

45. A Farm Work Planning Simulation in Multi-Media: A Comparative Evaluation

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“The Kayle’s Difficult Decisions” (KDD) is a farm work simulation exercise that enables participants to experience the relationship between farm economics, workload, and risks for injury in the context of the entire farm operation. KDD tells the story of a typical Kentucky farm family that purchases additional land and confronts a heavier financial burden, increased workload, fatigue, and associated risks for injury. The overall purpose of the exercise is to show how safe work practices and the reduction or elimination of farm hazards can contribute to the long-term economic viability of a family farm.

Originally prepared in print form, KDD has recently been completed in an enhanced multi-media format. The print version is most useful in small and medium-size groups (up to about 25 people) with a leader, where 2–4 person discussion groups work together on the problem. The multi-media version is most useful when no leader is available, with very small or very large groups, or where the discussion leader lacks sufficient experience in farming to organize the discussion. The multi-media version also provides much easier and direct access to backup discussion material than is possible in print. While these two formats each have advantages, a controlled evaluation of both versions is being conducted with vocational agriculture, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and county extension groups to illustrate the commonalities and differences.

The current KDD evaluation study is being conducted with high school students enrolled in vocational agriculture classes. Schools are randomly assigned to one of two treatments: print or multi-media instruction and discussion. A third group of schools (control) will undergo status quo training, and will be asked to complete base-line farm safety knowledge testing and will be provided access to KDD at the conclusion of the evaluation study.

The presentation will introduce the audience to the print and multi-media versions of KDD. The KDD exercise also provides an example of the role and principles of simulation exercises for occupational safety and health education and training. The evaluation, methodology, and instruments will be described and current results of the study will be presented. The presentation will conclude with a

review of the advantages (and disadvantages) of the two media and guidelines for maximizing training effects.

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