

AN EXAMINATION OF THE HOME VISIT PROCESS  
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

A Record of Study

by

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## ABSTRACT

The agricultural education profession has historically provided unique opportunities for agriculture teachers to gain a deeper connection with students through participation in FFA (formerly known as Future Farmers of America), supervision of supervised agricultural education (SAE) projects, and interactions in the classroom and laboratory. These three components are integrated to form a three-component model of agricultural education. They overlap through a strong relationship between agriculture teachers and students, which often develops through visits to students' homes.

A qualitative investigation presenting a historical and ethnographic account of the practice of home visits in agricultural education provided information from experts in the field about their definition of home visits, the value of home visits to the agricultural education profession, and the factors contributing to their changing focus in our profession. This investigation also described historical events, which affected and influenced teachers' visits to the homes of students. Home visits are perceived to have high value, but a coherent definition of a home visit did not exist. Conversations with experts revealed reasons for the decline in teachers conducting home visits such as larger class sizes, the loss of extended contracts, and competition for diverse program goals.

Second, a quantitative investigation and descriptive study presented the status of the practice of conducting home visits among California agriculture teachers. I used an online questionnaire to evaluate the perceived benefits of and barriers to conducting home visits as well as the prevailing definition of a home visit as compared to a SAE

visit. The target population comprised 750 California agriculture teachers, and 34.93% (n = 262) responded. This study revealed that 55.3% of respondents defined a home visit as separate from a SAE visit whereas 31.1% stated that an SAE visit is a home visit. The most highly ranked barrier category was support for the practice. The most highly ranked beneficial impact category was benefit to the student.

The final study used a descriptive phenomenological methodology to identify the motivation, structure, and outcomes of home visits made by agriculture teachers.

Twenty-one California agriculture teachers were interviewed. Themes emerging from this qualitative study included: (1) motivations for conducting home visits, (2) structure and format of visits, (3) data collection and materials disseminated, (4) challenges and barriers, (5) values and impacts, and (6) shared experiences. Primary motivations included visiting SAE projects, developing relationships, increasing student involvement, and professional development experiences. Impacts discussed were strong connections with students and their families, improved classroom management, and increased student success. Recommendations included creating instructional guides focused on home visits, promoting workshops statewide, and initiating a special recognition program for teachers who conduct home visits.

Based upon findings, it is recommended that the agricultural education profession adopt two new definitions of home visits: the Relational Home Visit and SAE Home Visit. Continued research on the use of home visits in today's agricultural education is recommended which includes further research into the value of home visits and the state of the practice across a larger sample of other states.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **History and Background**

Since the development of the home project method by Rufus W. Stimson in the early 1900s, agriculture teaching has extended outside the classroom and into the homes of students enrolled in agricultural education (Moore, 1988). Historically, the reason to visit student's homes began with the development of their supervised agricultural experience (SAE) projects, which have been a successful method for applying the concepts and principles learned in the agriculture classroom in real-life settings (Retallick, 2010). However, the benefits of working with students in their homes extend far beyond SAE projects. Research suggests that these interactions create a unique relationship among parents, students, and the home visitor (Larson, 1980).

“Being an effective agriculture teacher goes beyond classroom teaching” (Robinson & Haynes, 2011, p. 47). In addition to traditional teaching roles and responsibilities, agriculture teachers hold diverse job titles. A 2001 study revealed three main job titles as perceived by agriculture teachers. These included activities coaches for FFA events and assisting with SAE projects, serving as academic teachers that also search for grants to support program development, and vocational mentors to connect students with local business for real-life experiences (Delnaro & Montgomery, 2001). They also conduct and supervise SAE programs and service projects with students in the community (Delnaro & Montgomery, 2001). The Local Program Success (LPS)

initiative through the National FFA Organization also outlines key roles teachers play in building strong programs. Outside of the classroom responsibilities include advising supervised agriculture experience projects, developing strong community partnerships, and the promoting of their programs (National FFA Organization, 2005). These additional aspects of teaching and connecting with students outside the classroom provide meaningful opportunities to foster strong relationships between the teacher, student, family and community. Conducting home visits in agricultural education may be one avenue for strengthening these relationships and helping students succeed. Research done by the Family Engagement Partnership (FEP) through Johns Hopkins University in 2013 revealed that “trusting relationships between teachers and families established at the beginning of the school year, through home visiting, are associated with academic success” (Sheldon & Jung, 2015, p. 5). One of the goals of the National Research Agenda (Priority Area 5) is to create efficient and effective agricultural education programs (Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, 2016). It also states that “the application of the teaching/learning process can be made in a variety of other settings” (Barrick, 1993, p. 12). The settings for secondary agriculture teachers include the classroom, FFA activities, and the location of their SAE projects and students’ homes, where connections can be forged with parents. The National Research Agenda (Priority Area 6) also promotes the creation of vibrant and resilient communities that work together to help students reach their full potential (Roberts et al., 2016). These research agenda priorities support the need for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of students to share key

information with parents that will strengthen their programs and foster the creation of a supportive community for students.

Despite its benefits, the practice of making home visits is on the decline in modern agricultural education. SAE visits remain a part of many programs, but as early as 1980, home visits were reported to be on the decline (Miller, 1980). The responsibilities that have been added to the agriculture teacher's job description have made finding the time and resources to implement tools such as home visits an increasing challenge (Bane, 2003). The National FFA Organization's membership has gained 150,000 members in the past 40 years (National FFA Organization, 2017), resulting in a larger teacher-to-student ratio for many agriculture programs. Additionally, legislative changes such as the Vocational Education Act of 1963 have fundamentally changed project supervision requirements (Moore, 2003). Even as home visits have declined in agricultural education, researchers and policy makers have noted their benefits in other areas: for example, early childhood education. According to a 2009 report, state-based home visiting programs were reported by 40 states, representing 70 distinct programs across the U.S. (Johnson, 2009). To support this growth, President Barack Obama's 2010 education budget requested \$8.6 billion over 10 years for proven home visiting programs such as the Children's Alliance and The Home Visiting Coalition. Both of these programs use home visits as a strategy to help families with health, early childhood development, and family functioning (Johnson, 2009).

Even though there is an apparent increase in interest and funding for home visits at the elementary education level, the practice has not returned to past levels of

importance in agricultural education. This could be due to legislative changes in agricultural education as well as changing demographics. If agricultural teachers and students are to realize the full benefits of home visits in the future, it is important to examine their historical roots and understand how and why home visits have changed. The purpose of this research was to document the historical events significant to home visits through a review of literature and investigate the practice of home visits among California agriculture teachers through a questionnaire and interviews. The research also examined the theoretical and historical concepts that underlie home visits to better understand their value. Given the qualitative nature of the conversations, the author's lived experience is shared below:

The primary author has been an agriculture teacher for 15 years and has conducted close to 900 home visits. The process of conducting home visits has allowed the researcher to have in-depth personal experiences to contribute to home visit research. The home visit has become the norm in the author's program and community. Results from this experience include increased numbers of active FFA members, enrollment, career development event teams, and substantial supervised agriculture experience (SAE) projects. It has also created a sense of community in the classroom to support better classroom management strategies. A home visit, as defined by the author, is the process by which a teacher schedules a time to visit with the student and his/her parents at the student's home during freshmen year to discuss the agricultural education program. Components of a home visit include discovering the individual student's agricultural interest, clearly defining FFA and SAE, and gathering general information about the student to facilitate his/her overall success.

Visits to the home are identified by different names such as SAE visits or project visits, depending on the purpose or intent of the agriculture instructor. Early agricultural education history reveals programs with a variety of names related to visiting the home. In 1908, Rufus Stimson became the director of the Smith Agricultural School and

described his plan as the home-school cooperation plan (Stimson & Lathrop, 1942). This later evolved into the home project plan or method (Stimson, 1914), the farm enterprises (Schmidt, 1926), the supervised farm practice program (Cook, 1938), and the supervised farming program (Deyoe, 1943). These programs laid the foundation for teachers to visit the home farms of their students (Moore, 1988), which provided the opportunity to collaborate with the student and families at their homes to provide a unique relationship supporting the vocational future of students.

Historical pieces of agricultural education literature point to Rufus Stimson as one of most well-known individuals to visit the homes of students in agricultural education with his home project method (Moore, 1988). As a teacher, state supervisor, and the Father of the Home Project Method, Rufus Stimson personally visited every high school student in Massachusetts who was enrolled in agriculture during his tenure as state supervisor (Moore, 1988). His visit to a student's home began with the development of their SAE project, which has been a successful method for applying the concepts and principles learned in the agriculture classroom in real-life settings (Retallick, 2010). In addition, home visits provided an opportunity to counsel students just beginning their agricultural education experience.

The passage of the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917 promoted agricultural education as an avenue to train young men who had entered or who were preparing to engage in farm work. This act required all students to have directed or supervised practice in agriculture for at least six months each year, either on a farm managed by the school or other farm (National Vocational Education Act, 1917).

Strict enforcement of project supervision by agriculture teachers was required by federal and state supervisors; this supervision included making visits to student's homes to visit their projects and to provide general guidance. From 1921 to 1922, 79% of all agriculture students across the nation had a SAE project. This increased to 90% by 1930 (Bird, Martin, & Simonsen, 2013). During this period and into later years, teachers were required to keep detailed records of their visits and submit annual reports to state supervisors regarding their home farm project visits (Moore & Wilson, 2007). It was also common for district and state supervisors to attend project visits at homes and other locations with agriculture teachers to assist in the supervision of comprehensive SAE plans.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 changed school-based agricultural education and increased the diversity of SAE project opportunities for students. This encouraged development of a wider range of agricultural avenues in areas such as business, education, and technology and included being open to other types of experiential learning activities such as agricultural research projects, carrying out an in-depth investigation of an agricultural issue, preparing newspaper articles, or creating an educational video about agriculture (Moore, 2003). In addition, the passage of this act no longer mandated that teachers supervise SAE projects, though agriculture programs were still highly encouraged to promote SAE projects as a vital component of the three circles in agricultural education. Overall, this act increased numbers of off-farm activities and attracted more diverse students into agricultural education. This act also established a greater need to inform parents, students, and the community through

personal connections via the home visit but no longer required teachers to make the visits to the homes. The review of literature revealed key moments in history that contributed to the value of conducting home visits in agricultural education. An overview of the major historical acts connected to agriculture teachers visiting the homes of their students is summarized in chapter II of this record of study.

Literature continues to point to the impact these visits can have on student success. Home visits enable teachers to build rapport and personal relationships with students (Robinson & Haynes, 2011), and these visits were specifically recommended by Vincent and Kirby (2015) as a means of encouraging culturally relevant pedagogy. “One of the greatest results to be gained from visiting the student is a feeling of mutual understanding and respect” (Crosen, 1976, p. 282). An interview of a student regarding their motivation for SAE projects revealed that “he (the advisor) would do home visits to each student home and interview the family and the student to determine the student interest and capability to complete the SAE” (Bird, Martin, & Simonsen, 2013, p. 40). It also provides the opportunity for the teacher to meet the student’s parents and siblings to determine what influence these individuals have on the student’s development (Crosen, 1976). While research has indicated that building relationships is critical to enhancing student engagement (Bird, Martin, Tummons, & Ball, 2013), research also reveals that agricultural teachers find it difficult to balance work and personal life due to the demands of the position (Clark, Kelsey, & Brown, 2014). Thus, there is a need to document the impact of home visits to add to the body of research that justifies the time spent on these efforts.

Some states have enacted legislative measures that support the need for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of their students. In 1981, the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 187, which determined that it was within the best interests of the people that a comprehensive technical California Department of Education program in agriculture be created and maintained by the state public school system to ensure an adequate supply of trained and skilled individuals (California Department of Education, 2007). This bill also established a committee that created 15 program standards that schools must meet to be eligible to qualify for the California Agriculture Incentive Grant program. Recommendations of the State Advisory Council included developing a strategies manual for program improvement. Specifically, strategy number three, criterion number two, states that credentialed instructors conduct home visits to discuss SAE possibilities with parents, thereby involving them in the planning process for their children (California Agricultural Education, 2003).

Over time, teachers have developed methods to conduct SAE visits or project supervision visits at students' homes and create a foundational relationship with students. A 1985 guide titled *Improving Home-School Communications*, states that home visits acquaint the teacher with the home environment and provide a more relaxed setting for discussing the same kinds of issues that are covered in parent-teacher conferences (Gotts & Purnell, 1985). The underlying purpose of any home visit is to develop a human connection, foster a sense of community, encourage involvement, and to understand areas of interest for each individual student. To accomplish these goals, the instructor should try to determine the student's main goals in life (Crosen, 1976).



Overall, student recruitment, engagement, and retention are critical to the development of effective agricultural science programs. Home visits enable teachers to build personal relationships with students (Robinson & Haynes, 2011). Home visits are a high impact innovative strategy that shows proven results at the elementary, intermediate, and incoming high school levels (Martinez-Keddy, 2017). These results include building parental resources and supporting high school students applying for colleges.

Over the past two decades, home visits have become increasingly popular with policy makers and programs that deliver services to families (Lin & Bates, 2010). Most notably researched at the early childhood level, home visits serve as avenue for teachers to create an initial positive impression and gain needed support from parents (Lin & Bates, 2010). Particularly, President Obama's 2010 education budget aimed to support widely recognized home visiting models such as Healthy Families America, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers (Johnson, 2009). These visits directly endeavored to provide vulnerable families with mentorship but also support school readiness and academic achievement for their children. Regardless of the intent, visiting the homes of students can send a significant message of care and concern for future opportunities of students (Lin & Bates, 2010). Home visits are also beneficial for both the parents and the teachers who conduct them. For teachers, "home visits can provide teachers with an understanding of the families' lives and the academic, emotional, and social, needs of the student" (Lin & Bates, 2010, p. 180).

While history of the early to mid-1900s provides substantial information regarding this topic, recent history lacks depth in documentation of the need for teachers to visit students' homes and the impact these personal connections make on an agricultural education program. Currently, there is a lack of research documenting teachers actively using home visits as a method to promote SAE projects, to communicate with parents, and to create a personal connection with the students. The National FFA Organization reports that current FFA membership is at 649,355 members nationwide (National FFA Organization, 2017b). As the growth in numbers of students enrolled in agricultural education programs continues, agricultural education teachers will be expected to grow their strategies to connect with an increasingly diverse set of students. A 2011 survey by the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance reported 72% of consumers are not knowledgeable about farming practices (Mercier, 2015). Therefore, it can be logically assumed that students with this same lack of knowledge are entering our growing agricultural education programs each year. If "most Americans do not understand food and agriculture systems" (Mercier, 2015, p. 2), we need to strengthen our agricultural education programs to address the challenge of agriculture literacy. Conducting home visits is not only a way to build strong relationships, but also a way to break down assumptions, negative attitudes, and biased opinions garnered towards education and agriculture (Martinez-Keddy, 2017). Agriculture teachers who conduct home visits may be able to address the disparity of knowledge towards our global food system simply by starting dialogue with parents about opportunities in agricultural education.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Attachment theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1992) was used to frame the research which directly relates to home visits and the student-teacher relationship under investigation. While attachment theory was first expressed in the 1930s in an effort to describe parental involvement and connection with children, it has more recently evolved to address broader societal situations. In this research, attachment theory was used to explain the impact that an agriculture teacher can have on a student early in their high school career and in the program. The process of completing a home visit with the student creates familial security and forms a basis from which the individual can form new skills and interests in other fields (Bretherton, 1992).

In addition, Bronfenbrenner's 1986 ecological systems theory supports the need for teachers to visit the homes of their students. This theory proposed that a child's development is influenced by the many aspects of the environment and that to fully understand a child, one must attempt to understand the dynamic relationship between the child, his/her parent and their family characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Developing a deeper understanding of the student and their family dynamics can help the teacher provide new strategies and support to strengthen student centered learning. According to Bronfenbrenner, home visits are a part of the mesosystem, encouraging two elements of the microsystem (i.e., home and school) to interact with one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Finally, Roger's diffusion of innovation theory was used to guide understanding of how agriculture teachers perceive home visits, identify barriers and facilitators of

home visits, and determine strategies that might be effective in encouraging the adoption and implementation of home visits (Rogers, 1995). Traditional home visits associated with SAE projects were once commonplace. However, the practice has been on the decline (Miller, 1980). If one considers a home visit that is not associated with an SAE project to be an innovation, then it can be argued that the profession has failed to fully adopt the innovation.

### **Background**

A home visit is a tool that has been documented to positively impact student success. However, home visits within the context of agricultural education have been on the decline. There is a need to document the historical account of visits to the homes by agriculture teachers, collect information from experts in the field about the purpose of this pedagogical tool, and document barriers/impacts related to conducting home visits. Results from this study provide documentation that can be used by teachers, administrators, and policy makers to support and empower teachers to increase their use of home visits.

Attachment theory and ecological systems theory support and describe the student to teacher relationship in this study. Ecological systems theory supports the need for teachers to visit the homes of their students. Conversations with experts in the field of agricultural education was used to determine common perceptions about home visits, their historical roots, and the possible impact in today's agricultural education classroom. Although agriculture teachers have been conducting visits to the homes of their students since the early 1900s, little research exists that directly relates to

agriculture teachers conducting home visits, therefore investigation of this topic was needed.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Traditionally, home visits in agricultural education have been associated with home-based project supervision. However, with changes to project supervision requirements, demographics and teaching responsibilities, home-based project supervision may be declining. There is evidence to support the benefits of visiting a student's home that go beyond project supervision. If the use of the home-based project visit is declining, it may be necessary to develop new ways to support the practice and the teachers engaged in it. It may also be necessary to develop a new definition for the practice that does not rely heavily on the SAE project. A major challenge exists in the lack of current peer-reviewed research about home visits in agricultural education and their evolution over time. Guiding questions for this study were:

1. What key historical events contributed to agriculture teachers visiting the homes of their students?
2. What factors have led to the decline in teachers conducting home visits in today's modern agricultural education system?
3. What impacts does the practice of home visits provide to the agriculture teacher, student, and program?
4. What challenges to conducting home visits exist for agriculture teachers?
5. Is there a universally accepted definition of a home visit by agriculture teachers?

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to document the historical account of home visits through a review of literature and conversations with significant members of the agricultural education community. It was also to investigate the current practice of agricultural education teachers visiting the homes of students. Detailed descriptions of the impacts and challenges home visits have on students, teachers, and parents are presented.

## **Research Format**

This record of study is presented in a three-paper format. The research included both qualitative and quantitative methods. Chapters II, III and IV present papers intended for publication. Research article one provides a historical look at home visits within the context of agricultural education. Research article two provides the results of a questionnaire of California agriculture teachers to document the current state of the practice. Finally, research article three presents a phenomenological study of California agriculture teachers who conduct home visits.

## **Research Objectives**

The following objectives guided the research:

### **Article One Objectives: Historical Literature Review**

1. Describe the pertinent historical events and reasons for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of students.
2. Obtain an oral history of home visits from veteran agriculture teachers via conversations and email correspondence.

3. Identify reasons for the decline in home visits by agriculture teachers.
4. Identify a definition for home visits within the culture of agricultural education.
5. Provide a foundation for future documentation of the status of home visits by agriculture teachers.

#### **Article Two Objectives: Home Visit Questionnaire**

1. To describe the current status and purpose of home visits among California secondary agriculture teachers.
2. To identify how respondents perceive the impacts of, and barriers to, conducting home visits.
3. To identify a definition of home visits in the context of agricultural education.
4. To identify individuals who are currently conducting home visits to provide purposive sampling for phenomenological study.

#### **Article Three Objectives: Phenomenological Study of Teachers Identified as Conducting Home Visits**

1. To gain information from agricultural education teachers conducting home visits regarding their motives, strategies, and suggestions for implementation.
2. To identify challenges and benefits to implementing home visits into an agricultural education program.
3. To share strategies and experiences from colleagues in the profession.
4. To identify a definition of home visits by those conducting home visits.

## **Methods**

This research utilized three strategies to gather data: (1) a historical investigation to increase understanding of home visits in agricultural education to facilitate further research, (2) a questionnaire about home visits administered via Qualtrics, delivered via email, to all California secondary agricultural education teachers, and (3) a phenomenological study involving selected teachers who reported currently conducting home visits. Institutional Review Board approval was received from both Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University regarding this research (see Appendix A).

The research was reported in the three-article format. Manuscript one focused on the historical literature review of home visits, including conversations with expert agriculture teachers. The second manuscript reported findings from a questionnaire about home visits administered to secondary agricultural education teachers in the state of California. Finally, manuscript three utilized a phenomenological research format to document experiences of agriculture teachers currently conducting home visits in California.

### **Article One Methods: Historical Investigation**

According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012, p. 535-536), there are five reasons for conducting historical research:

1. To make people aware of what happened in the past so that they may learn from past failures and successes.
2. To learn how things were done in the past to see if they might be applicable to present day problems and concerns.



3. To assist in prediction.
4. To test hypotheses concerning relationships or trends.
5. To understand present educational practices and policies more fully.

The research method goal of documenting the history of visits to the homes by agriculture teachers will help current agriculture teachers understand the historical significance of home visits. This document also educates teachers about past methods for conducting home visits to guide implementation strategies in their own programs. Historical literature review and conversations with noted agricultural education leaders assisted in documenting the future need for home visits and provided evidence for the relationships formed from these visits. Lastly, the documentation of methods and strategies used provides teachers valuable information about current practices to conduct home visits and the logistical concerns of this pedagogical tool. Individuals were contacted based on their known status in the field of agricultural education. These individuals were asked to provide guidance in locating historical documents and legislation and encouraged to provide their own thoughts, beliefs, and experiences. Identification of individuals to visit with included consideration of years of teaching in agricultural education, experience in conducting home visits, connection to the National FFA Association, and significance in agricultural education.

Both primary and secondary sources were used to obtain the information desired. Whenever possible, primary sources of information were used due to the direct connection to the event or research being described (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Primary sources were personal communications with key individuals in agricultural education,

articles in the *Agricultural Education Magazine*, correspondence with the National FFA Organization, National FFA publications, and peer reviewed articles from the *Journal of Agricultural Education*. Secondary sources were books, emails, and social media posts related to current project supervision methods.

All references were subjected to both internal and external criticism. All sources were examined thoroughly to determine if they were authentic and authored by an individual who contributed worth to the study. Innovative and research poster abstracts containing information on this topic were submitted for blind review to the American Association of Agricultural Education (AAAE) conferences for feedback. Article number one was also submitted for critique. Multiple sources were used to triangulate the data and establish credibility of the results. This included personal notes during conversations, journal articles, and historical dates of significance.

### **Article Two Methods: Home Visit Questionnaire**

A questionnaire (see Appendix B) about home visits was administered as a census via email to all California secondary agricultural education teachers. The list of teachers was accessible via the California Agriculture Teacher's Association directory. A recruitment email (see Appendix C) and a recruitment flyer (see Appendix D) were utilized. A total of 750 teachers were contacted. The questionnaire was developed in consultation with experts in agricultural education, and a pilot test of the instrument was run to reveal a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .91. The instrument consisted of 20 questions that included multiple answer questions, short answer questions, and a set of

Likert Scale questions addressing the value of conducting home visits. Dillman's (2000) survey methods were followed.

### **Article Three Methods: Phenomenological Study of California Agriculture**

#### **Teachers Conducting Home Visits**

Phenomenological research involving selected teachers who reported conducting home visits was employed. Selection of those to be interviewed was made from the list of teachers who indicated a willingness to be interviewed on the questionnaire administered as part of Article Two. The final question asked for willing participants to be interviewed based on their experience with conducting home visits. Selection of individuals from this list was based on their tangible experience with conducting visits to the homes of students in their program. A recruitment email (see Appendix E) was utilized with these individuals. Interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached, with a total of 21 individuals being interviewed. Findings were presented in a phenomenological study format to allow depth of context to be shared.

#### **Limitations**

This research was subject to limitations. While the practice of visiting students in their homes is used in many areas, this research focused on the practice in the context of secondary agricultural education. Furthermore, this research focused on determining the current state of the practice in California. This information may be applicable outside of California, but researchers should use caution as there may be significant differences across geographic states and regions.

CHAPTER II  
AN EXAMINATION OF THE HOME VISIT PROCESS IN AGRICULTURAL  
EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL LOOK

**Overview**

This study presents a historical review of the practice of home visits in agricultural education as well as an ethnographic account of how the practice is defined and used by agricultural educators. The perception of experts in the field of agricultural education that home visits are valuable – as home visits are defined, in various ways, by the experts – is discussed. The factors contributing to a changed focus on home visits in agricultural education profession are identified. Historical events supporting the view that it is beneficial for teachers to visit the homes of students is documented. The author’s research reveals a long history of the practice of home visits in agricultural education, but very little documentation of its current impact. Pertinent literature reveals that two legislative enactments, the Smith-Hughes Act and the Vocational Education Act, significantly affected the practice of visits to students’ homes for project supervision. Specifically, experts in agricultural education identify increased class size, the loss of extended teacher contracts, and increasing demands on teachers’ time as reasons for decline in home visits. Agriculture teachers have been conducting visits to the homes of their students since the early 1900s. However, research that documents the impact of home visits on individual students, programs, and community support is lacking. Further investigation is needed to document the current status of home visits in agricultural education and whether their purposes are achieved when they occur.

## **Introduction**

“Being an effective agriculture teacher goes beyond classroom teaching” (Roberts & Dyer, 2004, p. 94). Education outside the classroom environment has long been a distinguishing characteristic of agricultural education, and often includes a visit to the home of the agriculture student. These home visits have most commonly been associated with supervised agriculture experience (SAE) projects, but may have a variety of purposes and functions. The Vocational Education Act of 1947 provided funding specifically for teacher supervision for off-campus FFA activities, including supervising SAE projects (Croom, 2008). Since then, changes in demographics, agricultural practices, education requirements, and legislation have permanently altered the field of agricultural education, and changed the practice of home visits. While the nature and frequency of these visits have changed over time, there is evidence that they may still provide classroom benefits and improve student involvement (including involvement in FFA activities).

Despite their apparent benefits, home visits appear to be declining (Miller, 1980). However, there is a paucity of data regarding agriculture teachers performing home visits in agricultural education programs. To understand the value of a home visit, one must study its origins and how the practice has changed over time. It is also illuminating to explore the perceptions, definitions, and expectations about home visits that exist in the culture of agricultural education. This paper presents a historical and ethnographic discussion of home visits related to secondary agricultural education. To accomplish this, I first present a review of the literature on the subject and on legislation that has

affected home visits over time. Next, I provide first-hand accounts from conversations with veteran agricultural education experts to better define the home visit and qualitatively describe its value.

One of the goals of the 2016-2020 National Research Agenda (Priority Area 5) is to create “efficient and effective agricultural education programs” (Roberts et al., 2016, p. 41). Increasing participation in some type of home visit may help achieve this goal by improving overall educational effectiveness both inside and outside the classroom. Home visits also can promote student success by engaging students and parents, which is crucial to the continued success of an agricultural education program. In addition, “home visits give the instructor the opportunity to analyze SAE projects first-hand and build rapport with students and families, which not only helps SAE supervision, but benefits classroom instruction and FFA involvement” (Bane, 2003, p. 14).

Experiential learning, through supervised agricultural experiences, has a long history in school-based agricultural education (Roberts et al., 2016). The benefits of visiting students in their homes extend far beyond supervising SAE projects. During these visits, a unique relationship is created between the parents, students, and the home visitor (Larson, 1980). A majority of the 60 teachers participating in the nationally recognized Parent Teacher Home Visitation Project (PTHVP) reported improved teacher-parent relationships, teacher-student relationships, student behavior, work habits, and academic achievement (Stetson, Stetson, Nix, & Sinclair, 2012).

In the early 1900s, Rufus Stimson created and used home project method during agriculture teaching, which extended teaching practices outside of the classroom and

into the homes of students enrolled in agricultural education (Moore, 1988).

Historically, the reason to visit student's homes began with the development of their SAE projects, which have been a successful method for applying the concepts and principles learned in the agriculture classroom in real-life settings (Retallick, 2010). Legislative changes such as the Vocational Education Act of 1963 have fundamentally changed project supervision requirements (Moore, 2003), and therefore the practice of home visits. Specifically, this act changed the nature of the SAE project to allow for variations of non-home-based projects, thereby reducing the previous emphasis on home visits.

SAE visits remain a part of many programs, but as early as 1980, home visits were reported to be on the decline (Miller, 1980), with demographic changes possibly contributing. The National FFA Organization's membership has grown by 150,000 members in the past decade alone (National FFA Organization, 2017), which has resulted in a greater student-to-teacher ratio for many agriculture programs. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average pupil to teacher ratio for secondary public schools rose to 26.8 in 2013 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). The increase in the number of students and the corresponding responsibilities that have been added to the agriculture teacher's job description have made finding the time and resources to implement tools such as home visits an increasing challenge (Bane, 2003).

Even as home visits have been on the decline in agricultural education, researchers and policy makers noted their benefits in other areas. Stetson et al. (2012)

conducted a research project with 60 elementary school teachers and discovered that 84% of the teacher participants believed that the home visit had an extremely positive to moderately positive effect on their relationship with the parents. According to Johnson (2009), state-based home visiting programs were reported by 40 states, representing 70 distinct programs. Additionally, President Barack Obama's 2010 education budget designated \$8.6 billion over 10 years for proven home visiting programs. However, these programs focused on early childhood education rather than agricultural education.

Despite the apparent increase in interest in funding for home visits overall, the practice has not returned to past levels of practice in agricultural education. The individual instruction that occurs during home visits requires considerable teacher time, but the results obtained justify the time required (Phipps & Osborne, 1988). If agricultural teachers and students are to realize the full benefits of home visits in the future, it is important to examine the historical roots of home visits and understand how and why they have changed. Given the qualitative nature of this historical investigation, I describe my lived experience below:

I have been an agriculture teacher for 16 years and have conducted nearly 900 home visits. The process of conducting home visits has allowed me to have in-depth personal experiences to contribute to home visit research. The home visit has become the norm in my program and community, resulting in increased numbers of active FFA members, more agricultural education students, more career development event teams, substantial numbers of supervised agriculture experience (SAE) projects and an increased sense of community in the classroom which supports better classroom management strategies.



## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The role of vocational agriculture teachers has traditionally included visits to the homes of students for the purpose of supervising occupational experience programs (Miller, 1980). Literature supports the notion that these visits can have a positive impact on student success. To this end, the practice of making home visits enables teachers to build personal relationships with students (Robinson & Haynes, 2011), and these visits were recommended by Vincent and Kirby (2015) as a means of encouraging culturally relevant pedagogy. While home visits in the field of agricultural education have traditionally centered on project supervision, the literature indicates benefits that far exceed supervision. Regardless of the intent, visiting the homes of students can send a significant message of care and concern for the future opportunities of students (Lin & Bates, 2010). Home visits are also beneficial for parents and the teachers who conduct them. Specifically, “home visits can provide teachers with an understanding of the families’ lives and the academic, emotional, and social needs of the student” (Lin & Bates, 2010, p. 180).

The benefits of visiting a student’s home are grounded in attachment theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1992). While attachment theory was first developed in the 1930s in an effort to describe parental involvement and connection with children, it has more recently evolved to address broader societal situations. The award winning national Parent Teacher Home Visit model shows that inventing and creating relationship attachments to families and engagement directly affects student achievement (Lemay, 2017) Attachment theory explains the impact that an agriculture teacher can have on a

student early in his or her high school career and in the program: the process of conducting a home visit with the student creates familial security and forms a basis from which the student can form new technical skills and interests in other fields (Bretherton, 1992). The student and teacher can gain an understanding of one another that fosters a respectful relationship that carries into the future. (Crosen, 1976).

Bronfenbrenner's 1986 ecological systems theory also supports the need for teachers to visit the homes of their students. This theory proposed that a child's development is influenced by many aspects of the environment and that to fully understand a child, one must attempt to understand the dynamic relationship between the child, his or her parents, and family characteristics (Lin & Bates, 2010). Developing a deeper understanding of the student and his or her family dynamics can help the teacher provide new strategies and methods of support to strengthen student-centered learning. According to Bronfenbrenner, home visits are a part of the mesosystem, which connects the home and school and promotes their interaction with one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In summary, home visits provide the opportunity for the teacher to meet the student's parents and siblings to determine what influence they have on the student's development (Crosen, 1976).

History of home visiting programs can be linked back to the Reform Era (1870-1920) with the focus of home health and the needs of vulnerable children and their families (Bhavnagri & Krolkowski, 2000). Since the late 1990s, home visits have become increasingly popular with policy makers and programs that deliver services to families (Lin & Bates, 2010). Research on home visits has been focused more on

elementary school grades because these visits allow teachers to create an initial positive impression and win parental support (Lin & Bates, 2010). President Obama's 2010 education budget supported widely recognized home visiting models such as Healthy Families America, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers (Johnson, 2009). The Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project reports that teachers' visits were directly aimed at helping vulnerable families through mentorship but also supported the child's school readiness and academic achievement (Stetson et al., 2012).

Research indicates that building relationships is critical to enhancing student engagement (Bird, Martin, & Simonsen, 2013). Although most of this research has focused on the elementary level grades, attachment theory and ecological systems theory suggest that the results may transfer to the secondary education level and to agricultural education. Some states have enacted legislation measures supporting the need for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of their students. One example is a bill passed in California.

In 1981, the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 187, which provided for the creation and maintenance of a comprehensive technical education program in agriculture by the state public school system to ensure an adequate supply of trained and skilled individuals (California Department of Agricultural Education, 2007). This bill also established a committee that created 15 program standards that schools must meet to be eligible to qualify for the California Agriculture Incentive Grant program, which encourages schools to create and maintain high-quality agricultural education programs.

Recommendations of the State Advisory Council for agricultural education included a manual of strategies for program improvement. One of these, strategy number three, criteria number two, is for credentialed instructors to “conduct home visits to discuss SAE possibilities with parents, thereby involving them in the planning process for their children” (California Agricultural Education, 2003, p. 21).

Over time, teachers have developed methods to conduct SAE visits or other visits to supervise projects at students’ homes and to create a foundational relationship with students. A 1985 guide written by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, entitled *Improving Home-School Communications*, states that “home visits acquaint the teacher with the home environment and provide a more relaxed setting for discussing the same kinds of issues that are covered in parent-teacher conferences” (Gotts & Purnell, 1985, p. 17). The most significant purposes of any home visit are to develop a mutual human connection, build a sense of community, promote FFA involvement, and understand areas of interest for each individual student. It is the one-on-one time at these visits that gives the instructor the opportunity to determine the student’s main goals in life (Crosen, 1976). Agriculture teachers can then guide students into SAEs, FFA career development activities, and possible career pathways that will foster those goals.

The National FFA Organization reported that current FFA membership is at 649,355 members nationwide as of 2017 (National FFA Organization, 2017). Student recruitment, engagement, and retention are critical to the development of effective agricultural science programs. Home visits enable teachers to build personal relationships with students (Robinson & Haynes, 2011), which is critical to enhancing

student engagement (Bird, Martin, Tummons et al., 2013). Therefore, if done well and at the beginning of a student's high school experience, home visits may markedly increase recruitment, participation, and retention in SAE and FFA programs as well as overall student and community engagement with agriculture.

While literature out of the early to mid-1900s contains some information regarding the topic of home visits in agricultural education, more recently there is a lack of in-depth documentation of the need for teachers to visit students' homes and the impact these personal connections make on an FFA program. Despite their potential value, there is a lack of research discussing teachers actively using home visits as a method to promote SAE projects, to communicate with the parents, and to create a personal connection with the students.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

Review of the literature revealed a lack of peer-reviewed research on home visits in agricultural education. The historical investigation described in this study increases our understanding of home visits in agricultural education, which is hoped to stimulate further research on how to incorporate this valuable tool into current agricultural education practice. The purpose of this research was to document the historical events significant to home visits as identified by a literature review and conversations with significant members of the agricultural education community. This research also examined the theoretical concepts that underlie home visits in order to better understand their value. Significant reasons for additional research were also uncovered. The purpose of this study was supported by the following objectives:

1. Describe the pertinent historical events and reasons for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of students.
2. Obtain an oral history of home visits from veteran agriculture teachers via conversations and email correspondence.
3. Identify reasons for the decline in home visits by agriculture teachers.
4. Identify a definition for home visits within the culture of agricultural education.
5. Provide a foundation for future documentation of the status of home visits by agriculture teachers.

Historical research is considered a type of qualitative research (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Walker, 2013). According to Fraenkel et al. (2012, p. 535-536), there are five reasons for conducting historical research:

1. To make people aware of what happened in the past so that they may learn from past failures and successes.
2. To learn how things were done in the past to see if they might be applicable to present day problems and concerns.
3. To assist in prediction.
4. To test hypotheses concerning relationships or trends.
5. To understand present educational practices and policies more fully.

The historical research presented here is intended to address items one, two and five above. Awareness of how home visits became important to agricultural education and how they have changed over time may help us learn from past failures and successes and may also give us insight useful for improving the modern version of the practice.

Understanding the evolution of home visits from both the historical and ethnographic perspective will enhance understanding of the current state of the practice.

As previously stated, home visits in agricultural education are traditionally associated with SAE projects. This suggests that the SAE project is an integral component of the definition of a home visit within the culture of agricultural education. Therefore, legislative and cultural changes that have changed the nature of SAE projects likely have also influenced the practice of home visits. Knowledge about the evolution of home visits may help us understand how the practice is currently defined in agricultural education. Research also suggests that home visits are a valuable practice outside of agricultural education, even when not associated with SAE projects. A review of the history of home visits in agricultural education coupled with information gathered from eminent agriculture teachers explains the current state of the practice and offers insight into the changes that may be necessary for the practice to continue.

Documentation of the history of visits to students' homes by agriculture teachers helps agriculture teachers understand the definition and significance of home visits in our collective history. This documentation also assists in educating teachers about past methods for conducting home visits, which should improve decisions about implementation strategies in their own programs. This historical and ethnographic research addresses these needs.

### **Methods**

This research was both historical and ethnographic. Conversations with eminent veteran agriculture teachers about the practice of home visits facilitated documentation

of home visits' history, evolution, and status within the culture of agricultural education. The historical research intended to identify the legislative and cultural basis for home visits as well as identify the legislative changes that contributed to the current state of the practice.

Knowledgeable persons gave first-hand accounts about the practice of home visits in information-gathering conversations. These individuals provided guidance that helped the author locate pertinent documents, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the practice from the point of view of experts steeped in the culture of the profession. This ethnographic approach uses personal conversations (both oral and written) to increase understanding of the definition, value, and evolution of the practice of home visits. Knowledgeable individuals were identified as persons to be contacted for direction on where to locate historical documents, and they provided guidance that was helpful in the collection of further information. Criteria established for determining who to contact included years of teaching in agricultural education, experience in conducting home visits, connection to the National FFA Association, and significance in agricultural education. For example, the group included five fellows of the American Association for Agricultural Education.

Historical research was conducted by reviewing all documents recommended by the experts and the literature and legislation pertaining to home visits and agricultural education. Both primary and secondary sources were used to obtain the information reported on. Whenever possible, I used primary sources of information due to their direct connection to the event or research being described (Fraenkel et al., 2012).



Primary sources included personal communications with key individuals in agricultural education, articles in *Agricultural Education Magazine*, correspondence with the National FFA Organization, national FFA publications, and peer-reviewed articles from the *Journal of Agricultural Education*. Secondary sources included books, emails, and social media posts related to current project supervision methods. All references were subjected to both internal and external criticism. Innovative and research abstracts were submitted for blind review and feedback from several AAAE conferences. A draft of this paper was also submitted for a blind review and constructive comments. All sources were examined thoroughly to determine if they were authentic and authored by an individual who contributed worth to the study. Multiple sources were used to triangulate the data and establish credibility of results, including personal notes, journal articles and historical dates of significance. Validation strategies were used to suggest fine-tuning to better capture the experts' perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Reflexive journaling methods were used to establish trustworthiness, which included documenting my personal or lived experience conducting home visits. Several components of this paper were peer reviewed in a qualitative research methods course and through submissions to calls for research at conferences.

The historical literature review and interactions with noted agricultural education experts provide evidence related to the need for home visits and evidence for the relationships formed as a result of these visits. Interactions with the seven experts occurred through unstructured in-person conversations, phone conversations, and email correspondence. All seven of these individuals were teacher educators at some point in

their teaching career and had been teaching more than thirty years. They include five Fellows in the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) representing three different states. Lastly, the historical investigation documented current practices related to conducting home visits and the logistical concerns of this tool for individuals.

## **Findings**

### **Historical Events**

The history of agricultural education points to the home project method as integral to the development of home visit programs and to Rufus Stimson as one of most well-known individuals in agricultural education to visit the homes of students (Moore, 1988). Home visits began with the need to develop and support SAE projects, and Stimson deemed his version of project-based learning as the “home-school cooperation plan” (Smith & Rayfield, 2016, p. 148). These farm projects have been a successful method for applying the concepts and principles learned in the agricultural education classroom in real-life settings (Retallick, 2010). Rufus Stimson was a pioneer of home visits, expending large amounts of time and effort to connect to agriculture students in his state (Moore, 1988).

The passage of the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act of 1917 promoted agricultural education as an avenue for training young men who had “entered upon or who are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm or of the farm home (National Vocational Education Act, 1917, p. 934). This act required all students to “have directed or supervised practice in agriculture, either on a farm provided by the school or a farm in another location for at least six months out of the year” (p. 934).

Strict enforcement by federal and state supervisors of project supervision by agriculture teachers was required and included making visits to homes to observe the students' projects and to provide general guidance. In 1921-22, 79% of all agriculture students across the nation were engaged in a SAE project. This engagement increased to 90% by 1930 (Bird, Martin, & Simonsen 2013). During this time, teachers were required to submit monthly and annual reports that would be sent to state supervisors about their home farm project visits (Moore, 2003).

The passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 changed school-based agricultural education and the diversity of SAE project opportunities for students. It encouraged a wider range of avenues for the study of agriculture in areas such as business and technology. The SAE definition reflected this change and expanded from being specifically a "farm project" to a "field, shop, laboratory, cooperative work, apprenticeship or other occupational experience" (Smith & Rayfield, 2016, p.153). Additionally, this change involved being open to other types of experiential learning activities that included multiple types of research and education (Moore, 2003). Further, with the passage of this act, it was no longer mandatory that teachers supervise SAE projects. However, agriculture programs were still strongly encouraged to promote SAE projects as a vital component of the three-component model in agricultural education: the FFA component, an SAE project, and classroom instruction. "Each of the three components of the agricultural education model originated at different times in American history, but were developed simultaneously. Supervised experience was probably the first to originate in the United States." (Croom, 2008, p. 117) The National

Vocational Education Act of 1963 also increased off-farm activities and attracted increasingly diverse students into agricultural education. The impact of this act and its implications for home visits to supervise home farm projects were discussed with Expert #6 by telephone. He shared that one of the major factors that contributed to the changing focus of agriculture teachers' visits to their students' home was the passage of this act in 1963. The act gave students the ability to customize their SAE projects, with every junior and senior acquiring access to twelve different pathways for SAE projects. New experimental design projects started to emerge, changing the nature of the experience and in turn creating new challenges for teachers. In addition, proposals for extended summer contracts with school districts for agriculture teachers to provide direct supervision via home project visits have declined. Across the country, many states have lost extended contracts because they did not document or follow through, resulting in decreased home visits.

### **Reasons for Decline**

The changing nature of SAE projects may have influenced changes in extended contracts for agriculture teachers. Indeed, "extended employment for agricultural education teachers appears to decline as the emphasis on SAE programs decline" (Dyer & Williams, 1997, p. 63). Several researchers including Dunham and Long (1984), French (1985), and Dyer and Osborne (1995) report that the length of a teacher's contract does not affect SAE participation. This indicates that the decline in extended contracts is a symptom of rather than a cause of declining emphasis on SAE projects.

What may be an effect of the loss of extended contracts, however is loss of time to dedicate to home visits. According to Moore and Wilson (2007), demands on teacher time may reduce SAE project supervision. As a professor and teacher educator, Expert #4 supervised numerous pre-service student teachers and conducted home visits with each of the teacher candidates in agricultural education. When asked how home visits have changed since the early 1970s, he shared:

the students have changed, but the actual visit itself hasn't changed a lot. The stuff around the edges, the fact that so many people are studying agricultural science today instead of agriculture, that's changed. The main reason why teachers don't make home visits is that the competition for your time is very strong. As a new teacher, the peer pressure from your neighboring school and the school that won contests last year is so great that there's not much of a reward for making a fantastic home visit, compared to a blue ribbon at a field day.

The link between SAE project visits, extended teaching contracts, and time pressure is evident in the literature and in conversations with experts. These factors may combine to create a reduced emphasis on SAE projects leading to loss of contracts and therefore a lack of time as a barrier to SAE home visits. It can be argued that this process began with changes in legislation.

Visits to the home are given different names such as "SAE visits," "initial SAE visits," or "project visits" depending on the purpose or intent of the agriculture instructor. Early agricultural education history reveals programs with similar names such as the 1908 Home-School Cooperation Plan (Stimson & Lathrop, 1942), home project method (Stimson, 1914), 1926 productive farm enterprises (Schmidt, 1926), supervised farm practice program (Cook, 1938), and supervised farming program

(Deyoe, 1943). These programs laid the foundation for teachers to visit the home farms of their students (Moore, 1988).

A review of the literature revealed key moments in history that have contributed to the necessity of conducting home visits in agricultural education. Major historical acts connected to agriculture teachers visiting the homes of their students are summarized in Table 1 as a timeline.

Analysis of the literature, key legislative points and conversations with experts reveal the link between SAE projects and home visits. Rufus Stimson may have been ahead of his time when he developed the home project method in 1908. Over a century later, home visits for early childhood education have gained support nationwide.

National FFA membership growth may be contributing to larger class sizes and increased demands for project supervision by teachers. As Expert #4 pointed out, competition for time due to increased participation in FFA activities and larger class sizes are a major additional reason for the decline of home visits. “The smaller the class size, the greater the probability the student received supervision by the agricultural education teacher” (Dyer & Williams, 1997, p. 60).

Table 1  
*Historical and Key Highlights Impacting Home Visits in the Context of Agricultural Education*

Date	Historical Highlight	Significance to Home Visits
1908	Home Project Method	Rufus Stimson father of the Home Project Method. He visited the homes of every high school student in Massachusetts (Moore, 1988).

Table 1 Continued

Date	Historical Highlight	Significance to Home Visits
1917	Smith-Hughes Act	Required all students to have a supervised agriculture project (National Vocational Education Act, 1917). Project supervision by teachers was required; it was strictly enforced (Moore, 1988).
1963	Public Law 88-210 The Vocational Education Act of 1963	Greatly expanded the federal role in agricultural education (National Vocational Education Act, 1963). Increased the diversity of SAE projects to include more off-farm activities. Eliminated mandate that teachers supervise projects (Moore, 2003).
1981	CA Senate Bill 187	CA State Legislature declared a comprehensive CTE program in agricultural education. Promotes credentialed ag teachers conducting home visits (California Department of Agricultural Education, 2007).
2010	President Obama's Education Budget	Supported widely recognized home visiting models for early elementary students.
2011- 2016	National Research Agenda	Priority five supports efficient and effective agricultural education programs. Priority six discusses vibrant, resilient communities (Roberts et al., 2016).
2017	National FFA membership reaches record high of 649,355 student members.	Membership has grown by 150,000 in the past 10 years. A result is that programs are expanding to larger class sizes (National FFA Organization, 2017a, 2017b).

### **Oral History from Veteran Agriculture Teachers**

Conversations with veteran agriculture teachers supplied insight into the overall culture of agricultural education. The home visit provides the opportunity to collaborate

with the student and families at their homes to foster a unique relationship supporting the vocational future of students. However, conversations with leaders in the field of agricultural education revealed that the definition and name of a home visit differs among individuals. The following excerpts illustrate the perceived value of home visits and the lack of a unified definition. Expert #1 shared via email:

I agree that the initial SAE visits can be most valuable. I contend that this initial home visit is as much an SAE visit as one to a senior with a fair project. It's not about the pig; it's about the student! The purpose of an initial visit is essentially the same: to work with the student and family to introduce, think about, and perhaps even plan for agricultural experiences. I'm afraid that if you couch it simply as a home visit, then teachers will perceive it to be something extra rather than something that is supposed to be part of their job. This is a debatable point in itself.

After a conversation about home visits, Expert #2 expressed similar views. In the late 1980s and early 1990s when he taught high school agricultural education, he conducted visits with each student four times a year. He defined this process as an SAE project visit and described his experience as follows:

The summer before the student's freshmen year, I would arrange to pick up my new students and drive them to their homes for an SAE project visit. That is what we would call it. We would meet the parents and discuss what type of project the student was going to do for their agriculture class. I would bring their record book and we would begin by starting information about their projects. After this initial SAE visit, I would visit each student three more times that year to check on them and their projects to provide feedback for improvements.

In the same conversation noted above, Expert #3 gave his definition of what home visits are and their relevance to the field of agricultural education:

Any time you make a specific effort to go visit individuals where they live or work, you are essentially visiting their home. Taking the time to physically go to their environment to have discussions, whether it is about FFA or agriculture education, or in my case possible funding needs or collaborations among universities, it makes a tremendous impact to make the effort to go visit them. It



does not have to be their ‘home,’ but the physicality of going to them makes it a home visit. I have made what I consider home visits to individuals in different states and even other countries, to discuss important matters in the hopes to gain support and spread agriculture literacy.

In a conversation with Expert #4, an agriculture professor of over 35 years who is now retired, first memories of home visits were recalled from pre-service teacher training. The expert stated:

When I was student teaching I remember my first home visit. It was a requirement while student teaching. I remember that I had to earn the right to go on one by myself, and of course, I had dinner! We would call it a project visit at home. I called them home visits all of the time I was a professor at [state] University, [state]. Our 1972 department head, [name] was one of the individuals that instilled the home visit philosophy in me.

In addition, home visits offer an opportunity to council students just beginning in their agricultural education experience. In a phone conversation, Expert #5 said:

All along Rufus Stimson’s home project method of supervising SAE projects produced the side benefit of knowing about the kids and their families. SAE project visits continued, but morphed to become a proxy for home visits.

### **Definition and Future Research**

Based on these conversations, it appears, from an ethnographic perspective, that the culture of agricultural education may have accepted a definition of home visits that no longer exclusively requires an SAE project, or even an actual visit to a home. However, it is clear that the SAE project is still highly relevant to the practice. It is also clear that the experts see value in home visits, but they do not necessarily agree on a precise definition. This may justify further research into the value of home visits and a study of the practice within the larger population.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

According to retired agriculture professor and senior fellow of the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE), Expert #5, “We don’t have many pieces in research that directly relates to agriculture teachers conducting home visits; therefore, it is recommended that we further investigate this topic.” The researcher was not aware of any specific documents that stated it was mandatory for agriculture teachers to conduct home visits, but it was implied that “direct supervision” of projects includes going to their homes to supervise projects. Agriculture teachers are expected to carry a heavy load of multiple responsibilities and roles within their agriculture program. However, finding new ways to encourage and promote student success is crucial to the continued success of a program.

One of the goals of the National Research Agenda (Priority Area 5) is to “create efficient and effective agricultural education programs” (Roberts et al., 2016). The promotion of our agricultural education programs, including FFA, SAE, and classroom components, can be discussed via a relationship-building home visit with parents. The National Research Agenda (Priority Area 6) promotes the creation of vibrant and resilient communities that work together to help students reach their full potential (Roberts et al., 2016). Both research agenda priorities directly support the need for research related to agriculture teachers visiting the homes of students and the relationship of these visits to strengthening programs and fostering the creation of a supportive community for students.

One practical action suggested by Parker Bane in *The Supervision Challenge* is to schedule the time to make home visits (Bane, 2003). This supports attachment theory

concepts by giving the instructor the opportunity to build rapport with the students and families, which not only helps SAE supervision but also benefits classroom instruction and FFA involvement (Bane, 2003). It also connects the home to school and gives agriculture teachers an understanding of the environment of the family dynamics, thus supporting Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

From this historical study, the researcher concludes that agriculture teachers have been conducting visits to the homes of their students since the early 1900s. The names by which these visits have been called have varied from project visits and initial SAE visits to home visits, depending on professional interpretations. Based on these conclusions, the author recommends documentation of the status of agriculture teachers conducting home visits and the impacts these home visits make on students and programs. Valid and reliable research related to the use of home visits within agricultural education is not present in the current literature. Documentation of the impact of home visits on students, teachers, and the programs as a whole would support better-informed decisions about the need to implement home visits. Research approaches, such as questionnaires to document current perceptions of home visits and current implementation and case study research to document examples of success and failure of home visits, would also assist teachers and teacher educators in developing methodology to use the home visit as a pedagogical tool.

The law may no longer require direct supervision of SAE projects in the student's home, but research suggests that home visits are still powerful tools. Agriculture teachers, under pressure to manage more students and more responsibilities,

may be justifiably reluctant to continue the process of home visits unless necessary for an SAE project. Further research into the value of home visits and the state of the practice across the nation may be justified. Since there have been changes in nature of the SAE project and the practice of agricultural education that may have affected the practice of home visits, it may be necessary to modify the definition of a home visit to reduce the focus on SAE projects if the practice is to continue. If the practice is as valuable as research suggests, agriculture teachers may consider adopting a definition of the home visit that does not require an SAE project in order to reach more students in their homes.

## CHAPTER III

### HOME IS WHERE THE START IS: AN EXAMINATION OF HOME VISITS AMONG CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

#### Overview

Visiting the homes of agricultural education students has long been a practice for agriculture teachers. The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive study was to determine the current status of the practice of conducting home visits among California agriculture teachers. This included their perceived benefits and barriers to conducting home visits as well as the prevailing definition of a home visit and a comparison to a supervised agriculture experience (SAE) visit. This study revealed that 48.9% of respondents defined a home visit as a relational visit separate from a SAE visit. However, 31.1% of respondents stated that an SAE visit is a home visit. Descriptive statistics for barriers and perceived impacts of home visits were indicated via a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Lack of time for the practice was identified as the most highly ranked barrier category followed closely by language and cultural barriers. The rankings of impacts were nearly evenly distributed among all options. The majority of respondents substantially agreed with statements about the impacts of home visits. However, there was a statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) difference in the perceived strength of the impacts and barriers among those who conduct home visits and those who do not.

## **Introduction**

The practice of conducting home visits may be a way to encourage and promote student success, which is important to the continued success of an agricultural education program. One of the goals of the 2016-2020 National Research Agenda (Priority Area 5) is to create “efficient and effective agricultural education programs” (Roberts et al., 2016, p. 41). It points out the shortage of trained personnel for agricultural industries and encourages educators to look for ways to engage individuals considering agricultural careers. One way to engage students in agricultural education is by reaching out to them and their parents through home visits.

The practice of visiting a student in their home has been a part of agricultural education since the time of Rufus Stimson and his development of the home project method. The father of the home project method, Stimson would visit the homes of every high school student in Massachusetts as state supervisor (Moore, 1988). It has historically been one of the defining practices of agricultural education, particularly when used for SAE projects. However, this practice has declined in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Miller, 1980). Researchers report the reason for this decline may range from changes in the legislation governing SAE projects (Moore, 1988) to the increasing demands on teacher time (Bane, 2003). Despite their apparent benefits, there is a lack of data describing the number of agriculture teachers performing home visits. This work presents the results of a questionnaire of California secondary agricultural education teachers to better understand the current state of the home visit practice in California.

For many agriculture teachers, the definition of a home visit is strongly linked to the SAE project. However, the practice may have benefits even in the absence of SAE projects. Particularly, “home visits can provide teachers with an understanding of the families’ lives and the academic, emotional, and social, needs of the student” (Lin & Bates, 2010, p. 180). As SAE projects, and SAE project visits, decline, it may be desirable to adopt a new definition of the home visit that is distinct and independent from the SAE project visit. The questionnaire presented in this work helps to quantify how agriculture teachers in California define a home visit and the extent to which it is connected to SAE project visits.

Finally, the study identifies the perceptions that California secondary agricultural education teachers hold with regard to home visits. Respondents were asked to evaluate statements about the benefits of home visits and the barriers to implementation. This information may help researchers understand how to encourage the practice and expand home visits beyond the SAE project.

### **Background**

Experiential learning through supervised agricultural experiences has a long history in school-based agricultural education (Roberts et al., 2016). Agriculture teachers have been making visits to the home since the early 1900s in connection with the supervision of their students’ home projects, now called SAE programs (Phipps, Osborne, Dyer, & Ball, 2008). The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 served as the federal law which mandated that all students have “directed or supervised practice in agriculture, either on a farm provided for by the school or other farm” (Phipps et al., 2008, p. 443).

The supervision of this farm practice provided by agriculture instructors was enforced by state supervisors (Moore & Wilson, 2007). Based largely on production agriculture, these project supervision visits provided the opportunity for agriculture teachers to connect with their students at their home farms and allowed the student-teacher relationship to develop.

Over the years, the way agricultural educators supervise SAE projects has changed to reflect the changing realities of the profession. These changes include increased class size, and competition for time and resources among other things. One of the most significant changes was brought about by the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. This act changed school-based agricultural education by encouraging a wider range of agricultural avenues for students to pursue. Therefore, the focus of SAE projects broadened to include “field, shop, laboratory, cooperative work, apprenticeship or other occupational experience” (Smith & Rayfield, 2016, p. 153). The passage of this act also removed the mandate for direct supervision of SAE projects. For students, the new legislation increased off-the-farm activities and attracted increasingly diverse students into agricultural education. While agriculture programs were not directly discouraged from promoting SAE projects, these changes may have contributed to the decline of the practice. Specifically, the reduction of mandatory supervision and decoupling of SAE visits from home-farm based projects may have reduced the pressure on teachers to conduct home visits.

The benefits of visiting students in their homes extend far beyond supervising SAE projects. Larson (1980) suggests that this process creates a unique relationship



between the teacher and the parents and students. Many of the teachers participating the Parent Teacher Home Visitation Project (PTHVP) reported improved parent-teacher and teacher-student relationships and student participation (Stetson et al., 2012).

Participating teachers, who were initially apprehensive about participating in a home visit, reported that the outcome was overwhelmingly positive (Stetson et al., 2012).

With SAE-project related home visits on the decline, it may be beneficial to revise the accepted definition of the home visit to extend beyond the SAE project. This may provide access to the benefits associated with the practice in the face of declining SAE participation. With this in mind, it is important to understand and quantify how current agriculture educators define a home visit with respect to SAE project visits.

Despite their apparent benefits, home visits appear to have declined (Miller, 1980). Several researchers have reported decreasing numbers of SAE programs since the 1980s (Miller, 1980; Rubenstein, Thoron, & Estepp, 2014). While the changes to SAE project supervision requirements and the increasingly limited time available for home visits may be at the heart of this decline, other barriers may exist. Data about agriculture teachers currently performing home visits and their perceptions about the benefits and barriers to implementation is scarce. The status of California agriculture teachers conducting home visits was unknown prior to this study.

Legislators in California recognized the value of home visits in agricultural education. In 1981, with Senate Bill 187, the California State Legislature declared that it was within the best interests of the people that a comprehensive technical education program in agriculture be created and maintained by the state public school system to

ensure an adequate supply of trained and skilled individuals (California Department of Agricultural Education, 2007). Recommendations of the State Advisory Council included a manual of strategies for program improvement. The strategies outlined supported that credentialed instructors conduct home visits with their students and include the parents in the planning of SAE projects (California Agricultural Education, 2003). As stated above, this bill retains the historical definition of a home visit that is strongly connected to SAE projects rather than adopting a definition of the home visit that is separate from the SAE project.

Despite the apparent increase in interest and funding for home visits, the practice has not returned to past levels of prominence in agricultural education. This may be linked to the overall decline of home-based SAE projects. However, other barriers to implementation exist. Researchers have reported agriculture teachers finding it difficult to successfully implement SAE project supervision into their already full job description. According to Moore and Wilson (2007), teachers believe that the lack of time and high numbers of students are barriers to conducting quality SAE programs. Research has shown that barriers to teacher supervision of SAE projects include lack of release time, increasing class size, and limited funding for teachers to travel to SAE sites (Dyer & Williams, 1997). In addition, the substantial expansion of proficiency areas available to students in today's agricultural education programs has made many opportunities available off the farm. Currently, there are 47 national proficiency areas that students can explore (National FFA Organization, 2017). Some fall into new SAE focus areas such as research, exploratory activities, and service learning (National FFA Organization.

2017). Forty-one percent of teachers surveyed by Moore and Wilson (2007) reported that they were not familiar with the new SAE categories making supervision difficult for teachers. All of these barriers may contribute to a decline in the practice. Phipps and Osborne (1988) argued that individual instruction provided during home visits requires considerable teacher time, but the results obtained justify the time required. If agricultural teachers and students are to realize the full benefits of home visits in the future, it is important to examine their current impacts and understand how agriculture teachers are using them in modern day agricultural education programs.

Modern agricultural educators work to balance the needs of students from many different backgrounds, few of whom will pursue production agriculture full time after graduation (Croom, 2008). The nature of the modern SAE project has expanded beyond home-based agriculture, and the requirement for direct supervision has been relaxed accordingly. This change in SAE projects coupled with increased time demands on all teachers may have led to a general decline in home visits by agricultural educators. However, many questions remain about the current state of the practice of home visits.

The purpose of this research was to document, through a questionnaire, aspects of the current practice of California agriculture teachers conducting home visits. The questionnaire was designed to ask respondents for their definition of a home visit and how it compares to an SAE visit. It also asked questions about incentives for, and barriers to, implementation. Finally, the questionnaire presented questions about the perceived benefits of home visits to understand their value as perceived by respondents. Agricultural educators at all levels could benefit from these details. The way respondents

define home visits should serve as an indicator as to the type interactions that are taking place between agriculture teachers, their students, and their students' families.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Attachment Theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1992). It was used to frame the research, which directly relates to home visits and the student-teacher relationship under investigation. Attachment theory is used to explain the impact that an agriculture teacher can have on a student early in their high school career and in the agricultural education program. The process of conducting a home visit with each student creates a sense of security as well as establishes a foundation for the student to obtain new information (Bretherton, 1992).

In addition, Bronfenbrenner's 1986 Ecological Systems Theory proposes that a child's development is influenced by variables to the home environment and that to understand a student, one must attempt to understand the complex relationships between his/her parents and family members (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Home visits provide a direct opportunity for parents, students, and teachers to gain background information to aide in the implementation of more meaningful learning opportunities for the student. (Lin & Bates, 2010).

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the practice of California secondary agricultural education teachers visiting the homes of students. It also served as the foundation for future research regarding home visits as a pedagogical tool in agricultural education. The research objectives for this study were:

1. To describe the current status and purpose of home visits among California secondary agriculture teachers.
2. To identify how respondents perceive the impacts of, and barriers to, conducting home visits.
3. To identify a definition of a home visit within the context of agricultural education.
4. To identify individuals who are currently conducting home visits to provide purposive sampling for a phenomenological study.

In this study, agriculture teachers were asked several questions relating to the relationships and connections home visits make between their classroom, the community, and a student's home. More specifically, this questionnaire supports the research objectives listed above by collecting home visit data addressing the following questions:

1. What percentage of respondents make home visits?
2. What percentage of respondents define home visits as SAE project visits?
3. What percentage of respondents agree with the definition of a home visit which does not include SAE project visits?
4. What do respondents perceive to be the greatest benefits to making home visits?
5. What do respondents perceive to be the greatest barriers to making home visits?
6. Is there a relationship between perceptions about the impacts of and barriers to implementing home visits and the agricultural teacher reporting that they conduct home visits?

## Methods

Quantitative survey methods were used. The population comprised 750 California agriculture teachers; a census was attempted. The final response rate was 34.93% ( $n = 262$ ). Not all participants provided a response to all questions. Throughout the results, the  $n$  indicates the number of participants providing a response to the question. The survey was administered via Qualtrics through the California Agriculture Teacher's Association list serve.

The Institutional Review Board at Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University approved the study. The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions asking respondents to provide information regarding their years teaching, definition of home visits, differences between home visits and SAE project visits, and perceived value of home visits. In addition, there were 41 Likert-type scale questions administered to assess the perceived value of conducting home visits. The scale options were 1 (strongly agree), 2 (somewhat agree), 3 (agree), 4 (neither agree nor disagree), 5 (disagree), 6 (somewhat disagree), and 7 (strongly disagree). The questions addressed perceived barriers and benefits to conducting home visits (based on the literature). Themes related to barriers included safety, time, language, training, and support. Themes related to benefits included impacts associated with the student, teacher, program, school, and community. This part of the questionnaire, developed in consultation with experts in agricultural education, had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .91, based upon a pilot test.

The questionnaire included a free response question regarding the difference between a home visit and a SAE project visit. For the purpose of the study, a definition

of the home visit was provided by the researcher to guide subsequent questions. It read as follows:

A home visit is the process by which the teacher schedules a time to visit with the student and their parent(s) at the student's home usually during freshman year to discuss crucial elements of the agricultural education program. Components of a home visit include discovering the individual student's agricultural interest, clearly defining FFA and SAE expectations, and gathering general information about the student to facilitate their overall success.

Respondents were then asked if they conducted home visits according to the given definition. The questionnaire concluded with a question asking respondents if they would be willing to participate in an interview related to home visits.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Demographics**

Fifty-one percent ( $n = 134$ ) of the respondents ( $n = 262$ ) reported 10 years of teaching experience or less, and 49% of the respondents reported more than 10 years of total teaching experience. Eleven percent of respondents reported over 26 years of teaching experience. The grade levels being taught by teachers displayed an even distribution among 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Ninety-two percent of the respondents were secondary agricultural education teachers, and the remaining 7% were in various positions at the collegiate level.

### **Home Visits: Visiting with Students and Parents at their Home**

Respondents were asked, "Do you meet with the student and their parent(s) at the student's home during freshmen year to discuss crucial elements of the agricultural education program other than SAE project visits? What is the purpose of this visit? Do you conduct SAE project visits in your program?"

Twenty-five percent ( $n = 65$ ) of teachers ( $n = 257$ ) responded yes to meeting students and parents at their homes for purposes other than SAE project visits. Purposes included discovering the student's agricultural interest, defining SAE and FFA expectations, and gathering general information about the student. Ninety-five percent ( $n = 234$ ) of respondents ( $n = 246$ ) agreed that they conduct SAE project visits while only 5% ( $n = 12$ ) answered "no." According to the provided definition of a home visit for the purposes of this study, only 23% ( $n = 55$ ) responded ( $n = 237$ ) "yes" to conducting home visits per the definition while 77% ( $n = 182$ ) responded "no."

### **Incentives for Conducting Home Visits**

Respondents were asked, "Do you receive incentives from your department, administration, or community for conducting home visits? What types of incentives would encourage you or a teaching partner to conduct home visits?"

Ninety percent ( $n = 191$ ) of the responding teachers ( $n = 213$ ) reported that they do not receive any incentives for conducting home visits. Only 5% ( $n = 10$ ) reported that they receive incentives and another 6% ( $n = 12$ ) indicated that they were not sure if they do. Teachers responded with varying answers to desired incentives such as extra duty pay or stipends, time in the form of a project period or early release time, decreased class sizes, support with language barriers, and intrinsic motivational factors. One respondent stated, "It's not a matter of time management. There aren't enough hours in the day to do it all when you aren't given an SAE period, so I guess the incentive is paid supervision or SAE period to balance the workload." Another teacher responded, "this is really not incentives based, it has to do with time, what I give up to conduct more of them."



Several teachers made comments regarding class size such as “smaller class sizes, at our ratio I would have 120 homes to visit.”

### **Home Visit Definition**

Respondents were asked, “What is your definition of a home visit? Provide a brief description.”

Answers for this area of the questionnaire varied greatly and provided an insight into teacher’s views on the differing purposes for the practice. Respondents defined home visits using their own words, which included creative responses such as, “for home visits you go inside a house, in project visits you go in a barn.” While the definitions provided by respondents varied, three major themes emerged from the free response question. These definitions grouped naturally into thematic categories: a relational visit, project based visit, and any visit to the home. Approximately 14% of teachers did not provide a response for a definition. The results are in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Definitions of a Home Visit by California Agriculture Teachers*

Categories	Frequency	%
Similar to definition provided-relational	113	48.9
Strictly project based	72	31.1
Any visit to the home	15	6.4
No response	31	13.7

Only 6% ( $n = 15$ ) of teachers ( $n = 231$ ) indicated it was any visit to the home for various reasons that did not fall under the other categories. Responses to this theme

included responses such as checking on a student's well-being, to schedule my regional occupational students (ROP) for internships, and to discuss the work ethic of the student.

More than 31% ( $n = 72$ ) of the respondents ( $n = 231$ ) defined the home visit strictly as a project visit. Teachers shared responses such as “a home visit for fair projects only” or “to visit students SAE at the projects location.” Another teacher stated, “anytime I go to the student's project, I consider it a home visit, even if it's not at their home.”

The dominant theme among respondents was relational. This group provided definitions that were similar to the definition provided. More than 48% ( $n = 111$ ) of teachers ( $n = 231$ ) defined the home visit as the same as the given definition. One teacher wrote, “a home visit to me is about informing students and their parents of opportunities in agricultural education, FFA leadership, and SAE projects. It is also a time to build relationships, learn of your student's interests, and work on building a career pathway for your student. It addresses the whole child and helps provide a positive path for guiding your student to success.” It should be noted that while 48% define a home visit as a relational visit similar to the definition given above, only 23% ( $n = 54$ ) of respondents indicated they actually conducted home visits in this manner.

### **Value of Conducting Home Visits**

Respondents were asked, “What is the value of conducting home visits as defined by the given definition of a home visit?” In order to address this question, respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement with 41 statements by using a 7-point Likert-type scale. This scale aimed to identify barriers of time, safety,

language/culture, training, and support. It also focused on impacts related to the agriculture teacher, the students, the program, the school, and the community.

The highest perceived program impact was participation in FFA activities. The lowest perceived impact related to signups for CDE teams. Participants considered the highest impact on students was their students' connection with them, whereas the lowest perceived impacts were on academic performance and student self-esteem. Participants considered the highest impact on the teacher as their connection with the student and the lowest perceived impact as teacher motivation. The highest perceived impacts on the school were improvements to student behavior and classroom management. The lowest perceived impact for the school was academic success. Finally, the highest perceived impact on the community was community engagement, while the lowest impact was family participation. The aggregated mean of 2.73 indicates that the overall impact of home visits is generally perceived as high.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for each Likert scale statement related to the impact of home visits. The questions are grouped according to their thematic category. A lower score should be interpreted as a higher impact.

Table 3  
*Impact Items related to Conducting Home Visits as Defined by Given Definition of a Home Visit and Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Variable	N	M	SD
Program			
Students who receive home visits will increase their participation in FFA activities.	208	2.55	1.07
Students who receive home visits are more likely to sign up for the CDE teams.	203	3.04	1.17

Table 3 Continued

Variable	N	M	SD
<b>Students</b>			
Students who receive home visits will develop more meaningful SAE projects.	203	2.87	1.05
Students who receive home visits are more likely to sign up for more Ag classes.	202	2.67	1.08
<b>Students</b>			
Student's academic performance will improve after receiving a home visit.	207	2.93	1.12
Students have improved self-esteem after their teacher comes to their home.	203	2.96	1.14
My students will have a stronger connection with me after I make visits to their homes.	202	2.42	1.01
Students who receive home visits are more engaged in the classroom.	204	2.81	0.99
<b>Agricultural Education Teacher</b>			
I feel like I have a better relationship with my students after a home visit.	205	2.34	1.31
A successful home visit motivates me to do more as an Ag Teacher.	201	3.04	1.29
Parents show more respect towards me and our Agriculture program after a home visit.	204	2.72	1.04
Teachers will have a stronger personal connection with their students after conducting a home visit.	206	2.19	1.00
<b>School</b>			
Classroom management will improve after I visit my students' homes.	208	2.63	1.12
Students that receive a home visit will experience more academic success at my school.	203	3.11	1.11
Home visits create a closer climate of belonging among students at our school.	202	2.74	1.04
Student's behavior in class will be better after receiving a home visit.	203	2.66	1.09
<b>Community</b>			
There will be a deeper understanding of Agricultural Education in my community after conducting home visits.	206	2.55	1.15
Family participation in my program will increase after I visit my student's homes.	203	3.08	1.04
Parents will share information about home visits, classes, SAE, and about the FFA program with other parents after having a home visit.	203	2.77	1.11
Students are more likely to remain engaged with the agricultural community after a home visit.	207	2.46	1.16

*Note.* Scale: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat disagree, 6 = disagree, 7 = strongly disagree.

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage of participants who substantially agree or substantially disagree with the impact related questions. Those teachers who selected “somewhat agree” (3), “agree” (2), and “strongly agree” (1) were considered to be in substantial agreement with the statement. Those teachers who selected “somewhat disagree” (5), “disagree” (6), and “strongly disagree” (7) were considered to be in substantial disagreement with the statement.

Table 4  
*Degree of Agreement with Perceived Impacts of Home Visits by Category as Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Variable/Impacts	Agree		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Program</b>				
Students that receive home visits will increase their participation in FFA activities.	171	95.5%	8	4.4%
Students that receive home visits will develop more meaningful SAE projects.	149	93.1%	11	6.8%
Students who receive home visits are more likely to sign up for more Ag classes.	155	95.6%	7	4.3%
<b>Students</b>				
Student's academic performance will improve after receiving a home visit.	150	92.5%	12	7.4%
Students have improved self-esteem after their teacher comes to their home.	136	91.2%	13	8.7%
My students will have a stronger connection with me after I make visits to their homes.	176	96.1%	7	3.8%
Students who receive home visits are more engaged in the classroom.	153	96.8%	5	3.1%
<b>Agricultural Education Teacher</b>				
I feel like I have a better relationship with my students after a home visit.	157	95.1%	8	4.8%

Table 4 Continued

Variable/Impacts	Agree		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Agricultural Education Teacher</b>				
A successful home visit motivates me to do more as an Ag Teacher.	122	87.1%	18	12.8%
Parents show more respect towards me and our Agriculture program after a home visit.	151	97.4%	4	2.5%
Teachers will have a stronger personal connection with their students after conducting a home visit.	182	97.8%	4	2.1%
<b>School</b>				
Classroom management will improve after I visit my student's homes.	168	95.4%	8	4.5%
Students that receive a home visit will experience more academic success at my school.	124	93.2%	9	6.7%
Home visits create a closer climate of belonging among students at our school.	148	97.3%	4	2.6%
Student's behavior in class will be better after receiving a home visit.	164	94.8%	9	5.2%
<b>Community</b>				
There will be a deeper understanding of Agricultural Education in my community after conducting home visits.	165	94.8%	9	5.1%
Family participation in my program will increase after I visit my student's homes.	137	88.9%	17	11.0%
Parents will share information about home visits, classes, SAEs, and about the FFA program with other parents after having a home visit.	153	95.6%	7	4.3%
Students are more likely to remain engaged with the agricultural community after a home visit.	168	94.9%	9	5.0%

As shown in Table 4, respondents substantially agreed with the positive impacts associated with home visits. However, there was less agreement regarding the barriers to implementation. The thematic barrier categories evaluated were time, safety, language/culture, training, and support.

The category “time” was the highest overall barrier. The highest time-related barrier is the perception that respondents are already working overtime on a weekly

basis. The highest safety-related barrier was having unsafe areas in the participant’s location. The least important safety-related barrier was feeling comfortable with doing home visits alone. On the language and cultural level, students perceiving home visits as strange was perceived as the most important barrier, while suspicions from the family was perceived as the least important barrier. Most participants felt comfortable regarding their training. However, the most important barrier in this category is having accompanied a fellow teacher on a visit. Knowing the difference between SAE visits and Home Visits (as defined in the questionnaire) was not an important barrier. Finally, the most important support-related barrier was the logistics aspect of transportation, time, and pay. The least important support-related barrier was school administration support. The aggregated mean of all barriers was 3.86. This suggests that the perceived barriers for home visits was considered somewhat average in terms of importance.

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics and the frequencies for each Likert scale question regarding the barriers to home visits. The questions are grouped according to their thematic category. A lower score should be interpreted as a higher barrier.

Table 5  
*Barriers to Conducting Home Visits as Defined by Given Definition of a Home Visit and Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Variable	N	M	SD
Time			
Conducting home visits requires too much time.	207	2.70	1.36
I would do home visits if I am paid extra.	202	3.55	1.64
My current job responsibilities already cause me to exceed a normal 40-hour week.	204	1.44	0.81

Table 5 Continued

Variable	N	M	SD
Time			
* I have enough time in my week to conduct at least 1 home visit.	208	3.84	1.83
Safety			
My personal safety is a concern for making home visits.	208	3.95	1.89
Not all areas of my town are safe to conduct home visits.	203	3.10	1.83
Visiting a student's home makes me nervous about my safety.	206	4.08	1.77
I am comfortable visiting homes alone.	208	4.60	1.82
Language / Culture			
Language barriers create a communication challenge in my community.	207	2.76	1.82
Students will perceive home visits as strange.	204	2.60	1.09
Families are apprehensive about having a teacher visit their home.	205	2.87	1.25
Families are suspicious about the motive behind the visit to their home.	203	3.36	1.42
Training			
* I feel adequately prepared and trained to visit student's homes.	207	4.98	1.75
* My teacher certification program covered visits to the student's homes.	203	4.86	1.86
* I have accompanied a fellow teacher on a visit to a student's home.	201	4.65	2.05
* I know the difference between SAE Visits and Home Visits.	204	6.19	0.99
* I am confident in explaining components of the program in a home visit setting.	204	6.16	0.97
Support			
My teaching partner views visits to the home as unnecessary.	204	4.02	1.72
* Our school administration is supportive of conducting home visits for our students.	203	4.65	1.46
* Visits to student's homes are acknowledged as an official function of the teacher.	201	3.82	1.72
* Transportation, time, and pay are designated at my school for home visits.	202	2.89	1.89

*Note.* Scale: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = somewhat disagree, 6 = disagree, 7 = strongly disagree. \* Item coding was reversed prior to the analysis.



Table 6 shows the frequency and percentage of participants who substantially agreed or substantially disagreed with the impact related questions. Those teachers who selected “somewhat agree” (3), “agree” (2), and “strongly agree” (1) were considered to be in substantial agreement with the statement. Those teachers who selected “somewhat disagree” (5), “disagree” (6), and “strongly disagree” (7) were considered to be in substantial disagreement with the statement. However, questions marked with an asterisk (\*) were reverse coded prior to analysis.

Table 6  
*Degree of Agreement with Perceived Barriers of Home Visits by Category as Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Variable	Agree		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Time</b>				
Conducting home visits requires too much time.	163	90.6%	17	9.4%
I would do home visits if I am paid extra.	98	70.0%	42	30.0%
My current job responsibilities already cause me to exceed a normal 40-hour week.	196	99.0%	2	1.0%
* I have enough time in my week to conduct at least 1 home visit.	95	50.3%	94	49.7%
<b>Safety</b>				
My personal safety is a concern for making home visits.	100	57.5%	74	42.5%
Not all areas of my town are safe to conduct home visits.	136	73.1%	50	26.9%
Visiting a student's home makes me nervous about my safety.	86	52.1%	79	47.9%
* I am comfortable visiting homes alone.	58	31.0%	129	69.0%
<b>Language/Culture</b>				
Language barriers create a communication challenge in my community.	153	81.0%	36	19.0%
Students will perceive home visits as strange.	174	94.1%	11	5.9%
Families are apprehensive about having a teacher visit their home.	162	90.0%	18	10.0%
Families are suspicious about the motive behind the visit to their home.	121	79.6%	31	20.4%

Table 6 Continued

Variable	Agree		Disagree	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Training</b>				
* I feel adequately prepared and trained to visit student's homes.	43	23.0%	144	77.0%
* My teacher certification program covered visits to the student's homes.	51	27.1%	137	72.9%
* I have accompanied a fellow teacher on a visit to a student's home.	53	30.1%	123	69.9%
* I know the difference between SAE Visits and Home Visits.	3	1.6%	190	98.4%
* I am confident in explaining components of the program in a home visit setting.	8	4.0%	192	96.0%
<b>Support</b>				
My teaching partner views visits to the home as unnecessary.	67	52.3%	61	47.7%
* Our school administration is supportive of conducting home visits for our students.	30	23.6%	97	76.4%
* Visits to students' homes are acknowledged as an official function of the teacher.	78	55.3%	63	44.7%
* Transportation, time, and pay are designated at my school for home visits.	131	73.6%	47	26.4%

\* Item coding was reversed prior to the analysis.

Table 7 shows the relative importance of each barrier and impact. In this analysis, the overall means for each theme were computed and compared to enable a more global observation regarding the thematic barrier and impact categories. The barriers which were perceived as the most important were time constraints and language/cultural differences. Training was considered the least important barrier, as the participants likely considered themselves to be well-trained. The participants considered home visits to have a relatively high degree of impact on all thematic categories. However, the impact on the Agricultural Education Teacher ranked slightly less than the

other themes. The lower the mean score the stronger the perceived impact (positive) or barrier (negative).

Table 7  
*Relative Perceived Strength of Impacts and Barriers related to Home Visits by Category as Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Variable	N	M	SD
<b>Barriers</b>			
Time	821	2.88	0.89
Safety	825	3.93	1.57
Language / Culture	819	2.89	1.03
Training	815	5.36	1.02
Support	810	3.87	1.16
<b>Impacts</b>			
Program	816	2.78	0.94
Students	816	2.77	0.89
Agricultural Education Teacher	816	2.56	0.97
School	816	2.78	0.94
Community	819	2.71	0.90

*Note.* The lower the mean score, the stronger the perceived impact (positive) or barrier (negative) of that variable.

Understanding the perceptions of respondents provides insight into the state of the practice of home visits among California agricultural educators. Another goal of this analysis was to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between responses from participants who conducted home visits and participants who did not. This could determine if there was a relationship between perceptions about home visits and actually conducting home visits. Responses to the Likert questions were compared based on whether a respondent reported conducting home visits or not. A *t*-test was used to determine whether the means of the two different groups were statistically different. Findings are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

*t-Test to Compare Teachers Who Reported Conducting Home Visits to Those Who Reported Not Conducting Home Visits as Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Variable	Did not conduct home visits		Conducted home visits		t-Test
	M	SD	M	SD	
<b>Barriers</b>					
Time	2.74	0.84	3.34	0.92	-4.295 ***
Safety	3.60	1.51	4.98	1.30	-5.758 ***
Language / Culture	2.79	0.95	3.23	1.22	-2.700 **
Training	5.12	0.99	6.16	0.69	-6.898 ***
Support	3.61	1.06	4.70	1.12	-6.236 ***
<b>Impacts</b>					
Program	2.97	0.90	2.16	0.81	5.639 ***
Students	2.96	0.84	2.18	0.80	5.713 ***
Ag Teacher	2.83	0.92	1.72	0.61	7.952 ***
School	2.99	0.89	2.13	0.79	6.022 ***
Community	2.90	0.86	2.15	0.77	5.459 ***

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

*Note.* The lower the mean score, the stronger the perceived impact (positive) or barrier (negative) of that variable.

Based on the *t*-test, it was revealed that the scores for all themes, from both barriers and impacts, were statistically different ( $p < 0.001$ ) between individuals who conducted home visits and individuals who did not conduct home visits. Clearly, individuals who conduct home visits generally tended to consider all types of barriers to be less important than individuals who do not conduct home visits. Likewise, individuals who conduct home visits generally tended to view all categories of impacts as more important or impactful than those who do not conduct home visits.

### Conclusions

The results of this study provide information about the status of home visits among California secondary agriculture teachers. It provides a better understanding of

their perceptions about impacts of and barriers to conducting home visits. It also provides information about how the respondents defined home visits with respect to the SAE project.

Examining the results of this study would lead agricultural educators to believe that teachers have varying perceptions about how they define home visits. For example, 25% ( $n = 65$ ) of respondents ( $n = 257$ ) reported making home visits for purposes other than SAE project visits. Over 48.9% of respondents do not consider the SAE project to be the primary component of the home visit. However, many California agriculture teachers do not distinguish between a home visit and traditional SAE visits, and only 31% of respondents considered the purpose of a home visit to be related to SAE project supervision. More teachers defined home visits as focusing on building relationships, setting goals, and getting to know the family versus merely visiting the student's project or SAE. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1986) connects to the information gained regarding the family environment after conducting the visit. Based on these results, there is no clear, universally accepted definition of a home visit according to California agriculture teachers.

Respondents clearly recognized the positive impacts associated with home visits. The vast majority of respondents substantially agreed with statements about the impacts of home visits. The highest ranked perceived impact was improvements to the relationship between teacher and student. This supports the principles of attachment theory and the strong connections formed through home visits. However, no single impact stands out as the most significant.

There was less agreement among respondents about the barriers to implementing home visits. Time and language/culture represented the highest perceived barriers. The overwhelming majority (99%) of respondents substantially agreed with the statement that “my current job responsibilities already cause me to exceed a normal 40-hour week.” Therefore, finding ways to provide agricultural educators with the time required to conduct home visits will be vital to promote the practice.

There appears to be a relationship between the perceptions held by respondents and whether they conduct home visits. There were significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) differences in perceptions about impacts and barriers between teachers who reported conducting home visits and those who did not. Teachers who conducted home visits considered all impacts to be more positive and barriers less important than did those who do not conduct home visits.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, continued research on the use of home visits in agricultural education programs is recommended. Future research should examine the strategies agriculture teachers use to conduct home visits and the impacts made to their agriculture program, school, and community. Researching ways to address time barriers and cultural/language barriers would be beneficial to many agriculture teachers. In addition, it would be wise to further explore successful home visit programs outside of agricultural education, such as the national award-winning Parent Teacher Home Visits program (Stetson et al., 2012) to identify best practices to reach all students. This proven program networks with six sample sites in Sacramento, Washoe County, Montana,

Denver, St. Paul, and Washington D.C. These six sites conducted over 19,000 home visits in the 2013-2014 year alone (Lee, 2014). Continuing to collect data on teachers who are actively conducting home visits would allow the profession to understand its use in modern day agricultural education programs. In addition, it is recommended to conduct personal interviews with agriculture teachers to understand the promotion, management, and follow-up of unique relationship opportunities that can be achieved through teachers visiting homes of their students.

It may also be beneficial to foster the creation of new instructional guides to serve as resources for teacher educators, student teachers, and new teachers in the profession. The development of a current relational home visit model based on agricultural education practices and practices in other fields of study would be beneficial as a resource. University agricultural education programs should increase instruction and focus on conducting home visits and home project visits during teacher preparation programs. This would provide prospective teachers with opportunities to learn how to interact with parents. For example, because pre-service teachers had only read about parent teacher communication, but did not talk directly with parents, the pre-service teachers had minimal understanding of the powerful role that parents play in their children's education (Peralta-Nash, 2003). Further, I recommend identifying agriculture teachers who are conducting successful home visits and partnering them with new teachers in the profession for mentorship opportunities. Lastly, I recommend providing increased workshop availability for both pre-service teachers and teacher educators at statewide in-service programs.

CHAPTER IV  
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF  
HOME VISITS AMONG CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

**Overview**

The agricultural education profession has historically offered unique opportunities to forge deeper connections with students through participation in FFA, supervision of supervised agriculture experiences (SAE), and interactions in the classroom and laboratory. The strong relationship built between agriculture teachers and students often develops through visits to the students' homes. This descriptive phenomenological study identifies the structure, motivation, and outcomes of home visits made by 21 California secondary agriculture teachers. General themes emerged were: (1) motivations for conducting home visits, (2) structure and format of visits, (3) data collection and materials disseminated, (4) challenges and barriers, (5) values and impacts, and (6) shared experiences. Motivations for making home visits included visiting SAE projects, developing relationships and inspiring involvement. Most of the home visits were reported to last 30 minutes to one hour and included a basic explanation by the teacher of the school's agricultural education program. Time, language, and safety were the three most significant barriers reported. Common perceived impacts were connections with students and their families, improved student success, and improved classroom management. Teachers shared helpful hints and experiences to help guide others in the profession. For example, one teacher responded



that home visits give educators a chance to “stop emailing a name and to start emailing a person.” Recommendations include creating instructional guides, promoting workshops statewide, and initiating a special recognition program for teachers conducting homes visits.

### **Introduction/Literature Review**

The 2016-2020 American Association for Agricultural Education National Research Agenda Research priority number five focuses on building “efficient and effective agricultural education programs” (Roberts et al., 2016, p. 41). Agriculture teachers conducting home visits and project visits to the student’s home may be able to build strong programs through direct connections with students, their families, and communities. With more students entering agricultural education programs without a background in agriculture, Mercier (2015) suggested that efforts be made to reach more students and a larger total population to involve the community in agricultural literacy efforts. Notably, a survey of ranchers and farmers in 2011 revealed that 72% of consumers are limited in their knowledge of farming (Mercier, 2015). This alarming statistic suggests that most students, even to the elementary school level, know little about farming, prompting a new focus on agricultural literacy awareness and interest in agricultural education programs for educators and other community members.

Home visits can provide the opportunity for agriculture teachers to provide parents with information about agriculture, FFA opportunities, and course pathways. The experience also creates a platform to distribute agricultural information about opportunities for students in agricultural education. This may promote retention of

students not only in high school agriculture programs but also encourage those students to select agriculture majors that lead to careers in agriculture.

In the early 1900s, Rufus Stimson became known for his practice of visiting the homes of all his students to supervise their projects. This home visit method has historically been one of the defining practices of agricultural education, particularly when used for SAE projects. Unfortunately, this practice has fallen in popularity (Miller, 1980). Researchers report the reason for this decline may range from changes in the legislation governing SAE projects (Moore, 1988) to increasing competition for teacher time (Bane, 2003). Despite the apparent benefits of home visits, there is a lack of available data validating the number of agriculture teachers performing home visits. Research also lacks substantial information regarding home visits, specifically in agricultural education at the secondary level. This work presents the results of interviews with California agricultural education teachers who have experience conducting home visits. The interviews were conducted to better understand teachers' motivations, home visit structure and format, data collection methods, and home visit challenges, impacts, and shared experiences. The most significant aspects of the interview asked teachers to respond to the question, "Some people will say that yes, it would be great to visit the homes of students, but with all our extra responsibilities, who has time for that? What beneficial factors would you say make home visits worth it?"

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was based on attachment theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1992) which was used to frame the research that relates to home

visits in agricultural education and the student teacher relationship under investigation. Attachment theory is used to explain the positive impact that an agriculture teacher can have on a student early in his or her high school career and in the agricultural education program. Specifically, the process of conducting a home visit with each student creates familial security and establishes a foundation for the student to gain new skills and interests beyond their current field (Bretherton, 1992).

Bronfenbrenner's 1986 ecological systems theory proposes that a child's development is influenced by the many aspects of the environment, including their home, and that to "fully understand a child, one must attempt to understand the dynamic relationship between the child, his/her parent and their family characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This theory supports uniting the home and school to discover the student's relationship with their family and the dynamics of the family structure. This can indicate the level of support the student has and also identify any individual needs. In this study, agriculture teachers were asked several questions regarding the relationships and connections home visits make between their classroom, community, and home.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

I sought to gain information from agricultural education teachers currently conducting home visits regarding their motives, strategies, and suggestions for implementation. This included the impacts and challenges of conducting home visits. The study was also aimed at identifying the key effects of this practice on the agricultural education profession. Lastly, this research sought to develop a new

definition for home visits in agricultural education based on information provided by teachers practicing them.

### **Methods**

This qualitative, descriptive, phenomenological study sought to obtain detailed information from California agriculture teachers who are currently conducting home visits or have experience with them in their secondary teaching career. Purposive sampling methods were used to select individuals to be interviewed, and respondents included current secondary agricultural education teachers, California state staff members, and professionals at the collegiate level. Individuals also included junior college faculty, university level professors, and significant positions still heavily associated with agricultural education. These teachers were asked to reflect on their motivations for conducting home visits, the impacts and challenges of home visits, and strategies used to conduct them. Additionally, they were prompted to offer advice to teachers seeking to make home visits and to share with the agricultural education profession how this challenging but rewarding pedagogical tool can make such an impact.

Participants for this study were selected from a previous home visit study that asked for their continued participation by way of an interview. An email was sent to the teachers who answered “yes” providing contact information. There was an overwhelming response: 88 teachers provided their contact information for a future interview. Only 21 teachers were interviewed due to reaching data saturation. Convenience sampling from the teachers who provided contact information was used as

those interviewed were selected based on time, availability, and geographical proximity to the researcher (Merriam, 2009). Fourteen of these interviews took place face-to-face at career development event field days, at the California FFA State Conference, and at the California Agriculture Teachers Association professional development week. Four of the interviews were conducted over the phone, and three additional interviews were a combination of in-person and email conversations. A limiting factor of this study was the challenge to find time to meet with the teachers via phone or face-to-face due to busy, conflicting agriculture teacher schedules, which proved harder than anticipated and was particularly difficult in smaller, more remote regions of California. The table below summarizes the informants for this study.

Table 9  
*Summary of Interview Participants' Characteristics, as Reported by California Agriculture Teachers*

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender	CA Region	Position (s)	Motivation to Conduct Home Visits
Joe	Male	South Coast	Secondary	Pre-Service instruction
Mary	Female	South Coast	Secondary	Job Security and buy-in
Sarah	Female	Superior	Secondary	To visit SAE projects
Carla	Female	Central	Secondary-Other	Develop relationships
Paul	Male	South Coast	Secondary	Motivate kids-involvement
John	Male	South Coast	Secondary	Relational and motivational
Scott	Male	San Joaquin	Secondary	Professional development
Kelly	Female	San Joaquin	Secondary-Other	Professional development

Table 9 Continued

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender	CA Region	Position (s)	Motivation to Conduct Home Visits
Mark	Male	Southern	Secondary-Other	Pre-Service instruction
Maria	Female	Central	Secondary	Pre-Service instruction
Bella	Female	Superior	Secondary	Pre-Service instruction
Margret	Female	San Joaquin	Secondary	Professional development
Diane	Female	Central	Secondary	Build program and buy-in
Bob	Male	San Joaquin	Secondary	Visit SAE / Relationships
Anne	Female	San Joaquin	Secondary-Other	Pre-service instruction
Molly	Female	San Joaquin	Secondary	Seeing success stories
Dixie	Female	Southern	Secondary-Other	Motivate kids-involvement
Lara	Female	Superior	Secondary	Recruitment-retainment
Lisa	Female	Central	Secondary	Pre-Service instruction
Marie	Female	Central	Secondary	Pre-Service instruction
Jeff	Male	San Joaquin	Secondary-Other	Pre-Service instruction

Note: "Other" includes Junior College, University Level, and significant positions still heavily associated with agricultural education.

Before conducting the interviews and collecting data, the use of human subjects was approved by the Institutional Review Boards at Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University. I conducted all interviews; interviews were from 25 minutes to 80 minutes, depending on the respondents' answers. Interviews were not recorded by video

or audio devices. Notes from each interview and post-interview reflections were written in a reflexive journal and recorded in a Google Forms spreadsheet containing all interview questions. These steps simplified data organization and allowed comparison across respondents to easily identify and categorize common themes among and across the participants.

The following questions were used to guide the interview:

1. What motivated you to start visiting the homes of your students?
2. Tell me about your typical home visit. What major components did it have?
3. What is the format of your visits? How long do they normally last?
4. What rules or criteria have you set?
5. What data collection procedures do you follow? How do you document the information you find out about the students and their parents?
6. What materials do you bring to give to the parents?
7. How do you choose which students to go on home visits with? Is there a method to your selection?
8. How did you present the idea of home visits to your students?
9. What challenges or barriers have you faced while planning and conducting home visits?
10. Describe how you felt when you saw that student in class the next day after a visit.

11. Some people will say that yes, it would be great to visit the homes of students, but with all our extra responsibilities, who has time for that? What makes it worth it?
12. Have you ever had any unexpected results from doing a home visit?
13. How has classroom management changed with the students you have visited?
14. In what ways has making home visits impacted student success in regards to:  
FFA involvement, SAE projects, and classroom academics?
15. What strategies would you not recommend to teachers wanting to conduct home visits?
16. How has making home visits impacted you as a teacher?
17. In what ways has conducting home visits impacted your agricultural education program?
18. What would you like to share about your experiences or thoughts regarding conducting home visits?

### **Findings**

Themes resulting from this qualitative phenomenological study were: 1) motivations for conducting home visits, 2) structure and format of visits, 3) challenges and barriers, 4) values and impacts, and 5) shared experiences.

#### **Theme 1: Teachers' Motivations for Conducting Home Visits**

All participants were eager to share their motivations for actively conducting traditional home visits or a modified version to fit the needs of their program. The interviewed respondents described a home visit style unique to them, and method and



purpose varied, making it apparent that no one definition of a visit fits all programs. All sub-themes had a component of general motivation of students, and four additional significant categories emerged.

*Pre-service instruction.* Eight of the participants credited their undergraduate educational institution with promoting the practice and teaching methods for visiting students' homes. The style, format, and focus areas, however, varied depending on the institution and specific experiences of their student teaching experience. All agreed that this was a powerful component of their training and that a variation of the experience carried into their own teaching career. Mark said, "When I was student teaching it's just how it was done. My master teacher and mentors showed me. Every kid had a project and we have vehicles provided to go visit the projects. This always included a home visit before the project." Maria said, "When student teaching at my university, it was part of a comprehensive SAE plan we learned about. This included getting an interest approval by the teacher, connecting it to a career, then visiting the home to follow up with the interest." Similarly, Lisa responded, "It began as a requirement of my student-teaching program, but I quickly realized the huge impact it could have after attending home visits with my master teacher and continued since then."

*To visit SAE projects.* Two respondents specifically alluded to using the home visit to focus on visiting the SAE project. Sarah said, "We only go to the homes to visit their SAE projects. We live in a very small, rural community where students live far away from school. Home visits go hand-in-hand always with an SAE project visit." Bob

similarly responded, “I use the home visit to establish myself with the parents and to supervise livestock projects.”

*Professional development.* Three teachers said that their motivation was due to a professional development workshop experience they had at a skills session during the week-long California Agriculture Teacher’s Association conference in 2015. Scott said, “I took a summer class at Cal Poly and was challenged to just do ten home visits. The results were phenomenal, so I kept doing them.” Kelly said, “I attended a summer session where the idea of home visit was presented to me as an option to help our program. We went to a house for a pretend home visit so we could see what they were like. We discussed the experience as a class and how this tool can be used. I pitched it to the faculty at our school and made it a goal for all teachers that had freshmen courses.”

*Develop relationships and increase involvement.* Several teachers gave a variety of answers that all included getting to know their students and increasing their involvement in FFA, career development events (CDEs), and SAE projects. Diane stated, “I needed to motivate them to be more involved and needed parent buy-in. I taught in a very poor socioeconomic area and the only way I could get kids to participate would be to take them home for a visit. There was a huge disconnect between parents and students.” Likewise, Laura said, “If we do not get [students] involved early, we lose them to sports and other activities. It is our main source of recruitment and retainment.”

## **Theme 2: Structure and Format of Visits**

A second theme discussed was the structure of the visits themselves. This theme was divided largely between those who used the home visit to focus on SAE projects and

those who use it as a vehicle to introduce students to all components of the agricultural education program. The strategies used varied depending on the teacher's intent. Jeff gave a clear description of the two in his interview, stating, "There are two different types of visits, a home visit that is personal and social in nature, and a project visit, that is business like and just about the project, not about the overall program and what it can offer." All respondents noted that, while not preferred, the home visit can take place in an alternative location such as the school farm, a fast food restaurant or a coffee shop if necessary. Other sub-themes identified were the amount of time allotted for the visits and the criteria set for the visit.

*Focus on SAE home visit.* This type of visit, as stated by Marie, was "done before they got their animal to make sure the home situation was ok. I check the facility, go over the record book, and give recommendations for their project. After this initial SAE visit, I would do quicker project visitations during the summer." Similarly, Sarah said, "I only make home visits to market animal project home locations."

*Focus on introduction to the agricultural education program.* John responded, "An important component of the home visit for me is to keep it comfortable and to get the student thinking about the future, not only in FFA, but beyond that. Another crucial component is to learn more about the student themselves." The vast majority of the respondents made similar comments on their focus during visits including starting with a brief overview of their programs, offering course information and suggesting possible future courses, FFA and SAE opportunities, and providing miscellaneous information about the program. Some reported providing brochures or handouts with course

pathways to parents. Indicating her agreement with this, Laura said, “I bring a brochure, talk about different pathways, discuss which classes are University of California- or California State University-approved, talk about career technical education (CTE) certifications and how parents can get involved.”

*Time, structure, and data collection.* The majority of the interviewees reported that their home visits took approximately 30 minutes to an hour. The time depended upon the specific student and family. Carla said, “I would schedule them for an hour. Sometimes they went shorter, sometimes longer. I would try to only schedule one or two per evening in case they did go longer. The point is to establish a positive working relationship and nothing says ‘I really don’t care about you or your kid’ more than checking the time and then rushing to get out of there.” In addition, Mark said, “I would make an appointment, take the student if possible, take materials, find out about parents ahead of time, ask if I needed to take my shoes off, where to sit (or suggest) etc...”

Reported methods of recording and documenting home visits were filling out a paper home visit form, entering information into Agriculture Experience Tracker (AET), completing a personal table or sheet, and taking photographs and sharing information during staff meetings. For example, Scott said, “I report it in AET as an SAE visit under that student’s name with comments. This allows me to print out a sheet with hours to show my administration.” There were two teachers that reported that they either did not record any information or just remembered the conversation. One of these, Carla, stated, “Honestly, I wouldn’t collect a ton of info on paper during the visits. It was a very

organic conversation to build connections and instill a sense of ease. After the visit, I would complete a quick form to document the visit.”

*Rules and criteria.* Each teacher was asked if they followed any specific rules to ensure sure their visits were productive. Most of the teachers reported that the parent and student must be present. Carla said, “I would make sure up front that the students knew I would not be talking negatively about them in regards to behavior or grades during the visit. Positive vibes only.” Scott shared that the extra time required to conduct home visits strained personal life demands; therefore, he identified one day a week that he conducted home visits. Maria also reported only doing home visits on designated Saturdays and also that “they have to do the AET assessment for the SAE project prior to the visit.” To be home at an acceptable time for his own family, Jeff set a limit of 6:00 pm, past which he could not be out for home visits. Several teachers also mentioned a no dinner policy. Diane stated, “even though a nice gesture, it is simply because it took too much time and I never accepted alcohol.” In contrast, Jeff reported that if he was doing a project late and was offered an alcoholic drink, he would accept it while he engaged in small talk with the dad for a while. He said that in some of the cultures in his community, it is disrespectful to turn down a social drink. When asked about which students they selected to go on home visits with first, all but three responded that they selected the most eager and willing students first. This set the tone for the rest of the students that it was ‘ok’ to have the teacher come to your house. Conversely, three teachers indicated that they started with the students who were either struggling or exhibited behavioral issues.

### **Theme 3: Challenges and Barriers**

Time, language, and safety emerged as the three most significant challenges to conducting home visits. Other barriers mentioned by teachers were physical challenges of the terrain where students lived, making it difficult to easily travel to their homes; loss of SAE supervision periods; and stigma from parents that the agriculture teacher was there to judge them or that visiting student homes was strange. In addition, one teacher reported that her students' parents complained to administration about the order in which she selected students for visits.

*Time.* “It takes a lot of discipline to set aside time for it,” said Mark. Several of the teachers alluded to increasing demands in other aspects of their job coupled with situations such as losing SAE periods to conduct visits. For Lisa, the increasing demands and “unforeseen last-minute emergencies which require re-scheduling” are difficult. The time it takes to connect with parents and to schedule is also a common frustration for teachers. Maria said that “the distance I have to drive out to homes takes time. I commute from a distance to school and a lot of our most active students live out in the country.”

*Language.* Five respondents commented that language was a barrier for them when scheduling home visits and communicating information. Paul commented that he would greatly appreciate having an interpreter who was not the student to communicate back and forth. Carla said, “I have had quite a lot of Spanish-speaking families and I don't speak the language at all, making it difficult for me to communicate to these families.”

Safety. One of the main difficulties affecting home visits was safety concerns of teachers traveling to certain parts of their district. At her school's location, "there's a lot of drugs and crime," said Kelly. She reported driving by the home ahead of time to assess whether she felt safe enough to do the visit. Both Maria and Jeff made similar statements, adding that they made the choice to stay on the front porch or yard instead of going inside. They felt it was not necessary if they felt uneasy. Mark expressed concern especially for young female teachers going into the homes alone.

#### **Theme 4: Values and Impacts**

Despite the challenges discussed, the teachers attributed several powerful impacts to conducting home visits. One of the overarching value themes connecting to attachment theory is relationship and connectivity built with students after a home visit. Respondents were asked to describe how they felt when they saw that student in the classroom the day after making a home visit. One teacher responded, "it makes me have a high of endorphins" while another said "it is refreshing to see that there are parents that genuinely care about their kids...its euphoric." Other values reported were positive changes in classroom behavior, increased engagement in class, and increased participation in FFA participation and SAE projects.

Relationships. Most of the teachers used the word "connected" in response to the question about how they felt the next day after a home visit. Carla said, "there were instant connections that could be made with the kid. The student would smile more and feel better about coming to my class." Other responses ranged from feeling like "they have a bond with the student" (Scott), "that it's helpful to know more about them"

(Kelly), “students appeared to be happier” (Kelly), “teachers understood the family situation better” (Laura), “created a tight-knit relationship” (Maria), and “they often respect me more” (Diane). Diane included, “the students were beaming and proud and it prompted a very positive and healthy relationship. It encouraged a huge impact in their wanting to perform. I was satisfied that I made the choice to make a difference.” Molly, who has not completed many home visits, stated “the student response to visits is always positive and encouraging which makes me feel like I should make them a bigger priority.” Overall, teachers reported that personal contact with the students and families established relationships quickly and had a larger immediate impact than just sending an email. As teachers, we can see first-hand what kinds of resources each student has in the means of finances, support, and family buy-in.

*Classroom management.* Eighteen of the 21 teachers mentioned positive changes in the classroom as a result of making home visits. “The kids were better; they were definitely better,” said Joe. Comments from other teachers were that the at-risk students felt more comfortable participating, students were more inclined to “put forth more effort” for the teacher in the class, and that there were fewer behavioral problems because teachers now knew the student’s family. Maria said, “as a new teacher, it helped me to fit in with the community. They are now more graceful to me and they now understand the stress and extra work of our job. Things are now easier to manage.” Post-home visit classroom strategies included adding a student’s picture to a bulletin board visible in the classroom, making sure to thank them publicly, and discussing the visit with the class to decrease anxiety other students had about the visit.



*Student success.* All respondents mentioned varying degrees of increased student involvement. Mary stated, “when you give the kid time to talk individually and tell them that a particular career development team ‘might be a good idea for you,’ this is when the magic happens.” Several of the teachers noted that, once they saw the resources available to the student such as preexisting gardens or family businesses, they were able to excite students about SAE projects. Mark said, “once I visited the home I often discovered possibilities for SAE projects that I didn’t know existed.” Parents also became more invested in both students’ FFA activities and SAE projects. One teacher also mentioned that once a student has a home visit, they were more invested in the program and more likely to be four-year program completers. Three of the respondents discussed that the home visit allowed the parents to see that it was safe to travel with the teacher on overnight trips to field days. Apprehensive and protective parents were more likely to let their child travel with agriculture teachers to conferences and events after hearing about more of the logistics in person. The parent and familial environment observed at home visits by teachers gave them a sense of the support level available for the student. This is consistent with Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological systems theory. Lastly, Dixie said that “many more students pursued higher education and careers in agriculture than they have previously.”

### **Theme 5: Helpful Hints and Shared Experiences**

*Helpful hints.* Each of the teachers offered unique personal experiences and advice for teachers considering making home visits in their programs. The purpose of the information shared is to clarify aspects of the home visit to make each visit meaningful. Suggestions shared by the respondents include:

1. Provide parents of notice for when and why you are coming. Provide the proper communication prior to the visit.
2. Start with organization. Use common sense and avoid unsafe situations. If you are shy and going to an area that could be considered dangerous, schedule them at school.
3. Be on time, but be flexible to the parents if they are running late.
4. Watch your facial expressions and eye movement. Try to smile often. You don't want them to feel like you are assessing their home and judging them.
5. Make sure to keep it comfortable and involve the student. Provide them with an opportunity to participate in the discussion.
6. Model a home visit format that works best for your program.
7. Do not just volunteer to drive kids in your car, no matter how tempting it may be. There are too many liability issues today that would be a concern.
8. Don't overbook yourself. Have a plan and be realistic with your time. Don't try to do too many home visits when you are a new teacher starting out. It can drain you of energy quickly.
9. Be culturally aware of the family dynamics.
10. Provide them with the offer to host the visit at school. Give them options of where to conduct the visit (i.e., front porch of home, school farm, classroom, coffee shop).

*Personal impacts.* All teachers were asked to describe how making home visits impacted them directly. The question led to many offering reflective suggestions to other teachers seeking to incorporate visits into their teaching strategy. Anne said, "My

satisfaction as a teacher is to make a long-lasting impact on lives. I thrive off of the numbers like high test scores, but the biggest thing to me is the relationships.” She added that she can still remember the faces of the kids that she did home visits with. As agriculture teachers’ lives change and they start families of their own, the format of and emotions resulting from home visits changes. Scott stated, “It always recharges me” and reminds me “this is why I’m doing this!” when describing the copious extra time invested in agricultural education. Kelly added that she “feels like a different teacher after conducting home visits and that she sees her students differently.” She states, “as a parent, myself, I want to know that my teachers care and home visits show they do.” Other teachers connected home visits to major impacts and personal relationships in their communities. Lisa added, “as a member of the community I have found a huge connection with the parents within our community and the support given after a home visit is huge. It typically impacts their future involvement in FFA and their engagement in our program.”

At the conclusion of the interview, two additional questions were asked of each participant regarding the home visit. First, they were asked “at the end of the day, despite the challenges and difficulties discussed, what makes conducting home visits worth it?” Many of the responses mentioned increased involvement and improved relationships. John said, “it is a commitment up front, I believe [home visits] pay dividends and allows for more time down the road. If done well, it will alleviate some of the extra responsibilities later on.” Scott added, “if you have time to write out formal lesson plans, you have time to make home visits.” Mary concurred, “it helps you in the long run because having a good rapport with the parents early on and it makes them

more helpful for things like donations and driving students.” Likewise, according to a 2011 study of a five-year follow-up to teachers that conducted home visits, teachers reported that they attributed beneficial relationships and higher-quality communication with parents to the home visits they had done earlier (Mann, Becker, & Meyer, 2011). One teacher mentioned that the increased focus on competition in FFA and showing livestock have become more of a priority for teachers. Kelly remarks, “It’s about priorities. Why *aren’t* you doing home visits? With all the focus on competitions and livestock shows, it is not a priority for a lot of teachers. We are losing the big picture of importance.”

The interview concluded with the teachers sharing anything they felt was pertinent to agricultural education regarding using home visits to make an impact on the profession. Kelly replied that agriculture teachers today are constantly saying that “people just don’t understand what we do”, and conducting home visits is one of the best ways to spread awareness about agriculture and education. Diane added, “the 4<sup>th</sup> circle is community. Without community, the other three are nothing. Home visits are directly a part of this.” One frustration noted by Dianne was that she had several parents opt out of home visits. To combat this, Marie suggested to just make a goal to do a small, high-quality amount of home visits to homes that are receptive to begin with. Finally, Laura discussed that the human connection is missing more these days due increased reliance on technology. Home visits connect the emails to people. They give us a chance to “stop emailing a name and to start emailing a person.”

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This phenomenological study sought to add to the body of knowledge regarding California agriculture teachers conducting home visits. The reported impacts of conducting home visits are substantial to students, parents, communities, and agriculture programs as a whole. As reported by the respondents, conducting home visits does come with challenges. However, the need to reach into communities to form strong relationships, inform others about opportunities in agriculture, and increase agricultural literacy is more important now than ever. According to the National Research Agenda, (Priority 5) “agricultural education ought to be reaching more students and involve the community and literacy efforts ... student leadership organizations should reach a larger population, and ... goals and efforts should be broadly defined” (Mercier, 2015, p. 44). Five major themes emerged from the interviews conducted with 21 California agriculture teachers. These were motivations for conducting home visits, structure and format of visits, challenges and barriers, values and impacts, and shared experiences.

The first theme comprised four sub-themes: pre-service instruction, visiting SAE projects, professional development, and developing relationships. Teachers credited their pre-service student teaching experiences for the motivation to continue home visits. Others attended professional development workshops promoting successes found with home visits. Two teachers specifically noted that their motivation came from the need to visit student projects at home. The variety of answers given, in general, stressed the strong relationships formed with students and families as their main motivating factor.

The second theme presented instructional strategies regarding the structure and format of visits. Two teachers focused their home visit structure to strictly focus on SAE home projects. This type of visit was to only discuss a student's project and was only scheduled and completed because the student had a project at home. The other teachers shared that details were given regarding how to introduce families to agricultural education programs, the average length and suggested structure of the visits, and rules or criteria set prior to conducting them. The average time reported by teachers was 30 minutes to an hour per visit, and all began the conversation with a brief overview of the teacher's agricultural education program. Rules and criteria alluded to the direct impact that extra time required to conduct visits had on the personal lives of the teachers, and therefore the need to prioritize time was essential.

Three major sub-themes arose from the challenges and barriers. Variations of time restrictions, language barriers, and safety concerns jumped to the top of the list for most respondents. One teacher also reported that the loss of an SAE period impacted the amount of time she had after school to also visit the homes of her students. Other perceived barriers included parents' perception that teachers making home visits was 'strange' and teachers' concerns about being awkward or unprepared.

All teachers enthusiastically reported the many benefits to conducting home visits and gave personal testimonials to back up their impacts. The benefit of forming strong relationships was a resounding response. Respondents commented that they felt connected on a different level, they have a bond with the student, there was a higher comfort level in the classroom, they garnered more respect from the families, and they

felt excited to work with the student in the future. Improved classroom management and numerous degrees of student success were shared.

Lastly, theme five provided an avenue for teachers to share helpful ideas based on their experiences. Ten suggestions were listed directly from the agriculture teachers interviewed. Suggestions range from being sure to prepare for the visit to ensuring that the families feel comfortable with your presence in their homes. It was also mentioned several times that while home visits are preferably conducted in the students' homes, it was acceptable to meet with families at alternative locations.

Recommendations include creating updated instructional guides on conducting home visits for agriculture teachers and promoting home visit workshops at statewide in-services. Maria suggested, "that we add how to conduct home visits to the agriculture teacher beginning teacher support and assessment (BTSA) training process." In response to the comment mentioning too much focus for new teachers on coaching teams and attending livestock shows, it is suggested to make a special recognition or promotional program for teachers visiting the homes of students. It would be greatly beneficial to provide a platform for teachers to share these home visits so that other teachers can learn from their experiences.

Finally, due to the information provided by respondents about the style, format, and purpose of their home visits, it is recommended that the agricultural education profession adopt two separate definitions of home visits within the context of agricultural education.

1. The Relational Home Visit is defined as an initial visit to the home of a student early in their agricultural education experience, for the purpose of developing a relationship among the student, parents, and teacher. The main focus is to inform them about aspects of the program as a whole and to get to know the student.
2. The SAE Home Visit is defined as a home visit with the focus of supervising the student's SAE project, but also includes meeting with parents to discuss the student's participation in the agricultural education program as a whole.



CHAPTER V  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusions**

Currently, only limited research exists that directly relates to agriculture teachers conducting home visits. Most of the available research has been at the elementary education level and not in the field of agricultural education. The material shared in chapter II has documented the historical background of the reasons for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of students and the evolutionary changes to this valuable tool over time. Through a historical literature review and conversations with expert agriculture teachers, it has been determined that there is no single home visit definition or a universal document mandating that agriculture teachers conduct them. Rather, it is implied that “direct supervision” of SAE projects includes going to their homes to oversee projects. Agriculture teachers are expected to be educators, FFA advisors, livestock supervisors, career development event coaches, and supervised agricultural experience project supervisors. The outcomes of this research were the following:

1. It was concluded that visits to the homes of students have been done since the early 1900s. Names of these visits include project visits, SAE visits, and home visits.
2. An outline of key legislative pieces that have shaped the need for agriculture teachers to visit the homes of their students. Two of the most notable are the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 and the National Vocational Education Act of 1963.

3. Documented conversations with experts in the field that contribute to an oral history describing their experiences visiting homes of their agricultural education students.

The research discussed in chapter three provided a foundation for current data regarding the status of California agriculture teachers conducting any visits to the homes of their students. This paper provided clarity to the definition and purpose of home visits. It also gave insight into barriers and challenges to visiting the homes of students as well as the impacts or values of conducting home visits. For the purpose of this study, a home visit definition was provided by the researcher for the respondents. This allowed them to have a platform or basis to formulate their own responses for comparison.

1. The definition of the home visit was categorized into three major themes: similar to the given definition/relational, strictly project based, and any visit to the home. The largest response (49%) was given to the relational definition. Overall, 55.3% of respondents defined a home visit as separate from an SAE project visit, whereas 31.1% stated it is strictly a project visit. There is no clear, universally accepted definition of a home visit.
2. Twenty-five percent (n = 257) of the respondents responded 'yes' to meeting students and parents at their homes for purposes other than SAE project visits.
3. Descriptive statistics via a Likert scale revealed that the most highly ranked barrier for conducting home visits was time for the practice. Strong barriers to implementation such as safety and language were also identified.

4. The most highly ranked beneficial impact category was benefit to the students, however all impacts showed a nearly even distribution. Benefits to the community, school, program, and teacher were ranked nearly as high.

The qualitative study provided a more in-depth and personal account of agriculture teachers' experiences visiting the homes of students. Twenty-one teachers were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the structure, practices, challenges and impacts of conducting home visits. This provided the researcher with detailed first-hand accounts from experienced teachers and individual recommendations. Five major themes emerged.

1. Interviews provided information for five major themes: motivations, structure and format, challenges, impacts and shared experiences.
2. Motivations for conducting home visits included visiting SAE projects, building relationships, increasing involvement, and professional development.
3. Most visits lasted 30 minutes to one hour. Answers varied depending on many variables such as the demographics of the school, location of the visit, and schedule of the teacher.
4. Time, language, and safety were the three most significant barriers reported and discussed in detail.
5. Impacts included forming strong relationships with students and their families, improved classroom management, stronger community support, and increased student success in the classroom. Teachers also reported more involvement in FFA and better-quality SAE projects.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on these conclusions, the author recommends continued documentation of the current status of agriculture teachers conducting home visits and the impacts these home visits make on students and programs. Documentation of impact on students, teachers, and the programs as a whole can provide valid and reliable information that can be used to make better-informed decisions about the need to implement home visits. This would also assist teachers and teacher educators in developing methodologies to use the home visit as a pedagogical tool. Further research into the value of home visits and the state of the practice across a larger sample of other states may be justified. If the practice is as valuable as research suggests, agriculture teachers may consider adopting a definition of the home visit that does not require an SAE project in order to reach more students in their homes.

Continued research on the use of home visits in today's agricultural education programs and from a more diverse group of schools is recommended. Researching ways to address concerns of safety, language, and time barriers would be beneficial. In addition, conducting a longitudinal study with the students that received home visits would indicate what impacts were made and if the home visit truly proved to be the motivating factor. Recommendations also include relational research and a comparison of students that receive home visits versus those who do not. Correlational research is recommended to prove the impact of home visits.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

In response to the comment regarding too much focus for new teachers on coaching teams and attending livestock shows, it is suggested to make a special recognition or promotional program for teachers visiting the homes of students. This would support recognition of those programs that may not focus on heavy involvement in active competitive career development event (CDE) or leadership development event (LDE) teams.

It may also be beneficial to foster the creation of new instructional guides to serve as a resource for teacher educators, student teachers, and new teachers in the profession. Specifically, the development of a current relational home visit model based on agricultural education practices would be beneficial as a resource. This can also include strategies to garner community awareness of the practice of home visits. University agricultural education programs are recommended to increase instruction and awareness of conducting home visits and home project visits during teacher preparation programs. This will provide teachers with opportunities to actually learn how to speak with parents. Further, it is important to identify agriculture teachers who are conducting successful home visits and partner them with new teachers for mentorship opportunities in the profession. Maria suggested, “that we add how to conduct home visits to the agriculture teacher BTSA training process.” It is recommended to provide increased workshop availability for both pre-service teachers and teacher educators at state in-services and national conferences such as the FFA National Convention and National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) conferences. These workshops could

include a panel of teachers who conduct various kinds of home visits to serve as references. It is recommended to create an instructional video explaining home visits and project visits, sharing testimonials from agriculture teachers, and providing information about how to conduct home visits. This could serve as a useful tool to show to teachers nationwide. A shorter video can help bring awareness to agriculture teachers and the parents they will be visiting, and this video might be used in the classroom or posted on social media outlets. Additionally, this shorter video could be used as a tool for the National Teach Ag Campaign to promote the strong relational impacts made by choosing a career as an agriculture teacher.

Lastly, due to all the information gained in all three papers, it is recommended that the agricultural education profession adopt two new definitions of home visits; the Relational Home Visit and SAE Home Visit. These two recommended definitions are based on data collected from teachers and their personal accounts to support the powerful impacts of conducting variations of home visits. The relational home visit describes an initial visit to the home of a student early in their secondary education, with the purpose of developing a relationship between the student, parents, and teacher. The main focus is to inform them about aspects of the program as a whole and to get to know the student. The SAE Home Visit, is defined as a home visit with the focus of supervising the student's SAE project, but also includes meeting with parents to discuss the student's participation in the agricultural education program as a whole.

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doi:10.5032/jae.2015.01032

# APPENDIX A

Updated April 19, 2016

## UT Centralized IRB Review

### Site Investigators Pre-Notification Letter - Intent to Submit for Centralized Review

**Information for the Overall Principal Investigator** – In addition to submitting an application to your institution's IRB (designated the "Reviewing IRB"), an "Intent to Submit for Centralized Review" form must be submitted to the IRB office at each participating institution.

**Information for the Site Principal Investigator** - The purpose of this form is to request centralized review at your institution (designated the "Relying Institution"). This request will be considered by your institution and a decision made on a case-by-case basis. The IRB office from your institution will forward the final decision to the Reviewing IRB.

If your institution agrees to Centralized IRB Review, you will be required to submit additional materials in accordance with local policy. The review of local issues by your institution is a separate process from the IRB approval being sought by the Overall PI. **Reminder:** you are not authorized to initiate research at your institution until both processes are completed: 1) the study is approved by the Reviewing IRB and an *approval letter* is issued, and 2) the local policy issues have been resolved and an *activation letter* has been issued by your institution.

Study Title:	A Survey of Home Visit Practices by California Agriculture Teachers
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**1. Name and Address of Site Principal Investigator (PI):**

Site PI's Name (Last Name, First Name, MI): Theresa Murphrey  
 Department: Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications  
 PI's Telephone#: 979-458-2749 PI's Cell or Pager Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PI's e-mail address: t-murphrey@tamu.edu PI's FAX Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name of the Overall Principal Investigator (PI):**

Overall PI's Name (Last Name, First Name, MI): Scott Burris  
 Institution: Texas Tech

3. Which Texas Participating Institution will serve as the Reviewing IRB?		
Select only one		
<input type="checkbox"/> UT at Arlington (UTA)	<input type="checkbox"/> UT HSC at Houston (UTHealth)	<input type="checkbox"/> Angelo State University (ASU TTU)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT Austin (UT Austin)	<input type="checkbox"/> UT Medical Branch (UTMB)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rice University (Rice)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT at Dallas (UTD)	<input type="checkbox"/> UT HSC at San Antonio (UTHSCSA)	<input type="checkbox"/> The Texas A&M University (TAMU)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT at El Paso (UTEP)	<input type="checkbox"/> UT MD Anderson (UTMDACC)	<input type="checkbox"/> The University of North Texas (UNT)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT Permian Basin (UTPB)	<input type="checkbox"/> UT Health Science Center Tyler (UTHSCT)	<input type="checkbox"/> The University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNT HSC)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)	<input type="checkbox"/> Baylor College of Medicine (BCM)	<input type="checkbox"/> The University of Houston (UH)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT San Antonio (UTSA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Texas Tech Univ (Texas Tech)	<input type="checkbox"/> The Methodist Hospital System (Methodist)
<input type="checkbox"/> UT Tyler (UTT)	<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Tech Univ. Health Sciences Center (Texas Tech HSC)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW)	<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Tech HSC El Paso (Texas Tech HSC El Paso)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**UT Centralized IRB Review**  
**Site Investigators Pre-Notification Letter -**  
**Intent to Submit for Centralized Review**

4. Which Texas Participating Institution will be engaged in this research?		
Select the Participating Institution(s) that will be engaged in the research	Indicate the affiliated organization(s) with the participating institution that will also be engaged in the research	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT at Arlington (UTA)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Austin (UT Austin)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT at Dallas (UTD)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT at El Paso (UTEP)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Permian Basin (UTPB)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT San Antonio (UTSA)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Tyler (UTT)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Medical Branch (UTMB)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT MD Anderson (UTMDACC)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Health Science Center Tyler (UTHSCT)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Baylor College of Medicine (BCM)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas Tech University (Texas Tech)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (Texas Tech HSC)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas Tech University HSC El Paso (Texas Tech HSC El Paso)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Angelo State University (ASU TTU)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The University of North Texas (UNT)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The University of North Texas HSC (UNT HSC)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rice University (Rice)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Methodist Hospital System (Methodist)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Texas A&M University (TAMU)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The University of Houston (UH)	
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		

**FOR IRB ADMINISTRATOR USE ONLY**

1. The Investigator's intention to include our institution as part of the Centralized IRB Review by the IRB designated in item 3 is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acceptable	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Acceptable
--	---

2. Notification Preference – the Reviewing IRB must notify this institution of approvals and study closure using the following method(s):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> send a copy of the IRB letter – Already have the letter	<input type="checkbox"/> send a monthly statement of listing the protocols approved in the previous month
<input type="checkbox"/> send a weekly statement of listing the protocols approved in the previous week	<input type="checkbox"/> send an copy of the IRB letter to the Site PI at this organization who is then responsible to provide this information to the Institution



UT Centralized IRB Review

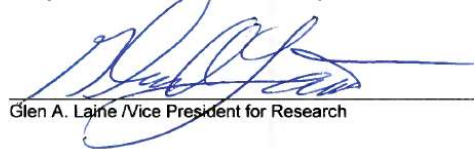
Site Investigators Pre-Notification Letter -  
Intent to Submit for Centralized Review

3. Federalwide Assurance Information – select the applicable statement(s)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The box that applies Subpart A to all research is checked
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The box that applies Subparts B, C, and D to all research is checked

[Signature page to follow]

4. Signature of the Official Authorized by the Institution:

 1-4-17  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Glen A. Laine /Vice President for Research Date

<input type="checkbox"/>	UT at Arlington (UTA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	UT HSC at Houston (UTHealth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Angelo State University (ASU TTU)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Austin (UT Austin)	<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Medical Branch (UTMB)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rice University (Rice)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT at Dallas (UTD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	UT HSC at San Antonio (UTHSCSA)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Texas A&M University (TAMU)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT at El Paso (UTEP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	UT MD Anderson (UTMDACC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	The University of North Texas (UNT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Permian Basin (UTPB)	<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Health Science Center Tyler (UTHSCT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	The University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNT HSC)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Baylor College of Medicine (BCM)	<input type="checkbox"/>	The University of Houston (UH)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT San Antonio (UTSA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas Tech Univ (Texas Tech)	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Methodist Hosp. System (Methodist)
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Tyler (UTT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas Tech Univ. Health Sciences Center (Texas Tech HSC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas Tech HSC El Paso (Texas Tech HSC El Paso)	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Nov 18, 2016 11:12 AM CST

Scott Burris  
Ag Education and Communication

Re: IRB2016-822 A Survey of Home Visit Practices by California Agriculture Teachers

**Findings:** *Best wishes with your research!*

Dear Dr. Scott Burris, :

A Texas Tech University IRB reviewer has approved the proposal referenced above. The approval is effective from Nov 18, 2016 within the exempt category of:

Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt research is not subject to annual review by the IRB. Any change to your protocol requires a **Modification Submission** for review and approval prior to implementation.

Your study may be selected for a Post-Approval Review (PAR). A PAR investigator may contact you to observe your data collection procedures, including the consent process. You will be notified if your study has been chosen for a PAR.

Should a subject be harmed or a deviation occur from either the approved protocol or federal regulations (45 CFR 46), please complete an **Incident Submission** form.

Once your research is completed, please use a **Closure Submission** to terminate this protocol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly C. Cukrowicz'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name and contact information.

Kelly C. Cukrowicz, Ph.D.  
Chair, Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board  
Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences  
357 Administration Building, Box 41075  
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1075  
T 806.742.2064 F 806.742.3947  
[www.hrpp.ttu.edu](http://www.hrpp.ttu.edu)



Jan 19, 2017 12:59 PM CST

Scott Burris  
Ag Education and Communication

Re: IRB2016-1040 A Case Study of Home Visits among California Agriculture Teachers

**Findings:** *This study is approved under the exempt category.*

Dear Dr. Scott Burris:

A Texas Tech University IRB reviewer has approved the proposal referenced above. The approval is effective from Jan 19, 2017 within the exempt category of:

Category 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Exempt research is not subject to annual review by the IRB. Any change to your protocol requires a **Modification Submission** for review and approval prior to implementation.

Your study may be selected for a Post-Approval Review (PAR). A PAR investigator may contact you to observe your data collection procedures, including the consent process. You will be notified if your study has been chosen for a PAR.

Should a subject be harmed or a deviation occur from either the approved protocol or federal regulations (45 CFR 46), please complete an **Incident Submission** form.

Once your research is completed, please use a **Closure Submission** to terminate this protocol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly C. Cukrowicz', enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Kelly C. Cukrowicz, Ph.D.  
Chair, Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board  
Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences  
357 Administration Building, Box 41075  
Lubbock, Texas 79409-1075  
T 806.742.2064 F 806.742.3947  
[www.hrpp.ttu.edu](http://www.hrpp.ttu.edu)

## APPENDIX B



### **An Investigation of Home Visits made by Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers.**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the practice of secondary agricultural education teachers visiting the homes of students. By completing the questionnaire you consent to participate in the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are not required to participate. The survey should not take longer than 5-8 minutes.

For questions about the study or procedures, contact Dr. Scott Burris of the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications at Texas Tech, who is in charge of the study. His phone number is (806) 834-8689. You can also contact Anna Bates, who is responsible for carrying out the procedures for the study at (805) 801-2532.

For information about your rights as a subject or any research related problems you might have, contact the Texas Tech University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) at (806) 742-2064 or email them at [hrrp@ttu.edu](mailto:hrrp@ttu.edu). Thank you!

---

I have read and understand the above consent form and I am willing to participate in this study.

Agree

Disagree

Are you a current secondary agricultural education teacher?

- Yes
- No

Are you a current secondary agricultural education teacher?

- Yes
- No

What level of students are you currently teaching? Select all that apply.

- 9th Grade
- 10th Grade
- 11th Grade
- 12th Grade
- I am not currently teaching

---

How many years have you been teaching at the secondary (high school) level?

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26+ years

Do you meet with the student and their parent (s) at the student's home during freshmen year to discuss crucial elements of the agricultural education program other than SAE project visits?

- Yes
- No

What is the purpose of this visit?

- To discover the student's agricultural interest.
- To define FFA and SAE expectations.
- To gather general information about the student.
- All of the above.

Do you conduct SAE project visits to students in your program?

- Yes
- No

---

What is your definition of a home visit? Please provide a brief description below.

In relation to the visit, what makes a home visit different than an SAE project visit?

---

For the purpose of this study, a home visit is defined as:

A home visit is the process by which the teacher schedules a time to visit with the student and their parent (s) at the student's home usually during freshmen year to discuss crucial elements of the agricultural education program. Components of a home visit include discovering the individual student's agricultural interest, clearly defining FFA and SAE expectations, and gathering general information about the student to facilitate their overall success.

According to the definition listed above, do you conduct home visits to students in your program?

- Yes
- No

Please select an answer for each statement related to the value of conducting home visits as defined by the given definition of a home visit.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel like I have a better relationship with my students after a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel adequately prepared and trained to visit student's homes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conducting home visits requires too much time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students are more likely to remain engaged with the agricultural community after a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students that receive home visits will increase their participation in FFA activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teaching partner views visits to the home as unnecessary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom management will improve after I visit my student's homes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Language barriers create a communication challenge in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student's academic performance will improve after receiving a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There will be a deeper understanding of Agricultural Education in my community after conducting home visits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My personal safety is a concern for making home visits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable visiting homes alone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time in my week to conduct at least 1 home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers will have a stronger personal connection with their students after conducting a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am confident in explaining components of the program in a home visit setting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student's behavior in class will be better after receiving a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher certification program covered visits to the student's homes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students have improved self-esteem after their teacher comes to their home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students who receive home visits are more likely to sign up for more Ag classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation, time, and pay are designated at my school for home visits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families are suspicious about the motive behind the visit to their home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Parents will share information about home visits, classes, SAEs, and about the FFA program with other parents after having a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not all areas of my town are safe to conduct home visits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would do home visits if I am paid extra.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students that receive home visits are more likely to sign up for CDE teams.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students that receive a home visit will experience more academic success at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A successful home visit motivates me to do more as an Ag Teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My students will have a stronger connection with me after I make visits to their homes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students will perceive home visits as strange.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students that receive home visits will develop more meaningful SAE projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our school administration is supportive of conducting home visits for our students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family participation in my program will increase after I visit my student's homes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My current job responsibilities already cause me to exceed a normal 40-hour week.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visits to students homes are acknowledged as an official function of the teacher.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have accompanied a fellow teacher on a visit to a student's home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Visiting a student's home makes me nervous about my safety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families are apprehensive about having a teacher visit their home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know the difference between SAE Visits and Home Visits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parents show more respect towards me and our Agriculture program after a home visit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home visits create a closer climate of belonging among students at our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students who receive home visits are more engaged in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you receive incentives from your department, administration, or community for conducting home visits?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know



---

What types of incentives would encourage you or a teaching partner to conduct home visits?

---

What is needed for instructors to facilitate making home visits?

- Transportation support
- Materials
- Financial Support
- Professional Development Training
- Other



Would you be willing to be interviewed to share your experiences conducting home visits?

Yes

No





**AGRICULTURE  
& LIFE SCIENCES**  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Thank you! Please provide the following information in the boxes below.

First and Last Name

Name of School

Email

Contact Number

## APPENDIX C

Subject: An Investigation of Home Visits made by Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers

Dear California Ag Teacher,

I am writing you to ask your help in a study regarding the current practice of high school agriculture teachers visiting the homes of their students. Your input on this subject will greatly contribute to information that can help guide us in future practices for program development in agricultural education.

You were selected because you are listed as a current California high school agriculture teacher in the California Agriculture Teacher's Association. The link below will direct you to a short survey that will take you approximately 5-8 minutes to complete.

◇

Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. Should you have any questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or the phone number listed below.

Thank you in advance for your participation. I greatly look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Anna Bates

Doc@Distance Graduate Student

Texas A&M / Texas Tech Universities

(805) 801-2532

# HOME VISITS IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ATTENTION ALL CA AG TEACHERS...  
YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED!



PLEASE TAKE THE 5-8 MINUTE SURVEY  
TO HELP CONTRIBUTE TO RESEARCH

## APPENDIX E

Re: Home Visit Research Study

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (insert their name)

Thank you so much for your willingness to share your experiences conducting home visits. This research study is part of my dissertation. I am currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Agricultural Education. I am a member of Cohort 6 of the Doc@Distance program through Texas Tech and Texas A&M.

I would like to schedule a time to meet with you either in person or over the phone to conduct an interview. I am very excited to hear about your experiences with home visits. Our profession can gain substantial knowledge by hearing from you and several others currently using this practice in their programs. I have attached an Information Sheet regarding this study for you to read over. Please let me know what days of the week and times that work best for you for an interview and I will try to schedule a visit with you accordingly.

I look forward to hearing from you soon! Thank you so much for your time and cooperation. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Anna Bates  
San Luis Obispo High School  
Agriculture Instructor / Graduate Student