

Agricultural Education Teacher of the Year Application

*Overview- I have been teaching AG ED and FFA in the small town of Tatum for the past 23 years. Tatum is on the lower end of NMAA Class 2, with a student population of around 100 in the High School. Tatum is located on the Northern end of the Permian Oil Basin. Many parents and former students are employed with oil field related jobs.

Ranching is also a very important area of employment, with many large Cow/Calf ranches in the area. Due to limited irrigation areas in a very hot, dry climate, farming is isolated to a few small areas.

*Teaching Philosophy- My teaching philosophy is always evolving to meet the needs of my students and the community. I strongly encourage my students to be very active and to participate in as many FFA and other extra-curricular activities as they can. I realize that Ag Ed classes are electives and students must “want to be there”. I try to keep my classes light and entertaining.

I tell my students that learning to be a farmer, rancher or any other agriculturist will not be the primary goal in my classes. I want every student to be able to think on their feet, look up information and to be capable of using appropriate communication skills to be successful in life!

*Classroom Instruction- I believe that the FFA motto is the way that I approach class and shop lessons. Over a period of years, I have changed my classroom instruction to NOT be the lecture, notes and test way of teaching. I like to have personal conversations with each student and talk about methods of accomplishing tasks.

I would rather let a student try to accomplish something after short instruction and learn by the “Trial and Error” method. I am fortunate to have classroom and shop sizes usually between 10-20 students, which enables me to teach in this style.

*Experiential Learning- In Tatum, I am fortunate that a very large number of my students have active SAE projects. The large majority of those projects involve member raising animals to show at the County and State fair levels. Many of my students work at their family business, ranches, farms, I will be the first to admit that I have a weak area which is having students keep record books and apply for degrees and proficiency awards. Like most NM Ag Teachers, I have many students that could achieve degrees if I stressed this important area more.

*Leadership Development-Being from a small school, I am very proud of my FFA members' achievements. Not only in FFA, but sports and other areas of extracurricular activities. I believe that oral communications play a vital role in the future success of today's youth. I try to have Junior High, Green Hand and Chapter members to compete in many levels in New Mexico's FFA Leadership Development Activities. We may not always win competitions, but the experience far outweighs the successes.

*Professional Growth-I am proud to be called a "senior citizen" or an "old fogey". I wear those names as a badge of honor. I have proudly been an active member of the NMAETA for 34 years. I started the Ag Teaching profession as a young guy who thought he knew everything, and many years later have come to realize that I know very little! There are so many opportunities in Ag and FFA that I don't take part in. I am always trying to keep learning new things. I believe that when I quit trying to improve my teaching methods, that is the time that I need to quit!!!!

Sincerely,

Mark Daugherty

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Tatum Agricultural Instructor and FFA Advisor