

# Agricultural Program Information

This booklet contains information that has been compiled concerning the Agricultural Program and the FFA organization at Jasper County High School

Please review the information. Listed below is the name and address of each Jasper County Board of Education member if you desire to call or write to express your concerns and discuss with them the future of the Agricultural Program.

Ms. Phyllis Norwood, Chairperson  
126 Shady Grove Church  
Shady Dale, Georgia 31085  
706-468-6600

Mr. Joe. Gaston, Vice Chairperson  
PO Box 67  
Monticello, Georgia 31064  
706-468-2239

Mr. Paul Kelly  
2536 Post Road  
Monticello, Georgia 31064  
706-468-2847

Mr. Bobby Norris  
76 Stroz Drive  
Monticello, Georgia 31064  
706-468-8968

Ms. Joy Wild  
1522 Wild Road  
Monticello, Georgia 31064  
706-468-0038

Board meeting Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm

# **Agricultural Program Information Sheet**

## **Purpose of the Agricultural Program**

The Agricultural Program is a "hands on" vocational class that is divided into three elements: Classroom instruction, lab experiences that support classroom learning, and Supervised Agricultural Experience, which applies the classroom instruction and lab experiences in practical experiences. The FFA organization provides the opportunity to learn and develop leadership skills such as presiding at a meeting, learning parliamentary procedure, developing agendas, and building relationships. The FFA organization provides an avenue for competition. Participating in various competitions allows an agricultural student to learn problem solving, decision-making, team work, and responsibility. In the FFA organization students are given rewarding experiences that builds self esteem.

## **Impact of Agricultural Program on Community**

Agriculture is the leading industry in our nation, in Georgia and in our community. The Agriculture Program is not just about farming. The following areas are studied and careers are explored as part of the program.

Forestry and Natural Resources

Plant Science- Horticulture, landscaping, floral design

Mechanics - Wood working, electricity, plumbing, metal working

Animal Science - Breed genetics, herd production

Soil science - Chemicals, crop science

Agriculture

Leadership Skills- Parliamentary Procedure

## **SPLOST**

The community voted within the past few years for a SPLOST to build a complete high school. What will this do to the integrity of the Jasper County Board of Education to close a program which was to be a part of the educational program for our students for years to come?

Question: Would just the fact that the Jasper County Board of Education would consider closing ANY program jeopardize a future SPLOST vote?

## **Grant Money Received from the State**

The Agricultural Program classroom, lab and greenhouse at the new Jasper County High School were equipped through three state grants totaling \$275,000.00. The three grants were awarded to a rural community in which three areas of study were in place; Ag mechanics, Horticulture and Livestock Production.

Citizens have been told that the Agricultural Program could be closed for one year, the equipment inventoried and then the program can be reopened.

An e-mail was received from the State Department of Education. The e-mail states that **if the program is closed within five years of receiving the grants, the equipment will be made available to other school systems that have similar programs in place.**

Question: What guarantee does the Jasper County Board of Education give to the community that the program will only be closed for one year? Why should we lose over a quarter of a million dollars of equipment that taxpayers have already received? If we are in an economic crisis, how does the Jasper County Board of Education propose to reopen the program?

## **Cost to Operate the Agricultural Program**

### **How expensive is this program to operate?**

Each agricultural program is required to have a program of work that must adhere to state requirements for that program. State money is allotted for agricultural programs for supplies and travel.

Questions: How much money is allotted to Jasper County for Career Technical Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs and, in particular, the Agriculture program? This question will be asked of the Superintendent of Schools through open records. Information will be forthcoming.

According to the instructor, approximately \$8,500 was used for supplies for the program during school year 2008. Each vocational teacher was asked to look at projects and supply expenses to reduce cost for their program. The local administrators were given the following suggestions. These suggestions would reduce the need for supplies approximately \$4,000.

1. Only raise plants in the spring, to cut down on fuel cost for the greenhouse
2. Grow more plants from seeds
3. Return some of the tanks used for welding so rent does not have to be paid
4. Use only as many classroom lights as necessary
5. Use heater in the Agriculture lab only when absolutely necessary (A heater is needed in the Agricultural Lab and in other labs because no heat was put in the building at the time of construction)
6. Use less paper supplies, and make less number of copies
7. Unplug all computers etc before each weekend.
8. Look at competitions and contact surrounding counties for combining travel
9. Ask FFA Alumni to help fund cost of some travel to competitions.

### **Is the salary of the instructor a factor?**

The instructor has earned a bachelor degree, a master's degree and a six year leadership degree. It is an expectation of all professionals in the business of education to earn advanced degrees. In order to supervise student projects, take students to competitions and complete home visits that are expected, the agricultural teacher is on an eleven month extended day contract (This was cut last year from the twelve month extended day contract that has been in place for this teacher for several years). The state furnishes money for the eleven month contract with the exception of ½ of one month's pay which equals to less than \$3000.00 for the year. Local pay comes from the local supplement that is paid to every teacher.

State money is received locally for each CTAE teacher. The State is cutting 13 hours from each agriculture teacher's extended day pay across the state. This cut is equal to approximately \$500.00 for this year.

## Why Save this Program?

Many students do not plan to further their studies at college. Agricultural classes are offered for students to learn a skill which helps them to have a productive career. This program is also available for students that want to pursue a career in agriculture that does require them to attend college or a technical school.

In reviewing past records, 60% of former students enrolled in the Agricultural Program were identified as presently having a job in an agriculturally related field.

In reviewing past records of the FFA organization, listed are a few award recognitions that have been achieved by students through the FFA Organization. There are presently 83 members of the FFA this school year.

### National Level

Livestock has been shown throughout the Southeastern States with numerous awards received

The most recent award was given in 2006 to a student who placed fourth in the Nation for his Supervised Agricultural Experience project in community service

The only National award for continual membership with the National FFA Alumni was given to the local FFA Alumni Chapter

### State Level

Reserve Grand Champion Lamb out of 1200 registered

State winner in the Tractor Operation and Maintenance Career Development Event

First place for Market Hog Showman for 10<sup>th</sup> Graders out of 135 in competition  
State officer

### District Level

Won first place several times in each of the area contest such as Parliamentary Procedure, Forestry Field Day, Creed Speaking contest, and Floral Design

Many students have achieved both the CTAE and college prep seals on their diplomas. These dual seals have allowed the students to earn scholarships to further their education.

There are 101 students enrolled in the Agricultural Program this semester.

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Question: How many students are expected to be enrolled each year to meet the state full time equivalent quota for this program? This question will be asked of the Superintendent of Schools through open records. Information will be forthcoming

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Question: What will underclassmen do about the continual progression that must be shown in Supervised Agricultural Experience Projects (SAE) that are evaluated for the State Farmer Degree and ultimately for the National Farmer Degree? These projects awards are coveted by students attending college and are the basis by which scholarships are awarded.

## **FFA Alumni**

The FFA Alumni is the “booster club” for the Agricultural Program. The money raised from the recent 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Antique Tractor and Truck Pull and from past fundraisers have provided students the following opportunities, as well as many others.

1. Attendance to the National Leadership Conference each year in Washington, D.C for two students.
2. Attendance to the State FFA Camp for Leadership camp
3. Attendance to the National FFA Convention every other year in Indiana
4. Provides entry fees for livestock judging contest
5. Provides two \$1000.00 scholarships to seniors each year to further a agricultural related career
6. Attendance to the Greenhand Career Conference
7. Attendance in July to the Chapter Officer Leadership Conference
8. Sponsors participation in the Seed, Plant, Tree and Weed Identification Career Development Event (CDE)
9. Sponsors participation in the Parliamentary Procedure CDE, Nursery Landscape CDE, Floriculture Workshop, Georgia Green Industry Plant Identification CDE, Creed Speaking CDE
10. Attendance to the State FFA Convention in Macon
11. Sponsors participation in the FFA Quiz CDE
12. Helps families in crisis
13. Funds the annual awards banquet
14. Provides funds for various community projects that are carried out by FFA members such as cleaning up elderly people’s yards, planting flower bed at various locations, cutting fire wood for people

Question: Is it fair to deny students who have registered for camp, Washington Leadership Conference and the National Convention the opportunity to attend these events? Pre-registrations and motel accommodations have been made for these events. Refunds are not always possible.

## **Fund Equity**

Fund Equity is money in the bank that each sound board of education should have in place. According to the Jasper County News the Jasper County Board of Education has 7.5 million dollars in fund equity.

Question: What is the purpose of fund equity? How much funding is enough to have on hand to support the current budget and future budgets? Can “money in the bank” to be used for times of crisis? Could some of the fund equity be used to keep the program opened for at least another year?

Question: Are the Jasper County Board of Education members looking out for our present and future students’ best interest by closing this program?

Question: Are the Jasper County Board of Education members looking out for the taxpayers of this county by closing a program that received a quarter of a million dollars in equipment that was to be used by the agricultural students of Jasper County?