

Exploring the Past of the New Farmers of America (NFA): The Merger with the FFA

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Abstract

This paper, "Exploring the Past of the New Farmers of America (NFA): The merger with the FFA", identifies the rationale that existed in the 1960s which may have led to the merger of the New Farmers of America (NFA) and the Future Farmers of America (FFA). It also includes memos presented from archives referencing the controversies surrounding the merger immediately before and after 1965. This paper is divided into sections with examples of pertinent information found in archives surrounding the merger.

History is used as a guide in determining what has led to the decrease of African American students in the FFA. The NFA was a thriving organization for African American males prior to the merger in 1965 with over 58,000 members, but since that time total membership for African Americans in the FFA has declined by over 38,000. Focusing on diversity is a major issue in today's society. Looking back at the past is one way of determining what may have led to the decline of African American students in agricultural education.

Background information is presented referencing the general history of the NFA and the everyday activities of the organization, which includes the Aims and Purposes of the organization, the National Conventions, the sections of the NFA, the Contests and Awards of the NFA, the emblem, the National Officers, and local officers and their stations.

In the early 1960s, representatives of the NFA and the FFA met to discuss the possibility of merging the two organizations. Several letters were written referencing correspondences going on during this period by both organizations. The organizations merged and appeared to be a success, but members of both groups presented several questions that were very important to the intended infrastructure of the FFA. Much progress was being made after the merger, but the question of fair treatment of NFA supervisors was continuously presented due to the nonexistence of African American in supervisory roles.

The NFA was an organization that had a full history of accomplishments and was a thriving organization in 1965 at the time of its merger with the FFA. However, the number of African American males in 1965 exceeds the number of African American males and females in the FFA today. Recommendations include additional research on increasing African American participation in the FFA, research that goes beyond the African American issues to include other underrepresented populations, and inclusion of pertinent NFA materials in the Official FFA Manual.

Introduction/Theoretical Framework

The New Farmers of America (NFA) was a national organization of Negro farm boys studying vocational agriculture in the public schools throughout the United States. Its purpose was the development of its members in vocational, social, and recreational life through established chapters. The NFA was started in Virginia in 1935 expanding from a few chapters and members to 58,132 active members at its height in 1963 (Norris, 1993; Strickland, 1995). At the merger with the Future Farmers of America (FFA) in 1965, NFA members were approximately 52,000 of the 454,000 total FFA membership (Bender, Taylor, Hansen, & Newcomb, 1979). Today, there are approximately 20,000 active African American members in the FFA (Moore, 1994) although it has an overall membership of more than 450,000 (Official FFA Manual, 1999).

Prior to 1965, the idea of merging the NFA and the FFA was presented to both organizations. After numerous meetings and skepticism between the organizations, the merger was approved. Before the NFA-FFA merger, there were many African American teachers, supervisors, and professors. A decade after the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, African Americans in these professional fields increased rapidly (Bowen, 1994). After the 1960s federally mandated desegregation and state compliance efforts ended, the infrastructure that maintained substantial numbers of African Americans in agriculture declined drastically (Bell, Powers, & Rogers, 1987).

With the decline in African Americans in key roles, membership in the agricultural sciences has steadily decreased for African Americans in agriculture. In 1965, there were more than 52,000 African American members in NFA when it merged with the FFA. The National FFA Foundation in 1993 reported that FFA membership was 4.5% African American or approximately 20,000 members (Moore, 1994). In viewing these statistics, the question of what is being done to increase minority or underrepresented students in the FFA becomes a major factor. Increasing minority involvement in agricultural education is a stated goal of the agricultural education profession. The National Council for Agricultural Education (The Council) reported that the profession was committed “to reach, attract, and develop the human potential of all people-regardless of race, creed, color, sex...” (National Council for Agricultural Education, 1989, p.4).

History can be one guide in determining what has led to the decrease of African American students in the FFA organization. Today, FFA membership is one-fourth female, two-thirds non-farm, and less than five percent African American (Moore, 1994; National FFA Organization, 2000). In terms of measurable progress, FFA has had the least success with ethnic (African American) diversity. Whereas prior to the 1960s African American agriculture teachers served as strong community leaders, once these teachers vanished their leadership roles were not sustained by the agriculture teachers who replaced them (Bowen, 1994). Whent (1994) stated that the agricultural education profession continues to exhibit a severe shortage of teachers and students from diverse populations and that often members of minority populations are impeded from entering agricultural education because of embedded biases of teachers and White students.

Focusing on diversity is a major issue in today's society. One way of looking toward the future is to look back at the past to see what may have led to the decline of African American students in agricultural education. The emphasis on diversity and pluralism continues to grow in recognition of demographics, economics and social changes taking place in the United States

today (Ingram & Nyangara, 1997). “Some could argue that the focus of future diversity efforts should be on enrolling more minority students and increasing membership in the FFA where programs are currently being offered” (Moore, 1994, p. 14). Larke (2000) stated “One of the big questions is how do we sensitize non-minorities to the need, get them to take ownership of the challenge and recruit students of color” (p.9).

It is important that history be remembered, as the NFA was a thriving organization prior to the merger in the 1960s (Norris, 1993; Strickland, 1995). In the year 2000 we are 35 years removed from the merger. The agriculture teachers at that time are either retired or near retirement and the NFA and FFA members involved at that time may have fading memories of the specifics of the events. The oldest FFA member in 2000, born in 1977 or 1978, was not born until a decade after the merger. From 1964-1966, virtually no articles were published in The Agricultural Education Magazine about the 1965 merger (Bowen, 1994). Radhakrishna (1998) reported that of the 701 papers presented at the National Agricultural Education Research Meeting (NAERM) over its 25-year history, 14 had women or minorities as a subject matter topic. Of these 14, only two were presented in the 1980s and zero in the 1970s. Further, from 1986-1996 only seven journal articles with the subject matter topic of women or minorities were published in the Journal of Agricultural Education (Radhakrishna, 1997).

Purpose/Objectives

The guiding purpose of this research was to document detailed background information on the New Farmers of America (NFA). An additional purpose to the study was to remember the past in order to increase diversity in today’s agriculture. The specific objectives were to:

1. Identify the rationale that led to the NFA/FFA merger in the 1960s.
2. Identify the controversies surrounding the NFA/FFA merger immediately before and after 1965.

Methodology

Historical research methods were utilized to accomplish the objectives of the study. Both primary and secondary sources were utilized to obtain the information needed. Primary sources included letters, documents, and federal law minutes of meetings and bulletins. Secondary sources included books, journal articles, doctoral dissertations, master theses, and magazine articles. Information was collected from the Purdue University libraries and the National FFA Archives located at Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

“History, it has been said, does not repeat itself- but historians often repeat each other. The study of the past is the study of events that took place, what people said or wrote then, and the trends that developed. Such matters cannot be changed, but the evidence of them varies widely and their description and interpretation are often revised” (Brooks, 1969, pg. 2). This quote guided the researcher in revisiting artifacts and what has been written about them. Past artifacts can be used to help local communities in productive and practical way (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

As researchers it is important for us to remember the past in order to progress toward a positive future. “In remembering the past, individuals tend to romanticize it. Time heals wounds, and many informants no longer remember fully just how bad conditions were” (Wright,

1988, p. 15). Maybe this is natural when considering that many of these older people now live alone, have no loved ones, and then see their earlier lives in an easier light. Throughout this paper the researcher was deeply absorbed in unearthing the buried past of African Americans in agriculture. In recent years discussions about underrepresented populations has been an issue in agriculture. The question of validity is a major concern to this issue. In establishing my commitment to the discovery and dissemination of my authentic African American experience, I came to appreciate the crucial role to be played by conducting an archival study on the impact of the NFA. Therefore I ask the question, “Why should historical research be conducted?”

The researcher chose to study the past:

- To make the past, especially its occurrences and products his own
- To lengthen knowledge about past events
- To make past occurrences and the past more honorable or richer in meaning
- To harmonize past occurrences with current values and orientations
- To hold on or cherish past events, achievements, condition, and so on
- To use the past to meet present and future needs, such as when people draw upon past lessons that history teaches in order to avoid making the same mistakes (Stahl, 1995).

The researcher’s primary sources of data were at the National FFA archives located at IUPUI in Indianapolis, Indiana. All boxes that were marked representing the NFA were collected and placed on reserve by the librarian. Pictures were also selected for review but will not be referenced in this paper. Firsthand letters from individuals involved in the NFA and FFA were retrieved and copied for validity purposes. Official documents referencing the origins of the NFA; logistics of the NFA such as ceremonies, conventions, relationships between members of the NFA, FFA and the federal government, and NFA minutes; and the proposal of the union of the NFA and the FFA were copied.

The secondary sources of collecting data were books written by past members of the NFA, journal articles, doctoral dissertations, and magazines articles collected from the Purdue University libraries. Field notes were taken for further reference purposes documenting all resources that were available at the IUPUI libraries that referenced NFA history and the NFA/FFA merger.

Findings

Background Information on the NFA

The general history of the NFA has been well documented. Strickland’s (1995) book provides an account of the NFA from 1935-1965. Tenney (1977) includes text and pictures from activities of the NFA. To understand the years surrounding the NFA and FFA merger of 1965, some background information is useful.

Prior to the merger, the NFA instilled in its members the importance of developing their vocational, social and recreational life. The Aims and Purposes of the NFA (New Farmers of America, 1963) were:

1. To develop competent, aggressive, agricultural, and rural leadership.

2. To encourage intelligent choice of farming occupations.
3. To encourage members in the development of individual farming program.
4. To encourage members to improve the home, the farm, and surroundings.
5. To participate in worthy undertakings for the improvement of agriculture.
6. To practice and encourage thrift.
7. To develop character, train for useful citizenship, and foster patriotism.
8. To participate in a cooperative effort.
9. To provide and encourage the development of organized rural recreational activities.
10. To strengthen the confidence of farm boys and young men in themselves and their work.
11. To encourage improvement in scholarship.
12. To create and nurture a love of country life.

The NFA was established on the basis that all students of vocational agriculture in high school were eligible for membership. The NFA held an Annual National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, had State and National Officers from 16 primary Southern states, and had many leadership building programs and activities. Awards of the NFA included: The H.O. Sargent (Young Farmer Award), the Star Superior Farmer, the Star Modern Farmer, Dairy Farming, Farm Mechanics, Farm Electrification, Farm and Home Improvement, and the Soil and Water Management Award. There were additional contests in public speaking, quiz, talent, and chorus. Membership in the organization was of four kinds: (1) Active, (2) Associate, (3) Collegiate, and (4) Honorary. The four degrees of membership were (1) Farm Hand, (2) Improved Farmer, (3) Modern Farmer, and (4) Superior Farmer.

The NFA emblem included the plow; the owl; the rising sun; an open boll of cotton with two leaves attached at its base; and an American eagle with shield, arrows and an olive branch. The emblem also included the letters "NFA" and the words "Vocational Agriculture."

The national officers were a President, three Vice-Presidents (one from each NFA section), a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Reporter. A local officer team was comprised of the President, stationed by the rising sun; the Vice-President, stationed by the plow; the Secretary, stationed by the cotton boll; the Treasurer, stationed by the picture of Booker T. Washington; the Reporter, stationed by the United States flag and the NFA flag; and the Advisor, stationed by the Owl and picture of H.O. Sargent.

The NFA placed member states into one of three sections. They were:

- The Booker T. Washington Section – Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia
- The H.O. Sargent Section – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee
- The Almmot Section – Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas.

When compared to the FFA (Official FFA Manual, 1999) the NFA had similar aims and purposes, membership structure, and emblems. The NFA was different in some of the names given to degrees, officer stations, and organizational structure of states.

Pre-merger of the NFA/FFA

The merging period as a trying time for all organizations involved, but justification was given for the purpose of the merger. African American males had been members of the FFA in states where separate schools were not maintained and many who attended these integrated schools became active members of the FFA (Tenney, 1977). The Future Farmers of America Foundation gave funding to both organizations for outstanding achievements. The FFA National President spoke at the National NFA Conventions and vice versa. The National Future Farmer Magazine carried stories on the NFA Convention and other activities of the organization (Strickland, 1995).

Because of these reasons and with the national debate on Civil Rights in the early 1960s, the NFA and the FFA decided to meet to consider merging the two organizations. In 1962 the NFA and FFA national officers held a joint meeting to discuss their two organization (Strickland, 1995). The process of merging the two organizations was long and difficult. Some states were either reluctant to merging or were moving at a slower pace than expected by the government. It was not until Congress passed an Act prohibiting segregation in public schools that all African American students of vocational agriculture could become members of the FFA (Tenney, 1977).

On June 20, 1963, Alice Owsley, Secretary to Arthur L. Harris of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, sent a letter to the Future Farmers of America and the Future Homemakers of America with an attempt on making it clear that there would be repercussions to those states that did not comply to desegregation. The note stated,

This is to confirm telephone arrangements for a meeting to discuss the future of segregated components of these organizations, which you were invited to attend, on July 1, 1963, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in Dr. Harris' office, Room 2-A-005, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW.

On July 10, 1963, Dr. Walter M. Arnold, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel, and Arthur L. Harris issued this memo to the Future Farmers of America and the Future Homemakers of America.

At the meeting in my office on July 1, to discuss FFA-NFA and FHA-NHA, it was proposed that the following suggestion be presented to each of the national advisory boards for these organizations on their earliest respective meeting dates:

That the _____ Association consider the adoption of a policy of withholding from membership or affiliation State associations which discriminate on the basis of race in their membership policies.

Staff members of the Division of Vocational and Technical Education in attendance at the meeting were not in complete agreement as to the presentation of such a proposal at this time, although there was no disagreement with the basic principle involved.

We believe that it is desirable and appropriate that the Office of Education proceed without delay to make its position clear with reference to discriminatory practices in these associations.

After the FFA/FHA meeting on July 10, 1963, Dr. Arnold issued this July 26, 1963 memo to Francis Keppel, the Commissioner of Education.

This is in reply to a memorandum of July 10 from Dr. Arthur L. Harris concerning the Future Farmers of America and the Future Homemakers of America.

Our staff has met and discussed thoroughly the proposal in the memorandum. It was the unanimous opinion of our staff that the next logical step would be to call a meeting, in Washington, D.C., of State Directors of Vocational Education, Supervisors of Home Economics and Agricultural Education, and National and State officials of the FFA, NFA, FHA and NHA from those States concerned. We believe it would be advisable to prepare a series of specific proposals to present to this group concerning the eventual complete integration of these organizations and that consideration be given to future dates for the completion of various phases of this process. Such a procedure might produce a faster action than the other limited step.

It appears to us inadvisable at this time to seek the withholding from membership of certain State associations that are not integrated. The FFA and FHA now accept all persons who are qualified as members. As State associations and local chapters become integrated, they leave segregated organizations and enter fully into the activities of the FFA and FHA.

The need for merging the two organizations had been discussed with the National Board of Directors of the FFA and members of the NFA. After thorough consideration, the need for gradual merging was agreed upon. In a meeting to discuss the future of segregated components of the FFA and FHA, several questions were raised. Wm. Paul Gray, National Executive Secretary of the FFA sent this memo to A.W. Tenney, Director of the Agricultural Education Branch:

1. What are the possibilities of accelerating integration of the FFA and FHA with counterpart organizations?
2. Have all possibilities of integrating the organizations been exhausted?
3. What is the significance of the reference to the FFA and the NFA in the George Barden Act?
4. Are we behind times in integrating the organization? (The White House, Secretary Celebrezze, and Commissioner Keppel have indicated their dissatisfaction with the progress that is being made since the integrating is only as rapid as schools are becoming integrated).
5. Is it true that in some States a Negro student of vocational agriculture cannot belong to the FFA and FHA?
6. What States are moving most rapidly toward integrating these two organizations?

7. What can be done to speed the integration in: a. Border States, b. States in the deep south?
8. What adjustments will be necessary relative to employment of Negro State staff members, as well as teachers of vocational agriculture?
9. What leadership should the National Organization provide to smooth the transition of the present two organizations into one?
10. How strong is the feeling in the NFA (both adults and students) toward integrating the FFA?

The group proposed that the problem of integrating the organizations be discussed with both the Board of Directors of the FFA and the Board of Trustees of the NFA at their forthcoming meeting that summer, and to explore the steps to be taken in integrating these two organization.

There was much progress being made toward the merging of the two organizations. Field notes by an unnamed author presented 15 goals of the FFA-NFA merger.

1. Have NFA President speak at FFA Convention
2. Have FFA President speak at NFA Convention
3. Have officer training done jointly in 1964 and annually thereafter
4. Have exploratory meetings of [FFA Board of Directors] and NFA [Board of Trustees].
5. Recommend interorganization act. On state and local levels
6. Have National Future Farmer use NFA stories.
7. Change name of FFA to Future Farmers and Agriculturalists
8. Change name of NFA to Future Farmers and Agriculturalists
9. Continue Atlanta Convention for five years or less
10. Recommend the merging of FFA and NFA on state and local levels as soon as expedient
11. Permit delegations from all eligible associations and chapters to attend National FFA Conventions
12. Continue NFA Award Program for five years or less
13. At the end of five years distribute foundation funds to states on basis of FFA membership
14. Encourage participation of FFA members in all local, regional and national contest and award programs
15. When NFA is changed to FFA, change NFA degrees and ceremonies to FFA.

It is recommended to the Board of Directors of the FFA and the Board of Trustees of the NFA that the National Organization continue to sponsor the FFA and its component part (the NFA) until December 31, 1965, so that both groups can make adjustments, and prepare for the elimination of the NFA Convention. It is also recommended that the State Associations integrate the chapters as rapidly as possible so that by June 30, 1968, all Negro students of vocational agriculture will be members of the FFA (NFA Archives).

Strickland (1995) summarized the details of the actual merger. The FFA National Board of Directors and the U.S. Commissioner of Education approved that membership in FFA effective July 1, 1965 was open to all agriculture students regardless of race, color, or national origin. It was further recommended that States not fulfilling this requirement be no longer

considered in good standing with the National Organization until such requirements have been met (NFA Archives). The NFA held its final National Convention during the first week of October 1965. The next week at the National FFA Convention a ceremony was held to symbolize the merger of the NFA and the FFA.

Post-merger of the NFA/FFA

J. Levonne Chambers, Attorney at Law and former NFA member, sent this memo to John W. Gardner, Secretary, Department of Health, Education and Welfare on April 6, 1966, less than a year after the merger.

As a former member of the New Farmers of America, a national organization of Negro students studying vocational agriculture, and one presently interested in desegregation of educational programs in North Carolina, I have been particularly interested in and disturbed by the merger or desegregation of vocational agricultural programs in the public schools in North Carolina. The merger or integration of these programs and of the New Farmers of America and the Future Farmers of America (the white counterpart of the former) have raised serious questions as to the role that Negroes are to play in the new system and of the effect of the merger or integration on vocational agricultural teachers and students.

It is my understanding that three Negroes have been appointed as supervisors in the state vocational program, none of who has been given a specific role or function. It is assumed that the white supervisors in the area formerly supervised by Negroes are now to assume the role of the former Negro supervisors. Further, Negro supervisors are customarily assigned to supervise Negro schools. Integration in the administrative staff beyond the supervisor level has not taken place. Negro students in vocational agriculture have not been integrated into the program. Many Negro teachers and supervisors of long experience have apparently been ignored or given positions without clear functions...Negro officers were merged out of existence... The present program in North Carolina is having a demoralizing effect upon the students and adults and others interested or active in vocational agriculture...

Another unknown author in 1963 wrote,

“There is a sincere concern by many Negro leaders that the values Negro youth are now receiving will be seriously jeopardized during the transition period, and much needed educational opportunity lost at a crucial time. It is not expected by any, however, that a transition can be made without some losses as work is going on toward gains” (NFA Archives).

Many after the merger echoed his same sentiment. As early as November 1965, one month after the merger, questions were raised regarding the roles of African American, former NFA members, administrators, and teachers. Norris (1993) documented that the U.S. Office of

Education did not approve a request for the appointment of a former NFA member to serve as a regional representative for agriculture.

With the merger, the NFA was required to give up its name, constitution, bylaws, emblems, money and its 52,000 members. The merger required the NFA to transfer all its National assets to the FFA. The transfer was substantial; in the 1964 audit report the NFA had \$10,445.56 in checking, \$32,355.30 in savings, and \$3,800 in stocks and bonds (NFA Archives). The African American teachers and state staff who had previously taught about the NFA were now required to teach pertinent facts about the FFA and arrange for the disposal of all NFA items (Norris, 1993). It was not until the 1990s that any information pertaining to the NFA was included in the Official FFA Manual (personal communication, A. Larke, Jr. May 31, 2000).

Moore (1999) wrote,

I can remember the turmoil of the Civil rights era because I was a high schools student when schools were integrated. I personally saw how African-American students were treated and accepted (read “not accepted”) into the white society. I experienced the NFA and the FFA merger (it really wasn’t a merger, it was a federal government mandated take over). I have reviewed the personal papers of former federal agricultural education officials and know who the racists were... I can remember when there were separate state organizations for the “white” agriculture teachers and for the “black” agriculture teacher. I have read “Forty Long Years” which expresses the African American viewpoint of the NFA-FFA merger and the empty promises made over the years by the federal agricultural education leaders...

Bell, Powers and Rogers (1987) believed that desegregation ended the infrastructure to sustain African Americans in agricultural education. African Americans were apprehensive of being merged out of rather than merged into roles of usefulness and effectiveness (Norris, 1993). African Americans were apprehensive about the merger because throughout history they had never been represented by employment in professional positions in Agricultural Education.

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations

The NFA was an organization that had a full history of accomplishments and was a thriving organization in 1965 at the time of its merger with the FFA. However, the number of African American males in the NFA in 1965 exceeds the number of African American **males and females** in the FFA today. Therefore, it is recommended that research be conducted to determine what can be done to increase African American participation in the FFA by looking at past activities of the NFA. It is further recommended that additional historical material on the NFA be included in the Official FFA Manual and that a lesson plan on the NFA and its history be developed and disseminated to agriculture teachers.

The infrastructure of African American teachers, state supervisors, and teacher educators in agricultural education that existed prior to 1965 is not nearly as strong today. Therefore, it is critical that all of agricultural education give greater attention to supporting diversity. “We need teachers who will personally make a commitment to reach out to students of color or at least find someone of color for whom they can be a mentor” (Larke, 2000, p.9). It is recommended that

teachers make a personal commitment to reach out to students of color or at least find someone of color for whom they can be a mentor. It is also recommended that a study be conducted to determine causes of the decline in African American teachers since the merger.

An implication from these findings is that a merger of equals was in reality a merging out of the NFA. Further implications would be that in order to increase African American membership in the FFA, a greater emphasis on diversity awareness and action must occur and that additional studies should go beyond African American issues to include other underrepresented populations in FFA issues.

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Exploring the Past of the New Farmers of America (NFA): The Merger with the FFA

A Critique

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Contribution and Significance of Research

Change is never without consequences. These consequences are often difficult to measure, and impossible to predict at the time of the change. George Santayana, said "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

It is especially fitting that this historical examination was conducted on this, the 35th Anniversary of the NFA/FFA Merger. Young black people have been joining the merged NFA/FFA organization for five years longer than the total number of years the NFA existed separately. As time marches on for the FFA it may be further separating, rather than uniting, young people with an interest in agriculture. This study provides us with additional evidence of a critical event in the history of the FFA. The authors are to be commended; this study is timely and needed.

There is little doubt in anyone's mind that the rate of change continues to accelerate. The FFA/NFA merger occurred 35 years ago, when biotechnology was still confined to the laboratories of a few scientists and global positioning was accomplished with terrestrial maps. The National FFA Organization has to try to manage this climate of change in such a way as to insure that the FFA remains a vibrant and relevant organization that meets the needs of every young person interested in agriculture. Janus, the Roman god of gates and doors, faced both forward and backward. The leadership of the FFA needs to shape their view of the future by looking back into the past.

That agricultural education, inclusive of the FFA, needs to continue to examine and improve diversity at all levels is beyond question. Diversity is often a contentious issue. The authors are to be commended for undertaking, reporting, and sticking their necks to examine this historical event and the resulting implications for the profession.

Questions for Consideration

The historical method was certainly appropriate to this study. This reviewer wondered if reviewing only records housed by the National FFA constituted a complete review of the available documents? Are you assuming that all NFA records were transferred during the merger?

You cite a single "personal communication" that sheds additional light on the issue. The reviewer then wondered why only a single interview was conducted? Clearly, Dr. Alvin Larke would be an excellent source of information on this topic, but I suspect that he could also direct the researchers to several other people with first-hand knowledge of this historical event. Their first-hand testimony would enhance this research effort, and will continue to become more difficult to secure.

Many of the recommendations were clearly based on the findings, and are likely to improve the practice. However, you recommend that the FFA examine past activities of the

NFA to increase African American participation. This reviewer questions the wisdom of using 35 year -old activities rooted in production agriculture as models to attract new members.