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THE 2010 REPORT OF THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE AGRICULTURE EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

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I. History & Economic Impact

Agriculture education is a systematic program of instruction available to students desiring to learn about the science, business, technology of plant and animal production and/or about the environmental and natural resources systems. Agricultural education first became a part of the public education system in 1917 when the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act. Senator Hoke Smith and Congressman Dudley Hughes, both from Georgia, sponsored this legislation. Georgia has been a pioneer in recognizing the importance of education and agriculture and its leaders have historically supported a strong national food and fiber policy. Today, over 800,000 students participate in formal agricultural education instructional programs offered throughout the 50 states and three U. S. territories. ¹ In Georgia over 40,000 students participated in agriculture education programs during the 2009-2010 school year.²

Agriculture is the nation's largest employer, with more than 21 million Americans (20 percent of the total U.S. workforce) working in some area of the industry.³ There are 2.13 million farms in the United States. The average size of U.S. farms in 2003 was 441 acres. Individuals and family partnerships or family corporations with fewer than 10 stockholders own 99 percent of U.S. farms. Non-family corporations own only one percent of America's farms and ranches.⁴ In 1998, the renowned Georgia 2020 Vision for Agriculture Education Report, stated agricultural production accounted for two percent of Georgia's jobs while the agribusiness sector accounted for more than 20 percent of Georgia's jobs.⁵ Agriculture contributed more than \$67 billion, or about 12 percent, annually to Georgia's \$787 billion economic output in 2010.⁶

The 1998 Georgia 2020 Vision for Agriculture Education Report was developed as a result of the challenge of developing the State's vision and mission for agricultural education for 2020 as part of the national Reinventing Agricultural Education Initiative sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Inc. More than 160 leaders from education, agriculture, agribusiness and government met in Perry, Georgia on March 24, 1998 to develop a preferred future for agricultural education. Participants were asked such questions as: where was agricultural education twenty years ago; where is agricultural education today; and where do we want agricultural education to be in the future. The following Vision Statement was a result of the conference and remains in place at the Georgia Department of Education (DOE): "To be a premier learning system in the delivery of agricultural, environmental and leadership programs and services." The conference also developed the following "vision" themes with statements of identified goals and strategies for each theme that remain in place:

- Global Agriculture
 - To foster global understanding and communication through learning experiences in agricultural education.
- Agricultural Awareness
 - To foster agricultural literacy, awareness and appreciation.
- Marketing
 - To promote the value of an educational program in agriculture.

¹ FFA- Who We Are, <https://www.ffa.org/About/WhoWeAre/Pages/AgriculturalEducation.aspx>

² Agriculture Education, http://aged.ces.uga.edu/_Short-Term_files/Program%20Info%20and%20Data/2009-2010%20FFA%20Membership%20Totals%20for%20web.pdf

³ FFA Fact Sheet, https://www.ffa.org/Documents/media_ffafactsheet.pdf

⁴ FFA Press Brochure, https://www.ffa.org/documents/med_pressbrochure.pdf

⁵ 2020 Vision for Agriculture Education, http://aged.ces.uga.edu/Program_Information/2020VisionforAgricultureEducation.pdf

⁶ Ag Classroom Georgia Statistics, <http://www.agclassroom.org/kids/stats/georgia.pdf>

- Leadership
 - To provide an educational program in agriculture with a dynamic leadership component through communication, citizenship and cooperative activities.
- Environmental
 - To develop awareness, appreciation and application of environmental stewardship.
- Partnerships
 - To develop an agribusiness industry-driven, educationally implemented, learning network.
- Technology
 - To fully utilize advanced and emerging technologies.
- Biotechnology
 - To interpret, communicate and encourage the proper application of biotechnology.
- Lifelong Learning
 - Make agriculture a lifelong learning opportunity.
- Curriculum
 - Develop and provide a functional and challenging curriculum utilizing state of the art equipment, facilities and technology.
- Recruitment
 - To develop and implement systems for recruiting and retaining quality teachers and students.⁷

The Georgia Joint Agriculture Education Study Committee was created by House Resolution 50 during the 2005 Legislative Session. The intent of the resolution was to provide direction to develop instructional strategies to teach specific agriculture standards from elementary through high school, then integrate these standards into a broad range of academic subject areas. With this in mind, the hope was that a stronger career preparation program would be made available to meet the demands of a dynamic and competitive agriculture industry. Ultimately, the aim of the resolution was to provide for a better informed citizenry. The Joint Agriculture Education Study Committee strongly recommended the creation of a Legislative Oversight Committee to help advise the direction of the program in the future.

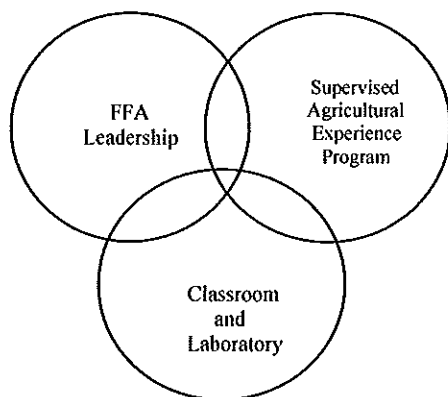
During the 2006 Legislative Session, House Bill 1227 created the Agriculture Education Joint Legislative Advisory Commission (the Commission), which consists of three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, at least one of whom is from the House Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs and at least one is from the House Committee on Education; three members of the Senate appointed by the Senate Committee on Assignments, at least one of whom is from the Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee and at least one of whom is from the Senate Education and Youth Committee; three members who are not members of the General Assembly to be appointed by the Governor; and three members who are not members of the General Assembly appointed by the State School Superintendent. The Commission receives an annual report on activities, program direction, and trends in agricultural education, and then makes any recommendations necessary for any new directions or trends that should be made or followed within the program. The Commission will sunset on December 31, 2012.

⁷2020 Vision for Agriculture Education,
http://aged.ces.uga.edu/Program_Information/2020VisionforAgricultureEducation.pdf

II. Status of Agriculture Education in Georgia

A. Program Components

The Agriculture Education program for K-12 education consists of three inter-locking components: high quality classroom/laboratory experiences; the Supervised Agricultural Experience Program (SAE) which allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom in real world practical jobs and experiences; and the Career Technical Student Organization, FFA, which provides co-curricular activities that build public speaking skills, personal growth, teamwork and leadership skills. The four primary areas of instruction are Agricultural Mechanics; Animal Sciences; Forestry/Natural resources; and Horticulture.



B. Classroom & Laboratory Experience

The first components of an agriculture education program are the classroom and laboratory experiences. In the classroom, students learn concepts and theories dealing with a broad spectrum of agricultural and agribusiness topics. The classroom is followed by the laboratory mode of instruction where concepts and theories are carried through to their application. The students are taught "hands-on" skills that ensure that the skills learned are practical and usable.

The DOE's Agricultural Education Office develops and constantly revises lesson plans and materials that meet Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Each teacher receives a flash drive with lesson plans and supplemental materials that can be updated through the office's curriculum website, which also contains the monthly reporting system, a listserv and a statewide directory. By utilizing a flash drive system for data, teachers do not have to have internet access in order to utilize the state's materials. The DOE's Agricultural Education Office's curriculum website is utilized nationally as a resource for teachers and individuals with an interest in agriculture education. The website received approximately 122,000 hits per month with the average visitor staying over 12 minutes in 2010.⁸

Under State Board of Education graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade as of August 2009, a student must earn four science credits. Prior to the 2009-2010 school year, agricultural education offered three classes that were considered a fourth science. Currently, agricultural education offers eight courses that qualify for the fourth science credit: Animal Science Technology/Biotechnology; Plant Science and Biotechnology; Forest Science; Wildlife Management; Biotechnology; Veterinary Science; Equine Science; General Horticulture and

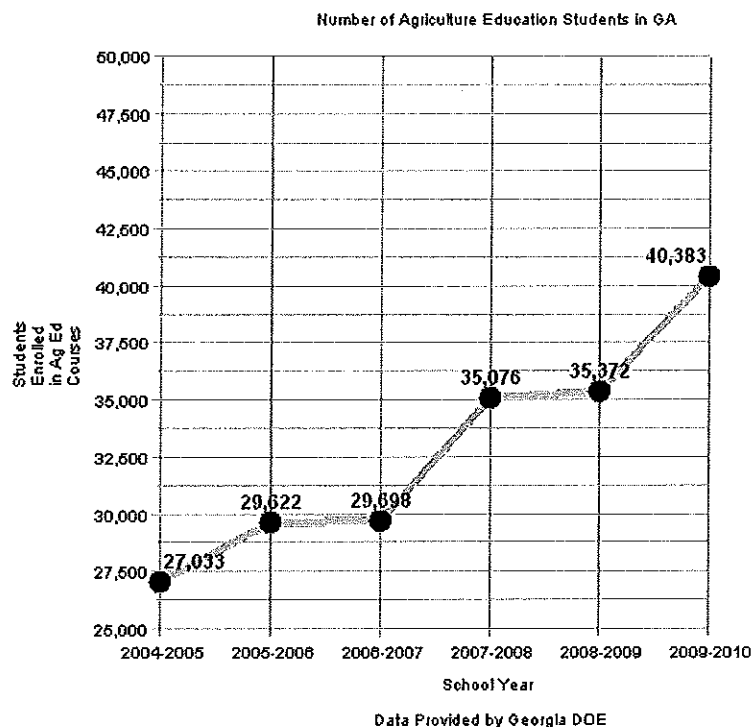
⁸ Testimony on September 9, 2010 by Chip Bridges, DOE Agriculture Education, Program Manager at the Joint Legislative Advisory Committee Meeting

Plant Science; and Natural Resources Management.⁹ The curriculum used for agricultural education is aligned to the GPS, which recently replaced the Quality Core Curriculum, which are enforced by the DOE.

The GPS are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for career readiness and success no matter what trade or professional career students choose after high school graduation. Agriculture nurtures leaders in a variety of fields. Students completing an agriculture career pathway will have solid skills in areas related to agriscience, biotechnology, turf management, landscaping, food science, forestry, environmental science, agricultural engineering, and agribusiness management. Each career pathway provided under the DOE’s structure provides students with the necessary tools to be successful at the next level of their educational career. Career Pathways have three or four specialized courses developed to provide students rigorous core elements, performance standards, and skills necessary after high school graduation to go straight into the workforce or choose college/university, or the military for additional training. Current agriculture pathways are Agribusiness Management; Agricultural Mechanics; Agriscience; Animal Science; Forestry/Natural Resources; Basic Agricultural Science and Technology; Plant Science/Horticulture; and Veterinary Science.

According to the DOE, students who complete at least three career, technical and agricultural education classes have a 92 percent graduation rate.¹⁰ Former State School Superintendent Kathy Cox stated, “Agricultural Education is Georgia’s number one dropout prevention tool.”¹¹

Georgia has seen a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in agriculture education since the formation of the Joint Agricultural Education Study Committee and the Commission as shown in the chart below:



⁹ Georgia Department of Education, <http://www.agedportal.org/users/403MyDocs/Fourth%20Science%20Requirement.pdf>

¹⁰ Stated on September 9, 2010 by Chip Bridges, DOE Agriculture Education, Program Manager at the Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting.

¹¹ Final Report of the Joint Agricultural Education Study Committee, <http://www.senate.ga.gov/sro/Documents/StudyCommRpts/05JtAgEdRpt.pdf>

C. Supervised Agricultural Experience Program (SAE)

A Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Program is a specific learning experience planned and conducted by an individual student that contributes to the development of agricultural and personal skills. Both classroom and laboratory instruction are put to use in the SAE component of the program. SAE opportunities should serve to improve agricultural literacy and skills and abilities required for careers in agriculture. SAE can vary from the traditional home projects to entrepreneurship or cooperative work experience in production or agribusiness. Through SAE projects students learn record keeping and decision making skills. With help from their agricultural teachers, students develop an SAE project based on one or more SAE categories: Agribusiness Entrepreneurship; Agricultural Placement; Agricultural Production; Agricultural Research; Directed School Laboratory; Agricultural Communications; Agricultural Exploration; and Improvement Projects.

An SAE project typically counts towards 25 percent of a student's grade. Although some students do complete SAE projects at their home with regular visits from their agriculture teacher, other students complete their project through a job placement at a farm or agribusiness or by completing a community improvement project under their teacher's supervision. In order for a schools program to meet State standards, at least 60 percent of students must have an SAE project.¹²

Nationally, FFA students earn \$4 billion annually through their hands-on work through SAE projects.¹³ By completing SAE projects, Georgia's students are able to compete for local, state and national recognition and scholarships through FFA.

D. FFA & FFA Alumni Association

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. The FFA operates on local, state and national levels. Student members belong to chapters organized at the local school level. Agricultural education instructors serve as chapter advisors. Chapters are organized under state associations headed by an advisor and executive secretary, who are often employees of the state DOE. States conduct programs and host annual conventions. A significant emphasis is placed on FFA Career Development Events (CDE) in conjunction with SAE programs.

Founded in 1928, the former "Future Farmers of America" brought together students, teachers and agribusiness to solidify support for agricultural education. The name of the organization was changed to the National FFA Organization in 1988 to reflect the growing diversity of agriculture. Today, more than 500,000 student members nationally are engaged in a wide range of agricultural education activities. The Georgia FFA Association was founded in 1929. It is the 3rd largest state association in the nation with over 30,000 FFA members. It is the largest in the FFA Southern region.¹⁴ The top five membership states are California, Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma and Missouri.¹⁵

¹² Testimony on September 9, 2010 by Gary Minyard, Agriculture Education Teacher at the Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting

¹³ https://www.ffa.org/Documents/media_ffafactsheet.pdf

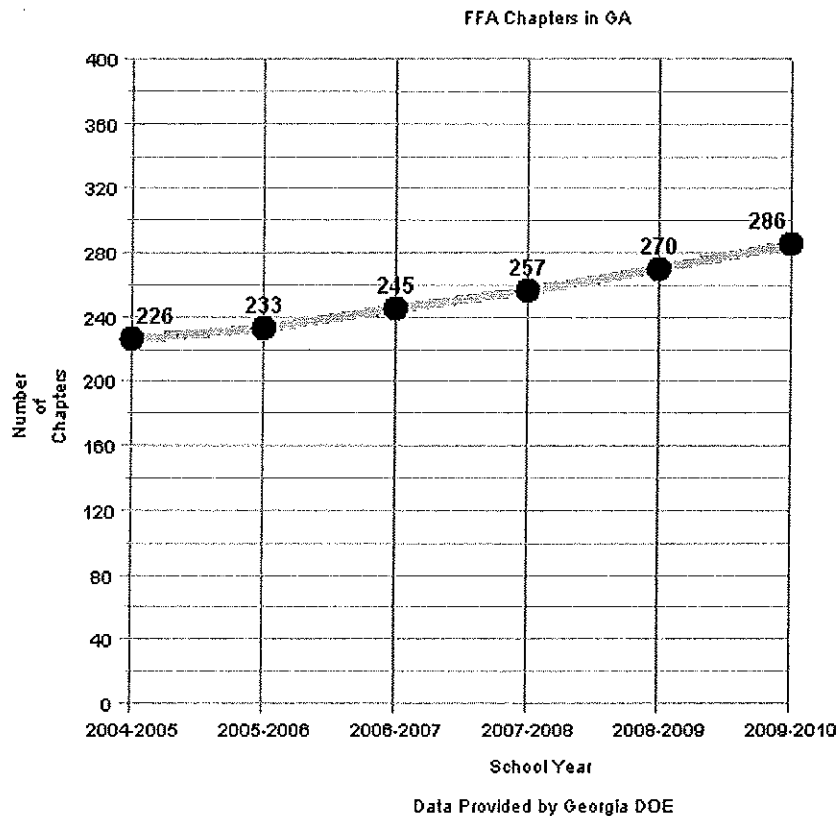
¹⁴ <http://www.georgiaffa.org/index.php?page=ffaifo#whatisffa>

¹⁵ <https://www.ffa.org/About/WhoWeAre/Pages/Statistics.aspx>

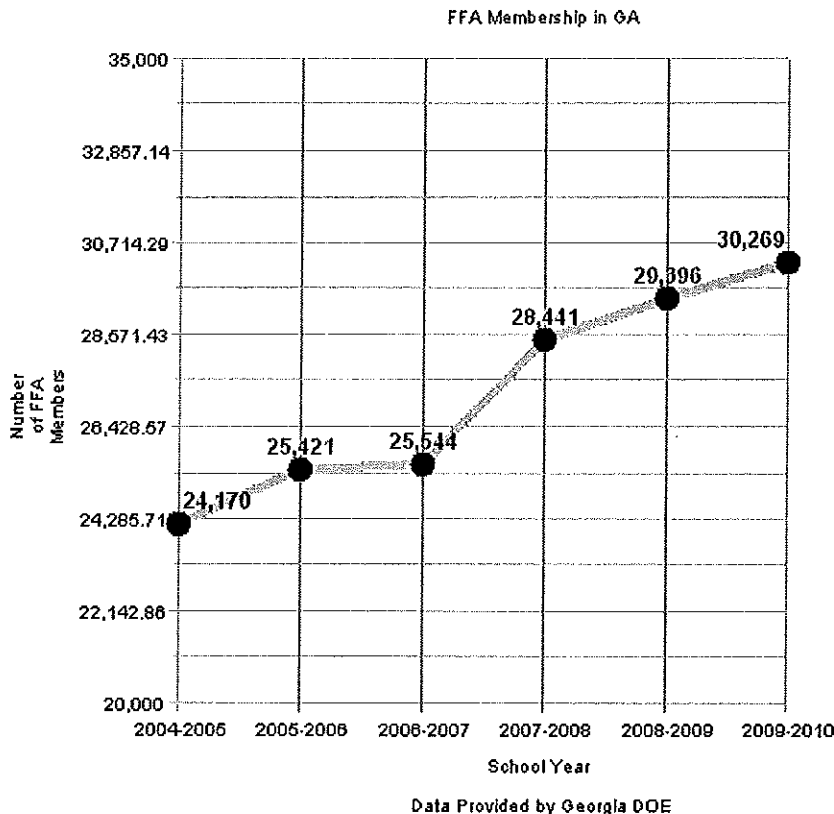
The 2009-2010 school year was the 12th consecutive year of membership growth in Georgia with 30,269 members and the 5th consecutive year surpassing all-time highs in membership. One hundred twenty-five Georgia chapters had 100 percent of agriculture education students enrolled as members. Georgia had 12 National Proficiency Award Finalists, 15 National 3-Star Chapters and an American Star Finalist in 2010. Only four states have more proficiency finalists and only four states have more 3-Star Chapters. The Georgia FFA Foundation raised industry sponsorship money to help offset costs for each state-winning individual and team to attend the competition at the national level in Indianapolis, Indiana.

During the 2010-2011 school year, out of the 290 Agricultural Education programs, 286 provided FFA chapters. The DOE emphasizes the importance of FFA participation throughout materials on the Agricultural Education Office’s curriculum website. The Commission received testimony during the 2010 meeting that the reasons for continued growth of the FFA were: committed agricultural education teachers and FFA advisors; support from the General Assembly for Extended Day/Year funds; the Area Teacher Program; support from industry and alumni; and the ability to continue to provide meaningful opportunities for interested students.¹⁶

The charts below shows the significant growth of FFA in Georgia due to a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in agriculture education since the formation of the Joint Agricultural Education Study Committee and the Commission:



¹⁶ Testimony on September 9, 2010 by Ben Lastly, Executive Secretary of the Georgia FFA at the Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting



The Georgia FFA Alumni Association aggressively pursues its mission of striving to be Georgia's premier agricultural education advocate through FFA alumni support in local communities. The Alumni Foundation provides resources and support in the development of leadership, personal growth, and career success of FFA members.¹⁷ During the past four years, the Alumni Association has contributed over \$65,000 to the Georgia FFA Foundation. Currently, three Georgians serve on the National FFA Alumni Council. The Georgia Alumni Association is the fourth largest state association in the nation in membership with 2,341 members and 62 local FFA Alumni affiliates. The Georgia Alumni Association received first place for their website at the 2010 National FFA Alumni Convention as well as the highest honor for any state alumni affiliate, the Silver Emblem Award.¹⁸

E. Middle School Agriculture Education Programs

Middle school programs in agricultural education are an important component of the overall agricultural education program in Georgia. Middle school programs introduce students to the agricultural industry at a critical stage of their development. Middle school students are at the appropriate age to learn about the important issues and vast career opportunities related to agriculture. Middle school students are ready and able to learn about the agricultural industry and the crucial relationships between agriculture, the economy and society. Students complete SAE projects and are eligible for FFA membership. The current programs were implemented by the DOE in 2009.¹⁹

During the 2010-2011 school year, Georgia has 67 Middle School Agricultural Education Programs. When the Commission began its work in 2006, 46 counties offered Middle School

¹⁷ Georgia FFA Alumni Association, <http://www.ffaalumni.org/about.asp>

¹⁸ Handout from Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting 2010

¹⁹ Georgia DOE, http://www.gadoe.org/ci_cta.aspx?PageReq=CICTAMiddle#msag

Agriculture Education Programs.²⁰ Currently, 57 counties offer Middle School Agriculture Education Programs, which is a 24 percent increase in the number of counties offering a program.²¹

F. Young Farmer Program

The mission of the Georgia Young Farmer Program is to provide lifelong learning, leadership development and networking opportunities to its members and to increase agricultural awareness among all citizens. The Young Farmer Program is an educational program designed for the systematic instruction of young farmers actively engaged in the business of farming. The program is under the direction and supervision of the State Department of Education and the local agriculture departments in the high schools. The instructional program is planned jointly by the Young Farmer teacher and class members.

Young Farmer Teachers provide instruction on a variety of topics from new farming techniques, risk management strategies, water management, and agricultural awareness to legislative issues affecting agriculture. On-site technical assistance to farmers is strong part of the program. During the 2009-2010 school year, Young Farmer Teachers instructed over 10,000 Georgians, through organized classes, small group instruction, and individualized instruction. Young Farmer Teachers instruct at least one class in the local school system each day. The Young Farmer Program operates in 52 counties.²²

The Young Farmer program was initiated in 1951. From 1951 until 1970, the program functioned only as an instructional program coordinated by full-time Young Farmer Teachers. In 1971, the Georgia Young Farmers Association (GYFA) was organized as an extension of the instructional program. The primary purpose of organizing the state association was to coordinate the activities at the state level and to provide leadership activities for the young farmers. The GYFA currently has over 3,600 members throughout the state and it is the nation's largest Young Farmer Program.²³

Historically, one of the goals expressed to the Commission was to grow the Young Farmer Program and increase membership in the GYFA to 5,000 members. At the conclusion of the 2009-2010 school year, the long-time Executive Secretary of the Young Farmer Program, Harry Thompson retired. Today, the program, while robust, is experiencing a period of transition as the three area Young Farmer coordinators fill Mr. Thompson's role.²⁴

G. Food Processing (Canneries)

The mission of the Georgia Food Systems Technology Program is to teach and assist persons in the community to preserve food. This program makes it possible for families to inexpensively process large quantities of food using modern procedures in a safe environment. Agriculture education students often participate in preserving food at local canneries.

Since the creation of the Commission in 2006, Georgia has experienced a tremendous revenue shortfall and no state grant money has been appropriated for the local canneries since FY 2010

²⁰ Georgia Agricultural Education 2006 Annual Report

²¹ Handout from Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting 2006

²² Handout from Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting 2010

²³ Young Farmer Program, <http://aged.ces.uga.edu/YF%20Program/index.htm>

²⁴ Testimony on September 9, 2010 by Lynn Barber, Interim Executive Secretary of the Georgia Young Farmer Program at the Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting

Budget. However, the canneries during 2006-2009 experienced an increase in the number of community visits. The table below shows a three year comparison of important data related to the canneries:

	2006	2007	2008	2009
# of Canneries in Georgia	33	31	29	29
# of Units Canned	253,082	246,320	285,250	246,531
# of Units Prepared for Freezing	72,772	67,471		
Total Visits (Community)	19,198	18,293	23,861	23,141
# of Students Instructed	6,536	10,693	5,426	4,722
Local Expenses (Beyond State Funds)	\$201,491	\$195,792	\$301,033	\$304,526
State Allocations	\$364,096	\$356,056	\$300,000	\$0

H. Extended Day/Extended Year Funds

Extended Day/Extended Year funds are grants to local school systems for the purpose of providing instructional services and leadership development activities and supervision of agricultural projects beyond the regular school day and year. Local school systems complete an application to the state in the spring for funding approval. Applications are evaluated and decided upon by Agricultural Education Region Coordinators and the State Program Manager.

In order to receive funding, teachers complete a Program of Work that supports the activities for their school's agriculture education program. Teachers must submit a monthly report on-line for record keeping and accountability of approved activities. Approved activities for Extended Day/Extended Year funds include:

- SAE visits and exhibits;
- FFA Career Development Events;
- FFA chapter activities;
- Community projects;
- Academic reinforcement;
- Leadership activities;
- Professional development;
- Industry contacts;
- FFA Camp participation; and
- Food Processing.

Throughout the testimony given to the Commission, since the economic downturn began in 2008, both teachers and administrators have emphasized the importance of Extended Day/Extended Year funding for retaining high quality teachers as well as excellence within the program. During the 2009-2010 school year, 329 received Extended Day funds and 330 received Extended Year funds.²⁵ The table below shows the changes to Extended Day/Extended Year funding as appropriated by the Legislature:

	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Extended Day	\$2,028,702	\$1,747,443	\$1,833,068
Extended Year	\$1,117,420	\$1,215,929	\$1,237,942

²⁵ Handout from Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meeting 2010

I. Camps

Georgia's two Agriculture Education Camps, the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington and Camp John Hope in Fort Valley, have undergone a tremendous series of upgrades and increased attendance since the creation of the Commission. The 2005 Final Report of the Joint Agricultural Education Study Committee noted that both camps were in need of repair, but conditions at Camp John Hope were especially deplorable and was rarely utilized for any purpose. As recommended in 2005, Georgia Department of Corrections labor is being utilized to perform the labor for upgrades in a cost-efficient manner. In FY 2011, \$2.2 million in bond funds were secured to be used for two new cabins at Camp John Hope, new recreation areas at Camp John Hope and new roofs for buildings at Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center.

1. Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center

The Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center has recently completed the GDA-Tommy Irvin Cabin, the Melvin Johnson Cabin and the Hayes-Outz Wildlife Education Center. The Center raised over \$300,000 in private funds from 2009-2010. Summer Leadership Camp attendance has been growing steadily in recent years with 1,824 in attendance in 2009 and 2,097 attending in 2010. The summer of 2010 was the highest attendance since the summer of 1966. The Center currently serves over 6,000 FFA and FCCLA students throughout the year for various events.

Currently, the Center urgently needs a security gate to ensure the security of campers and control entrance to the camp. Additionally, six cabins need renovations and new mattresses and several buildings need new roofs.

2. Camp John Hope

Camp John Hope has undergone a tremendous series of improvements since 2005 in order to attract visitors and provide a quality, desirable camp experience. Attendance and usage of the camp is increasing yearly as the facilities and programming undergo improvement. Recently, in response to significant student interest the camp developed an Agriculture Mechanics camp program. Cabins 2 and 3 were completely renovated into hotel style cabins with semi-private rooms; improvements were made to the bathrooms and flooring in cabins 8 and 9; and bathrooms in the Tabor Memorial Auditorium were completely renovated prior to the Commission's 2010 meeting. At the time of the Commission's meeting, the caretaker's residence was under construction.

As the physical condition of the camp improves, significant steps need to be taken to attract additional campers including: the development of recreation areas (basketball, volleyball, boats, and ropes course); cleaning of the lake to allow for recreation on and around it; development of an education program and program staff; and continued improvements to the cabins. The camp will continue its fundraising campaign to support these efforts.²⁶

J. Area Teachers

Area teachers are certified agriculture educators with programmatic and technical expertise in Agricultural Mechanics; Animal Science; Forestry/Natural Resources; and Horticulture. Currently, the 12 area teachers assist other teachers to meet program standards by: developing specific goals for individual teacher and program improvement; assisting beginning teachers; conducting professional development activities for teachers to obtain Professional Learning Units; providing training for apprentice teachers at the University of Georgia and Fort Valley

²⁶ Handouts from Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meetings 2008, 2009, and 2010

State University; and conducting approximately 100 curriculum driven, hands-on training sessions for students and teachers each year.

Additionally, area teachers: develop and update instructional materials; conduct 175 Career Development Events with more 15,000 participants annually, as well other student development events; work with teachers and students to develop SAE opportunities; assist with specialized facilities; provide support to the Young Farmer Program; and, serve as a liaison between in-school programs, post-secondary institutions and industry.

Since the Commission's inception, the workload of the 12 area teachers has greatly increased with the increasing number of teachers and students participating in agriculture education. During the 2005-2006 school year, the area teachers served approximately 25,000 students. By the 2008-2009 school year, the 12 area teachers were serving over 350 agriculture teachers and over 30,000 students. Currently, the 12 area teachers serve over 400 teachers and approximately 40,000 students.²⁷

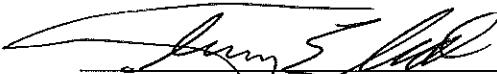
III. Recommendations of the Joint Legislative Agriculture Education Advisory Commission

During the September 9, 2010 meeting, the Commission adopted the following recommendations:


- Permanently codify the Joint Legislative Agriculture Education Advisory Commission during 2011 Legislative Session prior to the expiration of the Commission in 2012.
- Include in any renewal process, a reduction of the number of meetings to one annual meeting.
- Separate the Agriculture Education Program from the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education Pathway because a large number of Agriculture Education students are college bound.
- Replace the current Agriculture Education Program Manager position within the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education Pathway with a full-time State Director of Agriculture Education position within the Georgia DOE.

²⁷ Handouts from Joint Legislative Advisory Commission Meetings 2006- 2010

**IV. Signatures of the Joint Legislative Agriculture Education
Advisory Commission Co-Chairman**



The Honorable Terry England
Georgia House of Representatives
108th District
Chairman



The Honorable John Bulloch
Georgia Senate
11th District
Chairman