DEMONSTRATING PROFESSIONALISM AS AN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHER: A DELPHI STUDY

Teaching is a profession and those engaged in teaching should conduct themselves as a professional. While teacher professionalism has different meanings to different people, professional teachers are essential to make sure that students have meaningful experiences in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to describe what high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors consider to be professional and unprofessional behaviors. A panel of 24 high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors completed a three round Delphi procedure to identify what was considered to be professional and unprofessional behaviors of high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors. The panel reached consensus on 57 professional behaviors and 37 unprofessional behaviors. Overall, high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors are professional if they demonstrate ethical behavior in the classroom while encouraging their students to do their best. These teachers also establish the necessary relationships with students and their parents/guardians to promote a strong learning environment. Teachers that are unprofessional develop inappropriate relationships with their students and uses drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products in front of their students. Unprofessional teachers also are not committed to the total agricultural education program and do not prepare students adequately to assume careers or advanced learning in agriculture.

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

What comes to mind when one hears the phrase teacher professionalism? For most people, this phase has multiple meanings and implications (Phelps, 2003). Professional teachers exist today in many of the nation's classrooms. Yet, turn on the news and one will probably hear a report about the unprofessional activities of teachers and teacher misconduct within the local school system. Many times, these reports focus on inappropriate relationships with students or misuse of school resources. Both teachers and administrators have been relieved of their duties because they did not act in a professional manner.

Professionalism is defined as "how individuals or groups of individuals conform to the characteristics expected of them by virtue of their occupation" (Lee, 1981, p. 3). Allen (1978) commented that "being a professional carries with it certain roles and responsibilities. The three areas with which we should be concerned are professional status, professional improvement, and professional organization" (p. 123).

The connotation of professionalism was initially subjected to concerted attention by sociologists in the 1950s (Whitty, 2006; Hall, 1968; Moore, 1970), focusing in the features that an occupation should have in order to be termed a profession. A typical list includes such items as education and training by examination, a code of conduct oriented towards the public good, and a powerful professional organization (Millerson, 1964). Moore (1970) further commented that a profession involves a full-time occupation, a sense of calling or commitment, a formalized organization, useful knowledge and skills based on specialized training, and autonomy restrained by responsibilities.

If teachers are to demonstrate professionalism, then they must act like professionals. Being a professional means being prepared to enter a profession, taking an active role in the profession, staying current with what goes on in the professions, and demonstrating a positive demeanor

(Talbert, Vaughan, Croom, & Lee, 2007). Usually, being a professional means following a code of conduct and agreeing to a professional code of ethics that one should follow. Being a professional also means being committed (Phelps, 2003) with an essential commitment to student learning. Students should be the first priority of teachers as they enthusiastically embrace the classroom and show commitment to their students. Professionalism is revealed when teachers uphold high standards of ethical standards and demonstrate integrity.

Being a professional also means growing in knowledge and having a vision towards the future. Teachers have numerous opportunities to engage in professional development activities and interact with other professionals at meetings where they can update their knowledge and skills to become more effective in the classroom (Phelps, 2003).

What behaviors should a professional teacher demonstrate? Acheson & Gall (1980) identified professional behaviors that teachers should exhibit. These behaviors included taking initiative to perform tasks; maintaining equipment, materials, and records in an organized manner; accepting and carrying out responsibilities; being aware of and sensitive to students' needs; demonstrating appropriate appearance and personal hygiene; using appropriate grammar and communication skills', observing confidentiality of information and records; maintaining consistent attendance; and being consistently punctual arriving to work, meetings, duties, and in beginning classes. Furthermore, teachers should be willing to engage in professional development, seeking to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms and showing genuine interests and enthusiasm for teaching.

In the *Agriculture Teacher's Manual* (National FFA Organization, 1998), one section is devoted to professionalism and personal development. Primarily, this section focuses on upholding ethical standards. Specifically, agriculture teachers and FFA advisors should "never violate the integrity of a student, always speak positively about colleagues, avoid the use of inappropriate language, realize personal habits are often emulated by students, hold to high moral standards, stand firm on convictions as to what is right and wrong, hold fast to a single standard, and avoid being along with a student" (p. 21-2, 3).

The National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) has published on its website the *Ag Teacher's Creed*. Within the creed are many statements geared toward the professionalism of agriculture teachers. These statements include "I will strive to set before my students by my deeds and actions the highest standards of citizenship for the community, state, and nation", "I will endeavor to develop professionally through study, travel, and exploration", and "I will not knowingly wrong my fellow teachers. I will defend them as far as honesty will permit" (NAAE, 2006).

Blezek (1986) concluded that Nebraska agriculture teachers were perceived to be less professional than others in education. Lawver and Lee (1990) concluded that teachers who were members of professional organizations demonstrated higher degrees of professionalism than did non-members. Talbert, et. al (2007) commented that regarding the professionalism of agriculture teachers, professional teachers

> "stay current in pedagogy and subject matter. They act according to the highest ethics, always keeping of their students in first place. They strive for excellence and attempt to give their best effort in all that they do. Finally, the support the work of other teachers by refraining from gossip, spitefulness, and negative comments regarding their work, especially in front of their students" (p. 42).

Since there is a shortage of agriculture teachers across the nation today and many schools are hiring individual for these positions who have not completed a degree in agricultural education, the question arises about the level of professionalism of these teachers. Surely teachers that went through teacher education programs know what it means to act like a professional and what behaviors are professional and unprofessional. But what about those who come through alternative certification programs or jump from industry into a teaching position? Is teacher professionalism compromised in the classroom? This study sought to help define what high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors who are actively involved in the profession consider to be professional and unprofessional behaviors that will help define what constitutes a professional agricultural educator in the high school classroom.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to describe what high school agriculture teachers consider to be professional and unprofessional behavior. Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Develop a consensus listing of professional behaviors to be exhibited by high school agriculture teachers.
2. Develop a consensus listing of critical unprofessional behaviors of high school agriculture teachers.

Methods and Procedures

The Delphi technique was used to accomplish the purpose of the study. The Delphi technique uses a group communication process utilizing a panel of experts to deal with a complex problem (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). The Delphi technique also utilizes a series of questionnaires that initially asks for responses to a broad question or series of questions that focus upon problems, objectives, solutions, or forecasts (Delbecq, Van de Van, & Gustafson, 1986). The process stops when consensus has been reached among participants, or when sufficient information exchange has been obtained through additional rounds of questions (Dalkey, 1969). Because the Delphi technique does not require face-to-face contact, it is particularly useful for involving experts, users, resource controllers, or administrators who cannot come together physically (Delbecq et al, 1986).

The expert panel for this study consisted of NAAE state association presidents (n = 50) and the NAAE Board of Directors (n = 7). Approval was received from Dr. Jay Jackman, Executive Director of NAAE, to conduct the study. Dr. Jackman provided the researchers with the names and contact information for each NAAE leader who was invited to be in the study. Each leader was contacted via e-mail, explained the purpose of the study, and asked if they were willing to serve on the panel. Twenty-four NAAE leaders agreed to serve on the panel of experts.

Three rounds of data collection were conducted. The first round questionnaire consisted of three open-ended questions, which were:

(1) How would you define teacher professionalism in high school agricultural education (includes classroom, laboratory, and FFA advisor)?

(2) List positive, professional behaviors that you feel a high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor should exhibit when doing his/her job.

(3) List what you would consider to be unprofessional behaviors of a high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor.

Data from this round were analyzed using the constant-comparative method to categorize responses into characteristics (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). All 24 panel members responded (100 percent) and identified 57 professional behaviors and 44 unprofessional behaviors.

The round two questionnaire consisted of two parts: one dealing with professional behaviors of high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors and the other dealing with unprofessional behaviors of high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors. For each part, panel members were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each behavior listed by using a five point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Data from this round was treated as interval data and analyzed using means (Clason & Dormody, 1994). It was decided *a priori* that characteristics with a mean of 3.5 or higher and having at least 50 percent agreement (rating of a 4 or 5) would be retained for the next round. Twenty-two panel members responded (91 percent) to the round two questionnaire and agreed with all 57 professional behaviors and 42 unprofessional behaviors.

The round three questionnaire again consisted of two parts: one for professional behaviors of high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors and one for unprofessional behaviors of high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors. For the part on professional behaviors, panel members were asked to: 1) provide a dichotomous indication (agree/disagree) for each characteristic and 2) indicate how important it was for a high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor (1 = unimportant to 5 = very important). For the part on unprofessional behaviors, panel members were asked to: 1) provide a dichotomous indication (agree/disagree) for each characteristic and 2) indicate how critical should this unprofessional behavior be viewed in the profession (1 = not critical to 4 = very critical). It was decided *a priori* that those characteristics with 80 percent agreement would be retained. Eighteen members of the panel responded (75 percent) and reached consensus on all 57 professional behaviors and 37 of the unprofessional behaviors.

After collecting data in round three, researchers calculated the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for each response (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996). Mean scores from round three were used to determine either the importance of professional behaviors to be exhibited by high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors or how critical unprofessional behaviors should be viewed. For professional behaviors, responses were categorized as “Very Important” (4.50 – 5.00), “Important” (3.50 – 4.49), “Moderately important” (2.50 – 3.49), “Of little importance” (1.50 – 2.49), and “Unimportant” (1.00 – 2.49). For unprofessional behaviors, responses were categorized as “Very critical” (3.50 – 4.00), “Critical” (2.50 – 3.49), “Somewhat critical” (1.50 – 2.49), and “Not Critical” (1.00 – 1.49).

Results and Findings

Professional Behaviors of High School Agriculture Teachers/FFA Advisors

Round one sought to identify a list of professional behaviors that should be exhibited by high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors. The opened ended question used in this round was ”List positive, professional behaviors that you feel a high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor should exhibit when doing his/her job”. Panel members identified 57 professional behaviors that high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors should exhibit.

In round two, panel members were asked to rate their level of agreement with each of the 57 professional behaviors identified in round one using a 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree

to 5 = strongly agree). All 57 professional behaviors were retained for the round three. A full listing of professional behaviors and their level of agreement is listed in Table 1.

In round three, panel members were asked for a dichotomous (agree/disagree) response for each professional behavior listed. Panel members were also asked to indicate via a 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = not important to 5 = very important) how important it was for a high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor to exhibit that professional behavior. All 57 professional behaviors were retained. Nineteen professional behaviors were classified as very important while the remaining 38 professional behaviors were classified as important.

Unprofessional Behaviors of High School Agriculture Teachers

Round one sought to identify a list of unprofessional behaviors that would be inappropriate for high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors to exhibit on the job. The opened ended question used in this round was "List what you would consider to be unprofessional behaviors of a high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor". Panel members identified 44 unprofessional behaviors that would be inappropriate for high school agriculture educators/FFA advisors to exhibit.

In round two, panel members were asked to rate their level of agreement with each of the 44 unprofessional behaviors identified in round 1 using a 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Forty-two unprofessional behaviors were retained for round three. A full listing of unprofessional behaviors and their level of agreement is listed in Table 2. The following unprofessional behaviors were dropped: "forces students to join the FFA," and "has financial problems."

In round three, panel members were asked for a dichotomous (agree/disagree) response for each professional behavior listed. Panel members were also asked to indicate via a 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = not critical to 4 = very critical) how critical it was for high school agriculture educator/FFA advisor to exhibit the unprofessional behavior. Thirty-seven unprofessional behaviors were retained. The following unprofessional behaviors were dropped: "discusses personal problems with students," "shows anger in front of students," "gives busy work in class," "makes phone calls in class," and "allows personal problems to interfere with teaching."

Ten unprofessional behaviors were classified as very critical. Twenty-eight unprofessional behaviors were classified as critical while four were classified as somewhat critical.

Table 1

Professional Behaviors to be Exhibited by High School Agriculture Teachers/FFA Advisors

	Round 2 (N = 22)		Round 3 (N = 18)		
A professional agriculture teacher…	M[a]	% Agreement	% Agreement	M[b]	SD

demonstrates safe practices in the laboratory	4.81	95	100[c]	5.00	.00
demonstrates ethical behavior	4.86	100	94	4.94	.24
is honest	4.76	100	100[c]	4.89	.32
has good moral values	4.81	100	94[c]	4.83	.38
demonstrates integrity	4.86	100	100[c]	4.83	.38
leads by example	4.71	100	100[c]	4.78	.43
demonstrates respect for students	4.76	95	100[c]	4.78	.43
encourages students to do their best	4.81	100	100[c]	4.72	.46
is fair	4.81	100	100[c]	4.67	.69
is prepared to teach students each day	4.52	95	94[c]	4.61	.50
serves as a positive role model	4.76	100	100[c]	4.61	.50
exhibits a good work ethic	4.71	100	94[c]	4.61	.61
is committed	4.71	95	89[c]	4.56	.51
is accessible to students who need help	4.71	100	100[c]	4.56	.51
attends FFA convention with students	4.71	100	100[c]	4.56	.62
wins and loses with grace	4.65	95	94[c]	4.50	.51
has clearly defined expectations for students	4.52	95	100[c]	4.50	.51
follows through on professional obligations	4.81	100	94[c]	4.50	.51
provides leadership for the total program	4.67	100	94[c]	4.50	.62
uses appropriate language	4.67	100	89[c]	4.44	.51
is hard working	4.81	100	100[c]	4.44	.62
is prepared	4.48	95	94[c]	4.44	.62
has students participate in FFA CDE events and activities	4.57	90	100[c]	4.44	.71
works with all students in the program	4.62	100	100[c]	4.44	.71
recognizes individual students strengths and weaknesses	4.67	100	100[c]	4.39	.61
sets high academic standards for students	4.57	95	94[c]	4.39	.61
demonstrates a positive attitude	4.67	100	100[c]	4.39	.70
recognizes appropriate student achievement	4.67	100	100[c]	4.33	.49
follows school rules	4.48	100	100[c]	4.33	.49
participates as a team player	4.62	100	94[c]	4.33	.59

table continues

Table 1 (continued)

	Round 2 (N = 22)		Round 3 (N = 18)		
A professional agriculture teacher…	M[a]	% Agreement	% Agreement	M[b]	SD
is competent in technical subject matter taught	4.43	95	94[c]	4.28	.46
actively seeks community	4.38	95	100[c]	4.28	.58

partnerships and support					
actively participates in professional organizations	4.71	100	94[c]	4.28	.58
participates in professional development activities	4.71	100	100[c]	4.28	.67
is punctual to professional commitments	4.62	95	94[c]	4.28	.67
establishes relationships with parents/guardians	4.52	100	100[c]	4.28	.67
attends agricultural education teacher meetings	4.76	100	100[c]	4.28	.67
demonstrates a caring attitude towards students	4.86	100	100[c]	4.28	.75
uses a variety of teaching techniques	4.52	95	94[c]	4.22	.55
is enthusiastic	4.62	95	100[c]	4.22	.65
demonstrates good written communication skills	4.43	91	89[c]	4.22	.81
conducts SAE visits	4.29	86	94[c]	4.17	.71
demonstrates good oral communication skills	4.57	95	83[c]	4.17	.86
plans quality FFA activities for all students	4.48	95	100[c]	4.11	.47
returns phone calls promptly	4.24	91	94[c]	4.06	.54
keeps up-to-date with technology	4.24	91	94[c]	4.06	.64
dresses appropriate for the situation	4.38	95	94[c]	4.06	.64
is open-minded	4.71	100	94[c]	4.06	.64
is self-confident	4.48	95	100[c]	4.00	.69
has well-maintained and orderly facilities	4.29	86	94[c]	4.00	.84
completes appropriate paperwork on time	4.52	95	94[c]	3.94	.64
is willing to try new things	4.52	95	94[c]	3.94	.72
exhibits patience	4.48	91	89[c]	3.94	.73
is goal oriented	4.43	95	100[c]	3.94	.80
has a functioning advisory committee	4.10	81	94[c]	3.89	.83
performs school-related job responsibilities	4.52	100	100[c]	3.83	.62
collaborates with other teachers and staff	4.43	100	100[c]	3.56	.62

Note: [a]1=strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree
[b]1 = unimportant, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = moderately important, 4 = important, 5 = very important
[c]Reached consensus in Round Three.

Table 2

Behaviors Considered to be Unprofessional if Exhibited by High School Agriculture Teachers

	Round 2 (N = 22)		Round 3 (N = 18)		
An unprofessional agriculture	M[a]	% Agreement	% Agreement	M[b]	SD

teacher…					
develops inappropriate relationships with students	4.86	100	89[c]	3.94	.24
steals	4.86	100	83[c]	3.94	.24
uses drugs	4.86	95	89[c]	3.89	.32
is racist	4.86	95	89[c]	3.89	.32
lies	4.86	100	89[c]	3.89	.32
engages in unethical practices	4.86	100	83[c]	3.78	.43
drinks in front of students	4.86	95	89[c]	3.78	.55
demonstrates unsafe practices	4.62	100	94[c]	3.72	.67
makes sexist comments to students	4.76	95	94[c]	3.67	.59
talks about students in inappropriate situations	4.67	100	89[c]	3.56	.72
uses tobacco products during school time or in front of students	4.85	100	94[c]	3.44	.62
doesn't have students involved with FFA activities	4.52	95	94[c]	3.44	.71
uses inappropriate language (swears/curses)	4.76	100	83[c]	3.44	.71
demonstrates unsportsmanlike conduct	4.81	100	94[c]	3.39	.50
is not a positive role model for students	4.67	100	89[c]	3.39	.50
puts down students in front of others	4.52	100	89[c]	3.39	.78
doesn't follow through on commitments	4.71	100	83[c]	3.33	.59
is lazy	4.67	100	89[c]	3.33	.77
discusses personal problems with students	4.38	86	78	3.33	.97
is unprepared for class	4.57	100	89[c]	3.28	.58
is not committed to having summer program	4.48	91	94[c]	3.28	.90
makes degrading comments about administration in front of students	4.62	95	94[c]	3.17	.71
doesn't teach the curriculum	4.43	91	83[c]	3.17	.79
doesn't prepare students for activities	4.52	95	89[c]	3.17	.79
allows personal problems to interfere with teaching	4.38	91	78	3.17	.79
allows plagiarism in class	4.43	91	83[c]	3.17	1.10

table continues

Table 2 (continued)

	Round 2 (N = 22)		Round 3 (N = 18)		
An unprofessional agriculture teacher…	M[a]	% Agreement	% Agreement	M[b]	SD

is tardy	4.57	100	94[c]	3.11	.90
doesn't follow school rules	4.57	95	83[c]	3.06	.54
shows favoritism towards students	4.57	95	94[c]	3.06	.80
is not involved in professional organizations	4.67	100	89[c]	3.06	.80
doesn't adequately prepare students for FFA CDE events	4.23	91	83[c]	3.06	.94
is unfocused	4.33	91	83[c]	2.89	.68
doesn't have students involved with SAE projects	4.52	95	89[c]	2.83	.79
is dressed inappropriately	4.48	100	94[c]	2.83	.79
gossips	4.62	100	83[c]	2.78	.81
is close-minded	4.38	100	83[c]	2.78	.81
skips faculty meetings	4.24	100	89[c]	2.67	.77
doesn't have an advisory committee	4.15	86	89[c]	2.56	.92
complains	4.29	95	83[c]	2.39	.78
gives busy work in class	4.24	95	72	2.33	.59
shows anger in front of students	3.95	86	72	2.28	.67
makes phone calls during class	4.05	76	78	2.22	.94
forces students to join the FFA	3.52	47			
has financial problems	3.52	47			

Note: [a]1=strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree
[b]1 = not critical, 2 = somewhat critical, 3 = critical, 4 = very critical
[c]Reached consensus in Round Three.

Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications

From the data in this study, is can be concluded that from the perspective of this panel of experts, there are 57 professional behaviors that should be exhibited by high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors with 19 behaviors being very important. High school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors should demonstrate safety in laboratory settings, demonstrate ethical behavior, be honest, have good moral values, and demonstrate integrity. Furthermore, high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors should lead by example, demonstrate respect to students, encourage students to do their best, and be fair to all students. High school agriculture teachers should demonstrate a good work ethic, serve as a positive role model, be committed to the job, be prepared to teach their students, be accessible to students who need help, and attend student organization functions with their students.

Upon further analysis of the professional behaviors to be exhibited by high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors, common themes exist for these behaviors. These themes are centered on teaching, students, student organizations, working with colleagues/schools, program structure, and personal characteristics.

Overall high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors should put their students first and emphasize student learning, which concurs with the findings by Phelps (2003). Teachers should demonstrate respect for their students, encourage students to do their best, be accessible to students who need help, recognize individual students' strengths and weaknesses when planning instructional activities, recognize students appropriately for achievement in the classroom, and demonstrate a

caring attitude towards students. Furthermore, teachers need to model effective teaching practices in the classroom by demonstrating safe practices in the laboratory, being prepared to teach each day, and setting high academic standards while using a variety of teaching techniques.

High school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors should also have a well rounded agricultural education program to include classroom instruction, FFA activities, and supervised agricultural experiences for their students. It is very important for the local agriculture teacher/FFA advisor to provide leadership for the total program, making sure that the program focuses on local needs, that students are actively involved in FFA experiences, and that all students have an SAE program. Even though the SAE component of the total program was rated the lowest, it is still important for teachers to conduct SAE visits and make sure their students have quality SAE opportunities and experiences.

Many of the behaviors identified in this study are personal behaviors that teachers need to examine of themselves to see how well they demonstrate these behaviors on a daily basis. Teachers should be honest and hard working with good morals. High school agriculture teachers should be fair and demonstrate a positive attitude. These teachers also need to be enthusiastic in all that they do and participate as a team player in school activities. Agriculture teachers must be open-minded and be willing to try new things because everyday is a different day and students and their backgrounds are constantly changing the teaching landscape.

The panel of experts for this study agreed that there are 37 unprofessional behaviors that high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors should not exhibit on the job. High school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors would be considered unprofessional if they engaged in inappropriate relationships with their students, stole, used drugs, was a racist, lied, engaged in unethical practices, drank in front of students, demonstrated unsafe lab practices, made sexist comments to students, and talked about students in inappropriate situations.

Further analysis of the unprofessional behaviors saw behaviors categorized in the following areas: students, personal, teaching, and program characteristics. The most serious of these areas was the student area. High school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors are unprofessional if they engage inappropriate relationships with students, make sexist comments to students, and puts students down in front of others. From a personal standpoint, teachers are unprofessional if they lie, steal, use drugs, use alcohol in front of students, use tobacco products in front of students, use inappropriate language, and are lazy.

From a program standpoint, high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors are unprofessional if they do not get their students involved in the total program (instruction, FFA, and SAE). Teachers are also unprofessional if they do not have a summer program. Furthermore, teachers are considered unprofessional if they do not teach the curriculum.

While the panel of experts reached consensus on all of the professional behaviors, they did not reach consensus on seven of the unprofessional behaviors. These behaviors dealt with discussing personal problems with students, allowing personal problems to interfere with teaching, giving busy work in class, showing anger in front of students, making phone calls during class, forcing students to join the FFA, and having financial problems. Two of these behaviors (discussing personal problems with students and allowing personal problems to interfere with teaching), though viewed as critical unprofessional behaviors, almost reached consensus (78% agreement).

Many of the professional behaviors identified by the panel of experts are in agreement with what constitutes a profession (Acheson & Gall, 1980; Talbert, et. al, 2007; Moore, 1970; Millerson, 1964; National FFA Organization, 1998). Furthermore, those critical unprofessional behaviors identified by the panel of experts are similar to behaviors expressed by the National FFA Organization (1998) as unethical behaviors high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors should not engage in.

While the results of this study provides a list of both professional and unprofessional behaviors groups can use when evaluating high school agriculture teachers/FFA advisors, it should be noted that the members of the panel used in this study were considered professionals since they all held office within their professional organization, the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE). One would expect that they would be clearly focused on the professional behaviors agriculture teachers should demonstrate and the unprofessional behaviors one should avoid. Would agriculture teachers/FFA advisors rate these professional and unprofessional behaviors differently? Additional research should be conducted to validate this list of professional and unprofessional behaviors utilizing a sample of all high school agriculture teachers and FFA advisors. While this should make for a more representative sample, would only those who consider themselves professional respond to the study?

Results from this study have implications for teacher education programs and state departments of education that work with new teachers. Teacher education programs need to look at how future teachers are prepared to enter the agricultural education professions. Do students learn what it means to be a professional and to act in a professional manner? For those programs that work with alternative teacher education programs, how are these teachers prepared to enter the profession? Teacher education programs and state departments of education should work together when conducting training programs for alternatively certified teachers and new teacher programs to help these teachers enter the profession on a positive note and to maintain a positive professional standing for as long as they remain in the profession.

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