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An Analysis of FFA Chapter Demographics as Compared to Schools and Communities

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This descriptive study was a special project for the National FFA Organization to determine the demographic makeup of rural, suburban, urban, and randomly selected at-large FFA chapters from the four national FFA regions. Summary data for this study revealed that gender in selected FFA chapters was 55% male and 45% female. Eighty percent of FFA members were reported to be White while the respective communities were 54% White. Rural FFA chapters had the highest percentage of FFA members in relation to their agricultural education course enrollments. Urban chapters reported more than half (52%) of their agricultural education students were FFA members. The majority of agricultural education teachers are White males. The demographic characteristics of FFA chapters in relation to their respective schools and communities provide a snapshot of today's agricultural education programs and FFA chapters. Furthermore, this research could help identify strategies to move FFA chapters toward a more parallel representation of the schools and communities in which they exist.

Keywords: FFA chapter demographics, school demographics, community demographics

According to Talbert and Edwin (2008), diversity is one of the most "significant social aspects" (p. 51) in the United States because of the rapid change in demographics. Because of those rapid demographic changes, "opportunities to maintain a pipeline of future agriculturalists will depend on the ability of secondary agricultural education programs to attract students from nontraditional backgrounds" (Esters & Bowen, 2004, p. 25). Priority four of the national research agenda for agricultural education contains a scientific focus to "examine the role of diversity and multiple perspectives in meaningful learning across agricultural education contexts" (Doerfert, 2011, p. 9). Igo and White (1999) made a prediction that before the turn of the 21st century "future generations of FFA members will increasingly be urban, while the minority will be rural. Few will have a farm background, and even less will have family ties to production agriculture" (p. 9).

Even though the United States has become more racially/ethnically diverse and school populations around the nation have changed, school-based agricultural education programs have not (Bowen, 2002; LaVergne, Larke, Elbert, & Jones, 2011). Opportunities exist to increase agricultural education enrollment, FFA membership, and benefits to many students as the ethnic and racial composition in the United States changes rapidly (Roberts et al., 2009). Currently, "millions of students each year, from all ethnicities, are missing the numerous benefits provided through agricultural education and FFA" (Roberts et al., 2009, p. 70). Agricultural education should recognize the importance of recruiting students so the student body will "resemble the diversity of this country, of local communities, and of individual schools" (Roberts et al., 2009, p. 70) to ensure its future success.

Roberts et al. (2009) posited "the current demographics of FFA and agricultural education do not align with the 21st century ethnicity of many public schools" (p. 69). Few could argue that the recruitment of a diverse student population is not essential for a student organization to thrive (Brown, 2002). However, studies have shown there are many barriers that can preclude

minority students from enrolling in agricultural education programs (Cano & Bankston, 1992; Connors, Moore, & Elliot, 1990; Gliem & Gliem, 2000; Hoover & Scanlon, 1991; LaVergne et al., 2011; Talbert & Larke, 1995; Warren & Alston, 2007).

According to National FFA statistics, as of 2010 there were 7,487 FFA chapters across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Of these 7,487 chapters, the composition of members was 76% White, 16% Hispanic, 4% African-American, and 2% American Indian (National FFA, 2011a). According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2010 the respective percentages for the U.S. population were 72.4%, 16.3%, 12.6% and 0.9%. While these statistics are similar, school districts may not be accurately represented by national statistics.

The members of FFA and other youth agricultural education programs along with graduates in agricultural education teacher education programs across the nation do not reflect the "ethnic influx" (Lavergne et al., 2011, p. 140) that is occurring (Kantrovich, 2007; Rocca & Washburn, 2008; Talbert & Edwin, 2008; Talbert & Larke, 1995). Furthermore, LaVergne, et al. found that "most agricultural educators are not enrolling in diversity/multicultural courses in an undergraduate academic program" (p. 147). The field of agricultural education must begin to critically assess its recruitment, engagement, and retention of ethnically diverse youth or face the demise of the field in the future (Bowen, 2002). It is also important to study the demographics of the organization because having members with different perspectives, experiences, and knowledge will increase creative solutions to problems and increase the amount of available talent for filling important jobs in the workforce (Yukl, 2006).

The historical context of racial/ethnic agricultural teachers is not new. As late as 1963, the New Farmers of America (NFA), a national organization for Black farm boys enrolled in vocational agriculture, had reached a membership of more than 58,000 (Wakefield & Talbert, 2000). However, since the merge of NFA with Future Farmers of America in 1965, the enrollment of Black students declined to approximately 21,000 in 2011 (National FFA, 2011a).

The mission of the National FFA Organization is "dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education" (National FFA, 2011b). FFA provides leadership development, service-learning opportunities, and career preparation for all students enrolled in agricultural education programs. As FFA members and agricultural education program's students graduate and move on to post-secondary school or the workforce, they could potentially enter an area more diverse than where they attended high school.

Leventhal (1999) claimed "that students involved with vocational student organizations [VSOs] are likelier to be involved in community affairs and organizations, school organizations, church groups, etc." (p. 24). If FFA members are indeed more likely to be involved with their local communities, one may be led to think the FFA chapter would reflect the community demographic makeup. More research is needed before this assertion can be made.

A study conducted by Gliem and Gliem in 2000 reported significantly more non-FFA members were Asian, Black, and Hispanic than were FFA members. A significant number of non-FFA members also responded they did not realize how agriculture directly or indirectly affects their lives and their community (Gliem & Gliem, 2000). Is there a disconnect between FFA chapter membership and local communities? Roberts et al. (2009) assumed there was a disconnect present in three schools in San Antonio. Their study revealed that one school had a 722% increase in Hispanic enrollment in agricultural education and a 350% increase in FFA membership during the three–year implementation of tailored recruitment programs. Perhaps a school-by-school approach to increasing diversity of FFA chapters and agricultural education programs is an effective and efficient model for agricultural education.

Researchers have conducted numerous studies regarding diversity in agricultural education (Bowen, 2002; Esters & Bowen, 2004; Gliem & Gliem, 2000; Kantrovich, 2007; LaVergne et al., 2011; Roberts et al., 2009; Rocca & Washburn, 2008; Talbert & Edwin, 2008; Talbert & Larke, 1995; Wakefield & Talbert, 2000). Bowen

(2002) challenged the field of agricultural education to develop strategies to recruit a new ethnically diverse pool of agricultural teachers or face irrelevancy in the future. More than 10 years have passed since Bowen (2002) issued his challenge. Has the profession specifically tied to FFA heeded Bowen's warnings in 2001 and begun to change? This study sought to describe demographic characteristics of FFA chapters and FFA advisors to benchmark the status of selected programs within the schools and communities they reside to give insight to professionals involved with FFA.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the demographic characteristics of selected FFA chapters in the United States as well as the schools and communities in which these chapters exist. The following objectives were used to guide this study:

1) Describe selected FFA chapters in terms of selected demographic characteristics.
2) Describe the schools in which the selected FFA chapters exist in terms of selected demographic characteristics.
3) Describe the communities in which the selected FFA chapters exist in terms of selected demographic characteristics.
4) Describe the demographic characteristics of lead FFA advisors in selected FFA chapters.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of interest for this study consisted of three groups: (1) rural, suburban, and urban (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau) FFA chapters from the four National FFA regions; (2) schools in which these FFA chapters exist; and (3) communities in which the schools are located. A list of all chartered FFA chapters was obtained from the National FFA Organization. The chapters were sorted into four lists based on the four recognized regions: Central Region, Eastern Region, Southern Region, and Western Region. Chapters within each region were then categorized according to population density as rural (areas of less than 2,500 people), suburban (U.S. Census Bureau urban clusters of between 2,500 and 50,000 people), or urban (U.S. Census Bureau urban areas of 50,000 or more people). Microsoft Excel® and zip code population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau were used to categorize the FFA chapters. Categorized email addresses became panel groups and were loaded into Qualtrics, an online survey provider utilized by Texas A&M University.

An email invitation was sent to all FFA chapters (N= 7,418) with a valid email address via Qualtrics. Three hundred forty–six responses were obtained from the email invitation. Stratified random sampling (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996; Isaac & Michael, 1997) was used to select the 128 FFA chapters and corresponding schools and communities to be included from the 346 responses received from the convenience sample. Stratified random sampling allowed the researchers to represent both the overall population and key subgroups such as regions and population density areas while simultaneously providing a more representative sample of the entire population of FFA chapters (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996).

The rural, suburban, and urban population density categories within each region served as the strata or subgroups. Within each strata of each region, eight chapters were randomly selected for inclusion in the study from those who replied to the request for participation. Thus, eight rural chapters from each of the four regions (32 rural chapters total), eight suburban chapters from each of the four regions (32 suburban chapters total), eight urban chapters from each of the four regions (32 urban chapters total), and eight at-large chapters from each of the four regions (32 at-large chapters total) were included in the study. One hundred twenty eight FFA chapters and their corresponding schools and communities were selected for the study (see Table 1).

Table 1
FFA Chapters, Schools, and Communities Selected for Inclusion in the Study

Region	Strata			At-Large	Total
	Rural	Suburban	Urban		
Central	8	8	8	8	32
Eastern	8	8	8	8	32
Southern	8	8	8	8	32
Western	8	8	8	8	32
Total	32	32	32	32	128

Data Collection and Analysis

Selected demographic characteristics were collected at three different levels: (1) FFA chapter, (2) school, and (3) community. At the chapter level, the lead FFA advisor reported demographics for his or her program. A lead FFA advisor was operationally defined as the teacher in charge of the managerial duties for each local FFA chapter. Data collected included agricultural education program enrollment, number of FFA members, FFA member gender, and FFA member ethnicity. Lead FFA advisor gender and ethnicity were collected from direct contacts via email and/or phone.

School level demographic data for student gender and ethnicity were collected from statistics available on the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) website, State Department of Education websites (including School Report Card), high-schools.com, and schooltree.org. Community level demographic data for gender and ethnicity were obtained from the NCES website and city-data.com. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics were used to accomplish the objectives of the study.

Results

Summary findings for agricultural education program enrollment, FFA chapter membership, teacher demographics, and gender and ethnicity of FFA chapters and their respective schools and communities are described and discussed based on the strata used in the study.

Rural Chapters

Summary data for the gender and ethnicity within the 32 rural chapters and the respective schools and communities are presented in Table 2. The average number of students in the agricultural education programs in these 32 chapters was 73.81 and the average number of FFA members was 52.59. Therefore, on average, 71.25% of students enrolled in agricultural education in this study's 32 rural chapters were FFA members. Thirty-one of the 32 FFA chapters had one FFA advisor and the remaining chapter had two FFA advisors yielding an average of 1.03 FFA advisors per chapter. Twenty-six of the 32 lead FFA advisors were male and six were female. All 32 lead FFA advisors were White.

Table 2
Summary of Gender and Ethnicity for Selected Rural FFA Chapters and their Respective Schools and Communities (n = 32)

	FFA Chapter		School		Community	
Demographic Characteristic	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
Gender						
Female	684	42.48	3,842	48.41	31,795	48.71
Male	926	57.52	4,094	51.59	33,476	51.29
Ethnicity						
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	0.12	139	1.59	510	0.78
Black	29	1.71	835	9.57	13,201	20.25
Hispanic	153	9.02	1,227	14.07	2,998	4.60
Native American	6	0.35	29	0.33	182	0.28
Other	0	0.00	53	0.61	78	0.12
White	1,506	88.80	6,439	73.82	48,216	73.97

Note. Unreported gender and ethnicity data were not included in summary analysis.

Suburban Chapters

Summary data for the gender and ethnicity within the 32 suburban chapters and the respective schools and communities are presented in Table 3. The average number of students in the agricultural education programs in these 32 chapters was 123.09, and the average number of FFA members was 84.03. Therefore, on average, 68.27% of students enrolled in agricultural education in this study's 32 suburban chapters were FFA members. There were 46 FFA advisors for these 32 chapters yielding an average of 1.44 FFA advisors per chapter. Twenty of the 32 lead FFA advisors were male, and 12 were female. Twenty-nine of the lead FFA advisors were White, one was Native American, one was Black, and one was Hispanic.

Table 3
Summary of Gender and Ethnicity for Selected Suburban FFA Chapters and their Respective Schools and Communities (n = 32)

	FFA Chapter		School		Community	
Demographic Characteristic	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Gender						
Female	1,265	45.70	10,820	48.50	92,475	48.58
Male	1,503	54.30	11,490	51.50	97,893	51.42
Ethnicity						
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	0.32	168	0.75	2,564	1.32
Black	125	4.51	1,748	7.83	42,497	21.87
Hispanic	167	6.02	3,084	13.82	18,801	9.67
Native American	138	4.97	1,047	4.69	7,289	3.75
Other	1	0.04	10	0.04	64	0.03
White	2,334	84.14	16,260	72.86	123,130	63.36

Note. Unreported gender and ethnicity data were not included in summary analysis.

Urban Chapters

Summary data for gender and ethnicity within the 32 urban chapters and their respective schools and communities are presented in Table 4. The average number of students in the agricultural education programs in these 32 chapters was 149.09, and the average number of FFA members was 77.94. Therefore, on average, 52.27% of students enrolled in agricultural education in this study's 32 urban chapters were FFA members. There were 38 FFA advisors in these 32 chapters yielding an average of 1.19 FFA advisors per chapter. Of the 32 lead FFA advisors, 17 were male, 14 were female, and one did not report their gender. Of the 32 lead advisors, 30 were White, one was a Native American, and one was Hispanic.

Table 4
Summary of Gender and Ethnicity for Selected Urban FFA Chapters and their Respective Schools and Communities (n = 32)

	FFA Chapter		School		Community	
Demographic Characteristic	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Gender						
Female	1,117	49.53	21,519	48.47	444,889	48.55
Male	1,138	50.47	22,880	51.53	471,475	51.45
Ethnicity						
Asian/Pacific Islander	42	1.65	1,577	3.55	34,439	3.75
Black	173	6.81	6,662	15.00	181,234	19.73
Hispanic	643	25.31	9,387	21.13	224,910	24.49
Native American	25	0.98	598	1.35	6,999	0.76
Other	7	0.28	180	0.40	3,268	0.36
White	1,650	64.96	26,013	58.57	467,522	50.91

Note. Any unreported gender and ethnicity data were not included in summary analysis.

At-Large Chapters

Summary data for gender and ethnicity within the 32 at-large chapters and their respective schools and communities are presented in Table 5. The average number of students in the agricultural education programs in these 32 chapters was 102.72 and the average number of FFA members was 64.78. Therefore, on average, 63.07% of students enrolled in agricultural education in this study's 32 at-large chapters were FFA members. There were 38 FFA advisors in these 32 chapters yielding an average of 1.19 FFA advisors per chapter. Of the 32 lead FFA advisors, 27 were male and five were female. Thirty of the 32 lead FFA advisors were White, one was Hispanic, and one did not report ethnicity.

Table 5
Summary of Gender and Ethnicity for Selected At-Large FFA Chapters and their Respective Schools and Communities (n = 32)

	FFA Chapter		School		Community	
Demographic Characteristic	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Gender						
Female	887	41.28	9,037	49.16	162,510	48.43
Male	1,262	58.72	9,364	58.84	173,060	51.57
Ethnicity						
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	0.23	136	0.73	8,391	2.50
Black	52	2.39	1,069	5.77	51,946	15.48
Hispanic	186	8.54	3,444	18.60	87,854	26.18
Native American	32	1.47	165	0.89	1,206	0.36
Other	5	0.23	6	0.03	11	0.01
White	1,897	87.14	13,701	73.98	186,161	55.48

Note. Unreported gender and ethnicity data were not included in summary analysis.

All Chapters

Summary data for gender and ethnicity within the 128 chapters selected for inclusion in this study and their respective schools and communities are presented in Table 6. The average number of students in the agricultural education programs in these 128 chapters was 112.18 and the average number of FFA members was 69.83. Therefore, on average, 62.25% of all students enrolled in the agricultural education programs in this study's 128 chapters were FFA members. There were a total of 155 FFA advisors from the 128 chapters yielding an average of 1.21 FFA advisors per chapter.

Table 6
Summary of Gender and Ethnicity for Selected FFA Chapters and their Respective Schools and Communities (N =128)

	FFA Chapter		School		Community	
Demographic Characteristic	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
Gender						
Female	3,926	45.05	45,218	48.61	747,166	49.06
Male	4,789	54.95	47,810	51.39	775,904	50.94
Ethnicity						
Asian/Pacific Islander	58	0.63	2,020	2.15	45,834	3.03
Black	379	4.13	10,314	10.98	288,878	19.09
Hispanic	1,149	12.51	17,142	18.24	334,563	22.11
Native American	201	2.19	1,839	1.96	15,676	1.04
Other	13	0.14	249	0.26	3,421	0.23
White	7,387	80.41	62,413	66.41	825,029	54.51

Note. Unreported gender and ethnicity data were not included in summary analysis.

FFA Membership and Agricultural Education Enrollment

Summary data for agricultural education program enrollment and FFA membership by population classification are presented in Table 7. In rural chapters, 71.25% of students enrolled in agricultural education were FFA members. In suburban chapters, 68.27% of students enrolled in agricultural education were FFA members. In urban chapters, 52.27% of students enrolled in agricultural education were FFA members. In the chapters selected at-large, 63.07% of students enrolled in agricultural education were FFA members. Overall, 62.25% of students enrolled in agricultural education courses were FFA members. However, it must be noted that some chapters reported more FFA members than students enrolled in agricultural education. This could be explained if the school was on a block schedule, if the chapter had post-graduation members, and if students prepaid dues for the following semester when they would be enrolled in an agricultural education course.

Table 7
Summary of Agricultural Education Enrollment and FFA Membership by Population Classification

	Agricultural Education Students	FFA Members	Percentage of FFA Members
	f	*f*	%
Rural Chapters	2,362	1,683	71.25
Suburban Chapters	3,939	2,689	68.27
Urban Chapters	4,771	2,494	52.27
At-Large Chapters	3,287	2,073	63.07
National Totals	14,359	8,939	62.25

FFA Advisors

Summary data for gender and ethnicity of the 128 lead FFA advisors by population classification are shown in Table 8. More than one-half of the teachers in each population classification were White males. In the rural chapters, more than three-quarters of the lead FFA advisors were White males (n = 28, 87.50%). Of the 31 lead FFA advisors in the suburban chapters who reported gender and ethnicity, slightly more than half (n = 17, 54.84%) were White males. Of the 31 lead FFA advisors who reported gender and ethnicity in the urban chapters, slightly more than half (n = 16, 51.61%) were White males. In the at-large chapters, slightly more than three-quarters (n = 25, 78.13%) of the lead FFA advisors were White males.

Table 8
Summary of Lead FFA Advisor Gender and Ethnicity by Population Classification

	Rural Chapters	Suburban Chapter	Urban Chapters	At-Large Chapters	All Chapters
Female	4	12	14	5	35
White	4	12	14	5	35
Male	28	20	17	27	92
Black	0	1	0	0	1
Hispanic	0	1	1	1	3
Native American	0	1	0	0	1
White	28	17	16	25	86
Unreported ethnicity	0	0	0	1	1
Unreported Gender	0	0	1	1	1
Native American	0	0	1	0	1

Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

Caution should be used when interpreting self-reported data collected from numerous sources. This study was purely descriptive in nature. No inferences should be made beyond the scope of this study based on these findings. Caution must be taken in interpreting the results of this study due to the nature of convenience sampling techniques. The most telling conclusion was there are few centralized sources of demographic data for FFA chapters. In fact, there was no single source containing all of the demographic data of interest. As a result, compiling summary data that truly portrays all FFA chapters and their respective schools and communities across the country was challenging.

A panel of university faculty deemed public sources of information appropriate for the research project. Utilizing available public access information was useful and could prove valuable for other researchers who wish to replicate the study or further investigate the findings of this study. Additionally, agricultural education teachers provided adequate responses, but it is important to remember that these were self-reported data from the lead agricultural education teachers. The researchers assumed the teachers answered honestly and objectively.

Gender

Overall, there were more males in the 128 selected FFA chapters (n = 4789, 54.95%) and their respective schools (n = 47,810, 51.39%) and communities (n = 775,904, 50.94%) than females. However, when looking at the different population categories (rural, suburban, urban), there were some trends of interest. The overall trend was female FFA members became more prevalent the more urbanized the area became. Thus, the highest percentage of female members (49.53%) was present in urban areas representing an 11% increase above what was reported on the National FFA Organization (2011a) website for overall female membership. Are males drawn to rural programs more readily than females? Are females more likely to join FFA in urban programs? Are these questions true for all urban areas, or do regions have an effect on demographic makeup? These questions require further investigation and could offer insight into tailored recruitment strategies for FFA chapters as reported in Roberts et al. (2009).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity percentages changed between the categories of chapter, school, and community. The overall results indicate FFA chapters were 80.41% White, 12.51% Hispanic, 4.13% Black, 2.19% Native American, 0.63% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.14% Other. Although Roberts et al. (2009) reported that agricultural education and the National FFA Organization can be appealing to Hispanic students, the percentage of Hispanic students remains low.

According to available data sources, greater heterogeneity was present in the school and community than was present in the FFA chapters in this study. However, as population increased so did the heterogeneity of FFA chapter members. While it was unclear exactly why this phenomenon took place, one could hypothesize that it was due to more diverse populations being in urban areas. Nonetheless, these findings support Bowen (2002) that school populations have become more racially/ethnically diverse, but school-based agricultural education programs do not reflect the level of diversity found in their respective schools.

FFA Membership and Agricultural Education Enrollment

Summary data of agricultural education enrollment and FFA membership by population categories revealed interesting trends for this study. However, it must be noted that the data reported in the study for agricultural education program enrollment and FFA membership were self-reported by the lead FFA advisor. Additionally, some advisors reported more FFA members than students enrolled in their agricultural education program, which could be explained through block scheduling or having post-graduation FFA members working toward their American FFA Degree.

Of the agricultural education programs sampled, the summary data for agricultural education enrollment and FFA membership by pop-

ulation classification validated what some might assume to be true about an organization devoted to agriculture: Rural communities sampled had the highest percentage of FFA membership at 71%. However, suburban communities closely followed at 68% and at-large communities had 63% FFA membership. Urban communities in this study had the lowest percentage of FFA membership at 52%.

Although there has been expansion of agricultural education programs in suburban and urban areas, based on percentages, these findings do not currently support Igo and White (1999). The results of this study could, however, represent areas of membership growth potential just as Roberts et al. posited in 2009. If the National FFA Organization plans to increase membership substantially, more focus could be placed on the development of recruitment strategies and stakeholder buy-in campaigns for suburban and urban agricultural education programs. Strategies that focus on parents in urban areas as suggested by Esters and Bowen (2004) could also help increase both the numbers of FFA members and their diversity.

FFA Advisors

A snapshot of the FFA advisors or the teacher recognized as the lead FFA advisor in the agricultural education program from the 128 programs revealed that the majority (68.25%) were White males (n = 86). This aligns with Talbert and Larke's (1995) findings that the majority of agricultural education teachers are White males. Thirty-five advisors (27.78%) in this study were White females. There were three Hispanic males, one Black male and one Native American male serving as lead FFA advisors in the selected chapters. All female lead advisors in the 128 FFA chapters reported in this study were White. There were more females advising FFA chapters in urban (n = 14) and suburban (n = 12) settings than in rural (n = 4) locations. Bowen (2002) stated that our field must develop strategies to recruit an ethnically diverse pool of agricultural teachers or face irrelevancy in the future. Warren and Alston (2007) pointed out that both students and teachers can benefit from the inclusion of ethnic minorities and women in the profession. Further investigation is needed to determine if and why females are teaching agricultural education and advising FFA chapters with a higher frequency in urban and suburban areas than in rural areas.

Results of this study provided insight into the makeup of FFA chapters across the nation and how they reflect the school and communities in which they exist. FFA chapters were predominately White and relatively evenly split in terms of gender. Wakefield and Talbert (2000) suggested that the decline among Black students in youth programs was because too few students are interested in and were accepted into agricultural programs as well as the decline in hiring of minority agricultural education teachers. FFA chapters led by advisors who were not White did not represent the ethnic makeup of the school or community. The main concern that arose from these findings was why do FFA chapters not closely mirror the schools and communities they reside in? Additional time, resources, and research should be devoted to further investigation.

Recommendations for Practice

The following questions may apply to agricultural education teachers, state agricultural education staff, agricultural education teacher education faculty, key industry stakeholders and National FFA staff as a means of stimulating discussion about how to further agricultural education's future.

1) Should agricultural education teachers receive professional development on how to recruit and retain increased numbers of diverse students?
2) Should National/State FFA explore more opportunities to recognize chapters who excel in both recruitment of diverse members and accomplishment of the FFA mission?
3) Could creating and incentivizing an accurate reporting system (state or national) help agriculture teachers accurately report demographic information to National FFA?
4) Should round–table discussions at yearly meetings be developed to strategize about ways to further investigate and

expand diversity for agricultural education?

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many different avenues for future research based on demographic characteristics of youth involved in FFA. The following are examples of projects and questions that could advance the study of diversity and expand FFA membership.

1) Through survey research and collaboration with AAAE Member Institutions, NAAE, and National FFA, a national database of valid email addresses for agricultural education teachers could be developed and maintained to provide an accessible population for future research regarding the demographic composition of agricultural education programs.
2) How do the demographic characteristics of agricultural education teacher affect the demographic makeup of the FFA chapter?
3) Do urban FFA chapters have a significantly lower percentage of FFA members than other chapters?
4) Why do few ethnically diverse men or women choose/not choose careers as agricultural education teachers?
5) Are female students more likely to join a rural, suburban, or urban FFA chapter?
6) Explore non-agricultural education and agricultural education student perceptions of FFA in rural, suburban, and urban chapters.
7) Explore teacher perceived barriers to recruitment of diverse students.

Agricultural education has a far-reaching history. As the future materializes ahead of stakeholders involved in agricultural education, expanding the diversity of the program is not an option, it is a necessity (Bowen, 2002; Gliem & Gliem, 2000). Furthermore, if FFA program leaders do not try to "appeal to the new 'consumer', then they will become inconsequential in the school environment … more importantly, a segment of young men and women will miss out on the rich opportunities agriculture and the FFA holds for them" (Jahnke, 2011, para. 9).

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