

State Proficiency Best Practices

(helpfully hints for eligible quality applications)

****Including aspects outside of application award area will result in disqualification of application at the state level.****

Overall

1. Make sure the entire applications **DEFINES THE AGRICULTURE** part of the SAE.
2. Only include SAE components that applies to the proficiency area in the application.
 - a. 1800 hours of placement on a farm isn't 1800 hours in beef **AND** forage **AND** grain.
 - b. Oil crop production doesn't include any forage crop production information.
3. Question #1: Briefly explain your SAE and how it relates to this award area.
 - a. **ANSWER** how the SAE applies to the area award. This is the first thing the judges read. Clearly identify the parts of your SAE in XYZ area.
4. All pages must align. Question answers #1-5 must match scope/SAE descriptions.
5. **TRANSFERABLE SKILLS** is not the same thing as application in an specific award area/degree.
 - a. Ex. Working on cars changing oil isn't Agricultural Repair and Maintenance because they learned about oil in Ag Power class.
6. Just because it is unique doesn't mean it belongs in specialty animal/crop.
 - a. Mini pigs are still swine. Mini horses are still equine. Sweet corn is still in vegetable production.
7. Pay attention to the underlined, **bolded**, and "**NOTES**" for each area award description located here: <https://ffa.app.box.com/file/1622781071899>
8. Don't mention things it says not to mention.
9. Scope "boxes" need **DESCRIPTIONS**!
10. **AET SCHOOLS**: check what your students type when they enter records. Junk in, junk out.
11. **ALL PLACEMENT APPS**: cannot talk about entrepreneurship aspects.

Specific Award Areas information

12. Ag Communications: educating is not communicating according to description. Pay attention.
13. Ag Mech: agricultural equipment. No transferable skills.
 - a. How are the electrical, concrete, refrigeration, plumbing skills **AGRICULTURE**, not residential
 - b. **SAFETY EQUIPMENT** in pictures.
14. Ag Sales: **CANNOT** reference about growing and/or processing products. Do not reference raising the pigs or chickens, etc.
15. Ag Services: description needs to clearly identify what is the service was versus the product; ex, Ag Sales versus Ag Services. Read the description.
16. Grain Production: soybeans are a fiber/oil crop. Do not include any crops in description and scope that are not listed as grain crops.
17. Fruit & Nut: a berry is a berry is a berry. Strawberries belong here. Not in specialty crop.
18. Diversified Crop: specific and appropriate crops need to be mentioned to meet diversified area.
19. Diversified Hort: specific plants need to be mentioned to meet diversified area.
20. Environmental Science and Natural Resource Management:
 - a. Management of environment, yes. Creation/sustainment of habitat for wildlife, ponds, etc. **IS** wildlife production.
 - b. Controlled burns and brush fires, yes. Other fires, no.
 - c. Recycling and/or scrapping needs to talk about the environment management aspect.
21. Fiber and/or Oil:
 - a. Corn and wheat are grain crops. Soybeans are oil crop. Do not include soybeans in Grain Production. Do not include corn/wheat in Fiber and/or Oil Production.

22. Food Service: DO NOT include anything NOT directly related to food preparation and service.
 - a. Examples of activities not recognized are serving as a host or hostess, dishwashing, busing and waiting tables.
23. Forage Production: only include activities related to forage. Not raising of animals or crops.
24. Forest management: about FOREST MANAGEMENT, not trees. Does not include residential tree cleanup.
25. Landscape Installation: ONLY designing and installing. Nothing else.
26. Nursery – primarily intended for members who own or work at greenhouses and nurseries. Most of the plants grown are intended for replanting rather than for harvesting.
27. Outdoor recreation – Personal participation is not eligible.
28. Service Learning: Must develop a written plan which identifies the need and proposes a service solution. Community service is not the same as service learning as defined by the description.
 - a. Plan submitted?
 - b. Plan reviewed by a committee?
 - c. Completion of project and summary reported to committee?
 - d. ALL MUST BE INCLUDED in student answers to questions.
29. Small Animal – don't include species from another category.
30. Specialty Animal – don't include species from another category. Only list and discuss animals for the specialty animal award area.
31. Specialty Crop – Read description. IF you need clarification between NURSERY and Specialty Crop: think primarily intended for plants grown as crops we consume. I.e.: plants we eat, wear or medicate ourselves with.
 - a. INCLUDES: production of crop seed and floriculture production. (such as chrysanthemums, daylilies, etc.)
 - b. pumpkins are a vegetable.
32. Turf & Landscape Maintenance: includes REPAIRING of irrigation systems and hardscapes (NO INSTALLATION).
33. Vegetable Production: included pumpkins and sweet corn
34. Wildlife Production: personal participation in wildlife activities does not count.

For assistance with award area determinations (copied from National FFA Proficiency Award Descriptions):

When choosing the appropriate proficiency award area to apply in, review ALL of the proficiency area descriptions. If you are in doubt or have questions regarding the correct area, please contact your state staff and/or the National FFA Organization SAE Education Specialist. Please email a detailed description of the SAE to: proficiency@ffa.org to request a determination.

Many members engage in SAE enterprises or activities of multiple types, which may qualify in different proficiency award areas. When a member's SAE qualifies in multiple proficiency areas only the activities, goals, descriptions, earnings/hours, duties and accomplishments that qualify in the proficiency area in which they are applying can be included in the application. For example: A member with an SAE which includes raising fish to sell to pet stores and employment by a landscape installation company has one enterprise that will qualify in the Specialty Animal Production award area and one that qualifies in the Landscape Installation award area. When applying for an agricultural proficiency award in the Landscape Installation area nothing about the fish raising enterprise should be included in the application. Do not discuss the fish raising enterprise in answers to questions, do not include inventory, earnings, skills, etc., from the fish enterprise in the landscape installation application.