



# WHY agriculture

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**AGRICULTURE** has come a long way from the horse-drawn plows of our ancestors. The average farmer in the 1900s would be lucky to feed more than a family of five with their outputs, and many crops had a hard time withstanding the strains of the environment like unpredictable weather and insects.

Today, agriculture is more productive than ever before. The combination of advancements in technology along with pesticides and medication to keep plants and livestock healthy means that there is more being produced with far less inputs. The future is bright, but there are still challenges ahead. With eminent population growth and the strains of climate change, producing enough food is no easy feat.

Considering the increase in production that is still needed, more advancements in technology is in our near future. With it, comes an opening of agriculture-related jobs. A career in agriculture presents a wide array of opportunities in an always growing industry.

## WHY WORK IN AGRICULTURE

### **Importance:**

We've all heard the stats: with 9 billion people predicted by the year 2050, agriculture is more important than ever.

Even with food production at an all-time high, the FAO still estimates that around 815 million people are suffering from chronic hunger. This number is only expected to rise with the growing population.

Sufficiently fighting the global hunger problem will require an increase of production up to 70%. It is a task accomplished before, but to produce

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that much more food in an industry that is already setting records will need all hands on deck. If nothing else, a career in agriculture means you are doing your part. Despite what sector you find yourself in, you will be at the forefront of the fight against hunger, making agriculture a rewarding career as much as it is practical.

### **Wide Variety of Options:**

If working directly with plants or livestock is not for you, maybe communicating with people is more your style. Or, maybe your skills lie within a science lab, or with moving mechanical parts. Whatever your passion is, there's a role in the agriculture industry for you.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that 11% of total U.S. employment is attributed to agriculture. That figure represents a lot of different career types to explore and the best part is, it's inclusive to everyone, whether you have a college degree or not.

Careers in agriculture are different from the stereotypes. Consider all the people it takes to run a flour mill, or the innovative minds needed to create the next groundbreaking animal health product. Both these areas require workers of different skill sets. The reach of agriculture stretches beyond farming and ranching and can range all the way to a CEO position at a major food production company. You can find a good fit within the industry, even if your role is not directly related to production agriculture.

### **Job Outlook:**

Along with the variety of career opportunities, the number of >>>

open roles available in agriculture is also growing, so once you find your place, you can feel optimistic about landing a job.

Each year there is an estimated 57,900 job openings in agriculture with only an average of 35,400 new graduates to fill the positions (USDA). That leaves the industry shorthanded when it comes to having workers that are skilled in the areas of agriculture and food sciences.

Like previously discussed, ensuring that food production continues to increase is more important than ever before. This cannot happen without skilled workers, so your help is certainly wanted. With an employment rate that is only expected to grow, choosing to pursue a career in agriculture takes the guesswork out of the job hunt. You will love your job, while benefiting the world's leading industry.

#### **Job Security:**

If you're worried about keeping a job once you find the perfect one, the agriculture industry can remedy your fears. With the growing importance of feeding an ever-demanding population, there's generally no reason to worry about job security. That's not saying there won't be ups and downs. Just like any other industry, agriculture has had its share of hardship, but the future is looking bright. Even during these times, jobs are still available because providing a stable food source will always be necessary.

#### **Work Environment:**

Agriculture encompasses a wide variety of environments to work in. Like spending time outdoors and working with plants? An agronomist job or getting hands-on with all different types of livestock from fish to cattle might be the best fit. However, agriculture is present outside of rural areas. There is still

opportunity for someone who prefers an office setting and a little extra time at home, or even a person who likes exploring and traveling every week.

Finding the right work environment is just a matter of researching what the job requirements are for a certain field. Regardless of where you feel the most productive, the agriculture industry has the potential to accommodate your particular tastes.

#### **Salary:**

Monetary compensation often proves just how important working for the agriculture industry is. According to salary data, the average United States Department of Agriculture pay is \$67,000. This is higher than the national average which the Social Security Administration reports as hovering just above \$50,000. Agriculture workers are valued in their craft. They are laborers who understand and are working to solve global problems with food security. Hard work does not go without notice in agriculture, and you will likely reap rewards in addition to good pay.

#### **Ethic:**

More goes into job satisfaction than just wage. While choosing a career, it is important to understand all the benefits. One of these benefits that people often forget about is the meaning a job gives to your life. The good news? Agriculture is a morally rich career. Your day-to-day life will consist of various tasks, all benefiting the collaborative effort of feeding the world. Even serving as an accountant aids the flow of the agriculture industry. When pursuing a career in agriculture, you will get the peace of mind knowing you are making a difference.

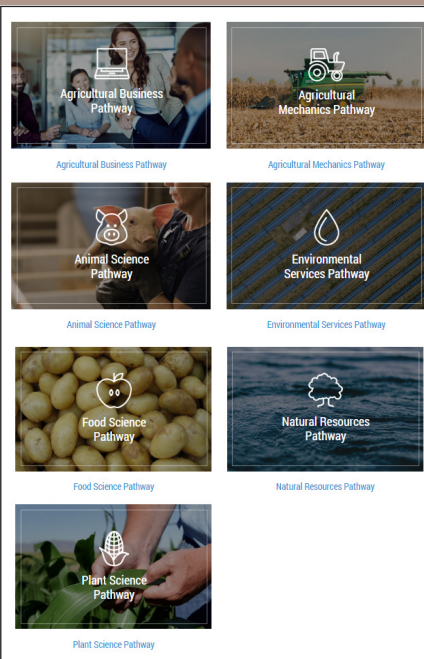
In the 1900's, a career in agriculture might have been working in the field.

But today, advancements in technology have opened a wide array of careers in biotechnology, engineering, and production along with many others.

So, when asking the question "why ag?", it's important to understand what the industry has to offer. Working with the 21 million people employed by agriculture means that you will reap the benefits of salary and plenty of choices, as well knowing you are contributing to global food security. **AG**

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