

## Agriculture as a Career

Stop for a moment, close your eyes, and picture your typical morning. Upon awaking, you dress, pour yourself a cup of coffee, and enjoy a breakfast of eggs and toast. You pack your children's lunches with snacks you bought from the grocery store the night before. On your way to work, you stop to fill your car with ethanol and perhaps you notice the rain clouds on the horizon that signal an August rain. Your day has just begun and, chances are, the connection behind all of these was never even considered.

Agriculture winds its way through our lives in more ways than people think. It's more than just farms with red barns, trucks, tractors, and rolling hills covered in corn. Instead, it's a growing industry full of scientists, marketers, researchers, families, and policy makers. It involves trial and error, uncertainty, dedication, fearlessness, and most importantly: education. It is education about our planet, our future, and ourselves. Agriculture careers are innovative by discovering new ways to feed a growing population with the same amount of arable land and diminishing natural resources. For these reasons, a career in agriculture is one of the most dynamic, and perhaps the most consequential, industries that can a young person can enter. With more job openings than graduates, why aren't more individuals seeking out agriculture as their career?

For most, I believe it is due to a lack of knowledge regarding what can be done in this industry. Countless times I've heard the following question regarding my degree: "What are you going to do with that? Manage a farm?" It wasn't until I began my classes in Agribusiness that I even knew the numerous opportunities available to me in order to fully answer their question. We need to bring awareness to the importance of where our food comes from by informing, teaching, and showing the next generation that a career in agriculture is so much more than managing a farm. It's about inspiring and caring for others and doing everything in our power to bring consistent crop yields and healthy foods to the world—all while reducing the peoples' impact on the planet.

My response now is to explain to people how agriculture is in everything: from the food they eat, to the clothes they wear, and even to the fuel they put into their cars. Agriculture is more than a just career; it's a lifetime commitment. As the world grows, changes, and adapts, so too must agriculture. And it needs us, those who choose to pursue a career in agriculture, to be its advocates.