SHOULD THE PROGRAM OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE TRAINING FOR OCCUPATIONS IN AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS?

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Agricultural, social, educational and economic changes that are now rapidly taking place certainly have many implications for vocational agriculture. According to the basic law, vocational agriculture shall be designed for present and prospective farmers. If we in vocational education in agriculture are to carry out our responsibilities for vocational training, we cannot ignore this, nor can we in my opinion, honestly press for a change in this objective. However, as long as there has been vocational education in agriculture we have had people enrolled other than those becoming farmers who have benefited from the instruction that was designed for those going into farming. A number of these are now in agricultural business occupations. The National Conference on Agricultural Education held March 3-7, 1959, in Chicago, recommended the following restatement of the educational objectives in vocational agriculture:

Develop the ability to:

I. Manage a Farm Business
   Establish and advance in farming
   Production
   Marketing
   Soil and Water Management
   Financing
   Mechanization

II. Improve Living Conditions
    Community
    Home

III. Assume Leadership Roles
    Community
    County
    State

Objectives in agricultural education must be realized out in the school communities where departments of vocational agriculture are located. Therefore, the program of vocational agriculture would be designed to develop proficiency in the work of the farm for those people engaged in or preparing to engage in farming. It is recognized that such training and counseling will contribute to the preparation for other agricultural occupations or further specialization in an agricultural college.

I take the position that vocational education in agriculture must still be designed for, but enrollment not limited to, present and prospective farmers. There are numerous occupations which require some measure of proficiency in farming. All young men who may become employed in such an occupation would and do profit from such a course in vocational agriculture.

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As desirable as it may seem, to train students directly for related occupations in agricultural business, I do not believe, in light of the greater need for trained farmers, that we can shift our vocational agriculture program design in order to cover agricultural business as well. We must strive to do a more effective job of vocational education in agriculture and at the same time cooperate in the development of an expanded program of agricultural education in our public schools to meet needs other than that for proficiency in farming. It is my concern that no one will be able to carry out the increasingly important task of training for farming if those of us in vocational education in agriculture become "splintered" by attempting to meet scattered, and in many cases low enrollment needs, such as green house operators, farm machinery mechanics, marketing, feed and seed retailing, etc. It is my belief that this would have to be done at the cost of neglecting our first responsibility.