

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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REPORT ON A STUDY OF STUDENT INTERESTS IN FIVE AGRICULTURAL  
OCCUPATIONS GROUPS, THREE AREAS OF NEW YORK STATE.

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DURING 1964-65, QUESTIONNAIRES WERE GIVEN TO 6,706  
STUDENTS IN GRADES 8-10 TO ASCERTAIN THEIR INTEREST IN  
PREPARATION FOR AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS. STUDENTS FROM 13  
SCHOOLS WHICH OFFERED AGRICULTURE COURSES, AND NINE WHICH DID  
NOT, WERE ASKED TO INDICATE THEIR INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL  
ACTIVITIES AND THEIR CHOICE OF THE FOLLOWING--(1)  
AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AND MECHANICS, (2) AGRICULTURAL SALES  
AND SERVICE, (3) FARM WORK (OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT), (4)  
ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE, LANDSCAPING, AND FLORICULTURE, (5)  
CONSERVATION, FORESTRY, AND CAMPSITE ACTIVITIES, OR (6) NO  
INTEREST. AN AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATION GROUP WAS SELECTED AS  
FIRST CHOICE BY 2,521 OF THE BOYS AND 1,658 OF THE GIRLS.  
FIRST CHOICES OF BOYS WERE CONSERVATION, AGRICULTURAL  
MECHANIZATION, FARM OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT, ORNAMENTAL  
HORTICULTURE, AND AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS, IN THAT ORDER. FIRST  
CHOICES OF GIRLS WERE ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE, CONSERVATION,  
FARM OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT, AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS, AND  
AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS, IN THAT ORDER. FROM THIS DATA,  
ENROLLMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL COURSES WERE PROJECTED. (EM)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
The State Education Department  
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Albany, New York 12224

REPORT ON A STUDY OF STUDENT INTERESTS IN  
FIVE AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS GROUPS

THREE AREAS OF NEW YORK STATE  
1965

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During the 1964 - 1965 year, studies have been made in a number of school districts to determine the interest of students in preparing for agricultural occupations. These studies have been conducted under the direction of district, city and village superintendents of schools in cooperation with local school administrators. The Bureau of Agricultural Education has provided guidance in conducting such studies including the tabulation and analysis of data and making recommendations for program development.

The primary purpose of such studies has been to provide data which can be used as a basis of instituting and/or modifying agricultural programs to more effectively meet present and future needs.

Following is a report of a study conducted in three areas of New York State which include data from twenty-two schools. These areas include twelve schools in Oneida-Madison Counties, seven schools in Jefferson County and three schools in Columbia County.

Schools included in the study are as follows:

Oneida-Madison Counties

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Bridgewater   | New York Mills  |
| Brookfield    | Oriskany        |
| Chadwicks     | Sauquoit Valley |
| Clinton       | Waterville      |
| Leonardsville | Whitesboro      |
| New Hartford  |                 |

Jefferson County

- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| Clayton       | Mannsville-Manor |
| General Brown | Hounsfield       |
| Henderson     | Watertown        |
| Lyme          |                  |

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Columbia County

Chatham  
Icabod Crane  
New Lebanon

Agricultural programs now serve ten of the Oneida-Madison County schools studied, none of the Jefferson County schools studied and all of the Columbia County schools studied.

All students in grades 8, 9, and 10 were requested to complete a questionnaire indicating their interest in agricultural activities and choice of occupational families in agriculture. They were also provided an opportunity to indicate no interest in agricultural occupations.

The five occupational areas included Agricultural Machinery and Mechanics; Agricultural Sales and Service; Farm Work, Operation and Management; Ornamental Horticulture, Landscaping and Floriculture; and Conservation, Forestry and Campsite Activities.

A total of over 6700 boys and girls completed these questionnaires. Over 1600 indicated a first choice in one of the agricultural occupation groups.

These studies reveal that a significant number of students are interested in enrolling in agricultural courses provided that a variety of courses are available. It is well to note that agricultural courses are presently not available in nine schools studied. Over thirty-seven percent of the 6706 students studied indicated an interest in one or more occupational groups in the broad field of agriculture. Table 1 gives an overall picture of this interest.

TABLE 1

A Summary of Students Surveyed and the Number Interested in One or More Agricultural Occupation Groups - Three Areas of New York State - 1965

	<u>Students Surveyed</u>	<u>Students Indicating 1st Choice in Agriculture</u>			
		<u>B</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>12 Oneida-Madison County Schools</u>	3611	887	508	1395	38.7
<u>7 Jefferson County Schools</u>	2265	573	269	842	37.2
<u>3 Columbia County Schools</u>	830	198	86	284	34.3
TOTAL	6706	2521	1658	863	37.6

Among the first choices of occupational groups, boys consistently placed Conservation, first; Agricultural Mechanization, second; Farm Operation and Management, third; Ornamental Horticulture, fourth; and Agricultural Business, fifth.

Girls on the other hand, tended to rank Ornamental Horticulture, first; Conservation, second; Farm Operation and Management, third; Agricultural Business, fourth; and Agricultural Mechanics, fifth.

Figure 1, shows graphically the first choice of student interest in agricultural occupation groups.

In interpreting the data, factors were applied to provide a conservative estimate of the actual enrollment which could be anticipated in the various courses. These factors are based on previous experience and the best judgment of those interpreting the data.

Following is an example of how data is tabulated and enrollments in agricultural courses projected.

SAMPLE CENTRAL SCHOOL

1965

TABLE 2

First Choice of Students Interested in Agricultural Occupations

	8		9		10		Total	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
Agr. Mech.	9	-	5	1	6	-	20	1
Agr. Bus.	4	9	2	5	1	2	7	16
Farming	7	5	6	4	4	1	17	10
Orn. Hort.	5	15	2	9	2	6	9	30
Cons.	11	14	5	6	8	4	24	24
TOTAL	36	43	20	25	21	13	77	81

TABLE 3

Estimated Number of Students to be Enrolled in Agricultural Courses

COURSE	1965-1966			1966-1967		
	B	G	Total	B	G	Total
Agr. 1	10	1	11	12	2	14
Agr. 2	10	1	11	10	1	11
Farm Prod. & Mgt.	5	-	5	9	1	10
Agr. Mech.	6	-	6	7	-	7
Orn. Hort.	1	2	3	2	5	7
Conservation	3	1	4	4	1	5
Agr. Bus.	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	35	5	40	44	10	54

The above tables illustrate the need for agricultural programs serving an area larger than a single school district. In the above school there is sufficient potential enrollment to warrant the offering of Agriculture 1 and 2. Students interested in the other agricultural courses should be transported to a convenient center for such instruction.

It is anticipated that if such centers are established, that in schools where there is sufficient enrollment in agricultural courses and facilities available, that the individual schools would offer such instruction. Where enrollments are small, such as in specialized agricultural courses, students would be transported to a center for instruction.

This would bring about efficiencies in instruction and use of facilities. In addition, it would make possible the offering of specialized courses in Conservation, Ornamental Horticulture, Agricultural Mechanization, Agricultural Business, and Farm Production and Management.

It is recommended that an instructional program be established to serve the needs of out-of-school youth employed in farming and off-farm agricultural occupations. This instruction would be carried on throughout the year.

The training programs in agriculture are needed to meet the expanding demand for off-farm workers in the broad field of agriculture as well as to continue to train farm operators and managers for our farms.

