicate, high school agricultural education teachers in the state of Tennessee, as listed in the 2002-2003 Tennessee Agriculture teacher directory. There are approximately 190 high school agriculture programs in the state of Tennessee, many with multiple teacher departments; therefore, the total number of instructors surveyed was 284.

Initially, a survey containing a series of questions was mailed to the participants with a brief cover letter explaining the study. The survey was created and administered referencing Dillman's book, Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method. The survey was designed to reach a variety of the respondent's sensory channels by offering both open-ended questions, as well as those with ordered responses. A postcard or e-mail reminder was sent one week following the initial mailing. Follow-ups were then mailed out at three weeks and six weeks following the initial mailing. The survey was returned by 197 agriculture teachers (approximately 69% of the total number mailed).

This study was an ex post facto, descriptive-correlational study. The data collected was used to determine the perceptions and concerns of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at the school where they currently teach. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Release 11.0). Statistical tests were conducted to assess potential response bias by determining if differences existed between early and late responders. Differences between early and late responders were analyzed for several key independent variables (level of concern, biggest concern, increased/decreased student discipline, teacher burnout, student burnout, contract type, willingness to change contract, type of schedule, time spent on Supervised Agricultural Experience's, scheduling camps, ability to have trips approved, instructional changes, and curriculum changes) using Chi Square and t-tests. No significant statistical differences were determined to exist between early and late responders and the preceding variables. Since late respondents are "assumed typical of non-respondents" (Miller and Smith, 1983), it was deemed unnecessary for an additional follow-up to be conducted.

Findings

Objective 1: Schedules on which Tennessee high school agriculture programs currently operate

As reported in Table 1, the total number of survey respondents was 197; of these 175 (93.1%) taught in schools operating on a traditional schedule, while 13 (6.9%) taught in schools that operate on a year-round schedule (nine people chose not to respond to this question). Of the 13 respondents at schools on a year-round schedule, 11 characterized

their schedule as single-track while the remaining 2 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 1 goes here

Objective 2: Are schedule changes being considered? If so, why?

As reported in Table 3, of the 197 respondents, 139 (73.9%) stated no schedule change was being proposed by their respective school district, 47 (25%) are proposing a change from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule, and 2 (1.1%) stated their school system is proposing a change from a year-round to a traditional schedule. When asked the reason for change, respondents stated most frequently that change was due to the anticipation of increased student test scores, student retention, and student attendance.

Table 3 goes here

Objective 3: Methods used to inform the community or school staff of schedule changes

Most frequently, the respondents stated the method that the administration and/or school board officials would use to inform students, teachers, parents, and the community was via newspapers, radio, etc., followed by board workshops/meetings, and the third most frequently stated method was by faculty meetings.

Objective 4: Level of concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule

As reported in Table 4, when asked their level of concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule, the majority of the Tennessee high school agriculture education instructors currently teaching at a school on a traditional schedule showed some level of concern [97 (58.1%)], while the majority of the teachers currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule were not concerned [7 (58.3%)].

As reported in Table 5, when the teachers currently teaching at a school operating on a traditional schedule were asked their biggest concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school from a list of ordered responses, 52 (31.3%) stated curriculum/ instructional changes, 42 (25.3%) stated increased student/teacher burnout, 7 (4.2%) stated increased discipline problems, and 65 (39.2%) answered “other” as their biggest concern. The respondents that answered “other” most frequently stated that extracurricular activities were their biggest concern. Of the teachers currently teaching on a year-round schedule, 3 (25%) stated curriculum/instructional changes, 2 (16.7%) stated increased student/teacher burnout, 1 (8.3%) increased discipline problems, and 6 (50.0%) answered “other” as their biggest concern. The respondents that answered “other” gave responses such as: no concerns, contests on vacation days, lower student performance, childcare during intersessions, and all of the above.

Table 4 goes here

Table 5 goes here

Objective 5: Perceptions concerning curriculum and instructional changes caused by the implementation of a year-round schedule

As reported in Table 6, when responding to the statement “If a year-round schedule is implemented at my school my instructional methods will not change” based on a Likert-Scale (1=You strongly disagree with the statement, 2=You disagree with the statement, 3=Neutral, 4= You agree with the statement, 5=You strongly agree with the statement), the result was a mean of 3.12 (s.d.=1.21) for teachers on a traditional schedule. While the opinion seemed somewhat neutral, there was widespread opinion between the respondents given by the high standard deviation and after further evaluation

the results were obviously somewhat mixed. Of the respondents on a traditional schedule, 38.7% showed some level of agreement with the statement, 31.8% where neutral, and the remaining 29.5% showed some level of disagreement with the statement. Of the teachers currently teaching at a school operating on a year-round schedule, the mean score was 3.08 (s.d.= 1.31). Four (33.3%) showed some level of agreement with the statement, 5 (41.7%) where neutral, and the remaining 3 (25%) showed some level of disagreement with the statement.

The teachers were then asked if they felt a change in curriculum would be necessary if their school operated on a year-round schedule. This statement was again based on a Likert-Scale. As reported in Table 6, of the teachers currently teaching on a traditional schedule (mean=3.10; s.d.=1.09), 34.3% showed some level of agreement, 37.2% were neutral, and 28.5% of the respondents showed some level of disagreement with the statement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule (mean=2.92; s.d.=0.90), 3 (25%) showed some level of disagreement with the statement, 6 (50%) where neutral, and 3 (25%) showed some level of agreement.

Table 6 goes here

Objective 6: Perceptions regarding increased or decreased student and teacher burnout due to a year-round schedule

The respondents were asked if they felt teacher burnout would increase with the implementation of a year-round schedule. As reported in Table 7, of the teachers currently teaching on a traditional schedule, 43.4% felt that teacher burnout would increase, 30.7% stated teacher burnout would decrease, while the remaining 25.9% felt that the implementation of a year-round schedule would have no effect on teacher

burnout. Of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule, a larger percentage (50%) felt that teacher burnout would decrease, while 33.3% stated that teacher burnout would increase, and 16.7% said that there would be no effect on teacher burnout.

The respondents were also asked their perceptions of student burnout. As reported in Table 7, of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a traditional schedule, 45.7% answered student burnout would increase, 27.5% said student burnout would decrease, and the remaining 26.8% felt that there would be no effect on student burnout. Of the respondents currently teaching on a year-round schedule, opinions were somewhat evenly distributed with 41.65% indicating that student burnout would decrease, 41.65% indicating that student burnout would increase, and 16.7% indicating that there would be no effect on student burnout.

Table 7 goes here

Objective 7: Perceptions of increased or decreased student discipline problems related to year-round scheduling

As reported in Table 8, when the respondents were asked if they felt student discipline problems would increase or decrease in a year-round schedule, the majority of those teaching at a school on a traditional schedule (59.8%) felt that the discipline problems would remain the same, while 27.4% felt that student discipline problems would increase, and the remaining 12.8% felt that student discipline problems would decrease. Of those currently teaching on a year-round schedule, 41.7% felt discipline problems would increase, while 33.3% felt that student discipline problems would

decrease, and the remaining 25% felt that student discipline problems would remain the same.

Table 8 goes here

Objective 8: Perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on student Supervised Agricultural Experiences (S.A.E.'s)

As reported in Table 9, when responding to the statement "Students spend more time working on their S.A.E.'s when the school is operating on a year-round schedule," the result was a mean of 2.61 (s.d.=1.22) for teachers on a traditional schedule. Thirty-nine and one-half percent felt that students would not be able to spend more time on their S.A.E.'s if their school operated on a year-round schedule, potentially negatively impacting their experience. However, 39% were neutral, and the remaining 21.5% felt that students would be able to spend more time on their S.A.E.'s. Of the teachers currently teaching at a school operating on a year-round schedule (mean=3.09; s.d.=0.83), 2 (18.2%) showed some level of disagreement with the statement, while the majority 7 (63.6%) were neutral, and the remaining 2 (18.2%) showed some level of agreement with the statement.

Table 9 goes here

Objective 9: Perceptions regarding the impact of year-round scheduling on FFA camp and various other FFA summer activities

As reported in Table 10, when the teachers on a traditional schedule were given the statement, "Year-round school makes it more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp," the mean score was 3.94 (s.d.=1.23). The majority (68.2%) felt that it would be more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention

and FFA Camp, 17.9% were neutral, while 13.9% felt it would not be more difficult to schedule these events. Of the teachers currently teaching at a school operating on a year-round schedule (mean=3.85; s.d.=1.28), 9 (69.2%) showed some level of agreement with the statement, 2 (15.4%) showed some level of disagreement with the statement, and the remaining 2 (15.4%) were neutral.

The teachers were then given the statement: "It is more difficult to get lengthy trips (State Convention and FFA Camp) approved by school administration when the school where they teach operates on a year-round schedule." As reported in Table 10, this statement was again rated by teachers on a Likert-Scale with a mean rating of 3.51 (s.d.=1.24). The majority (50.6%) of the teachers currently teaching on a year-round schedule showed some level of agreement with the statement, while 31.4% were neutral, and 18% of the respondents showed some level of disagreement with the statement. Of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a year-round schedule, there was mixed opinion (mean=3.08; s.d.=1.32); 5 (38.5%) showed some level of agreement, 4 (30.75%) showed some level of disagreement with the statement, and 4 (30.75%) were neutral.

Table 10 goes here

Objective 10: Willingness of Tennessee agriculture teachers who are currently on a 9-10 month contract to move to a 12 month contract

As reported in Table 11, the majority (71.3%) of the respondents currently teaching at a school on a traditional schedule are on 12-month contracts, 25.3% are on 10-month contracts, and the remaining 3.4% are on contracts marked as 'other' (i.e., 11 month contract). Those not currently on a 12-month contract were asked if they would be willing to change to a 12-month contract. Remembering that 73.1% are currently on a

12-month contract as reported in Table 12, 23.4% said they would be willing to change to a 12-month contract, while the remaining 3.5% said they would not be willing to change to a 12-month contract. The majority (61.5%) of the respondents currently on a year-round schedule are on a 12-month contract; 4 (30.8%) are on a 9-to 10-month contract, and 1 (7.7%) marked other. Of the respondents that were not on a 12-month contract (38.5% total), all said they would be willing to change to a 12-month contract.

Table 11 goes here

Table 12 goes here

Objective 11: Characterize the respondents demographically

As reported in Table 13, the majority of the agriculture teachers surveyed that currently teach on a traditional schedule were male (85%), and 92.3% of the teachers currently teaching on a year-round schedule were male. The respondents were also asked the size of school where they currently teach. As reported in Table 14, of the respondents on a traditional schedule, the majority teach in small rural schools (54.9%). The majority of the respondents currently teaching in schools on a year-round schedule also teach in small rural schools (76.9%). The final question asked the respondents the number of years that they had been teaching. Length of time teaching ranged from 1 year to 38 years with an average of 14.7 years.

Table 13 goes here

Table 14 goes here

Conclusions and Discussion

The typical high school agriculture teacher in the state of Tennessee is male, paid on a 12-month contract, and currently teaches at a school operating on a traditional schedule in a small rural area. However, 13 (6.9%) respondents teach at schools currently operating on a year-round schedule. While this is a relatively small percentage of the respondents, my committee members and I originally believed there were no high school agriculture programs in the state of Tennessee operating on year-round schedules. Forty-nine (26.1%) teachers stated the school where they teach is proposing a schedule change; all but two of these were considering changing to year-round education. With a percentage this high considering schedule changes it would lead one to believe that the number of Tennessee high school agriculture programs on a year-round schedule would change in the upcoming years. The most frequent methods that administration and/or school board officials use to inform the teachers and community of schedule changes are by newspapers, radio, etc.

The majority of teachers on a traditional schedule (58.1%) are concerned about the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school. While the majority of teachers on a year-round schedule (58.3%) are not concerned about the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school, the discrepancy would lead one to believe the concern teachers on a traditional schedule have is possibly unwarranted and could possibly be influenced by the teacher's limited experience with the schedule.

The largest number [52 (31.3%)] of teachers on a traditional schedule stated their biggest concern was curriculum changes and changes in instructional methods due to the

implementation of a year-round schedule at the schools where they currently teach. The largest number [6 (50%)] of teachers on a year-round schedule answered “other” when asked their biggest concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at the school where they currently teach. These responses included none, contests on vacation days, all of the above, student performance, and childcare during intersessions. Seeing the previous responses from Tennessee high school agriculture teachers raises the questions, “Are changes in curriculum necessary when switching from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule?” and, “Are changes in curriculum the biggest concern of teachers beginning to teach on a year-round schedule?”

Among the teachers currently on a traditional schedule, there is mixed opinion regarding whether instructional methods and curriculum will change upon the institution of a year-round program at their school. Conversely, half of the teachers on a year-round schedule are neutral regarding changes in instructional methods and curriculum. The experience that teachers currently on a year-round schedule have with the schedule itself may be attributed to the difference in opinion between themselves and their counterparts on a traditional schedule.

Among teachers on a traditional schedule, 43.4% feel that teacher burnout would increase following the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school. However, the largest number [6 (50%)] of respondents on a year-round schedule answered that teacher burnout would decrease following the implementation of a year-round schedule at their school. Although Bradford reports that teacher burnout is an increasing problem for school administrators (1991), teachers have reported the year-

round calendar gives them opportunities that were previously not possible due to the presence of breaks in every season, not only the summer (Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf, 1987). This reaffirms the perceptions of teachers at schools currently operating on a year-round schedule.

Of the teachers currently on a traditional schedule, 45.7% answered student burnout would increase while their counterparts on a year-round schedule were evenly divided (41.65% answered student burnout would increase and 41.65% answered student burnout would decrease). The data collected may lead one to believe that student burnout depends on the individual students themselves. For example, some students may have a higher incidence of burnout when on a year-round schedule, while other students may have a lower incidence of burnout on the same schedule.

The majority of teachers currently teaching on a traditional schedule [98 (59.8%)] felt students' discipline problems would remain the same if a year-round schedule were implemented at their school. On the other hand, teachers currently on a year-round schedule were somewhat evenly divided although the largest number [5 (41.7%)] felt that student discipline problems would increase. The data collected from the Oxnard School District in Oxnard, California stated quite the contrary. For three years, the Oxnard School District maintained both year-round and traditional schedules (Oxnard, 1992). During this time period, "it was found that student suspensions had decreased by 30% in YRE schools compared to the rate of pupil suspensions at traditional schools" (Oxnard, 1992).

Of the teachers currently on a traditional schedule, the responses were mixed when given the statement: "Students spend more time working on their S.A.E.'s when the school is operating on a year-round schedule." However, of the respondents on a year-round schedule, the majority (63.6%) was neutral. Ballinger, Kirschenbaum, and Poimbeauf (1987) stated, "Opportunities for student employment can be enhanced in communities using the year-round concept, because students are available for jobs throughout the year, not just in the summer months when there are too many students competing for too few part-time jobs." The variation of responses in this study may lead one to believe that the time students spend on their S.A.E.'s when attending a school on a year-round schedule could depend greatly on the student and how well they are able to cope with the schedule itself.

The majority of teachers on a traditional schedule (68.2%) showed some level of agreement with the statement: "Year-round school makes it more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp." Likewise, the majority of teachers currently teaching on a year-round schedule (69.2%) showed some level of agreement with the preceding statement. The majority of teachers currently teaching on a traditional schedule (50.6%) showed some level of agreement with the statement: "It is more difficult to get lengthy trips (State Convention and FFA Camp) approved by school administration when the school is operated on a year-round schedule." The teachers on a year-round schedule, however, had somewhat mixed opinions when given the same statement. Shepard and Baker (1977) suggest, "...YRE would present the opportunity for more efficient use of camp facilities by establishing year-round camps rather than just

summer camps”. The data collected from this survey may suggest that the small number of Tennessee high schools currently operating on a year-round schedule may not have affected FFA Camp and State Convention as of yet. If the number of Tennessee high school agriculture programs on a year-round schedule should increase, will FFA Camp and State Convention be impacted?

Recommendations For Further Study

Additional research should be conducted as more schools change to a year-round schedule to determine if teachers’ perceptions of year-round education have changed or if they remain constant.

This study should also be replicated with an expanded definition of the year-round schedule. The original definition of year-round education stated: “The students at my school attend school for several weeks and then have a short break. Students take short, frequent breaks throughout the entire year”. Offering teachers examples of year-round schedules (i.e. 45 days on, 15 days off) that may apply to their respective schools could provide a clearer definition of year-round scheduling. Therefore, the number of schools on a year-round schedule could change if a clearer definition is provided.

A similar study should be conducted focusing on Tennessee high school students to determine their perceptions of year-round scheduling.

Finally, this study or a similar study should also be conducted in other states to determine agriculture teachers’ perceptions of year-round scheduling.

Recommendations for School Districts

An area that should be addressed is the length of contract the teachers will be working. Teachers in a year-round, single-track system can teach intersession to try and minimize the amount of time they are unpaid. Multi-track systems offer a twelve month contract (Kneese, 2000), making finances easier for teachers on this schedule. However, of the respondents in this study that currently teach at schools operating on a year-round schedule, only 61.5% are currently on a 12-month contract, possibly making the contract an important issue that should be addressed.

Implementer(s) must also be aware of the fact that year-round schedules not only affect teachers, students, and parents, but the entire community as well (McLain, 1973). The conversion of a school to a year-round program, “has a significant impact on families and communities that must be considered in order to gain public support rather than resistance to implementation” (Mutchler, 1993). These issues must be factored into the decision-making process to ensure a smooth implementation process, as well as community buy-in (Mutchler, 1993).

The conclusions reported in this study show the perceptions of Tennessee high school agriculture teachers regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at the school where they currently teach. As stated by McLain in his book: Year-Round Education: Economic, Educational, and Sociological Factors, “Any person, committee, or agency contemplating year-round education as a possible alternative to the existing programs is confronted with two broad strategic considerations: the feasibility of change and a plan for implementation” (McLain, 1973). Perhaps the data collected from this

study could aid school administration and school board officials so they will know concerns they should address before implementing a year-round schedule at their school. The respondents of this study expressed concerns with teacher and student burnout, as well as scheduling agriculture-related school trips (i.e. State Convention and FFA Camp). These concerns could be addressed by school administration via newspaper articles and meetings that focus on these specific concerns.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire and Initial Cover Letter

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Company»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

April 8, 2003

Dear «FirstName»,

School systems across the United States have been involved in a schedule change from a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule. Frequently, these changes are made and implemented rather quickly without input from teachers and other people in the community that would be directly impacted by this change. Therefore, your perceptions and concerns about a schedule change often go unknown.

All Tennessee high school agriculture teachers are being asked to supply information on their program and give their perceptions and concerns on these changes to your schedule. Your participation in completing this questionnaire is voluntary, however your participation would be greatly appreciated. In order for the results to truly show what Tennessee agriculture teachers think about year-round scheduling and the concerns that they have regarding this schedule, it is important for each questionnaire to be completed and returned.

You will be assured of total confidentiality. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so your name can be removed from the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be associated with your responses.

You may receive a summary of results by writing your e-mail address on the enclosed index card and submitting it with your questionnaire in the return envelope.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have. Please write, e-mail, or call. My e-mail address is gblack@utk.edu and my telephone number is (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Blackwell, Jr.

Year-Round Education Survey

1. Circle the statement that best describes your current school schedule:

TRADITIONAL

The students at my school attend school August/September through May/June and then have approximately a three month summer break.

YEAR-ROUND

The students at my school attend school for several weeks and then have a short break. Students take short, frequent breaks throughout the entire year.

2. If your school operates on a year-round schedule, which statement best describes your school's operating schedule (If your school operates on a traditional calendar please skip the next two questions.):

SINGLE-TRACK YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION

A system of year-round education using a balanced calendar. Students and all school personnel use the same instructional and vacation calendar. This method does not reduce the size of classes or allow the school to accommodate more students.

MULTI-TRACK YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION

A system typically used to try and reduce the problem of overcrowding in schools. This method was specifically designed for schools with a shortage of classroom space, eliminating the need to build additional school space.

3. How would you describe your school's schedule? For example, 45 instructional days, 15 days off.

Please answer the following questions in regard to your school's schedule.

1. Is the school district that you currently teach in proposing a change from a year-round schedule to a traditional schedule or a traditional schedule to a year-round schedule? (Circle One.)

1. YEAR-ROUND → TRADITIONAL

2. TRADITIONAL → YEAR-ROUND

3. NO SCHEDULE CHANGE IS BEING PROPOSED.

5. If a schedule change is being considered please explain the reason given for this change.

6. How has/will the administration and/or school board officials inform the teachers, students, parents, and the community in general regarding proposed changes? _____

Regardless of the scheduling system that your school operates on please answer the following questions. Please circle the response that best describes your perceptions of year-round education.

1. My level of concern regarding the implementation of a year-round schedule at my school is:
 1. VERY CONCERNED
 2. SOMEWHAT CONCERNED
 3. NOT CONCERNED
 4. SOMEWHAT UNCONCERNED
 5. VERY UNCONCERNED
2. My biggest concern about implementing a year-round schedule is:
 1. CURRICULUM CHANGES/CHANGES IN INSTRUCTION
 2. INCREASED DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS
 3. INCREASED STUDENT/TEACHER BURNOUT
 4. OTHER: _____
3. Implementing a year-round schedule at my school would increase/decrease student discipline problems?
 1. INCREASE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS
 2. DECREASE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS
 3. DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS WOULD REMAIN THE SAME
4. The implementation of a year-round schedule at my school would increase/decrease teacher burnout?
 1. TEACHER BURNOUT WOULD INCREASE
 2. TEACHER BURNOUT WOULD DECREASE
 3. WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON BURNOUT
5. The implementation of a year-round schedule at my school would increase/decrease student burnout?
 1. STUDENT BURNOUT WOULD INCREASE
 1. STUDENT BURNOUT WOULD DECREASE
 2. WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON BURNOUT
6. What contract are you currently on?
 1. 9-10 MONTH CONTRACT
 2. 12 MONTH CONTRACT
 3. OTHER

7. If you are currently on a 9-10 month contract would you be willing to change to a 12 month contract following the implementation of a year-round schedule at your school?

1. YES

2. NO

3. I AM ALREADY ON A 12 MONTH CONTRACT

Please circle the response that best describes your perceptions of year-round education. (1-You strongly disagree with the statement; 3-Neutral; 5-You strongly agree with the statement).

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Students spend more time working on their S.A.E.'s when the school is operating on a year-round schedule. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Year-round school makes it more difficult to schedule events such as State Convention and FFA Camp. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | It is more difficult to get lengthy trips (State Convention and FFA Camp) approved by school administration when the school is operated on a year-round schedule. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | If a year-round schedule is implemented at my school my instructional methods will not change. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | A change in curriculum would be necessary if my school operated on a year-round program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. If you feel that your instructional method will change what changes do you anticipate?
-
-

7. If you feel that it would be necessary to change your curriculum how would the curriculum be revised?
-
-

Please answer the following demographic questions in order for us to understand the respondents of this questionnaire.

1. What is your gender:

1. FEMALE

2. MALE

2. What is the size of your school:

1. SMALL RURAL SCHOOL (LESS THAN 1,000 STUDENTS)

2. LARGE RURAL SCHOOL (MORE THAN 1,000 STUDENTS)

3. SMALL URBAN SCHOOL (LESS THAN 1,000 STUDENTS)

4. LARGE URBAN SCHOOL (MORE THAN 1,000 STUDENTS)

3. How long have you been teaching (years)? _____

APPENDIX B

Post Card Reminder

April 14, 2003

Last week you received a questionnaire from me asking that you describe your perceptions and/or concerns about year-round scheduling and its potential impact on you, your program and students.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to me please accept my sincere thanks. If you haven't yet returned it, I would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete and return the questionnaire as soon as possible. Because this study is representative of all Tennessee agriculture teachers it is important for each questionnaire to be completed and returned to ensure that information learned can be generalized to the entire population.

If by chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please reply to this note immediately (glblack@utk.edu) and I will put another one in the mail to you today.

Again, thank you for your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Blackwell, Jr.

APPENDIX C

Third Week Follow-up Letter

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Company»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

April 29, 2003

Dear «FirstName»,

Approximately three weeks ago, I wrote to you in search of your perceptions and/or concerns regarding a change from a traditional school schedule to a year-round schedule and its potential impact on you, your program, and students. As of today, I have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

This study was developed in an effort to gather input from high school agriculture teachers that may ordinarily be overlooked when a schedule change is being proposed.

I am writing to you again because each questionnaire is important for determining the validity of this studies' results. Every high school agriculture teacher in the state of Tennessee was selected to complete the questionnaire to ensure that information learned could be generalized to the entire population.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Blackwell, Jr.

APPENDIX D

Six Week Follow-up Letter

«FirstName» «LastName»
«Company»
«Address1»
«City», «State» «PostalCode»

May 20, 2003

Dear «FirstName»,

I am writing to you concerning the study seeking your perceptions and/or concerns regarding year-round scheduling. I have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

I have been very optimistic do to the large number of questionnaires that I have already received. However, the ability to accurately describe how Tennessee high school agriculture teachers feel concerning this schedule change depends upon you and the others who have not yet responded. The reason is because those who have not sent in their questionnaire may hold very different opinions than those who have already responded.

This study was created in an effort to gather perceptions and concerns from teachers that may normally be overlooked when schedule changes are being considered. The usefulness of this survey's results depends on how accurately we are able to identify Tennessee agriculture teachers' potential concerns.

A replacement questionnaire is enclosed. Please complete and return it as soon as possible. I realize this is a very busy time of year for agriculture teachers (C.D.E.'s, state convention, etc.) so your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you would like a summary of the results please write your e-mail address on the slip of paper.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Blackwell, Jr.

APPENDIX E

Table 15: How would you describe your school's schedule?

Table 15: How would you describe your school's schedule?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
18 week term	1
180 instructional days	14
2-90 day periods with Christmas and Summer breaks	1
2 hour block, 10 hours/week	1
2 week fall and spring break	1
2 weeks at Christmas, 1 week spring and fall break	1
4-45 day periods with 4 breaks	2
4-45 day periods with 11 week summer break	1
45 days on, 10 days off (Year-round in 2003-2004)	2
45 days on, 5 off (10 between semesters)	2
6 period day	2
9 weeks on, 15 days off (7-9 week summer break)	1
9 months on, 3 months off	1
9 weeks on, 1 week off and summer break	10
9 weeks on, 2 weeks off (Year-round in 2003-2004)	1
9 weeks, break (summer 5 weeks off)	1
90 days, Christmas and summer breaks	1
August-May with 2 months off	2
Block schedule	14
Change to year-round (45 on, 15 off) in 2003-04	1
Don't know	1
Going year-round in 2004-2005	1
Modified year-round schedule, 9 weeks on, 2 off (8 weeks=summer)	1
Traditional 6 period day, holidays and spring break	1

APPENDIX F

Table 16: Reasons for Proposed Schedule Changes

Table 16: Reasons for Proposed Schedule Changes

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Adapt to changes in other counties	5
Better for teachers and students, financial	1
Better use of facilities, manage failures better	2
Don't know	7
Going to a 9-1 schedule	1
Increase test scores, student retention, and student attendance.	14
Less student fatigue in late spring	1
Less time spent between courses	1
More/longer breaks	1
No change	2
School board and county supervisors want it	8
Some Dr. thinks it's better	1
Sounds like a good idea	1
Teachers requesting change	1
We are no longer an agricultural society	1
Year-round is non-beneficial	1

APPENDIX G

Table 17: Administration and/or School Board Officials Methods of Informing Teachers, Students, Parents, and the Community in General Regarding Proposed Schedule Changes?

Table 17: Administration and/or School Board Officials Methods of Informing Teachers, Students, Parents, and the Community in General Regarding Proposed Schedule Changes?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Advance proposals	1
After the decision is made	1
Board workshops/meetings	12
Community survey	4
Community voted (Traditional won 3:1 vote)	1
County forums	8
Faculty has no input	1
Faculty meetings	6
Good luck! You are on your own	1
In-services, surveys, open meetings, questionnaire	3
Just made announcement	2
Newspapers, radio, letters sent home	29
No change	1
No formal announcement has been made	1
No idea	1
Not very well	1
School board announcement	2
Sneak it in	2
This is the way it is going to be	1
Vote	4
Word of mouth, principals	1

APPENDIX H

**Table 18: Other Responses Given for: My Biggest
Concern About Implementing a Year-Round
Schedule**

Table 18: Other Responses Given for: My Biggest Concern About Implementing a Year-Round Schedule

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
All of the above	2
Childcare during intersessions	3
Continuing education for teachers	1
Destroy ag. Program	6
Extended employment	5
Extracurricular activities	18
I think it will be good	1
Negative attitude by participants in change	1
None	16
Schedule conflicts	11
Student retention is bad	3
Students work schedules	2

APPENDIX I

Table 19: Anticipated Changes in Instructional Methods Following the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

Table 19: Anticipated Changes in Instructional Methods Following the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Project work put on hold	5
Restructure organizational methods	4
Scheduling sessions with students in FFA activities	1
Teach/Re-teach more than normal before a break	2
Timing will have to be changed	5
Trying to balance instruction to meet state standards	1
Uncertain	1
Very little change needed	1

APPENDIX J

Table 20: Anticipated Curriculum Revisions Following the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

Table 20: Anticipated Curriculum Revisions Following the Implementation of a Year-Round Schedule

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Amount of time required for each subject	3
Better	1
Changed to fit current state curriculum and calendar schedule	10
Courses taught now work well in traditional program	1
Depends on schedule / classes	4
Difficulty in continuity	1
Do not know yet	4
Exit exams for each class	1
Harder to get kids meaningful summer experiences / cooperative work	2
More course offerings and competencies	15
More specific areas of instruction	2
More technical	7
No changes necessary	13
Not given much consideration	1
Only minor changes	1
Revise courses to fit the season school is in session	6
Short courses / lessons	3
Teach the same course each year	1

APPENDIX K

Table 21: Number of Years Teaching

Table 21: Number of Years Teaching

<u>Years Teaching</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
1	10
2	11
3	12
4	10
5	11
6	12
7	6
8	9
9	4
10	3
11	3
12	2
13	1
14	3
15	6
16	4
17	2
18	5
19	4
20	7
21	5
22	5
23	3
24	4
25	9
26	3
27	3
28	8
29	4
30	7
31	2
32	4
33	1

Table 21: (continued)

<u>Years Teaching</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
34	2
35	1
36	1
37	1
38	1

VITA

Gary Lee Blackwell, Jr. was born in Hendersonville, North Carolina on July 6, 1978. He attended East Henderson High School in Henderson County, North Carolina, where he was a member of the National FFA Organization (formerly Future Farmers of America) in which he served as vice president of his chapter his senior year. He graduated from high school in 1996.

He attended The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he began studies in Ornamental Horticulture and Landscape Design in the Fall of 1996. Following multiple internships in the horticulture industry he decided to begin studies in Agricultural & Extension Education as well. He graduated with both degrees in May 2001.

After graduating with his Undergraduate degree he went on to further his education at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the department of Agricultural & Extension Education. In November 2002 he was initiated into Gamma Sigma Delta, The Honor Society of Agriculture.

He is currently completing the Agricultural & Extension Education graduate program at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Upon, graduation he plans to pursue a full-time career in the area of agricultural education.

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10/20/04

VP

MAB

