



Supervised Agricultural Experience

Supervised Agricultural Experience Fact Sheet Exploratory SAE

“Shadowing my agriscience teacher has enabled me to prepare lesson plans, organize and carry out events and train younger members to participate in FFA career development events. I now plan to pursue a career as an agriscience teacher and FFA advisor.” – *Clarissa Parks, Coral Reef FFA, Florida*

An exploratory SAE program is designed to increase student agricultural career awareness and/or agricultural literacy through exploration activities. This type of SAE is primarily designed for middle school students, but is also effective for high school students in the initial stages of agricultural instruction. Activities within an exploratory program may include observing, interviewing or assisting an individual in an ag-related profession; participating in a field day or event; collecting materials on a topic; or giving a classroom demonstration. These programs are planned cooperatively by the student, parent/guardian, teacher and others directly involved. The two main categories for exploratory activities include career exploration and agricultural literacy.

Career exploration provides first-hand knowledge of agricultural careers and furthers an appreciation for these occupations. For example, a student interested in floriculture may want to shadow or interview a florist or greenhouse manager, or prepare a report on careers in floriculture. **Agricultural literacy** programs are intended to strengthen knowledge of agriculture and its role in daily life. A student in this type of SAE participates in activities that develop an understanding and appreciation of at least one of the following areas: agricultural issues, growth and care of plants and animals, the connection between agriculture and diet, national and international agriculture trade systems, and/or agricultural policy issues.

Examples of Exploratory SAE Projects/Programs

Career Exploration

- Shadow an agriculture professional (farmer, loan officer, veterinarian, etc.).
- Interview the management at a grocery store to learn about daily operations.
- Observe or assist at a laboratory that develops crop hybrids.
- Write a paper on food science careers, salaries and educational requirements.
- Write a university and request information on agriculture majors.

Agricultural Literacy

- Tour a dairy facility and report your experience in class.
- Present a historical overview of American agriculture in the past 50 years.
- Research food safety and give a demonstration on food safety practices.
- Make a presentation explaining the role of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Grow a small garden and share the progress with your classmates.