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## Agriculture as a Career

It was a warm September afternoon when I caught a dark red grasshopper. When I first spotted it, I noticed its colors, its noises, and its behavior. It was in that moment that I fell in love with agriculture. As I held that grasshopper, I realized that agriculture was more than just planting crops and taking care of cattle. Agriculture is a way of viewing the world and how organisms interact. Most people would look at this grasshopper and see a bug with strange legs; however, I saw a pest to crops, food to animals, and a fertilizer to the soil. It is in this observation that I realized agriculture is so much more than meets the eye.

When people hear the word agriculture, they often conjure up images of cornfields, cattle, and tractors. Society overlooks many jobs that are necessary to the success of livestock and crops. Geneticists and entomologists are just two examples of careers that work to provide safe and healthy food. Geneticists are able to manipulate gene sequences to enhance the nutritional value of a crop at a low cost. Entomologists explore solutions to rid farms of pests. This is so vital, as insects can destroy close to 25% of crops around the world each year. With an ever-increasing global population, these lesser-known agricultural careers in genetics and entomology are increasingly important as they help provide a sufficient amount of nutritional food.

Although the two career fields of genetics and entomology are important aspects of agriculture, it is also important that we remember the all-encompassing impact of the industry. Wendell Berry, a farmer and agrarian writer, once said, "Eating is an agricultural act." Whether you are a farmer or a consumer, the food you eat was provided by agriculture. This fact alone is the main reason why people should be educating the general population on careers in agriculture. While increased education in the field would help promote agriculture as a potential career path, it would also make people more aware of what the industry is doing to the food they put in their body. It seems that every other day there is a riot resulting from the use of a new pesticide, the creation of a new GMO, or the release of an exotic biological control. By informing consumers about the purpose behind these activities, the agricultural industry can negate destructive claims and begin building a trusting relationship with society.

I have a strong desire to inform people about the agriculture industry because it has provided me with a more interesting view of the world. I no longer look at a cornfield and see plants; instead, I see the biologists feverishly working to increase crop yields. I no longer look at cattle and see a steak dinner; I see an animal that requires proper nutrition and medical care. And I no longer look at a grasshopper and see an insect; rather, I see the opportunity to change and improve the world I live in.