DISCUSSANT'S REMARKS

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AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS CURRICULUM FOR AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A DELPHI STUDY

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In an era when the national trend in higher education is to provide less support for agricultural mechanization instruction, and in some cases, eliminate it completely from pre-service teacher education in agricultural education, this research effort is most timely. The results of this report, establishes a strong case to maintain agricultural mechanics in the pre-service curriculum.

I recommend the researchers for acquiring data from the expert practitioners in the field. Their method of selecting experts in the teaching of agricultural mechanics from recommendations from a third party as well as verifying the teachers expertise through FFA achievement records added a great deal of credibility to the results. Also, adding additional new items in rounds two and three of the Delphi process was an important process the researchers implemented.

The results of competencies identified were organized closely with the format of the National FFA Agricultural Mechanics Career Development Event. The amazing number of high consensus on such a large number of competencies in Rounds 2 and 3 was a significant finding of the results. There is no doubt that agricultural mechanics teachers experts are in common agreement that a high number of competencies in Metal Fabrication, power by machinery structures, and boil in water management should be taught to pre-service teachers. The report included 160 skills/competencies on which 100 percent agreement was achieved.

As I reviewed the nature of competencies identified, I noted that many of the new emerging technologies were not well represented especially with precision agriculture competencies such as GPS and mapping, electronic monitoring. But, I am reminded that the researchers cautioned us that teachers were considered as only one of three audiences who should be consulted.

Another aspect that would have strengthened the study would be to have expanded the background and theoretical construct with reference to previous work on identifying the broad spectrum of agricultural mechanics curricula and to document the trends in pre-service agricultural education that establishes the gravity of the problem.

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