Introduction

Much research has focused on studying pre-service agricultural science teachers. Shelly-Tolbert, Conroy, and Dailey (2000) concluded that students in agricultural education (AGED) programs today are more diverse than in the past, with many students having little to no traditional agricultural background. Extrapolation from work by Abbott (2003) and Stage and Hossler (1989) supports the idea that students entering the AGED teaching profession may have been influenced to do so by their parents’ occupations.

Other researchers have concentrated on the formative influences exerted on student teachers by their cooperating teachers and centers (Deeds, Flowers, & Arrington, 1991; Harlin, Edwards, & Briers, 2002). Still others have cited the role played in classroom performance of teachers’ assessments of their own knowledge bases (Squire, 2000; Rome & Moss, 1990; Garton & Chung, 1997; Layfield & Dobbins, 2000; Washburn, King, Garton, & Harbstreit, 2001; Edwards & Briers, 1999; Johnson, Schumacher, & Stewart, 1990; Schumacher & Johnson, 1990; Wingenbach & Gartin, 2000; Dormody & Torres, 2002).

What ensures that new agriculture science teachers are knowledgeable and comfortable with teaching agriculture curricula in the classroom, according to an established set of state standards (competencies)? This study attempted an answer by measuring the impacts of self-efficacy on perceived performance and correlated impact with the influences exerted by explicit course-content guidelines.