Lesson 2: Types of Supervised Agricultural Experience

Supervised Agricultural Experience programs are essential for every student enrolled in agricultural education. There are a variety of ways in which a student can become involved with an SAE program. As mentioned in lesson 1, an SAE program is made up of a series of related individual projects or a long-term experience. There are five types of SAE projects:

- Exploratory
- Entrepreneurship
- Placement
- Research/Experimental
- Analytical

Characteristics and Expectations of SAEs

Exploratory

An exploratory SAE project is a small project completed by the student to investigate different career possibilities and SAE programs in a variety of areas. An exploratory project is not meant to complete the SAE requirements for the entire high school experience, but it can be an excellent way to become acquainted with different agricultural areas or supplement the primary SAE project.

Exploratory projects are planned by the student, instructor, and parent. The number of hours the student works, the materials used, and the competencies and skills demonstrated are recorded in the student's Record Book. Table 2.1 shows examples of exploratory projects from a variety of areas.

Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneurship SAE project is a project in agricultural production or agribusiness that is owned and managed by the student. Establishing an entrepreneurship SAE can be a very rewarding experience.

Students involved in entrepreneurship SAEs should create a plan early in high school to grow their projects from a small, modest beginning into a successful project. This can be a great lesson in goal setting. The most traditional entrepreneurship projects involve agricultural production, but there are many opportunities in agribusiness as well.

Entrepreneurship projects are planned by the student, instructor, and parent. Purchases, receipts, and competencies and skills are recorded in the student's Record Book. For an entrepreneurship SAE to be successful, the student must exhibit a good work ethic, and the project must show growth and improvement. Examples of entrepreneurship projects in production are swine, vegetable, specialty crop, and specialty animal production. Examples of agribusiness entrepreneurship projects include providing a lawn care or engine repair service or operating a custom hay-hauling operation.

Placement

A placement SAE project is a project in which a student is employed at an agribusiness firm, school or community facility, farm, or ranch. This may include paid and unpaid labor. There are many opportunities for education in a placement setting in which the student works for a business or individual in the agricultural industry.

Table 2.1 - Exploratory SAE Projects

Agricultural Area	**Exploratory SAE**
Plant science	Collect insect specimens and label and organize them.
Animal science	Create a display with pictures and descriptions of the major breeds of beef cattle.
Natural resources	Job shadow a conservation agent.
Horticulture	Perform a plant cutting in the school greenhouse.
Agricultural mechanics	Create a design for a farm shop.
Agricultural business/sales/marketing	Create an advertisement for your FFA chapter fundraiser.
Food science	Complete a country cured ham project.
Leadership and communication	Create a scrapbook for your FFA chapter.

Supervised Agricultural Experience

Placement projects are planned by the student, instructor, parent, and employer. The number of hours worked, wages earned, work-related expenses (including wage deductions), and competencies and skills are recorded in the student's Record Book. For a successful placement project, the student must exhibit a positive attitude and good work ethic and must show growth and improvement in his or her work skills and competencies. Examples of paid placement projects include working as a hired hand on a farm or ranch and working in a farm-supply store or florist shop. Completing community improvement projects and working after school in the school greenhouse or agricultural mechanics shop are examples of unpaid placement projects.

Research/Experimental

A research/experimental project is a project in which a student plans and conducts an agricultural experiment using the scientific process. This type of activity is particularly well-suited for students in agricultural classes that have a strong emphasis on biotechnology or agriscience.

The interests of every student cannot be fulfilled by entrepreneurship or placement SAEs. Some students, as part of their SAE program, may choose to conduct a scientific experiment in an agricultural field. This is not a substitute for the entire SAE program, but it can be a valuable component.

Research/experimental projects are planned by the student, instructor, and parent. To successfully complete the project, the student must identify a problem facing the agricultural industry and use scientific processes to come up with possible solutions. The number of hours worked, receipts and expenditures, and competencies and skills are recorded in the student's Record Book. Examples of research/experimental projects are performing an experiment on the effects of feed additives on cattle and comparing the effects of different pest-control methods on greenhouse crops.

Analytical

For an analytical SAE project, a student identifies an agricultural problem that is not amenable to experimentation and designs a plan to investigate and analyze the problem. The student gathers and evaluates data from a variety of sources and produces a finished product that addresses the problem.

As part of his or her SAE program, a student may choose to participate in a project or become familiar with a career area where entrepreneurship or placement is not a viable option. Many of these interest areas are also not conducive to a research/experimental project. In this case, an analytical project is often the way to gain experience in the chosen field.

Analytical projects are planned by the student, instructor, and parent. A written report evaluating and documenting the outcomes of the research may be the expected product for an analytical SAE project. The number of hours worked, receipts and expenditures, and competencies and skills are recorded in the student's Record Book. Examples of analytical SAE projects include tracking agricultural commodity markets over a period of time, creating a land-use plan for a local farm, developing a marketing plan for a local business, or studying agricultural law and completing a research paper on the topic.

Laws Regarding Placement SAEs

Placement projects are a key component of many SAE programs because they can be an excellent way for students to receive direct, hands-on experience in the area of their choice. However, to have a successful SAE, it is important to know and follow workplace safety rules and regulations, for your own safety as well as the safety of others. There are also state and federal laws governing working conditions, workplace behavior, and the hours and type of work individuals can do based on their age. It is an employee's right and responsibility to know the policies and laws regulating his or her place of work.

Safety

According to the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, each year nearly 3,000 young Missouri workers are injured seriously enough to file a worker's compensation claim. Thirty-eight percent of these injuries are in agriculture-related areas.

Following safety rules makes the workplace healthier and safer, and it also helps increase productivity and improves morale. Each job will have its own specific safety rules and requirements. See Figure 2.1 for a list of basic safety rules.

Figure 2.1 - Basics Rules for Safety

Staying Safe on the Job
• Follow all safety rules and instructions. • Wear clean clothes daily, and do not wear torn or loose-fitting clothes that can get caught in moving parts. • Stay out of fields where pesticides have recently been sprayed. • Do not eat or drink in the field or work area. • Know what to do in case of emergency. • Report any health and safety hazards to your supervisor. • Take breaks, drink plenty of water, and wear appropriate clothing to avoid overheating. • Use correct bending and lifting procedures to avoid injury.

Labor Laws

State and federal laws regulate the number of hours a person can work and the type of work he or she can do based on age.

In Missouri, the following regulations apply to workers 14 and 15 years old:

Work hours, Labor Day to June 1
- 3 hours a day on school days
- 8 hours a day on nonschool days
- 6 days a week
- 18 hours a week (per federal law)
- Work may not begin before 7 a.m.
- Work may not continue after 7 p.m.

Work hours, June 1 to Labor Day
- 8 hours a day
- 6 days a week
- 40 hours a week
- Work may not begin before 7 a.m.
- Work may not continue after 9 p.m.

In Missouri, no worker under 16 may do the following types of work:
- Handle or apply pesticides
- Drive, ride, or assist in operating a tractor or forklift
- Drive any vehicle for transporting passengers
- Use any power-driven equipment such as a chain saw, hay mower, or hay baler
- Work from a ladder or scaffold

Workers under 16 need a work certificate from their public school district office to work during the school year.

These are only some of the basic laws governing youth employment. Other laws may apply, depending on the type of work involved. There are also federal laws regarding working hours and the type of work a person can do based on age. When state and federal laws do not agree, the stricter law applies, but both laws must be complied with.

Worker's Rights

Everyone has a legal right to be treated fairly and work in a safe environment. If you feel these rights are not being respected, you may wish to contact one of the following agencies or visit their Web site for additional information.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – Founded in 1971, OSHA was created to prevent work-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths. OSHA works with employees and employers to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.

Missouri Commission on Human Rights (MCHR) – The MCHR, which is part of the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, works to prevent and eliminate all types of discrimination. The commission investigates claims of discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and housing. The MCHR will investigate claims of discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, disability, and age.

U. S. Department of Labor – The Department of Labor offers information on a number of work-related issues including equal employment opportunity, wages

and hours, workplace safety and health, and youth employment.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) – The NLRB administers the National Labor Relations Act, which governs relations between unions, employers, and employees in the private business sector. The board works to prevent or correct unfair labor practices, whether by employers or labor organizations.

Summary

There are five types of SAE projects: exploratory, entrepreneurship, placement, research/experimental, and analytical. Each type of project has its own characteristics and expectations, and each is suited to reaching specific goals and objectives. Planning is an important part of SAEs. Student should work with the appropriate individuals—their instructor, parent, and employer, if applicable—to plan their SAE to help ensure that it will be a success.

Credits:

Garton, B., ed. *Agricultural Education Program Planning Handbook for Missouri Schools*. 5th ed. University of Missouri-Columbia Department of Agricultural Education. Accessed June 18, 2007, from http://ssu.agri.missouri.edu/aged/resources/handbook/.

Missouri Commission on Human Rights. Accessed August 21, 2007, from http://www.dolir.mo.gov/hr/.

Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Accessed June 25, 2007, from http://www.dolir.mo.gov.

National Labor Relations Board. Accessed August 21, 2007, from http://www.nlrb.gov/.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Accessed August 21, 2007, from http://www.osha.gov/.

U. S. Department of Labor. Accessed August 21, 2007, from http://www.dol.gov/.