

2011 PROFICIENCY AWARD AREA DESCRIPTIONS



INTRODUCTION

Proficiency award areas do not define supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs. Rather, proficiency awards are an outgrowth of students' SAE enterprises and learning activities conducted outside of regular class time. An SAE is a year-round developmental program that can be made up of multiple enterprises and activities, including entrepreneurial and/or placement enterprises, development of supplemental skills, learning activities and improvement projects impacting the student's SAE, home, school or community.

There are four categories of SAE programs:

- **Exploratory** - Learn about the big picture of agriculture and its many related careers.
- **Research/Experimentation and Analysis** - Conduct research and analyze information to discover new knowledge.
- **Ownership/Entrepreneurship** - Plan and operate an agriculture-related business.
- **Placement** - Work for an agriculture-related business or individual, either for pay or for the experience

As students develop their long-range SAE plans they may engage in enterprises or activities that cross the four SAE categories, which could theoretically qualify for multiple proficiency awards.

When considering applying for proficiency award recognition, the focus of the enterprise, activities and/or skills developed determine the correct proficiency award area in which to apply.

If questions arise as to which is the appropriate category, the teacher will need to contact their state staff or national FFA staff with a detailed description of the student's SAE program. Send all inquires related proficiency categories to proficiency@ffa.org

Definition of Key Terms

Entrepreneurship: Student owned enterprises where the student assumes responsibility for all financial and management decisions for the successful completion of the project or activity.

Placement: Student works for a business or company for a salary, hourly wage or directed laboratory unpaid hours.

Research/Experimentation: Student is responsible for research or experimentation design and implementation. Student accepts the risks and responsibility for the successful completion of the experiment or the quality of the research activity.

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Note: Effective 2009, Aquaculture is now in the Specialty Animal Production award area with the exception of water plants produced for sale which would be Nursery Operations.

PROFICIENCY AWARD CATEGORIES

Unless differentiated by category as “Entrepreneurship” or “Placement”, a student may own the enterprise, work for a business or do research and experimentation.

Agricultural Communications – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes programs in which a student is placed at a newspaper or other agricultural print (such as magazines) facilities to obtain training and practical experience in writing and publicizing in preparation for a writing communications career. Programs may also be at radio, TV stations, fair media rooms, or other businesses requiring speaking skills and knowledge of agriculture. Student may also own and produce a agriculture related broadcast or show. This area also includes any use of technology (such as websites and blogs) aimed at communicating the story of agriculture.

Agricultural Education – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Related to education and extension, including, but not limited to: youth mentoring, agricultural education departmental assistants, PALS mentors and student coordinators, students developing and conducting informational materials and presentations for civic organizations and school aged youth, and students who are involved in SAEs surrounding educating the public about the broad topics of agriculture, agriculture education and the FFA

Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Involves the design, and construction of agricultural equipment and/or structures or the structural materials selection and/or implementation of plans for utilizing concrete, electricity, plumbing, heating, ventilation, and/or air conditioning into agricultural settings.

Agricultural Mechanics Energy Systems (Ag. Power) – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Involves the adjustments, repairs, and maintenance of agricultural power systems including mechanical power, electrical power, chemical power, wind power, solar power and/or water power. **NOTE:** Electrical wiring for general construction, restoration of tractors, general engine repair is more appropriately covered in other agricultural mechanics proficiency award areas.

Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Entrepreneurship – Student owns an enterprise or business involving the repair and maintenance of agricultural equipment, (including lawn equipment) and/or structures.

Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance – Placement – Student works for an employer or conducts research involving the repair and maintenance of agricultural equipment, (including lawn equipment) and/or structures.

Agricultural Processing – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Related Student owns the enterprise or business to assembling, transporting, processing, fabricating, mixing, packaging, and storing food and nonfood agricultural products. Programs may include processing meat, milk, honey, cheese, raisins and other dried fruits, maple syrup and/or other food processing. Non-food products could include by-products processing such as meat, bone, fish and blood meal, tallow, making compost, hides, processing of wool & cotton, cubing & pelleting of forages, producing bird seed and other pet foods. **NOTE:** Processing of forest products is no longer part of the Agricultural Processing area. See Forest Management and Products.

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Agricultural Sales-Entrepreneurship – Student owns the enterprise or business, not covered in a more appropriate proficiency award category; may include enterprises such as: the sales of feed, seed, fertilizer, agricultural chemicals, agricultural equipment, machinery or structures. Enterprises may also include the merchandising of crops, livestock, processed agricultural commodities, horticultural or forestry items at either the retail or wholesale level.

Agricultural Sales-Placement – Student works for an agriculture related business or does research and experimentation, not covered in a more appropriate proficiency award category, that includes sales of feed, seed, fertilizer or agricultural chemicals. Students may also work for businesses that involve the sales of agricultural equipment, machinery or structures. Activities may also include the merchandising of crops, livestock, processed agricultural commodities, horticultural or forestry items at either the retail or wholesale level.

Agricultural Services – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Involves students owning enterprises, working in an agricultural business or does research and experimentation, not covered in any of the existing award categories. This would include enterprises such as: custom equipment operation and maintenance, agricultural management and financial services, animal breeding services, custom baling, crop scouting, horse shoeing, taxidermy services, auction services including working or owning the auction house, custom and contract feeding services or other appropriate services offered through agricultural enterprises. Student applying for placement in agricultural services must work for company or individual whose key function is to provide agricultural services. **NOTE:** Activities related to lawn care, landscaping, mowing or other landscape and care activities are not included in this area. Students with these types of enterprises or activities need to apply in other more appropriate areas related to turf care, horticulture or nursery landscape.

Beef Production- Entrepreneurship – Student owns the enterprise or business that uses the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market beef.

Beef Production- Placement – Student works for a livestock producer or does research and experimentation applying the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market beef. Student may work for a wage or may work in a directed laboratory setting.

Dairy Production- Entrepreneurship – Student owns an enterprise or business and applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market dairy cattle and dairy cattle products.

Dairy Production- Placement – Student works in the dairy cattle industry or does research and experimentation applying the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market dairy cattle and dairy cattle products.

Diversified Crop Production – Entrepreneurship – Student owns an enterprise or business that applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops from two or more of the crop related proficiencies areas such as: grain production, fiber/oil production, forage production, specialty crop production, vegetable production, or fruit production.

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Diversified Crop Production – Placement – Student works for a crop producer or does research and experimentation that applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops from two or more of the crop related proficiencies such as: grain production, fiber/oil production, forage production, specialty crop production, vegetable production, or fruit production.

Diversified Horticulture – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Applies the best management practices available to efficiently manage an SAE program that includes **two or more** of the following proficiency areas: Floriculture, Landscape Management, Nursery Operations, or Turf Grass Management.

Diversified Livestock Production – Entrepreneurship – Student owns an enterprise or business that applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market livestock from two or more the livestock related proficiency award areas such as beef, dairy, swine, equine, sheep, specialty animals, small animal production, or poultry.

Diversified Livestock Production – Placement – Student works for someone or does research and experimentation for a business or individual applying the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market livestock from two or more the livestock related proficiency areas such as beef, dairy, swine, equine, sheep, specialty animals, small animal production, or poultry.

Emerging Agricultural Technology- Entrepreneurship/Placement – Involves students gaining experiences in new and emerging agricultural technologies, such as agriscience, biotechnology lab research, computers and other new and emerging technologies that are not covered in any of the existing award categories.

Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management – Entrepreneurship /Placement – FFA members receive practical experiences concerned with the principles and practices of managing and/or improving the environment and natural resources. Activities may include management of agriculture waste, recycling of agriculture products, environmental clean-ups, conservation corps, agricultural energy usage, multiple uses of resources, land use regulations including soil, water and air quality, preservation of wetlands, shorelines and grasslands, wildlife surveys, erosion prevention practices, public relations and education concerning pollution.

Equine Science- Entrepreneurship – Student owns an enterprise or business providing experience in horse production, breeding, marketing, showing and other aspects of the equine industry. Programs may also include calf roping, barrel racing, rodeo, racing, training, riding lessons and therapeutic horseback riding if horses are owned and/or managed by the member.

Equine Science- Placement – Student works for an employer or does research and experimentation providing experience in horse production, breeding, marketing, showing and other aspects of the equine industry. Programs may also include calf roping, barrel racing, rodeo, racing, training, riding lessons and therapeutic horseback riding if horses are owned and/or managed by the member.

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Fiber and Oil Crop Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Student owns the enterprise, works for a business or does research and experimentation that includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops for fiber and/or oil; such as, cotton, sisal, hemp, soybeans, sesame seed, flax, mustard, canola, castor beans, sunflower, peanuts, dill, spearmint, and safflower.

Floriculture – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Student owns the enterprise, works for a business or does research and experimentation that includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market field or greenhouse production of flowers (fresh and dried), foliage, and related plant materials for ornamental purposes, including the arranging, packaging and marketing of these materials.

Food Science and Technology – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Student owns the enterprise, works for a business or does research and experimentation that provides experience in the applying microbiology and biochemistry or food product research and development to improve taste, nutrition, quality and/or value of food. Programs could include research, development of new products, food testing, grading and inspecting. Work experience could be obtained at research facilities, in classroom/lab facilities, or by testing milk or other foods for quality and safety. **NOTE: Food Science is not** processing of food products, marketing or sales of food products, or food preparation and/or service.

Forage Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops for forage such as: sorghum not used for grain, alfalfa, clover, brome grass, orchard grass, grain forages, corn and grass silages, and all pastures.

Forest Management and Products – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes the best management practices available to conserve or increase the economic value of a forest and/or forest products through such practices as thinning, pruning, weeding, stand improvement, reforestation, insect and disease control, planting, harvesting, Christmas tree farming, Forest Service, making and selling cedar shakes and firewood, and wood chips/mulch.

Fruit Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops for fruit such as stone fruits, pome fruits, citrus fruits, pineapples, coconuts, berries, watermelon, grapes, nuts and all common fruits. (Pome Fruits include apples, mayhaws, and pears. Stone fruits include peach, nectarine, plum, apricot and cherry)

Grain Production – Entrepreneurship – Student owns an enterprise or business—that applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops for grain production such as corn, barley (including the malting types), millet, buckwheat, oats, grain sorghum, milo, wheat, rice and rye.

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Grain Production – Placement – Student works for a crop producer or grain production related business or does research and experimentation that applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops for grain production such as corn, barley (including the malting types), millet, buckwheat, oats, grain sorghum, milo, wheat, rice and rye.

Home and/or Community Development – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Activities that involve improving and protecting the beauty of an area by using natural vegetation or commercial ornamental plants and/or modernizing the home for better health and comfort through installation or improvement of water and sanitary facilities, heating and air conditioning or labor saving devices. Also includes community development activities such as volunteerism, community development and community betterment activities.

Landscape Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes experiences of planting and maintaining plants and shrubs, landscaping and outdoor beautification, grounds keeping, sprinkler installations and improvement of recreational areas.

Nursery Operations – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Provides students with job-entry experience in areas such as turf, plants, shrubs and/or tree production for the purpose of transplanting or propagation. This could include water garden plants if produced for sale.

Outdoor Recreation – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Strives to develop outdoor recreational activities as the primary land use. Some activities best suited to family use or as income-producing enterprises are vacation cabins and cottages, camping areas, fishing, hunting, shooting preserves, guide services, riding stables, trail rides, vacation farms and guest ranches, natural scenic or historic areas, and rodeo events where member does not own or manage animals.

Poultry Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market chickens, turkeys, domestic fowl such as ducks, geese and guinea, and their products.

Sheep Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market sheep, sheep products and wool.

Small Animal Production and Care – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market small pet animals such as rabbits, cats, dogs, mice, hedgehogs, guinea pigs, lizards, etc. and programs that typically provide a service in caring for the well being of pets. Programs could include working at a pet shop, groomer, dog trainer, providing pet sitting services or working at a kennel.

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Specialty Animal Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market specialty animals within the U.S. Agriculture industry. Students in the specialty animal production proficiency area must demonstrate that they are producing and marketing specialty animals not covered in any of the existing award categories. Specialty animals can include the following: aquaculture, bees, goats, mules, donkeys, miniature horses, mink, meat rabbits or rabbits bred for fur or show, worms, ostriches, emus, alpacas or llamas. Placement experiences could include zoo worker or placement at any specialty animal facility. In their supervised work experience, students will participate in hands-on activities including feeding, inoculating, performing basic animal care, weighing, measuring, showing and possibly marketing animals in an entrepreneurial or work placement environment.

Specialty Crop Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops not covered in any of the existing award categories, such as: sugar beets, dry edible beans, gourds, tobacco, specialty corns (popcorn, white corn, Indian corn), all grass seed production, herbs and spices, mushrooms, sugar cane, hops, sorghum cane, confectionary sunflowers, or production of crop seed.

Swine Production – Entrepreneurship – Student owns the enterprise that applies - the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market swine.

Swine Production – Placement – Student works for an employer or does research and experimentation that applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market swine.

Turf Grass Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Involves the planting and maintaining of turf for outdoor beautification, providing a lawn-mowing service, improvement of recreational areas, sod produced for sale, and sport field or golf course management.

Vegetable Production – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Applies the best management practices available to efficiently produce and market crops such as beans, potatoes, pumpkins, sweet corn, tomatoes, onions, zucchini, hot peppers, all canning vegetables and all common garden vegetables.

Veterinary Medicine – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Includes working with veterinarians in clinical practice, research facilities, colleges of veterinary medicine, animal health industry, or any other environment in which they assist veterinarians in performing duties related to the health of people and/or the health and welfare of large and small animals. This experience may include wage earning, entrepreneurial or exploratory activities not limited to: hands-on care of animals, management of business aspects of a veterinary practice, or working on legislation or regulations relating to animals.

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Wildlife Production and Management – Entrepreneurship/Placement – Strives to improve the availability of fish and wildlife through practices such as land and water habitat improvement, development of new land and water habitat, trapping, Fish & Wildlife departments, Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources or the stocking of fish and wild game. Wildlife ducks, geese, quail and pheasants are eligible if used as an income enterprise.