Some Careers in Agriculture

Florist

**Job Description:** Florists sell cut flowers, potted plants, and other materials having to do with flowers. They purchase flowers, plants and supplies from growers or wholesalers, delivers flowers, designs bouquets, corsages, wreaths, table and window displays and makes other decorations for restaurants, weddings and funerals. The florist cuts, waters, wraps and packs flowers and must keep accurate records of all transactions, stock and inventories.

**Skills:** A florist should be creative, have an artistic sense for balance and colors and enjoy growing and handling flowers.

**Preparation:** College or vocational-technical courses in ornamental horticulture and experience working in a floral shop.

Golf Course Superintendent

**Job Description:** A golf course superintendent uses what he or she knows about grasses, trees, shrubs and agricultural chemicals to manage and maintain a golf course. Responsibilities include cutting, watering and caring for grass to make sure it is healthy and looks good. He or she must know how to mix and apply chemical fertilizers and chemicals used to control insects, weeds and disease. Other duties include laying sod and planting grass seeds in worn out or new areas and taking care of equipment. The superintendent must also keep track of all the supplies needed to maintain the golf course.

**Skills:** A golf course superintendent should like working outdoors and know how to grow and maintain grasses, sods and shrubs.

**Preparation:** Two-year college degree in turf-management or ornamental horticulture or vocational-technical classes in greenskeeping and horticulture.

Forester

**Job Description:** A forester manages forest lands and their resources. Duties include supervising fire-fighting crews, replanting after fires and working to prevent and treat damage to timber resulting from insects, diseases and other causes. A forester must also know how to prevent soil erosion and floods. He or she must estimate how much timber is available for cutting in a forest area and how much money it is worth. The forester must know about surveying, mapping and road-building in order to plan roads into forest areas. He or she manages and protects wildlife and may be in charge of recreational activities like hunting, fishing, camping and hiking.

**Skills:** A forester must have an interest in outdoor work, forest and wildlife and modern business practices.

**Preparation:** College degree in forestry and work experience with a forester.
Agriculture Teacher

**Job Description:** The agriculture teacher holds high school classes in production agriculture, agricultural mechanics, agricultural products, processing and marketing, horticulture, renewable natural resources, forestry and other agriculture/agribusiness subjects. He or she organizes field trips, laboratory experiments and community demonstrations, arranges for students to get agricultural work experience and visits them at work to check their progress. The agriculture teacher also serves as chapter advisor of the Future Farmers of America.

**Skills:** An agriculture teacher should like working with young people and be interested in agriculture.

**Preparation:** High school courses in agriculture and college degree in dairy or animal science. Part time work experience on a farm.

Agricultural Machinery Sales Associate

**Job Description:** A farm machinery sales associate sells new and used machinery to farmers, sells special tractors and equipment to construction businesses, travels from farm to farm talking to farmers about their farm machinery problems and tries to interest them in trading or buying new or used equipment. The work includes closing sales, getting contracts signed, collecting down payments, writing up terms, collecting bills, checking on complaints and advising farmers about farm machinery needs. A sales associate may also supervise the

**Skills:** The dairy farmer should like working outdoors with crops, livestock and machinery. He/she should have good business sense and be able to make successful major and minor farm management decisions. The work requires a knowledge of soil chemistry, plant and animal physiology, genetics, nutrition, entomology, farm management and economics.
installation of new equipment and order equipment for special farm jobs.

Skills: An average aptitude in business and clerical work and an interest and ability in salesmanship is required. A knowledge of general agriculture and the operation of all kinds of farm machinery along with a knowledge and understanding of new and old models of farm equipment is desirable.

A sales associate should have a pleasing personality and be able to work with people.

Preparation: High school courses in bookkeeping, speech, math, mechanical drawing and agriculture and prior experience operating and repairing farm equipment.

County Cooperative Extension Service Agent

Job Description: A county agent uses practical experience and knowledge of research to help farmers who are having problems with livestock, crops, farm management or marketing of farm products. The agent conducts educational programs to bring the latest agricultural developments to the farmer, organizes groups and committees to plan and develop programs and activities for rural development, and coordinates 4-H clubs in the county.

Skills: A county agent should enjoy working with people and be interested in agriculture.

Preparation: College degree in some field of agriculture and experience working on a farm.

Dietitian

Job Description: Dietitians work in community health programs, hospitals, schools, and other public facilities. Some work as private nutritional consultants. A dietitian at a community health program or hospital is responsible for the facility's health programs and works with patients to help them develop healthier diets. Dietitians may also offer classes to the public in such subjects as weight control and healthy cooking techniques.

Skills: A dietitian must enjoy working with people and have some knowledge of human nutrition.

Preparation: College degree in food science and nutrition.

Farmer

Job Description: Farmers grow cash crops and raise livestock. Farmers who grow crops use their knowledge of
soils and plants to determine fertilizer and irrigation needs, obtain seeds for planting, prepare the soil for planting, combat plant diseases and insect pests, harvest crops and sell them. Farmers who raise livestock use their knowledge of animal husbandry to develop sound breeding programs for animals which they raise for meat, milk and eggs. Farmer must keep their machinery and other equipment in good working order and make repairs on farm buildings, fences and other structures. Keeping accurate records of supplies, purchases, sales, planting, breeding and production are another part of the farmer’s job.

**Skills:** A farmer should like working outdoors with crops, livestock and machinery. He or she should have good business sense and be able to make good management decisions. The work requires knowledge of soil chemistry, plant and animal physiology, genetics, nutrition, entomology, farm management and economics.

**Preparation:** High school courses in agriculture and a college degree in some field of agriculture along with work experience on a farm.

**Farm Loan Officer**

**Job Description:** A farm loan officer may work in a rural bank, Farmers’ Home Administration, Federal Land Bank, or some other lending agency which meets the financial requirements of farmers. Duties include appraising farm property, checking farm credit, gathering information on farm sales and profits, preparing reports for the lending agency’s farm loan committee, arranging for farm loans, answering customer questions, giving financial advice and helping farmers budget their incomes so they can repay loans.

**Skills:** A farm loan officer should enjoy working with people and be interested in farm business management.

**Preparation.** College degree in agricultural economics, general agriculture or some other field of agriculture and training in banking, finance, economics and business law.

**Agricultural Machinery Mechanic**

**Job Description:** An agricultural machinery mechanic maintains, repairs and overhauls farm machinery and equipment, examines machines and equipment for operational defects and dismantles and repairs them. The mechanic advises customers on machinery repair problems.
and sets up, adjusts and prepares new machinery and equipment for delivery. Work may be indoors or outdoors but is usually done in a modern, well-equipped and well-lighted shop.

**Skills:** A high degree of mechanical aptitude and interest in working with equipment is required. A mechanic must also be able to read and understand parts manuals.

**Preparation:** High school courses in math, mechanical drawing, agriculture and physics and vocational-technical courses in mechanics along with farm experience in the operation and repair of farm equipment.

### Custom Equipment Operator

**Job Description:** A farm equipment operator drives and controls farm equipment used to plow, cultivate, plant, fertilize, dust, spray and harvest crops. He or she may operate and maintain several types of farm equipment and make minor repairs to tractors and farm equipment in the field.

**Skills:** A farm equipment operator should like to work outdoors and be good with machinery.

**Preparation:** High school courses in mathematics, science, driver education, agriculture and machine shop and experience operating farm equipment.

### Veterinarian Technician

**Job Description:** An animal health technician helps the veterinarian with testing programs and inspections of livestock. He or she may work at a racing stable helping care for horses or may assist in the operation of a small animal hospital. Veterinarian Technicians may also be employed in laboratories doing biological research, in zoos or in meat-packing companies. Duties may include record-keeping, animal care and feeding, preparing animals, instruments, equipment and medication for surgery, collecting specimens, applying wound dressings and assisting a veterinarian in diagnostic, medical and surgical procedures, answering the phone and making appointments.

**Skills:** A veterinarian technician must have knowledge of farm animals and be able to handle large animals.

**Preparation:** High school courses in science, physiology, health and vocational agriculture and farm livestock experience.

### Fruit and Vegetable Market Manager

**Job Description:** A fruit and vegetable department manager is responsible for the operation and management of the produce department. He or she orders all produce and supplies, checks produce received for quality and quantity, makes sure all produce is properly stored, handled and merchandised properly, plans displays and promotions and decides what...
produce should be marked down. He or she also keeps fixtures, equipment and floors clean and makes sure produce department personnel are neat and courteous.

Skills: A fruit and vegetable market manager should have an average aptitude for clerical work and like working with people. A knowledge of sales and advertising is beneficial, along with the ability to judge quality in fruits and vegetables.

Preparation: High school courses in math, economics, speech, business and agriculture and work experience on a vegetable or fruit farm.

Feed Mill Equipment Operator

Job Description: A feed mill equipment operator works with and maintains grain handling, shelling, rolling, crushing, grinding, mixing and sacking equipment. He or she purchases the grains to be processed by the mill, uses equipment to unload the grains from railroad cars and trucks, supervises feed mill helpers, takes orders for feeds, sells feed to customers, bills customers and collects money.

Skills: A feed mill equipment operator should be good with machinery and have some knowledge of the different kinds of livestock.

Preparation: High school courses in math, agricultural mechanics, mechanical drawing and bookkeeping and experience operating farm equipment and feeding livestock.

Agricultural Journalist

Job Description: An agricultural journalist gathers writes and edits news for magazines or newspapers that are read by rural and urban people. The ag journalist covers all events of interest to farmers and others in the area and gathers news by observation, interview and research. He or she takes photographs, reports on and writes feature stories about fairs and livestock shows.

Skills: An agricultural journalist must be a good have good writing skills and an interest in agriculture.

Preparation: Degree in agricultural journalism, general journalism or some field of agriculture.