

## Ag Teacher of the Year Application

### a. Overview – brief description of the agricultural education program and the community in which the program exists.

- Tucumcari FFA is an affiliate chapter. Although every person in an agricultural class is an FFA member, not all are active members.
- The program has two teachers and the classes taught are Agricultural Food and Natural Resources, Introduction to Agriculture, Welding 1-4, and Greenhouse.
- I have taught the AFNR, Introduction to Agriculture and Greenhouse.
- Our greenhouse is a hydroponic greenhouse and our primary crops are tomatoes and cucumbers. Through the years we have experimented with other crops including; bell peppers, eggplant, corn, watermelon, chili peppers, and lettuce.
- We have also researched the possibility of raising koi in an aquaponics tank along with crops from small fry to the size desired by the area pet shops.
- Our community is very rural and quite isolated.
- Most of our students are in the lower economic strata. Farming, ranching, and tourism are the underpinning of our economy. A majority of our towns-people are minimum wage earners or rely on economic support.
- Our community has supported our program in different ways.
  - Our produce is available to the public at several local businesses and the school's reception areas.
  - We have an Advisory Council which assures oversight for our program.
  - We also have an active Alumni Chapter. They have helped cover operating costs and campaign to advertise our FFA program.
  - The local Elks are very supportive, allowing use of their facilities for fund raising efforts as well as much appreciated monetary donations.
  - The Tucumcari Rattler Reunion Committee has also shown their support of our program by using some of our students to help staff reunion needs such as serving and photography. This undergirds our school- to -work efforts. They also have contributed monetarily to support our students traveling to Nationals in Indianapolis.

### b. Teaching Philosophy – a brief reflective statement of the personal teaching philosophy.

I believe that every student deserves the opportunity to learn. On that premise, I must meet each student at the appropriate point of education for that individual. Our FFA program is perfect for reaching students that may not excel in every academic course. The program is very appealing to most "hands-on" students. I strive to structure a learning experience that is engaging to a broad spectrum of learners with expectations for maximum improvement for each student. My expectations include precepts for not only learning objectives but behavior, work ethic, acceptance and tolerance for all students. I emphasize individual responsibility in both cooperative learning and singular work. Each student is exposed to and expected to use current technology in academic endeavors as well as having a working knowledge of the technology of the studied vocations. I feel it is my responsibility to create a safe environment for exploration and learning, to design a place to practice skills without fear of failure. I also make it my personal goal to help students see a broader world view. I have sponsored trips to Europe and organize trips outside our town to experience speakers and different events. This indeed meets my goal of reaching each student with an appropriate opportunity for advancement.

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c. Instruction – examples of your effective classroom and laboratory instruction including curricula that is used or has been developed.

In the classroom both in my agricultural classes and in biology classes, I have started to implement the CASE, AFNR lessons. I have found using them to guide my instruction has increased the amount of science base learning I have brought to the agricultural classroom. This has improved my students' belief that agriculture is more than just base farming and ranching. I have also worked to keep some traditional lessons that I feel are vital to all agricultural classes. This year my students in the high school classes combined their knowledge of balancing rations, and marketing and had to create Reindeer feed sacks. After creating their feed sack they used common foods as substitutes for feedstuffs and created their food. We found out that Southwest Dot pretzels and fruit loops are actually good together.

d. Experiential Learning – examples of the accomplishments in getting students involved in work-based learning such as supervised agricultural experience programs, cooperative education, and internships.

Throughout my years of teaching I have tried to expose all students to the idea of having an SAE and the value of keeping records. Often with the greenhouse courses I have them track their hours in the greenhouse and learning in AET. I feel that as part of the three ring model that having students take what they learn in the classroom and put it to practical knowledge is important. I had two students who took one of our issues with our greenhouse sales and turned it into a National winning Agriscience project. Linking what they learned in class, to practical applications, and FFA.

e. Leadership Development – examples of the accomplishments in developing leadership skills of the students. Students' participation and successes in student organization activities, such as FFA, PAS, and NYFEA but not limited to these organizations may also be included.

- In 2021 two of our members won the National Agriscience Division 2 social science Leadership Development Event.
- In 2021 we had the two students receive their American FFA Degree. This ended a 13 year drought for our chapter. This also included the first female in our Chapter to receive her American FFA Degree.
- In 2020 we had a student who won the State Illustrated Talk.
- In 2020 we had a State Officer candidate.
- Starting in 2019 we have had 3 State Degree recipients, in 2020 we had 2 and in 2021 we had 1. Prior to 2019 it had been 4 years since the last State Degree recipient from Tucumcari.
- Our Chapter had the Reserve Grand Champion Layers at the Quay County fair in 2021.
- Our Chapter President is also the Class of 2022 President.
- Our Chapter Vice President is the Class of 2023 President, his 4-H club's Vice President.
- We have two chapter members who were on the State Winning Robotics team, their project was selected by Virgin Galactic for funding. It is also a finalist in the MIT competition.
- Our Chapter Reporter is her 4-H President.

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f. Professional Growth – examples of how they stay professionally prepared and up-to-date in teaching techniques and technical content including information regarding their participation in professional organizations such as NMAETA, NAAE and programs sponsored by NAAE.

I have always felt the need to keep learning and growing as a professional. I was one of the oldest teachers when NMSU hosted the CASE AFNR curriculum. At first it felt a little awkward but I soon realized what a tool this could be to improve my teaching. I try to attend all NMAETA opportunities provided for professional development. I have also tried to help other teachers across New Mexico. I have presented at NMAETA conferences on hydroponics, AET, and computers in the classroom.