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Year: Senior

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### Agriculture as a Career

Agriculture is not just a career for me; it is a passion. Being a non-traditional agricultural student, I know that agriculture is more than just a career. Agriculture is the industry where an individual has the power to make a difference at a global scale. I was not raised on a farm, however I was still introduced to agriculture at an early age when I worked in the orchards with my parents. In my mind, this created a negative perspective because I saw agriculture as only hard labor and something that I could not wait to get out of. I would always complain because I did not want to wake up at 4:00AM and work in the fields, but every time I complained my parents would tell me, "This is why you have to stay in school. You don't want to end up like us working in the fields for the rest of your life". Even though I admire my parents, I made it a life goal to pursue a higher education so I did not have to wake up at 4:00AM and go to work in the fields either under the hot sun, or on the cold chilling days. Although I had such a negative perspective on agriculture, my opinion began to change when my horticulture teacher persuaded me to become part of the National FFA Organization.

Through the FFA I quickly started learning about the importance agriculture has in our society. After being actively engaged in the FFA for four years, I derived a passion for agriculture that continues to grow every day. When I first told my parents I was going off to college to pursue a degree in Agriculture, they were shocked. They didn't think I was serious and told me not to waste my time pursuing something unrealistic with no future. I took it upon myself to educate my parents on the importance agriculture has in our society and the contributions I want to make in the industry. My aspiration is to bring awareness to agricultural issues and contribute to the development of sustainable agricultural and economic systems in third world countries.

The need for sustainable agricultural practices is huge in other countries. Sometimes we fail to recognize that the shortage in food supply is a world wide problem. We don't pay much attention because we are not the ones being directly affected, but there are many people around the world who are starving everyday. I know I can make a difference by providing those people with basic agronomic and economic knowledge so that they can create sustainable systems within their communities. Providing communities with this basic knowledge allows us to progress as a global community towards addressing current agricultural issues.

Increasing the agricultural knowledge in consumers is another primary issue I also hope to contribute to. My priority as an agriculture advocate is to inform the everyday consumer through awareness and education. The importance of agriculture needs to be known because it impacts our lives on a daily basis. I am taking it upon myself to keep advocating for agriculture because it's my passion and I hope that this is one day reflected in the difference I will make in the industry.