

Count on an Ag Career

Grade Level: 4-6

Approximate Length of Activity: One to two class periods

Objectives:

Teacher

1. Provide facts about agricultural careers to use in developing statistics.

Students

1. Survey parents or guardians and determine how many jobs are agriculture-related.
2. Become aware of many different types of jobs that are agriculture-related.

Michigan Content Standards: (Math) N.ME.04.20; N.FL.04.36; D.RE.04.01; D.RE.04.03; N.MR.05.22; N.MR.06.13

Introduction

You don't have to come from a farm to pursue a position in agriculture. There are ag-related jobs everywhere for anyone! In fact, one out of every six jobs in the United States is related to agriculture. With more than 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 U.S. Department of Agriculture, more than 57,000 jobs open each year in agriculture.

More than 22 million people have careers in agriculture. Only two million people are traditional farmers, but many people are involved in the process from farm to market. There are agriculture careers in agribusiness, communications, engineering, biotechnology research, government, education, computer science, processing, distribution, marketing and many other areas. Some people have careers connected to agriculture but they do not realize it! For example, sales representatives for food distributors, genetic researchers and elementary teachers who teach topics such as plant and animal systems are all involved in agriculture because their jobs relate to the food and fiber system.

The agricultural industry is made up of six employment areas. These areas are:

- Production Specialist – 7 percent
- Social Service Professionals – 9 percent
- Education and Communication – 11 percent
- Managers and Financial Specialists – 13 percent
- Scientists, Engineers and Related Specialists – 32 percent
- Marketing, Merchandising and Representatives – 28 percent

Agricultural Production Specialist Careers such as aquaculturalist, turf manager, viticulturist, farm manager, grain and/or livestock farmer, wildlife manager, greenhouse manager, fruit and vegetables grower and specialty animal producer.

Social Service Professionals Careers such as youth program counselor, dietitian, regulatory agent, community development specialist, regional planner, park manager, food inspector and outdoor recreation specialist.

Communication and Education Specialist Careers such as computer systems analyst, illustrator, journalist, information specialist, personnel development specialist, agriculture/horticulture teacher, public relations representative, computer software designer and radio/television broadcaster.

Managers and Financial Specialist Careers such as an accountant, policy analyst, bankers, food service manager, retail manager, consultant, wholesale manager, economist, insurance agency manager and association manager.

Scientist, Engineers, and Related Specialists Careers such as agronomist, remote sensing specialist, research technician, environmental scientist, landscape architect, food scientist, animal scientist, agricultural engineer, water quality specialist and plant scientist.

Marketing, Merchandising, and Sales Representative Careers such as grain merchandiser, insurance agent, sales representative, landscape contractor, restaurant manager, market analyst, commodity broker, export sales manager, advertising manager and forest products merchandiser.

Materials Needed

- "Careers in Agriculture" worksheet
- Dictionaries, encyclopedias and other resources
- Chalkboard and chalk or dry erase board and markers

Activity Outline

1. Begin the lesson by having the class brainstorm a list of careers and jobs related to agriculture. The teacher should write the careers and jobs on the board. When the students cannot think of anymore careers or jobs, hand out the "Careers in Agriculture" worksheet. Have the students read through the occupations and then place each occupation in the appropriate category. This worksheet can be done individually or in groups.
2. Next, have the students write down their parents' or guardians' occupations. If some students are unsure, finish the lesson the next day so students can find out what their parents occupations are.
3. The teacher should make two columns on the chalkboard. One column is for parents with jobs related to agriculture and the other column is for parents that have non-agriculturally related jobs. Ask each student what his or her parents do and whether their jobs are ag-related or not. If the student has trouble figuring out if a job is ag-related, have the class help.
4. Once the lists are complete, have the students count their parent's occupations and how many of those occupations are related to agriculture. This can then be turned into a percentage and ratio of how many parents are involved in agriculturally-related careers. Compare this ratio to the fact that one in every six jobs in the United States is related to agriculture.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the six employment areas of agriculture?
2. One in every how many jobs is related to agriculture?
3. How many parents/guardians have agriculturally-related jobs? What is the percentage? The ratio?
4. What are some jobs that are related to agriculture?
5. What job would you like to have that is related to agriculture?

Related Activities

1. Invite people employed in agriculture-related occupations to talk to the class.
2. Role-play some of these careers.
3. Categorize and graph occupations of the parents of your students.
4. The Michigan Farm Bureau has an educational magazine geared for kids entitled "Career Ag Mag." To obtain copies for your classroom contact Michigan Farm Bureau, Promotion and Education at (800) 292-2680, ext. 3202.
5. The lesson "You are the Farmer" located in the math section of this curriculum guide.
6. The lesson "Scientific Careers in Agriculture" located in the science section of this curriculum guide.
7. The lesson "Picture This Agriculture Career" located in the language arts section of this curriculum guide.
8. The lesson "Foods Amazing Journey" located in the social studies section of this curriculum guide.

Careers in Agriculture

Careers related to agriculture are found in many different categories. Match each occupation below with the proper category. Can you think of other occupations in each category?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Farming and Ranching | a. Agronomist |
| | b. Home economist |
| | c. Meteorologist |
| 2. Science and Research | d. Food inspector |
| | e. Elevator manager |
| | f. Fruit grower |
| 3. Manufacturing | g. County extension agent |
| | h. Writer |
| 4. Business | i. Fertilizer packager |
| | j. Loan officer |
| | k. Soil conservationist |
| 5. Education and Services | l. Artist |
| | m. Seed grower |
| 6. Communications | n. Poultry producer |
| | o. Equipment sales agent |

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1. Farming and Ranching
F, M, N
 2. Science and Research
A, C, D, K
 3. Manufacturing
I, O
 4. Business
E, J
 5. Education and Services
B, G
 6. Communications
H, L
- a. Agronomist
 - b. Home economist
 - c. Meteorologist
 - d. Food inspector
 - e. Elevator manager
 - f. Fruit grower
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