

Picture this Agricultural Career

Grade Level: 4-6

Approximate Length of Activity: Two to three class periods

Objectives:

Teacher:

1. Help the students research a specific agricultural career.
2. Use agricultural career information to conduct an activity.

Students:

1. Conduct research to gain an understanding of the various agricultural careers.
2. Learn about aptitudes for specific agriculture careers.

Michigan Content Standards: (Language Arts) 1.1; 1.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 7.1; 10.1

Introduction:

You don't have to come from a farm to pursue a position in agriculture. There are related jobs everywhere for anyone! In fact, one out of every six jobs in the United States is related to agriculture. With over 250 career areas available in the field of agriculture the possibilities are numerous. Plus, there is a demand for qualified people to fill these positions. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, more than 57,000 jobs open each year in agriculture.

Approximately 22 million people now work in agriculture and ag-related fields. Only 10 percent of them are directly involved in production agriculture. The rest work in agribusiness, communications, science, government, education, processing and distribution, and marketing and sales, as well as dozens of other occupations which serve the farmer or the total agricultural industry.

As new technologies emerge in agriculture, so will new job opportunities and the need for well-trained and educated people. Today's agriculture offers more than 250 rewarding and challenging careers. Agriculture today is so much more than farming. Agriculturists can work in livestock production or soil conservation, equipment repair or radio broadcasting, or anything from nursery management and genetic engineering to landscaping and law.

There are various categories of agricultural careers. This list gives some examples of each.

Agricultural Production -- agronomist, animal breeder, aquaculturist, cattle farmer, dairy farmer, mushroom grower, peanut producer, rice farmer, tree farmer, corn farmer and soybean farmer, sheep producer, hog producer

Ag Processing/Distribution -- Christmas tree grader, food and drug inspector, fruit distributor, grain broker, meat cutter, quality control supervisor, winery manager

Ag Mechanics/Engineering -- ag construction engineer, diesel mechanic, equipment operator, land surveyor, machinist, parts manager, soil engineer, welder

Agribusiness -- aerial crop duster, ag equipment dealer, livestock groomer, computer analyst, farm auctioneer, feed ration developer, fertilizer plant supervisor, field sales representative, kennel operator, poultry hatchery manager, salesperson

Resource Management -- animal ecologist, environmental conservation officer, forest fire fighter, forest ranger, game warden, ground water geologist, soil conservationist, water resources manager

Ag Research/Health Sciences -- animal nutritionist, avian veterinarian, biochemist, botanist, entomologist, food chemist, plant geneticist, pomologist, veterinarian

Horticulture/Forestry -- floral designer, forester, golf course superintendent, greenhouse manager, landscape architect, log grader, turf farmer

Ag Specialist -- ag accountant, ag corporation executive, ag educator, ag journalist, ag lawyer, ag loan officer, ag market analyst, computer specialist, farm investment manager, rural sociologist

Materials Needed:

- "Careers in Agriculture" worksheet
- "Ag Career Strips" sheets
- Encyclopedias
- Reference materials
- Internet (if available)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Chalk or dry erase markers

Activity Outline:

1. Have students brainstorm careers that are related to agriculture and give some of the background information to the class about agricultural careers.
2. Have each student fill out the "Careers in Agriculture" worksheet. After the students have filled out the first nine responses, have them use these descriptions to identify what skills and level of education are needed in each career listed. Many of the careers require more than one of the choices.
3. Discuss the "Careers in Agriculture" worksheet with the students.
4. Take the "Ag Career Strips" sheet and cut apart the ag careers. Place all the paper strips in a hat.
5. Play Ag Career Pictionary with your class. Divide the class into two teams. Assign one team to be Team A and the other to be Team B.
6. Allow a student from Team A to pull an ag career from the hat. Ask them to draw something that represents that career on the chalk/dry erase board. Team A must guess what career is being represented as the student is drawing. If Team A guesses correctly within one minute, they will be awarded 20 points. If Team A does not guess correctly, allow Team B 20 seconds to guess the career. If Team B guesses correctly, they will be awarded 10 points.
7. Allow a student from Team B to pull an ag career from the hat. Ask them to draw something that represents that career on the chalk/dry erase board. Team B must guess what career is being represented as the student is drawing. If Team B guesses correctly within one minute, they will be awarded 20 points. If Team B does not guess correctly, allow Team A 20 seconds to guess the career. If Team A guesses correctly, they will be awarded 10 points.
8. Continue this pattern until all students have had the chance to draw an ag career on the board. The team with the most points wins!

Discussion Questions:

1. Have the students generate questions to the person giving the speech.
2. Which career probably requires the most amount of education? The least?
3. Do you know anyone who has a career in agriculture? What do they do?
4. Which of these careers would you most like? Why?

Related Activities:

1. Have students conduct an in-person or phone interview with someone who has an agricultural career. Report the information to the class.
2. Play "Agricultural Charades." Have students take turns acting out the career on the paper drawn from a hat. The other students try to guess what career is being portrayed.
3. The Michigan Farm Bureau has an educational magazine geared for kids entitled "Career Ag Mag". It contains stories, games and facts. To obtain copies for your classroom contact Michigan Farm Bureau the Promotion and Education department at 1-800-292-2680 ext. 3202.
4. The lesson "Count on an Ag Career" located in the Math section of Farm Bureau's Ag In the Classroom Lessons.

Careers in Agriculture

Check the responses which describe you.

I want to:

1. _____ work with other people
2. _____ work with ideas or information
3. _____ work with machines
4. _____ do math and work with numbers
5. _____ do science experiments
6. _____ work with animals
7. _____ work with plants
8. _____ go to college for four years after high school
9. _____ work outdoors

Listed here are just a few of the hundreds of careers in agriculture. Write the number of the description above you think is most needed in each career. You may need to look up some of these careers. Many descriptions fit into each career.

Agriculture Production

- _____ aquaculturist
- _____ fruit grower

Resource Management

- _____ groundwater geologist
- _____ soil conservationist

Agribusiness

- _____ meteorological analyst
- _____ sales representative

Ag Specialist

- _____ ag economist
- _____ ag journalist

Horticulture/Forestry

- _____ forest ranger
- _____ landscape architect

Ag Mechanics/Engineering

- _____ ag construction engineering
- _____ diesel mechanic

Ag Processing/Distribution

- _____ food and drug inspector
- _____ milk plant supervisor

Ag Research/Health Sciences

- _____ agronomist
- _____ entomologist

To be used with:
Picture This Agricultural Career

Animal Groomer	Salesperson
Computer Programmer	Wholesale Florist
Equipment Operator	Surveyor
Safety Inspector	Welder
Food & Drug Inspector	Fruit & Vegetable Grader
Meat Inspector	Aquaculturist
Farmer	Livestock Producer
Tree Nursery Manager	Vegetable Grower