



Quality 12-Month Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Program Manual

Tennessee Department of Education | October 2023



Executive Summary

Quality 12-month programs provide students with opportunities to participate in multiple levels of instruction in agriculture: classroom instruction, supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs, and career and technical student organization activities. T.C.A. § 49-5-416 states that agricultural education programs that were 12-month for the 1992-93 fiscal year, or thereafter, shall be maintained by the local board of education, so long as a quality agricultural education program, as determined by criteria established by the career and technical education division, agriculture education program, of the department of education, is maintained. This summary encapsulates the key points from the Quality 12-Month Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Program Manual aimed at equipping secondary high school teachers and supervisors with the requisite knowledge and guidelines for implementing and maintaining a robust agricultural education program.

Key Takeaways

- Encouragement for year-round engagement is provided through SAE programs, which may encompass a range of activities including employment, entrepreneurship, research, and skill development, with possibilities for students to earn credit through proper oversight and documentation.
- The manual emphasizes the upkeep of school-based agricultural facilities like animal laboratories and greenhouses and ensures their relevance and utility in school-based instructional activities.
- The manual delineates the responsibilities of local career and technical education (CTE) directors in ensuring adherence to the Q12 program criteria, including the annual assessment of the program and its educators, alongside maintaining necessary documentation for compliance verification.
- An array of recommended activities for agriculture educators during their 12-month contracts is provided in Appendix B, emphasizing student support, leadership development, classroom instruction, and community engagement to foster well-rounded agricultural educational institutions.

Quality 12-Month Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Program Manual

Introduction

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated “T.C.A. § 49-5-416(b)”, all Tennessee secondary agricultural education programs that were 12-month programs (since the 1992-93 fiscal year) shall be maintained as 12-month programs by the local board of education, so long as a Quality Agricultural Education (Q12) Program, as determined by criteria established by the Tennessee Department of Education, is maintained.

Pursuant to Attorney General opinion, [Tenn. Op. Gen. No. 05-137](#), the only way a school system may maintain a 12-month agricultural program is if the program is a Q12 program meeting the criteria adopted by the Tennessee Department of Education. This manual defines a Q12 program in Tennessee and lists criteria to be implemented by local education agencies (LEAs) in Tennessee to maintain a Q12 program.

Q12 programs provide students with opportunities to participate in multiple levels of instruction in agriculture: classroom instruction, SAE programs, and career and technical student organization activities. This three-pronged approach increases the opportunity for students to learn, practice, demonstrate their agricultural knowledge and skills, and make more informed decisions about their education and available careers in the agriculture industry.

SAE programs are encouraged to be year-round, requiring continued supervision of students throughout the summer months. Examples of SAE programs include employment or placement at a farm or worksite, entrepreneurship, research, home and farm improvements, and skill development. SAE programs can be credit-bearing for students in Tennessee if appropriate oversight and documentation of skill development and accrued hours are provided to the LEA.

Students are also encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities through the intracurricular National FFA Organization (FFA), including the many FFA career development events and leadership conferences during the summer months to avoid conflict with instructional time. These activities ensure personal growth and development, along with the development of technical competence, which often requires educator supervision during the summer months.

In addition to working directly with students in the summer, agriculture educators are encouraged to maintain school-based agricultural facilities, such as animal laboratories, greenhouses, and pastures. These facilities often must be managed daily and may require yearly renovations and maintenance to ensure relevance for school-based student instructional use.

Criteria for a Q12 Program

The state of Tennessee, through the division of College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) at the Tennessee Department of Education (the department), Q12 program requires all districts that offer CTE programs utilizing federal funding through the Carl D. Perkins V Act, to follow specific criteria outlining expectations of the three critical components of agriculture, food, and natural resources. To meet the definition of a Q12, programs must have documentation of all five size, scope, and quality indicators (SSQIs) and meet most of the expectations outlined for the three components of agriculture, food, and natural resources. The expectations, which can be used by district personnel to set expectations for agriculture educators, are found below.



Indicator 1 – Appropriate program size, alignment, and sequence which is informed by stakeholders:

- Does the eligible recipient offer approved program(s) of study with sequenced courses to meet the needs identified by the local advisory council and aligned to local and regional employment opportunities?
 - Program(s) of study offered by the eligible recipient with course offerings and descriptions, including adequate enrollment projections to match identified needs.
 - Current labor market data to support high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand employment opportunities in the aligned program(s) of study.
 - Active advisory council engaged on a regular basis to inform, implement, and evaluate program(s) of study.

Indicator 2 – CTE offerings which are of sufficient scope:

- Does the eligible recipient support program(s) of study which allow students to develop academically and receive adequate training to be successful in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand opportunities?
 - Integration of appropriate grade level academic, technical, employability, and leadership skill development in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand opportunities in the aligned program(s) of study.

Indicator 3 – Quality educators which contribute to the profession:

- Does the eligible recipient ensure students have access to quality educators in the classroom and provide opportunities for educator professional development to support their continued growth?
 - Properly endorsed and licensed educators who participate in opportunities for continued professional learning, ongoing development, and/or instructional improvement.

Indicator 4 – Career counseling and advisement which impact students:

- Does the eligible recipient support student and parent understanding of how personal interests, abilities, and values might predict success in academic and career fields and how to form goals accordingly?
 - Student learning plan(s) which include interest inventory and aptitude assessment results and advisement activities leading to enrollment in aligned pathways and program(s) of study.
 - Activities demonstrating parent/guardian and student advisement sessions.

Indicator 5 – Opportunities for students to demonstrate readiness:

- Does the eligible recipient allow students to demonstrate their college and career readiness through work-based learning experiences, career and technical student organizations (CTSO) participation, and early postsecondary credit attainment, including industry certification(s)?
 - Activities demonstrating classroom, school, and/or community-based work-based learning and career exploration experiences.
 - Activities demonstrating classroom, school, and/or community-based leadership programming and competitive events.
 - Dual credit, dual enrollment, or articulation agreements and/or other aligned early postsecondary opportunities allowing students to earn postsecondary credit and/or industry certifications, demonstrating current linkage to postsecondary through a program of study.

Monitoring and Compliance with Published Criteria

The local CTE director, or designee, is responsible for ensuring the district's Q12 program meets the published criteria listed above and is eligible to employ agriculture educators who will oversee the Q12 program. Agricultural educators will submit the Tennessee Quality 12-month Report Form yearly to the Senior Coordinator of FFA or the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources Program Coordinator within the TDOE. The submissions will be evaluated and then sent to CTE directors. The CTE director, or designee, should assess the Q12 program annually, including all educators responsible for overseeing the district's Q12 program. In addition, each educator should have personal documentation of participation in the quality program indicator expectations outlined in the chart above.

Documentation of compliance with published criteria should be kept on file at the district level. All documentation supporting criteria for a current year should be available for review during a Results-Based monitoring as well as all years past since the last monitoring.

For examples of recommended documentation to support compliance with published criteria and templates that the CTE director can use for yearly evaluation and documentation, please see the following:

- List of Measured Areas: Appendix B (pp. 7 - 8) of this manual.
- [Local Program Application Guide](#)
- (INSERT LINK TO FORM)

Teachers will self-evaluate based on four criteria areas: SAE student support, FFA and student leadership, classroom instruction, and program overview. Maximum points per category can be found in Appendix B. Teachers under a Quality 12-month contract will be required to submit an annual report (by July 15) to the department via an electronic form. The report will be reviewed by the Tennessee Department of Education and/or Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Program evaluations and performance levels will be determined and distributed to local education agencies (LEAs) prior to Aug. 31.

Reviewers will determine the tier and distribute responses to CTE Directors or appropriate LEA staff based on the teacher's response. If a teacher falls into Tier 1 and is not within the first three years of teaching or within two years at a new school, the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Department of Agriculture, along with the respective CTE Director, will support the teacher if requested by the LEA. Examples of support could be, but are not limited to, one-on-one meetings with the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Department of Agriculture, program visits, developing an improvement plan, or other support strategies as needed.

Tier 1: Probationary (30 points or less) *Acceptable for new teachers within the first three years or the first two years at a new school. *	Tier 2: Qualified (31 – 49 points)	Tier 3: Exemplary (50 points or more)
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------

LEAs who employ agriculture educators on 12-month contracts must continue annually to meet expectations of published criteria for a Q12 program (outlined above) to comply with state law.

Final Thoughts

Agriculture educators engaged in a quality 12-month program are entrusted with the task of orchestrating a harmonious learning experience that intricately interweaves classroom instruction, FFA involvement, and supervised experiential learning, thereby fostering a profound understanding and appreciation of agriculture among students. This holistic educational paradigm not only imparts essential agricultural knowledge but also cultivates a realm of practical application and communal engagement, which are quintessential for nurturing adept, future-ready individuals. A collaboration between agriculture educators and CTE Directors within local districts is imperative to ensure the effective translation of this educational blueprint into tangible learning outcomes. Together, they should meticulously craft and execute an implementation plan aligned with the nuanced criteria outlined in the Q12 program manual, ensuring it resonates with their program objectives and optimally serves the educational aspirations of the student body.

Appendix A: Definitions

Intersession – Any time period during the school year when students are not actively engaged in classes (e.g. spring break and weekends).

Proficiency Award – The Agricultural Proficiency Awards program rewards FFA members at the local, state, and national levels for exceptional accomplishments and excellence in a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program.

SAE – a student-led, instructor-supervised, work-based learning experience that results in measurable outcomes within a predefined, agreed-upon set of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) technical standards and career-ready practices aligned to a career plan of study. Types of SAEs include:

- **Foundational SAE** – This type of program is great for beginning students and those who are uncertain about their interest, where a student experiences the “big picture” of agriculture and its many related careers. Students can enrich their agricultural literacy and experiences by adding one or more Immersion SAE’s.
- **Immersion SAE** – Extension of the Foundational SAE and contribute to a student’s growth in an authentic contextualized manner in career exploration and planning, employability skills, financial management and planning, workplace safety and agricultural literacy in on of the five areas:
- **Research: Experimental, Analysis, or Invention** – where a student conducts or participates in research using the scientific process. Agriculture is a science-based industry and there are limitless opportunities for research-based experiences.
- **Ownership/Entrepreneurship** – where a student is a business owner. The student plans and operates a related enterprise or business. Examples may include producing and marketing livestock, crops, nursery plants or forest products, providing a service such as lawn care, processing agricultural products, repair, designing or fabricating agriculture equipment.
- **Placement** – (including internships) where a student is employed, either for pay or non-pay. These experiences may be in agribusinesses, school labs, farms and ranches, or community facilities.

- School-Based Enterprise – where a student-managed enterprise, can be entrepreneurial or placement, in a school setting that provides goods or services that meet the needs of an identified market. They involve the student in all aspects of the business and must replicate the workplace environment as closely as possible.
- Service Learning – a student-managed service activity where students develop a needs assessment, plan the goals, objectives and budget, implement the activity, promotion, and evaluation/reflection of a chosen project. The student(s) are responsible for raising necessary funds for the project (if funds are needed). A project must be a stand-alone project, not part of an ongoing chapter or community fundraiser.

State FFA Degree – This is the third level of active FFA membership. It is the highest level that the state association can bestow upon a member for exceptional accomplishments and excellence in a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program.

Appendix B: Recommended Activities

CTE directors may use the following list to clarify further appropriate activities that agriculture educators may engage in during their twelve-month contracts. These activities are recognized and recommended by the department; however, specific expectations for minimum and maximum days spent for each activity are ultimately at the discretion of the LEA and may be defined in a personnel contract, established performance goals and job plans, or other appropriate expectation-setting documents that are created and evaluated at the local level.

Other activities not on the list may be carried out with prior approval from the LEA. For a review of activities and technical assistance, local school systems may reach out to the Senior Coordinator for FFA or the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources program manager within the TDOE if desired.

Measured Areas:

Section 1: SAE Student Support (maximum of 12 points earned)

1. Participation in Student Recognition/Judging Opportunities.
2. Participation in Student Recognition Opportunities (NON-Judging).
3. Fair and Livestock Show/Jr. Expositions Participation.
4. External SAE Opportunities.

Section 2: FFA and Student Leadership (maximum of 18 points earned)

5. Agriculture Leadership Development or Industry Trips Provided to Students.
6. Banquets and Conferences.
7. CDE/LDE Participation (Per School Year).
8. Level of Student Officer Position Held.
9. Program Documentation.
10. Student Leadership Training.

Section 3: Classroom Instruction (maximum of 18 points earned)

11. Agriculture Professional Development.
12. Presenting or Conducting Professional Development.
13. Teacher Mentoring.
14. Professional Organization Memberships.
15. Student Certifications Earned.
16. Facilities.

Section 4: Program Overview (maximum of 18 points earned)

17. FFA Annual Report and SAE Report Submission.
18. Community Involvement within the Program.
19. Program-Wide Community Outreach.
20. PLOW (Passing Literacy Onward).

21. Digital and Social Media Program Promotions.

22. Other Media Promotions.

Permission is granted to use and copy these materials for non-commercial educational purposes with attribution credit to the "Tennessee Department of Education". If you wish to use these materials for reasons other than non-commercial educational purposes, please contact the Office of General Counsel at (615) 741-2921 or Joanna Collins (joanna.collins@tn.gov).



[Click here to access the **Copyright/Trademark Permissions Request Form**](#)