



Three Circle Model

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems. Through agricultural education, students are provided opportunities for leadership development, personal growth and career success. Agricultural education instruction is delivered through three major components:

- Classroom/Laboratory Instruction
- AFNR Work-based Learning
- Student Leadership Organizations

These key components are often visually organized into a three-circle Venn diagram as seen below. The ideal agricultural education program uses all three components together to deliver comprehensive student growth and development. Each component is also described below.

● Classroom and Laboratory Instruction

Students work with qualified, experienced agricultural education teachers to receive instruction that is competency-based and includes the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes required for gainful employment in occupations relating to Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR). Programs of study may include courses from one or more recognized pathways in AFNR. It is highly recommended that the program be organized to meet the needs of the community, align to student interests, and support the goals of the local school district.

● AFNR Work-based Learning

Students work with agricultural education teachers and/or designated supervisors to plan, conduct, record and reflect on a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program. Experiences develop career and employability skills in alignment with the students' personal goals. SAEs are unique to each student and may be structured as a student business, school-based enterprise, internship, or a research experiment/study. Experiences may be paid or unpaid based on local resources and opportunities.

● Student Leadership Organizations

Students work with peers and designated program advisors to plan, conduct and reflect on a comprehensive program of activities designed to promote personal growth and leadership development. Activities may include but are not limited to chapter coordination, state and nationally affiliated conferences and conventions, competitive leadership events, and mentorship programs with designated alumni or supporters. The recognized Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) for agricultural education programs in Illinois is the Illinois Association of FFA. FFA chapters are led by a team of student officers and a local FFA Advisor.

● The Three-Circle Model

Each of the three components support each other. Knowledge gained in AFNR courses inform SAE program development while skills developed in SAE programs fuel inquiry during coursework. Achievement in classwork and SAE are incentivized through FFA award programs, and relationships built during shared FFA activities make learning together a joyful and lasting experience. All three components continually work in unison to develop the whole student.

