

Capturing Opportunities for the Future. (A01-knauft113857-Oral)

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Abstract:

Agronomy-related departments across the country are facing challenges of low student numbers. Much of the problem may be associated with a broad-based perception that these departments train students, rather than educate them. Training is perceived as developing skills that are put to use immediately, are useful for only a very focused task, and may become unnecessary in the future. Education involves the development of a joy for obtaining new knowledge and serves as a foundation for a lifetime. The challenge for agronomy departments is to develop a curriculum that truly educates students, rather than one that trains them. Departments that possess such a curriculum then have the challenge of communicating its value to potential students. The recruitment process needs to begin early, and it must include parents, teachers, extension personnel, and others who influence student decisions. Because the ultimate success of a teaching program is measured through its graduates, retention issues, career planning and placement, and alumni relations are also important parts to the recruitment continuum.

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