

# 2025-2026 Annual Report

## Hinckley-Big Rock Agricultural Education Department

### **Hinckley-Big Rock Agriculture Department Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Hinckley-Big Rock Agriculture Department is to provide for the development of student career and educational skills in the areas of agricultural and horticultural sciences in order to prepare them for success in an agricultural occupation or advanced education.

### **The National FFA Organization Mission:**

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth, and career success** through agricultural education.

Tracey Sanderson  
Zoey Dye  
Agricultural Instructors/ FFA Advisors

[HBR FFA 25-26 Video](#)

# HBR Agriculture Department Annual Report

## I. Scope of the Hinckley-Big Rock Agriculture Department

The Hinckley-Big Rock High School Agriculture Department includes a classroom, shop laboratory, greenhouse with hydroponics system, land laboratory, teacher office, tool and supply/storage area, apple orchard, to soon be completed outdoor building and computer lab area. The classroom has technology including a LCD Projector, and an electronic projection microscope. Within the mechanics shop, there are 3 Arc Welders, 3 MIG Welders, 1 plasma cutter, 1 CNC plasma cutter, and 3 Oxyacetylene Tank Systems. Additionally, there is a small engines, and wood working lab area within the shop. The Greenhouse is vitally important, and is used to produce poinsettias, annual/perennial bedding plants for a spring sale as well as a learning lab for the Horticulture classes. The land lab is used to produce corn and soybeans on a rotating basis.

The Middle School Department includes a classroom laboratory, 3 hydroponic units, a pressure cooker, and a portable stove top. Soon to implemented is a compost system.

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## Agriculture Department Goals

The Goals and Objectives of the Hinckley-Big Rock Agriculture Department are:

- Prepare students to enter the workforce or postsecondary education as productive citizens.
- Develop the agricultural knowledge of our students and members of the community.
- Promote community service and awareness through activities designed to improve the quality of life for others.
- Prepare students for careers and further education in the areas of agricultural sciences.
- Develop the leadership and communication skills of students in order to prepare them for success after high school graduation.

## Course Enrollment

### Course Enrollment by Grade Level

\*Numbers not available yet to the teacher for 2026-2027 school year.

Course Name	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Introduction to Agriculture *	13	18	14	19	32	18	28	24	13	15	18
Basic Horticultural Science * #	26	9	16	14	8	17	18	23	21	9	10
Wood Working	19	23	22	21	19	0	22	10	20	18	15
Welding/Small Engines	16	23	20	17	10	0	20	12	20	14	21
Pre-Veterinary Science*#	0	12	16	0	13	24	0	0	0	11	4
Agricultural Business Management ^ #	7	13	9	24	19	19	0	15	11	9	10
Entrepreneurship										4	6
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>

\* Stands for a course that fulfills academic graduation requirements in science.

^Stands for a course that fulfills academic graduation requirements in consumer education.

#Stands for course that earns dual credit

Course Name	2024-2025	2025-2026
6th Grade Agricultural STEAM*	65	55
7th Grade Agriculture^	27	37
8th Grade Agriculture^	29	25
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>117</b>

\* Stands for a course that is a required exploratory at the middle school level.

^Stands for a course that is a chosen exploratory at the middle school level.

## Hinckley-Big Rock FFA Chapter Component



The FFA is a national organization for students enrolled in agriculture and horticulture science programs. The mission of the organization is to promote premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.

Membership within the organization is divided into active members, alumni membership, and honorary membership.

\*The Illinois Department of Agriculture pays the fee for all IL programs.

**Membership Summary:100 High School Members, 50 Middle School**

### The FFA Motto

Learning to Do

Doing to Learn

Earning to Live

Living to Serve

### 2026-2027 Officer Team Members

Election to be held April 15th for High School.

Election to be held April 16th for Middle School.

## Supervised Agricultural Experience Component

SAE stands for "Supervised Agricultural Experience." The purpose of the SAE is to provide the agriculture student with an opportunity to explore agricultural career interests. A main focus of the SAE is to develop record keeping and decision making skills. Students who maintain an SAE have the opportunity to exhibit at fairs to earn money, while gaining additional showmanship experience. SAE record books are used as the basis for awarding FFA Proficiency Awards as well as the Degrees of membership awarded through FFA.

### **HBR Agriculture Department SAE Statistics:**

<b>SAE Participant Statistics</b>	<b>Number of:</b>
<b>Entrepreneurship SAE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Placement SAE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Middle School SAE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>State Degree Recipients</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Professional Activities of the Agriculture Instructor**

### **A. Professional Development Meetings and Conferences designed to improve classroom instruction or overall Agriculture Department activities:**

#### **Tracey Sanderson**

1. Fall/Winter Agriculture Teachers Meeting
2. VALEES Conference co-presenter about HBR phone policy
3. Mentor Coaching for Ag Teachers for the IEA (IL Educators Association)
4. NEA (National Educators Association) National Assembly
5. Seed Your Future- Curriculum Work- Horticultural Industry
6. Taught PD about Agricultural Construction for Illinois

#### **Zoey Dye**

1. IAVAT Annual Conference
  - a. District 2 FFA Representative for Special Projects and Resolutions
2. Fall/Winter Agriculture Teachers Meeting
3. Participant of the IEA Mentor Coaching for Ag Teachers (IL Educators Association)
4. VALEES Conference co-presenter about FFA Programs at the Middle School level
5. 2nd Year Ag Teacher Conference
6. Facilitating Coordination in Agriculture Education (FCAE) quarterly meetings for 1-3 year teachers

### **B. Professional Organization Memberships and School Committees**

#### **Memberships for Ms. Dye and Ms. Sanderson**

1. Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers (IAVAT)
2. National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE)
3. Illinois Association of Science Teachers (ISTA)
4. Illinois Association of Career and Technical Educators
5. Association of Career and Technical Educators
6. National Education Association/ Illinois Education Association

### **C. Planned Summer Activities**

IL State FFA Convention	June
IL State Ag Teachers Conference	June
IL FFA Camp	July
County Fair	Kane Co. July
SAE Visits/Officer Training	H-BR School District June- August
Greenhouse Maintenance	H-BR School District June- August
Curriculum Evaluation and Organization	H-BR School District June- August
Agricultural Building Construction	H-BR School District June-August

## **Advisory Council**

The Hinckley-Big Rock Advisory Council is a group of volunteers related to the Agriculture Department through business, education, and/or industry. The group serves to provide recommendations for improvement and expansion of the Agriculture Department, such as curriculum changes, chapter goals, facilities, and fundraising activities.

## **Hinckley-Big Rock FFA Alumni Chapter**

The HBR FFA Alumni Chapter serves as a type of “booster” club for the HBR FFA Chapter. Members of the chapter consist of parents, community members, and past FFA members, who work to help supplement FFA chapter activities.

### **A. FFA Alumni Meetings Highlights**

The goal of the organization is to support Ag Ed through efforts:

- Volunteering for SAE contest judges
- Constructing new agricultural building
- Hosting fundraisers
- Aiding in the production on the agricultural plot
- Awarding Academic Scholarships for FFA Seniors
- Volunteering for any event or activity
- Job partners in classes to show industry examples
- Job shadowing opportunities



### **Reflections**

Looking back at the 2025-2026 school year, the agricultural department has a solid foundation of our current programming and spent much of the year envisioning how to successfully grow the program in all aspects, by learning from other program models. Highlights for this year are noted below:

### **Achievements in FFA**

- Performed and completed successful FFA Week, Banquet, and annual programming (Sandwich Fair, Plowing Match, Safety Day)
- Incorporated a variety of events for the Middle School Chapter (Middle School FFA Conference, Meetings, Christmas Party, Career Development Events)
- Updated communication methods with the use of Canva, QR codes, and printed publications for a variety of audiences.
  - Created Quarterly Newsletters
  - Implemented a Middle School FFA Google Classroom

### **Achievements in the Classroom**

- Continued enrollment in dual credit offers to 9 credits, in 3 classes (Basic Horticulture, Pre-Veterinary Science, and Agricultural Business Management)
- Improved lab facilities:
  - Continued new agricultural building project
- Agricultural Plot- 2026-2027 Crop will be corn
- Successfully refined curriculum for a Middle School program

## **Goals for 2026-2027**

- Create periodic career focus events at new agricultural buildings.
- Streamline communication methods for students, guardians, school staff, and community members.
- Provide more event opportunities for students at the local level, specially to include younger students.

## **Areas of Improvement:**

- Increase student completion of courses related to career pathways. This is an advantage for students post high school plans. This can be accomplished with more career focused counseling.
- Student accountability at all levels for conferences, events, and Supervised Agricultural Experiences. There were several moments where students struggled with commitment to attend events and/or with upholding responsibilities. Without proper communication from the students and their guardians, it may have a financial impact upon the FFA as well as directly impacting student success. Working directly with administration and district to mirror athletic accountability standards.
- Creating solutions to meet the needs of students with the new adaptive schedule and options for learning. Class enrollments are lower in the AM and PM- based on student dual credit and IVVC attendance.

## **Facility Goals**

- Maintenance of equipment/Lab plans
  - Replace glazing of the greenhouse.
  - Evaluate ventilation/exhaust fans for the greenhouse.
- Appreciate working with maintenance/grounds, and transportation mechanics in facility and class support. They have been a great partner with the building project.

## Appendix-High School Courses

### A. Course Titles and Descriptions

#### **Introduction to the Agricultural Industry Grades: 9-12 Credits: 1.0**

This orientation course provides an opportunity for students to learn how the agricultural industry is organized; its major components; the economic influence of agriculture at state, national and international levels; and the scope and types of job opportunities in the agricultural field. Basic concepts in animal science, plant science, soil science, horticulture, natural resources, agribusiness management, and agricultural mechanics, will be presented. Improving computer and workplace skills will be a focus. Participation in FFA student organization activities and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration and reinforcement of academic concepts. **This Class may be used towards the Science requirement.**

#### **Woodworking Grades: 10-12 Credits: 0.5**

This advanced course focuses on the knowledge, hands-on skills, and workplace skills applicable to construction in the agricultural industry. Major units of instruction include: personal safety, hand tools, power tools, blueprint reading, surveying, construction skills in carpentry, concrete, block laying, drywall and painting. Careers such as agricultural engineers, carpenter, concrete and block layers, finishers, safety specialists, and other related occupations will be examined. Improving workplace and computer skills will be a focus. Participation in FFA student organization activities and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration and reinforcement of academic concepts. This class may be repeated with the consent of the instructor.

#### **Basic Horticultural Science Grades: 9-12 Credits: 1.0**

This course is designed to introduce students to the horticulture industry and provide them with basic plant science knowledge that can be further developed in advanced horticulture courses. Major units of instruction include horticulture research, horticultural careers, plant anatomy, seed germination, plant propagation, growing media, pest management, hydroponics, identifying horticultural plants, growing greenhouse crops, and floral design. Improving computer and workplace skills will be a focus. Participation in FFA student organization activities and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration and reinforcement of academic concepts. This class may be repeated with the consent of the instructor. **This class may be used toward the Science requirement. This course is dual credit with Highland Community College- 3 college credits.**

#### **Pre Veterinary Science Grades: 10-12 Credits: 0.5**

This course will develop students' understanding of the small and companion animal industry, animal anatomy and physiology, animal ethics and welfare issues, animal health, veterinary medicine, veterinary office practices, and animal services to humans. Career exploration will focus on veterinarian, veterinary lab technicians, office lab assistant, small animal production, research lab assistant, and animal nutrition lab technician. Improving computer and workplace skills will be a focus. Participation in FFA student organization activities and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration and reinforcement of academic concepts. This class may be repeated with the consent of instructor. **This class may be used toward the Science requirement. This course is dual credit with Highland Community College- 3 college credits.**

### **Small Engine Repair and Welding Grades: 10-12 Credits: 0.5**

This course will concentrate on expanding student's knowledge and experiences with agricultural mechanics technologies utilized in the agricultural industry. Units of instruction included are: design, construction, fabrication, internal combustion engines, hydraulics, employability skills, maintenance, and welding, (arc, mig, and oxyacetylene welding and cutting. Computer aided plasma cutting instruction may also be available. Careers of agricultural construction engineer, electrician, plumber, welder, equipment designer, parts manager, safety inspector, welder, and other related occupations will be examined. Improving workplace and computer skills will be a focus. Participation in FFA student organization activities and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration and reinforcement of academic concepts. This class may be repeated with the consent of the instructor.

### **Agricultural Business Management Grades: 10-12 Credits: 1.0**

This course will provide students with the basic knowledge and skills necessary to manage personal finances and develop into a successful entrepreneur and/or businessperson. Instructional units include: business ownership types, starting an agribusiness, managing and operating an agribusiness, financing an agribusiness, managing personal finances, record keeping and financial management of an agribusiness, local, state, and federal taxes, agricultural law, and developing employability skills. Student skills will be enhanced in math, reading comprehension, and writing through agribusiness applications. Improving computer and workplace skills will be a focus. Participation in FFA student organization activities and Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration and reinforcement of academic concepts. **This class may be used towards consumer education requirements. This course is dual credit with Highland Community College- 3 college credits.**

### **Entrepreneurship Grades: 10-12 Credits 1.0**

Entrepreneurship courses acquaint students with the knowledge and skills necessary to own and operate their own businesses. Topics from several fields typically form the course content: economics, marketing principles, human relations and psychology, business and labor law, legal rights and responsibilities or ownership, business and financial planning, finance and accounting, and communication. Participation in student organization activities is an integral course component for leadership development, career exploration, and reinforcement of academic concepts.

### **Supervised Agricultural Experience I Grades: 9-10**

### **Supervised Agricultural Experience II Grades: 11-12**

**Credits: 0.50 per year**

This orientation program is for students in the grades 9-10 (SAE I) or 11-12 (SAE II). Students receiving credit in this area must be enrolled in an approved agricultural program sequence. Individual students will have a minimum of one approved project or acceptable plan for doing so. Supervised study, project record book work, training plans and agreement, report writing, and instructor project visitation and supervision are essential of the supervised occupational experience as well as basic employability and transition skills and work ethic. SAE II has similar requirements but higher expectations for more in-depth work. FFA membership is required. This is an independent study class and requires instructor permission.

This course is designed to establish knowledge and skills in various agricultural careers. Students will gain credit by establishing a project at their home, at a local business, or at their school usually after

normal school hours. Example projects may include, but are not limited to: working at a garden center, raising vegetables/grain/livestock, conducting Agri-Science experiments in a greenhouse, and training horses at a stable. Students will be required to verify their experiences by keeping written or computerized records including: business agreements, budgets, inventories, daily activities, hours worked, income and expenses, total earnings, depreciation, and net worth. In addition, SAE lessons are integrated in each agricultural course. SAE participation can lead to full time employment, scholarships, and awards through the FFA.

## **Appendix-Middle School Courses**

### **A. Course Titles and Descriptions**

#### **8th Grade Agricultural**

This course is offered as an elective exploratory offered to 8th Grade students for one (1) Quarter. Serving as an introductory course, students will learn basic agricultural knowledge and a variety of skills relating to Food Science and Electrical Wiring. The Food Science unit allows students to explore conducting a proper taste test, food processing, creating a food label, growing methods, American grown crops, and reading recipes. The Electrical Wiring unit covers tool identification, proper tool use, drawing schematics, electrical symbol identification, equipment identification, shop safety procedures, PPE, and wiring procedures.

#### **7th Grade Agricultural**

This course is offered as an elective exploratory offered to 7th Grade students for one (1) Quarter. Serving as an introductory course, students will learn basic agricultural knowledge and a variety of skills relating to Sustainability and Animal Science. The Sustainability unit is focused on understanding population growth, inventions contributing to society, agriculture history, sustainable products, marketing, and presentation skills. The Animal Science unit begins with a brief overview of domestication and how to care for small animals before diving into breed identification and traits. Students use this knowledge to create a new breed for an animal of their choice, providing key information as well as a 3-D model of the animal in its natural habitat.

#### **6th Grade Agricultural STEAM**

This course is a required exploratory for all 6th grade students that lasts one (1) Quarter. Students who take this course will be introduced to many concepts relating to Leadership, Careers, and Plant Science. The Leadership unit is focused on self reflection, teamwork, and critical thinking. Activities for the unit include personality tests, discussion on how to interact with different personalities, competitive games rooted in STEAM, and weekly self reflections. For the Careers unit, students will take a quiz that matches them to several different careers before deciding on one that they enjoy the most. They will research the job responsibilities, education/ training requirements, location, relation to agriculture. Students will present the information they have found to peers, along with quality pictures to represent the career and their final statements on if they consider themselves to have that career in the future. The Plant Science unit provides students with basic knowledge in plant cells, soils, seed parts, germination, nutrients, photosynthesis, flower parts, pollination, and seed formation.