

# **PART-TIME FARMING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY TEACHERS OF YOUNG FARMERS IN GEORGIA**

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## **Abstract**

This descriptive, correlational study involved teachers, supervisors and chapter presidents in the Georgia Young Farmer program. The primary purpose was to determine the nature and extent of part-time farming activities conducted by teachers of Young Farmers and the perceived effect these activities had on Young Farmer programs. A mailed questionnaire was used to collect data. The instrument yielded a .81 reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. A comparison of early and late respondents found no significant differences. Teachers of Young Farmers in Georgia were married, averaged 42 years of age, and had a masters degree. Chapter presidents averaged 34 years of age, were married, had high school as their highest educational level, and had farmed about 16 years. Vocational supervisors were 49 years of age, married, and had a Specialist degree; only one-third had farming experience. Over one-half of the teachers were actively farming, with a majority having livestock and crops. Nine out of ten indicated that they intended to continue. Emotional, financial and educational reasons were given for continuing to farm. Over 80 per cent of the supervisors and chapter presidents whose teachers engaged in part-time farming indicated that these activities had a positive effect on the working relationship between Young Farmer teachers and chapter members. Less than one-third of the presidents and one-half of the supervisors whose teachers did not farm thought farming would have a positive effect. Over three-fourths of the chapter presidents agreed that Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to farm part-time, while only 40% of supervisors agreed. There was a significant difference between teachers and supervisors/chapter presidents regarding the negative effect farming activities could have on working relationships "...because these activities limit the amount of time that the teacher has to work with members." Nearly all supervisors and chapter presidents gave their Young Farmer teacher high ratings for meeting the needs of chapter members. Age was the only demographic characteristic that affected ratings of statements about part-time farming activities conducted by teachers. Increased dialogue between teachers, presidents and supervisors was recommended, along with inservice meetings for teachers on the topic.

## **Introduction**

In 1997, full-time Young Farmer teachers, their vocational supervisors, and their local chapter presidents were surveyed seeking information pertaining to their farming experience and their perceptions of Young Farmer teacher part-time farming activities. This information was assessed to determine the effect of these part-time farming activities on local Young Farmer chapters. There has been no research done to determine the extent of farming activities by Georgia Young Farmer teachers and the effect that these activities have on the teacher's ability to meet the needs of local chapter members.

Nationally, some research has been conducted involving different aspects of the Young and Adult Agricultural Education programs. An extensive study of the history of the Young Farmer program in Georgia (Boatright, 1993) and the views and characteristics of the membership in the National Young Farmer Educational Association (Carpentier & Iverson, 1992) are examples of this research. Bruening and Radhakirshna (1991) assessed the needs and practices of Young/Adult Farmer teachers and Steakley and Webb (1973) conducted a study to identify characteristics that contributed to the most successful Young Farmer chapters in Texas. Part-time farming activities by Young Farmer teachers were not mentioned in any of these studies.

Martin (1987) used a survey to assess the current educational programming being offered to young and adult farmers in Iowa. The assessment centered on programs being offered, the degree of importance, and the quality of programs as perceived by farmers. Smith and Kahler (1982) conducted a study of factors which influenced participation of adult farmers in educational programs. Neither of these studies mentioned the extent or effect that farming activities had on the working relationship between the Young Farmer teacher and local chapter members.

There has been considerable research performed which addressed the feelings and attitudes of teachers in general as they relate to part-time work or "moonlighting". Research by Pearson (1994), Raffel and Groff (1990), Bell and Roach (1989), Wisniewski and Kleine (1984), and Henderson (1982) indicated that the need to supplement salaries and/or raise the standard of living are major factors why teachers have second jobs. This study indicates that some Young Farmer teachers have part-time farming activities mainly for financial reasons, but most have emotional reasons for this part-time work. Physical and educational reasons are also given as to why they farm part-time.

Ballou (1995) indicated that moonlighting teachers do not appear to shortchange students when preparing lessons, grading papers, or assigning homework. Phipps (1980) stated that persons who plan to teach agriculture should have a background of experience in the agriculture occupation they will be teaching.

At the time of this study, there were 53 active Young Farmer programs in the state with full-time teachers. Two counties had more than one active program (Weeks, 1996).

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the nature and extent of part-time farming activities by Young Farmer teachers and the perceived effect these farming activities had on Young Farmer programs. Specific objectives were to:

1. Determine the demographic characteristics of respondents.
2. Ascertain perceptions of Young Farmer teachers, supervisors and chapter presidents regarding effects, advantages and disadvantages of farming activities pursued by teachers of Young Farmers of Georgia.
3. Compare the ratings that teachers, chapter presidents and vocational supervisors gave a set of seven attitudinal statements about the farming activities of Young Farmer teachers.
4. Determine chapter presidents' and vocational supervisors' ratings of the performance of Young Farmer teachers.
5. Analyze how respondents' characteristics affected attitudes toward farming activities engaged in by teachers of Young Farmers of Georgia.

### **Procedures**

This was a descriptive, correlational study involving teachers', supervisors', and chapter presidents' perceptions of part-time farming activities of the Young Farmer teachers in Georgia. An extensive review of literature revealed only a few references to part-time employment or "moonlighting" by teachers. These references were not specific to agriculture or Young Farmer teachers, therefore, the researchers used their own experiences and contacts within the Georgia Young Farmer association to design this study. A draft instrument was reviewed for face validity by the teacher educators at the University of Georgia. The instrument was submitted, along with a human subjects review form, to The University of Georgia Office of the Vice President for Research on August 9, 1996. The instrument was approved in early September, 1996. An extension was granted on January 6, 1997, to facilitate followup. The names and addresses of supervisors and presidents were secured at a Young Farmer in-service meeting. The original instrument was sent to teachers, supervisors, and presidents on August 12, 1997. A follow-up post card was sent after 10 days. Another follow-up attempt was made later in the Fall at a state-wide teachers meeting. Three additional responses were obtained from this follow-up. Data collection ended in November, 1997.

When late responders were compared to the earlier responders, no significant differences were observed, therefore, late responders--and by inference, non-respondents--were considered to be part of the same population (Miller & Smith, 1983), thus all responses could be combined for analysis. A total of 14 presidents, out of 53 (26.4%); 31 teachers, out of 51 (60.8%); and 25 supervisors, out of 49 (51%) responded, for a total of 70 respondents who provided useable data. This represented 45.8% of the 153 individuals who made up the population. The data were transferred from the instruments to the Word Perfect word-processing program, and analyzed at the Academic Computing Center at The University of Georgia. Primarily descriptive statistics were used, including count, means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations. In addition, t-tests and analysis of variance were used to determine differences between groups of respondents. Also, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was used to determine reliability of the seven Likert-type attitudinal variables; which achieved a moderately strong alpha of .81.

### **Findings**

#### **Demographics**

Most Young Farmer teachers responding to the study were married (97%) and had an average age of 42 years. Over one-half (55%) of the Young Farmer teachers had a Master's degree and most (87%) were interested in the study, as indicated by their request for the results.

Chapter presidents responding to this study had an average age of 34 years. Most (77%) of the chapter presidents were married, over one-half (62%) reported high school as their highest educational level, and they had an average of between 16 and 17 years of farming experience. Fifty percent of the chapter presidents responding wanted the results of this study.

Vocational supervisors responding had an average age of 49 years. Most supervisors (96%) were married with 65% having a Specialist degree as their highest educational level. Two-thirds (68%) of the supervisors had no farming experience. Those supervisors with farming experience (32%) had an average of 28 years involved in some form of farming. Most (72%) of the supervisors wanted a copy of the results of this study. These data may be viewed in Table 1.

Table 1  
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=70)

Category	Teacher (n=31)	Supervisor (n=25)	President (n=14)
Age			
M	42.3	48.7	33.6
S.D.	6.81	6.26	8.32
Range	25-55	37-60	25-53
Highest Education Level			
High School	-	-	8
Technical School	-	-	1
Bachelors Degree	1	1	4
Masters Degree	17	3	-
Specialist Degree	11	15	-
Doctorate	2	4	-
Marital Status			
Single	1	1	3
Married	30	22	10
Current Residence			
Farm	14	-	14
Non-farm	17	-	-
Years Experience in Farming	23.8*	28 (n=8)	16.5
Mean Years of Teaching Agriculture	15.9	-	-
Mean Years of Teaching Young Farmers	9.3	-	-
Interest in Study Results	27	18	7

\*Note: Seventeen teachers (55%) were actively farming at the time of the study. Sixteen (94.1%) intended to continue. Nearly three-fourths (12 or 70.6%) of the Young Farmer teachers with part-time farming activities had livestock and 10 or 58.8% had farming activities involving crops.

When chapter presidents and vocational supervisors were asked if the Young Farmer teacher at their school engaged in part-time farming activities, 71% of the chapter presidents responded yes, 21% answered no, and 7% did not know. Vocational supervisors responded with 36% answering yes, 48% responding no, and 16% did not know. These data can be viewed in Table 2.

When the 16 Young Farmer teachers were asked why they will continue to engage in part-time farming activities, responses were grouped into four categories: financial, emotional, physical, and educational. Nearly one-half (7 or 43.8%) of the Young Farmer teachers gave emotional reasons for continuing part-time farming activities. Some examples that were categorized as emotional were reasons such as “children enjoy showing cattle”; “teaches children responsibility and work ethics”; “makes teacher fit in with others”; and “therapy”. Nearly one-third (5 or 31.3%) of the teachers gave financial reasons for continuing part-time farming activities. Two respondents (12.5%) gave physical and educational reasons for continuing part-time farming. The one respondent who indicated that he would discontinue farming, gave two reasons: time involved (“takes away from job and family which are more important”) and “not making any money for the amount of time involved”.

Table 2.  
Responses of Study Participants Regarding Farming Activities of Teachers (N=70)

Response	Teacher		Supervisor		President		Overall	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	17	54.8	9	36.0	10	71.4	36	51.4
No	14	45.2	12	48.0	3	21.4	29	41.4
Don't Know	-	-	4	16.0	1	7.1	5	7.1

### **Perceptions of respondents regarding effects, advantages and disadvantages of farming activities**

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the perceptions that vocational supervisors and chapter presidents had of the effect that part-time farming activities have on the working relationship between Young Farmer teachers and local chapter members. For purposes of analysis, responses were divided into two groups of vocational supervisors and two groups of chapter presidents. Vocational supervisors and chapter presidents who indicated that their Young Farmer teacher engaged in part-time farming activities were summarized separately from those that answered that their teacher did not have or that they did not know if their teacher engaged in farming activities. Responses could be Positive, Negative, or No Effect.

Eight out of nine (88.9%) of the vocational supervisors and nine out of eleven (81.8%) of the chapter presidents with teachers that had part-time farming activities indicated that these farming activities had a positive effect on the working relationship between Young Farmer teachers and local chapter members.

Just 5 out of 17 (29.4%) of the vocational supervisors and 2 out of 4 (50%) of the chapter presidents with teachers that did not have part-time farming activities or did not know if the teacher had farming activities indicated that they believe that these activities would have a positive effect on the working relationship between Young Farmer teachers and local chapter members. Moreover, almost one-half (8 or 47.1%) of these vocational supervisors and one-fourth of the chapter presidents thought the effect would be negative. These data may be viewed in Table 3.

Chapter presidents, vocational supervisors, and Young Farmer teachers were asked to give three reasons why Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to engage in part-time farming activities. A combination of responses were found for most frequent first, second, and third answers. Respondents indicated that the major reason for encouraging Young Farmer teachers to farm was “To have a first-hand knowledge of a farming enterprise”(18 or 33.3%). The next most popular belief was that “Experiencing the problems of farming by Young Farmer teachers enables them to sympathize with the farmers that they work with” (8 or 16%). The major reason given for discouraging farming activities of Young Farmer teachers was “Requires time and effort that could be put into the job of teaching and advising the Young Farmer program (22 or 45.8%). The next most mentioned reason for discouraging teachers from farming was that the farming activities “Often get out of hand, size-wise, and can become the major priority” (5 or 10.4%).

Table 3.  
Perceived Effect of Young Farmer teachers’ Farming Activities

Response	Supervisors		Chapter Presidents	
	n	%	n	%
	Respondents whose teachers farm			
Positive	8	88.9	9	81.8
Negative	—	—	1	9.1
No effect	1	11.1	1	9.1
	Respondents whose teachers do <u>not</u> farm			
Positive	5	29.4	2	50.0
Negative	8	47.1	1	25.0
No Effect	4	23.5	1	25.0

### **Respondent Perceptions of Attitudinal Items about Farming Activities of Teachers**

Six attitudinal statements were presented to chapter presidents, vocational supervisors, and Young Farmer teachers. A Likert-type scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree was used for the participants to use. In order to discuss the findings, answers of Strongly Disagree and Disagree were combined as a disagree response. A like grouping of Strongly Agree and Agree are reported as an agree response. There were no significant differences in how the three groups responded to five of the six statements. These data may be perused in Table 4.

Over three-fourths (77%) of the chapter presidents responding agreed that Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to have part-time farming activities. However, 44% of the vocational supervisors participating in the study disagreed, while 40% agreed that Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to have part-time farming activities; 16% were undecided about the statement. Over one-half (53%) of the Young Farmer teachers responding agreed and 36% disagreed with this statement. When all the responses were combined from the three groups, 53% agreed and 34% disagreed with the statement that Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to have part-time farming activities ( $M=3.21$ ).

Over two-thirds (67%) of the chapter presidents involved in the study disagreed and only 8% agreed with the statement that Young Farmer teachers should be discouraged from having part-time farming activities. Almost one-half (48%) of the vocational supervisors disagreed with this statement and 36% agreed. Two-thirds (63%) of the Young Farmer teachers responding disagreed with the statement that Young Farmer teachers should be discouraged from having part-time farming activities, while 23% agreed. When all responses were combined there was 58% disagreement and 25% agreement with the statement ( $M=2.48$ ).

All of the chapter presidents participating in the study agreed with the statement, “Young Farmer teachers can better relate to the problems and successes of local chapter members if they have similar farming activities”. More than one-half (56%) of the vocational supervisors agreed while 32% disagreed. Over three-fourths (77%) of the Young Farmer teachers agreed with this statement and 13% disagreed. The combination of responses by participants shows that 74% agreed with the statement and 17% disagreed ( $M=3.86$ ).

Respondents were asked to respond to the statement, “If Young Farmer teachers have a desire to have part-time farming activities, they should be encouraged to do so as long as the activities are limited to an average of less than forty hours per week”. Two-thirds (67%) of the chapter presidents, 50% of the vocational supervisors, and 55% of

the Young Farmer teachers responding agreed with this statement; while 8% of the presidents, 25% of the supervisors, and 41% of the teachers disagreed. Chapter presidents and vocational supervisors both had an undecided rate of 25% while only 3% of the teachers were undecided. When all responses were combined, there was a 55% agreement, 29% disagreement, and a 15% undecided rate with the statement, for a mean of 3.42.

When asked to react to the statement, “The positive effects of part-time farming by Young Farmer teachers far outweigh the negative effects of these farming activities on local Young Farmer chapters” over one-half (58%) of the chapter presidents, 52% of the vocational supervisors, and 58% of the teachers responding agreed; just 8% of the presidents, 28% of the supervisors, and 26% of the Young Farmer teachers disagreed with the statement; however, 33% of the chapter presidents, 20% of the vocational supervisors, and 16% of the teachers were undecided. A combination of responses showed that 55% agreed, 24% disagreed, and 21% were undecided ( $M=3.47$ ).

The study sought to determine the perceptions that Young Farmer teachers have about the statement, “Part-time farming activities by Young Farmer teachers can have a detrimental effect on the working relationship with Young Farmers because these activities will limit the time the teacher will have to work with chapter members”. Young Farmer teachers responding were evenly divided with 42% in agreement and 42% disagreeing with the statement. Just 16% of the teachers were undecided. Three-fourths (75%) of the chapter presidents and 64% of the vocational supervisors agreed with this statement. However, 17% of the presidents and 16% of the supervisors disagreed with the statement; and 8% of the chapter presidents and 20% of the vocational supervisors were undecided. A combination of responses showed that 68% of the respondents agreed, 16% disagreed, and 16% were undecided about this statement. This was the only item where a significant difference ( $p<.05$ ) was found between teachers, supervisors and presidents. These data may be seen in Table 4.

Table 4  
Respondent Ratings of Attitudinal Statements about Teachers’ Farming Activities

Statement	Teachers		Supervisors		Presidents	
	<u>M</u>	SD	<u>M</u>	SD	<u>M</u>	SD
Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to have part-time farming activities.	3.2	1.32	3.0	1.46	3.8	1.01
Young Farmer teachers should be discouraged from engaging in part-time farming.	2.3	1.34	2.8	1.48	2.4	1.00
Young Farmer teachers can better relate to the problems and successes of their students if they have similar farming activities.	4.0	1.10	3.4	1.36	4.3	.48
Part-time farming activities can have a negative effect on the working relationship between YF teachers and enrollees because these activities limit the time that the teacher has to work with members.	3.0*	1.40	3.8	1.29	3.8	.97
If Young Farmer teachers have a desire to have part-time farming activities, they should be encouraged to do so as long as they average less than forty hours per week.	3.3	1.54	3.5	1.32	3.5	.90
The positive effects of part-time farming by YF teachers far outweigh the negative effects.	3.5	1.34	3.4	1.55	3.5	1.00

\*Significant difference:  $p\leq.05$

### **Performance Ratings of Teachers**

Chapter presidents and vocational supervisors were asked to rate the performance of their Young Farmer teachers in meeting the needs of chapter members. A scale of 1 = Poor, up to 5 = Excellent was used to rate their performance. A large majority (11 or 84.7%) of the chapter presidents gave their Young Farmer teacher a rating of 4 or 5 ( $M=4.2$ ;  $SD=1.14$ ); 20 or 95.2% of the vocational supervisors responding gave their Young Farmer teacher a rating of 4 or 5 ( $M=4.6$ ;  $SD=.60$ ). A t-test revealed no significant difference between the subset ratings. Combining the responses shows 31 out of 33 (93.4%) giving ratings of 4 or 5 for the Young Farmer teachers in meeting the needs of chapter members.

### **Relationship of demographics to ratings of the attitudinal statements**

Demographic characteristics were cross tabulated with the Likert-type items; t-tests and ANOVA were used to test of significance. Only the age of respondents was found to significantly affect their perceptions of part-time farming and its effect on local chapters.

The six attitudinal statements in the study that used the Likert-type scale for responses were analyzed by t-test for age differences of respondents. There was a significant difference noted on the item, "Young Farmer teachers should be discouraged from engaging in part-time farming activities". Both the forty-and-under age group and the over-forty group disagreed with the statement, but the over-forty age group disagreed to a lesser extent. The researchers noted no significant differences by age group in the responses for the remaining statements.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

Over one-half of the full-time Young Farmer teachers in Georgia engage in part-time farming activities; and almost all plan to continue these activities. There are more part-time farming activities involving livestock than crops.

Emotional factors are the main reason why Young Farmer teachers continue part-time farming activities. Financial factors were the second most frequent reason given. This is different from the findings of Pearson (1994), Raffel and Groff (1990), Bell and Roach (1989), Wisniewski and Kleine (1984), and Henderson (1982) who indicated that the need to supplement salaries and/or raise the standard of living are major factors why teachers have second jobs.

Most chapter presidents and supervisors feel that farming activities by Young Farmer teachers have a positive effect on the working relationship between the teacher and chapter members. Vocational supervisors whose teachers do not farm are more likely to think that these activities have a negative effect on the working relationship between the teacher and chapter members.

Young Farmer teachers, supervisors and chapter presidents believe that farming gives the teacher first-hand knowledge of farming enterprises. However, when asked why Young Farmer teachers should be discouraged from having part-time farming activities, a majority of teachers, supervisors and chapter presidents will likely give the reason that it requires time and effort that could be put into the job of teaching and advising.

Most teachers, supervisors and chapter presidents in Georgia believe that Young Farmer teachers should be encouraged to have part-time farming activities, in order to better relate to the problems and successes of local Young Farmers.

Chapter presidents and vocational supervisors agree that farming activities by Young Farmer teachers can have a negative effect on the working relationship with chapter members if forty or more hours are spent per week on these activities. Thus, most program participants will probably agree that if Young Farmer teachers have a desire to have part-time farming activities, they should be encouraged to do so as long as the activities are limited to an average of less than forty hours per week. Furthermore, teachers, supervisors and chapter presidents agree that the positive effects of part-time farming by Young Farmer teachers far outweigh the negative effects of these farming activities on local Young Farmer chapters.

Young Farmer teachers in Georgia are highly rated by chapter presidents and vocational supervisors for meeting the needs of local chapter members.

Older (over forty years of age) program participants are more likely to agree with the statement, "Young Farmer teachers should be discouraged from engaging in part-time farming activities".

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations can be made as a result of this study:

There should be more dialogue between Young Farmer teachers, chapter presidents, and vocational supervisors concerning farming activities conducted by Young Farmer teachers.

Inservice meetings with Young Farmer teachers should be conducted to explore and discuss the results of this study.

Guidelines should be developed stressing the positive aspects of part-time farming by Young Farmer teachers with a discussion of possible detrimental effects on local chapters if too much time is spent in these activities.

Similar studies should be conducted in other states with Young Farmer programs to determine if views and perceptions are the similar.

### Suggestions for Further Study

1. A replication of this study should be made in Georgia in five years to determine changes over to time.
2. Young farmer teachers should be surveyed to determine their perceptions of the statement, "Farming activities by Young Farmer teachers can have a negative effect on the working relationship with chapter members if forty or more hours are spent per week on these activities."
3. A study should be made of financial benefits of part-time farming to teachers of Young Farmers, as compared to other jobs or professional activities.
4. A study of regular teachers of agriculture should be conducted to determine if there are any differences from respondents in this study.
5. Program leaders should explore why vocational supervisors who had a Young Farmer teacher doing part-time farming activities were more positive about the activity than those with Young Farmer teachers who did not farm.
6. A study should be made to determine the effects of farming experience by vocational supervisors on their attitudes toward Young Farmer teachers' part-time farming activities.

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