



High School

National FFA Organization

Lesson HS.109

THE ORIGINS OF ORGANIZATIONS

Unit. FFA: An Integral Component of Agricultural Education

Problem Area. What Are the Components of a Successful Organization?

Precepts. F5: Acquire new knowledge

National Standards. NSS-EC.9-12.14 — Entrepreneurs — Identify an entrepreneur and describe how the entrepreneur's decisions affect job opportunities.



Student Learning Objectives. As a result of this lesson, the student will...

- 1 List factors of why organizations exist.
- 2 Identify the needs, beliefs, and conditions leading up to the establishment of Nike, John Deere, and FFA.
- 3 Identify dates associated with the origin of FFA.



© 2004 National FFA Organization
*It is illegal to reproduce copies of this material
without written permission from the National FFA
Organization.*
National FFA Organization



Time. Instruction time for this lesson: 50 minutes.



Resources

National FFA Organization's Essential Learnings, 2003.
Official FFA Manual, National FFA Organization, 2002.
Tenney, A.W., "The FFA at 50," Indianapolis, Indiana. Future Farmers of America, 1977.



Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

- ✓ Red pens or pencils
- ✓ Blue pens or pencils
- ✓ Green pens or pencils
- ✓ Blank paper
- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Overhead projector
- ✓ HS.109.Assess—one per student
- ✓ HS.109.TM.A
- ✓ HS.109.TM.B
- ✓ HS.109.AS.A—five
- ✓ HS.109.AS.B—one per student
- ✓ HS.109.AS.C—one per every other student
- ✓ HS.109.AS.D—one per every other student



Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson and appears in bold italics:

- ***Beliefs***
- ***Conditions***
- ***Needs***



Interest Approach

Before class starts, write the following companies' names on a public writing surface:

- Deere and Company
- Nike
- Levi Strauss
- Boy Scouts of America
- E-Bay



2

Provide HS.109.AS.A to five students, and instruct them that they will be acting out one of the needs described. Assign one of these needs to each student and tell them they will “charade” it one at a time.

Instruct the remainder of the class they are going to be solving the mystery of their peers' needs. They are to identify what need is being “charaded,” and what company listed on the writing surface will best meet that need.



If you enjoy the challenge of persuading others to accept your opinion, stand up.

Pick five students from those standing. Provide the following instructions to the five students:



Imagine you have instantly become exchange students who do not speak a word of English. You have a sheet of paper with five scenarios on it. Each of you will act out one of the given scenarios in order to have the rest of the class guess what your need is. Each scenario represents a need of a person. When I say, “Action,” take the sheet, go to the back of the room, and decide who will act out each scenario. Questions. Action!

Then provide the following directions to the rest of the class:

 The challenge for the rest of us is to guess what their need is and what organization listed on the writing surface will help them meet their need. When you think you have correctly identified their need, stand up, state their need and the company listed on the writing surface that will best meet their need. What questions are there?

Facilitate the activity, then ask the following process questions:

 What was difficult about determining what the “charaded” need was?

 Once you had identified the need, how did you match it with the organizations you had?

 Organizations exist to meet the needs of people. Some organizations, as you have pointed out, are so effective and efficient at meeting those needs, they are identified within seconds of hearing a need that they fulfill.

 Today, we are going to be investigative television journalists; we are going to discover a way to recognize why organizations are formed in the first place. The key to understanding how organizations are formed is through three familiar letters. By knowing and understanding what these three letters mean, you will be able to understand why organizations exist, what their function is, and what they can provide for you. By the end of this class, you will have increased your ability to think strategically—a skill that managers CEOs, principals, and parents need to be successful.



SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1. List factors of why organizations exist.



The three letter secret to determining why organizations exist is directly tied to a tune. It is the same tune the television network NBC is known for. Who knows that three-chime tune?

Use Voice Modulator Moment. Have one student demonstrate the tune...dum-dum-dum to the tune of NBC. Have students call back the tune, this time singing N...B...C!



Let's explore how NBC...

Use Choral Response Moment ... "NBC" to the NBC tune



...will help us understand organizations.

Refer to HS.109.AS.B.

I. Why people join organizations



On your worksheet, list three organizations, other than FFA, in which you are involved. They can either be school organizations, or organizations outside of school.



When I say, "NBC," pair up with a neighbor. Turn your chairs so they are facing each other, and continue your role as an investigative reporter. One of you will be the investigative reporter; the other, the interviewee. The reporter will be the person with the longer hair.



Reporters, write the name of the person you are interviewing at the top of the worksheet before you begin. As reporters, we are trying to figure out why they joined the organization.



What benefit do you get from each organization?



Why do you believe these organizations are worth your time?



What events happened that allowed you to become involved in this organization?

Summarize what they say on their worksheet. When you have completed your questioning, switch roles: the reporter becomes the interviewee, and the interviewee becomes the reporter, asking the same questions.



Remember, as expert reporters, we're searching for why they joined—if we receive a "surface" level response like "I joined to have fun," with what question should we follow up?

Encourage students to ask “why” questions to get to the heart of why they joined.



4



What questions are there? NBC!

Facilitate activity, making sure students are staying on task. Encourage them to keep questioning until they are sure they have received the “truth” about why the interviewee joined.



Great job interviewing! Stand up! High five your neighbor! Arrange your chairs so you can comfortably focus on the overhead and add to your reporter’s notebook.



The three letter secret to determining why organizations exist is directly tied to a tune. For what tune is the television network NBC known?

Use Voice Modulator Moment to call back the tune.



Organizations form because of NBC: Needs, Beliefs, and Conditions.

Use Voice Modulator Moment, having students sing “Needs, Beliefs, Conditions” to the tune of the NBC television network. Reveal Needs, beliefs, and conditions definitions on HS.109.TM.B. Explain each concept one at a time, encouraging students to record the definition in their notes, writing or highlighting the definitions with colored pens or pencils for emphasis using Crayon Moment.

A. Needs



Record the word need and its definition in red pen—it reminds us that we need to stop and think about why we join organizations.

1. Organizations exist because individuals have necessities that can’t be met working

alone. It answers the question, what benefit does the organization provide that can't be realized elsewhere.

Example: what benefit do you get from involvement in your own organizations?

Refer back to their interview sheets. Ask a few students to share their benefits.

B. Beliefs



Record the word belief and its definition in blue pen. Blue is for belief.

1. Organizations exist because their founders see the value in what it can do. It answers the question: Why do we believe these organizations are worth our time.
Example: why do you believe the organizations you are involved with are worth your time?

Refer back to their interview sheet. Ask a few students to share their observations.

C. Conditions



Record the word conditions and its definition in green pen. Green is for growth. For an organization to grow, conditions have to be right.

1. Organizations exist because of events that make it favorable for them to form.

Answers the question: what events took place that made it ideal to start the organization.

Example: what events happened that allowed you to become involved in this organization?

Refer back to their interview sheet. Ask a few students to share events that led them to join their organizations.

Objective 2. Identify the needs, beliefs, and conditions leading up to the establishment of Nike, John Deere, and FFA.



Give students the opportunity to demonstrate their newfound knowledge by allowing them to pick a case study based on the title—either HS.109.AS.C or HS.109.AS.D. In the case study they choose, they will identify the needs, beliefs, and conditions leading up to the establishment of the respective organization.

Write the following headlines on a writing surface:

- *Headline #1: WAFFLES WITH “SOLE” FILLED A BIG HOLE!*
- *Headline #2: FARMER USES HIS NAME FOR HEAVY METAL FAME*

II. Identify how Nike, John Deere, and FFA were established using the NBC method.



As expert NBC investigative reporters, we are about to travel back in time to explore one of two fascinating stories using this new NBC system. You will be given a choice of the story you want to cover, based on its headline. On the public writing surface are the two headlines. You will have 30 seconds when you hear the words “big headliners” to stand up, come to the front of the room, and take one of the two stories back to your news desks. I’ll tell you what to do with them once we have all selected. Questions. Big headliners!

Count down the time to keep students moving.



Each of you now has a story about the formation of an organization. As television journalists, determine the need, belief, and conditions that led to the formation of the organization. As you read the case study, underline what you believe to be a need for the organization in red, a belief of why the organization is important in blue, and underline in green an ideal condition that allowed the organization to form. When I say word “investigate,” begin your investigation. What questions do you have? Investigate!

A. NBC of Nike, Inc.

1. Needs included a demand for higher quality, lower cost athletic shoes; money for the business idea; they needed to sell shoes
2. Beliefs included Knight’s belief that he could sell a better shoe at a lower price; Bowerman’s belief that he could design a shoe that more athletes would want; belief in making changes to the shoe based on athletes’ suggestions; belief in each other’s ideas and creativity



3. Conditions included the shoe markets being dominated by German companies at the time; Knight and Bowerman meeting at the University of Oregon; Knight's paper at college that led to the idea of selling cheaper shoes imported from Japan; Jeff Johnson's dream about Nike; Prefontaine and other athletes wearing Nike shoes

Have students share their case studies with others working on the same study to compare. Instruct them to write down their observations on a notes page.

B. NBC of John Deere

1. Needs included John's need to find better work; a need for a self-scraping plow that worked better than the current plows; need for blacksmiths in the West; need for steel to make the plows
2. Beliefs included John's belief he could find a better life out West; John's belief that he could make a plow that worked better than the ones used by most of the farmers; John's belief that farmers would buy his product if he took it to them and demonstrated it; belief in quality of his products
3. Conditions included the economic depression in Vermont; soil type in the Midwest; mass migration of farmers to a new location that required different tools; not very many blacksmiths in the area

Have students share their case studies with others working on the same study to compare. Instruct them to write down their observations in their notes.

Instruct students that they are now experts on their particular case study. They will now have a chance to be an NBC reporter and an NBC expert correspondent. Have students reviewing HS.109.AS.C pair up with students reviewing HS.109.AS.D to share with them their observations using the Eyewitness News Moment.

C. NBCs of FFA



Stand up! Say: I am an expert investigator!

Use Choral Response Moment



In a moment, when you hear me say, "FFA," switch your perspective by switching seats with someone in 10 seconds. What questions do you have? FFA.

Instruct students that they are now going to go back in time as an NBC reporter to determine

how FFA was started. Instruct students to read Case Study #3, and underline needs, beliefs, and conditions with the appropriate color.



You are about to put your expert investigation techniques to the test. When I say “Investigate,” stand up, come get the story about the formation of FFA, read it, and underline what you believe to be a need for the organization in red, a belief of why the organization is important in blue, and underline in green an ideal condition that allowed the organization to form. Investigate.

1. Needs: need for instruction in agriculture



7

2. Beliefs: farm boys should have the same opportunities as city boys; students should have opportunities to learn about agriculture

3. Conditions: technological developments in agriculture; Morrill Act; Hatch Act; Smith-Hughes Act; state organizations in vocational agriculture; national livestock judging contests held in Kansas City, Missouri

Ask students to share their discoveries with the person next to them. Have them compare their discoveries to HS.109.TM.A.

Objective 3. Identify dates associated with the origin of FFA.

III. Identifying important dates



As an expert investigator, you need the ability to have instant recall of events leading to the formation of FFA. As I read the following story, envision it happening, in detail, and construct a timeline that identifies important dates of events leading up to the formation of FFA.

Read the following story to students to aid their recall of dates:



Imagine yourself getting ready to go to school: it is a typical day, and you are wearing what you typically wear. You are on your way to school in the typical way you come to school, and as you walk through the doors to school, something new catches your eye off to your right.



You take a second look, and right inside the doors of your school, a video is playing on a TV, showing two actors in a black and white scene. As you listen, you realize it's a video of Abraham Lincoln. As the VCR counter hits 1862, Abraham tells a young boy that agricultural colleges establish good morals in young people. Remember, the VCR counter hits 1862, and Abe tells a young boy that agricultural colleges establish good morals in young people.

Use Choral Response Moment for date and event; i.e., 1862...agricultural colleges establish good morals.

A. Morrill Act of 1862: established state agricultural colleges

Have students record the events and corresponding dates on a piece of a paper.



You need to ask your science teacher a question before school starts, so you walk down the hall, into the biology room. Several students already are gathered around two incubators, looking down. You walk over to their station and ask them what they're doing, and they tell you they are watching chicks hatch at their experiment station: 18 in one incubator and 87 in the other. Remember, they are watching chicks hatch at their experiment station: 18 in one and 87 in the other.

Use Choral Response Moment for date and event.

B. Hatch Act of 1887: established agriculture experiment stations

Have students record the events and corresponding dates on a piece of a paper.



You get your question answered in the biology room, so you walk down the hall toward your

locker. Passing you in the hall is a football player named Smith, and he's bragging about the recent game. Smith yells, "Who's yo' Daddy.! Who's yo' Daddy!. We won 19 to 17! " Remember, Smith yells, "Who's yo' Daddy.! Who's yo' Daddy!. We won 19 to 17!"

Use Choral Response Moment for date and event.

C. Smith-Hughes Act of 1917: established vocational agriculture courses

Have students record the events and corresponding dates on a piece of a paper.



You pass by the art class, where you peek in to have a look at the displays of art students' paintings. In one painting, you see a picture of a horse with a judge's gavel, wearing an American flag. The price tag on the painting is \$19.26. Remember, you see a picture of a horse with a judge's gavel, wearing an American flag. The price tag on the painting is \$19.26.

Use Choral Response Moment for date and event.

D. American Royal Livestock and Horse Show hosts National Livestock Judging Contests in 1926

Have students record the events and corresponding dates on a piece of a paper.



Finally, you walk into Ag class, where you are sitting right now. You see a big parcel package addressed to you, laying on my desk, with three stamps on it: the top stamp reads Kansas, the middle reads Missouri, and the bottom reads Baltimore. The postage amount reads \$19.28.



You rip it open and find an old FFA jacket with your name on it. Remember: In Ag class, you see a package addressed for you, lying on my desk with three stamps: Kansas, Missouri, and Baltimore. The postage amount reads \$19.28. You rip it open and find an FFA jacket with your name on it.

Use Choral Response Moment for date and event.

E. Future Farmers of America is established in 1928 in Kansas City, Missouri, at the Hotel Baltimore

Have students record the events and corresponding dates on a piece of a paper.

Have students quiz each other on the story or timeline. Ask them to be creative and come up with details that help them remember the events better.



Review/Summary



Provide a blank sheet of paper. In groups of three, instruct students to write the word “Organization” down the middle of the paper. Challenge them to use all of the letters of the word organization to form other words, concepts, and skills they learned during the class. They will write these words and concepts on the same paper using the letters of “organization” as part of the new word, similar to Scrabble.

Application

► Extended Classroom Activity:

Allow students to research a company or organization of their choice, using the Internet or other references in order to determine the NBC leading to its formation.

► FFA Activity:

Interview other teachers or administrators, determining their perceptions of the needs, beliefs, and conditions leading to the formation of FFA. Compile the responses, and develop an educational brochure or program that details FFA history.

► SAE Activity:

Identify the needs, beliefs, and conditions that led to the development of your SAE, or what needs, beliefs, and conditions you will need in the future to form your own SAE.

Evaluation

HS.109.Assess is included for evaluating the students’ understanding of the lesson concepts.

Answers to Assessment:

1. Needs, beliefs, conditions
2. Any two of the following: the economic depression in Vermont; soil type in the Mid-West; mass migration of farmers to a new location that required different tools; not very many blacksmiths in the area
3. Any one of the following: farm boys should have the same opportunities as city boys, students should have opportunities to learn about agriculture
4. Any one of the following: shoe markets being dominated by German companies at the time; Knight and Bowerman meeting at the University of Oregon; Knight's paper at college that led to the idea of selling cheaper shoes imported from Japan; Jeff Johnson's dream about Nike; Prefontaine and other athletes wearing Nike shoes
5. Kansas City, Missouri
6. b.
7. e.
8. f.
9. a.
10. d.



10

HS.109.Assess Name: _____

THE ORIGINS OF ORGANIZATIONS

► Short Answer

Provide a brief answer to the following questions.

1. What are the three factors that lead to the origin of organizations?
2. What were two conditions that led to the development of the company now known as Deere and Company?
3. What was a firmly held belief behind establishing FFA?
4. What is one condition which allowed Phil Knight to have success with his Nike brand shoes?
5. In what city and state was the Future Farmers of America established?



► Matching

Match the event with the description that describes it. Write the corresponding letter to the left of the event.

Event

- _____ 6. Hatch Act
- _____ 7. American Royal Horse and Livestock Show
- _____ 8. Future Farmers of America
- _____ 9. Morrill Act
- _____ 10. Smith-Hughes Act

Description

- a. Congress passed it in 1862
- b. This established agricultural experiment stations
- c. Congress approved it in 1916, establishing vocational agriculture courses nationwide
- d. Congress approved it in 1917, establishing vocational agriculture courses nationwide
- e. Event that occurred in 1926 that attracted thousands of agriculture students to Kansas City,

Missouri

f. Established in 1928



12

HS.109.TM.A

Needs: need for instruction in agriculture

Beliefs: farm boys should have the same opportunities as city boys; students should have opportunities to learn about agriculture

Conditions: technological developments in agriculture; Morrill Act; Hatch Act; Smith-Hughes Act; state organizations in vocational agriculture; national livestock judging contests held in Kansas City, Missouri



13

DEFINITIONS

◆ Need (record in red)

→ Organizations exist because individuals have necessities that can't be met by working alone. It answers the question: what benefit does the organization provide that can't be realized elsewhere.

◆ Beliefs (record in blue)

→ Organizations exist because their founders see the value in what it can do. It answers the question: why do we believe these organizations are worth our time.

◆ Conditions (record in green)

→ Organizations exist because of events that make it favorable for them to form. Answers the question: what events took place that made it ideal to start the organization.



► **Needs of Foreign Exchange Students:**

You want to stay in shape while you are in the U.S. You need a pair of running shoes.

Your favorite pair of blue jeans has a big hole in the leg. You need a new pair of blue jeans.

Your host-family's old push-powered lawn mower has broken down, and you have agreed to mow your family's and neighbors' lawn in order to make money. You need a reliable riding lawn mower to mow lawns.

Your computer does not have enough storage space for the programs you need to run for a school assignment. You need to sell your current computer to get enough money to purchase a new computer.

You are bored on the weekends, but you love hiking, camping and the outdoors. You need something positive and fun to do with your time.



HS.109.AS.B Name: _____

Name of Person I am Interviewing:

Three organizations in which they are involved (besides FFA):

1.

- 2.
- 3.

What benefit do you get from each organization?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you believe these organizations are worth your time?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What events happened that allowed you to become involved in this organization?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



HS.109.AS.C

► CASE STUDY 1: WAFFLES WITH “SOLE” FILLED A BIG HOLE! or

HIS PRODUCT WAS 'SNEAKS—HIS ORGANIZATION IS GREEK!

Phil Knight was a runner first, but a business-savvy student second. Attending the University of Oregon on a track scholarship in order to run, Phil knew that it was the most prestigious track and field program in the nation. What he didn't know was that when he shook hands with his coach, he would be shaking hands and forming a relationship with a future business partner, inventor, and co-founder of one of the world's most recognized organizations. Phil's coach, Bill Bowerman, had established the reputation of coaching elite runners at the University of Oregon.

In 1962, now a Masters student in Business Administration at Stanford, Phil wrote a research paper about how athletic shoes could be imported from Japan and sold in the United States at a lower price and higher quality than the German-dominated shoe market. Upon graduating with his MBA degree, Phil traveled to Japan to explore shoemakers and the possibility of starting a partnership. When questioned about what company he represented, Phil made up a name of a company, and unconsciously gave it the name "Blue Ribbon Sports." The company would be worthy of a blue ribbon, and more.

The first shipment of shoes arrived in 1963, and by 1964, Phil would partner with his former track coach, Bill. Bill and Phil each contributed \$500 to the new enterprise. Selling shoes out of his father's basement and out of the back of his car at local track meets, Phil began to see his shoes on the feet of runners. While Phil worked to sell the shoes, Bill would design prototype shoes, experimenting with different shoe designs and getting feedback from runners on changes that needed to be made for future designs. In 1965, Phil hired his first full-time help--Jeff Johnson, a rival runner also from the University of Oregon. In 1966, Jeff opened the first retail outlet, and in 1967, Phil and Bill officially incorporated their business and continued to sell shoes from Japan, based on Bill's designs. Nineteen sixty-eight saw the first retail store being opened.

Creativity and innovation were essential to the budding business and key in separating it from competitors. In 1970, after numerous shoe designs, Bill sat at his breakfast table staring at the waffles his wife had made for him. An idea sparked in his mind, triggering Bill to pour a rubber compound mixture into his wife's waffle iron. The result was a mold for a shoe sole that would forever change running shoe design. Creativity also struck Jeff Johnson in 1971, in the form of a dream, the night before the company had to have a name to print on shoe boxes. Jeff dreamed of the Greek goddess of victory, a name that would reflect the brand of shoe they wanted to create. The name for the shoes, the designs, and probably the rubber in the waffle iron, stuck. Soon, runners everywhere began wearing the shoes with a "swoosh" on the side, including legendary middle-distance runner Steve Prefontaine. When the shoes began showing up on the feet of Olympic gold-medalists, athletes the world over began to notice and buy the shoes themselves. In 1981, Blue Ribbon Sports combined with the new brand to form what is now the largest sports and fitness company in the world—a brand of shoes named after the Greek goddess of victory, Nike.

**HS.109.AS.D****►CASE STUDY 2: FARMER USES HIS NAME FOR HEAVY METAL FAME**

John was born in Vermont in 1804, and in addition to receiving a common education, John “learned to do” the work of a blacksmith by serving as a blacksmith’s apprentice for four years. As a blacksmith, John gained considerable fame around Vermont making hay forks and shovels, and was known for his attention to detail, innovation, and craftsmanship. When Vermont faced an economic downturn in the 1830’s, many Vermont farmers started to move out west in search of better opportunities. John was no different; he hit the road and after several weeks, arrived in the town of Grand Detour, Illinois. Because of the mass migration of opportunity-seekers to the Midwest, the demand for a blacksmith was very high, and within two days of arriving in Illinois, John had built a forge and was busy filling orders of the local farmers--shoeing horses, fixing plows, and making equipment as needed.

John learned from the farmers he served that the soil in the Midwest was quite fertile but different from any soil they had ever seen. Unlike the light, sandy soil they were accustomed to plowing in the East, the richer, heavier soil of the Midwest clung to the bottom of the plows they had brought with them. After every few feet the plow moved in the earth, it was necessary to scrape the soil off the bottom. Plowing became very slow and labor intensive work.

John studied this dilemma and discovered that a plow with a properly designed face, called a moldboard (the steel part of a plow that cut through the ground), would clean itself as it sliced through the soil. Building his newly-designed plow out of extra steel he had, he tested it, and it worked. Convinced that he had created something very unique, John bucked the blacksmith tradition of the day and began making the plows before he had orders. He would then take the plows out to the countryside, where he would demonstrate how his plow worked and sell them to farmers. Word spread, as did John’s name as a great plow maker.

By 1846, John was making over 1,000 plows a year and ordered the first load of specially rolled steel that was produced in America. The steel was delivered to his new plow making factory on the Mississippi River, in the town of Moline, Illinois. As time passed, John constantly made careful improvements to his equipment and was known to make the statement, “I will never put my

name on a plow that does not have in it the best that is in me.”

His passion for quality equipment and his name continue to be built into farm equipment made to this day. Since 1868, when John incorporated his business and gave it his last name, Deere and Company has continued the tradition of high quality farm equipment with an emphasis on constant improvement. John not only has tractors and lawn mowers bearing his namesake, but also his own color on every piece of his company’s equipment: John Deere green.



► CASE STUDY 3: FFA IS HERE TO STAY

At the turn of the twentieth century, there had been much technological advancement in farming. There was a huge need for a system to teach and train people in agriculture. In fact, this need had been foreseen several decades before 1900 during President Abraham Lincoln’s administration. President Lincoln signed a piece of legislation called the Morrill Act in 1862 that set up state colleges devoted to teaching agriculture and mechanics. In addition, Congress passed the Hatch Act in 1887 that set up agriculture experiment stations that provided agricultural information and supported the education of agriculture in high schools. However, this wasn’t enough to keep farm youth using their skills on the farm—thousands migrated to the city for better opportunities.

By 1916 there were several thousand high schools offering training in agriculture to farm boys, which combined classroom “book” learning with “real-life” farm projects. The direction, funding, and content of each agriculture class was left up to individual states and individual schools—there were no organized courses of instruction in agriculture at the national level. That all changed in 1917 when Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act. This established national courses in vocational agriculture and provided funding to states to promote vocational agriculture in high schools.

“When farm youth first enrolled in courses in agriculture they felt a spirit of unity and common purpose because of their rural background and interest in farming as a vocation. It was only natural, therefore, for student organizations to be developed” (Tenney, p.10). These agricultural

clubs took part in many activities, like competitive livestock judging contests, community service activities, and holding regular meetings with their own rituals. The livestock judging contests became so popular among vocational agriculture programs in many states that a strong movement for a national contest developed. In 1926, the American Royal Livestock and Horse Show hosted the first National Livestock Judging contests in Kansas City, Missouri. The event was a hit it attracted over 1500 boys from 22 states.

Over the next two years, the American Royal continued to host national contests and serve as host for the National Congress of Vocational Agriculture students. Even before this national meeting, several states began to develop their own youth organizations in vocational agriculture. In Virginia, in 1925, four agricultural educators observed that farm boys of their state felt inferior to their city cousins. One of the educators made the statement, “I believe that a strong organization of our boys in agriculture would help them to overcome this handicap. Let’s form an organization that will give them a greater opportunity for self-expression and for the development of leadership. In this way they will develop confidence in their own ability and pride in the fact that they are farm boys” (Tenney, p.18). Less than a year later in 1926, one of the educators, Henry Groseclose, had prepared the initial plans and constitution for the organization, called the Future Farmers of Virginia.

Because the National Congress of Vocational Agriculture students happened on an annual basis, educators decided in 1928 that the time was right to launch a national vocational agriculture student organization at that year’s Congress. In November of 1928, the first national convention of the Future Farmers of America was held at the Hotel Baltimore in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. The constitution developed by Groseclose for the Future Farmers of Virginia was adopted as the national constitution, and Leslie Applegate of New Jersey was named the first president of the Future Farmers of America. C.H. Lane was elected the first national advisor, and Henry Groseclose was elected executive secretary. Because of his contributions, Groseclose is now regarded as the “Father of the FFA.”

