



## Careers in Agriculture FACT SHEET

March, 2009

### **National Ag Week and Ag Day**

*www.agday.org*

#### **What Is Ag Day?**

Ag Day is celebrated on March 20, 2009 - the first day of spring. National Ag Day falls during National Ag Week, March 15-21, 2009. It is a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless other across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

#### **Why Celebrate Agriculture?**

Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis. But too few people truly understand this contribution. By building awareness, the Agriculture Council of America is encouraging young people to consider career opportunities in agriculture. Each American farmer feeds more than 144 people ... a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more - and doing it better. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

#### **Where Can I Find More Information?**

Contact the Agriculture Council of America at (913) 491-1895 or visit *www.agday.org*.

### **Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in the U.S. Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resources System 2005-2010**

*http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/supplydemand/2005-2010*

This study is the sixth in a series of five-year employment opportunities projections initiated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) relating data from the Integrated Post-secondary Education System (IPEDS) and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Opportunities for positions in Education, Communication and Governmental Services, Agricultural and Forestry Production, Scientific and Engineering, and Management and Business Occupations are discussed. Major factors affecting the market for graduates also are presented.

#### **From the Report Summary**

##### *The Big Picture:*

Employment opportunities for U.S. college graduates with expertise in the food, agricultural, and natural resources system are expected to remain strong during the next five years. We expect slightly more than 52,000 annual job openings for new graduates during 2005-2010, and some 49,300 qualified graduates available each year for these positions. Annually, an average of approximately 32,300 new graduates from U.S. colleges of agriculture and life sciences, forestry, and veterinary medicine are expected to take jobs in the system. Other job openings will be filled by some 17,000 qualified graduates from allied higher education programs such as biological sciences, engineering, business, health sciences, communication, and applied technologies.

*Projected Job Opportunities:*

Management and business occupations will provide some 24,000 annual openings compared to about 20,200 graduates who will have expertise in these areas. We anticipate relatively stronger employment opportunities for technical sales specialists; brokers; financial management specialists; and forest product, fruit, and vegetable marketing representatives. These individuals will work for organizations that add value to agricultural and forest commodities. We anticipate declining employment opportunities for sales and business representatives who provide production inputs to farmers and ranchers, and fewer opportunities for merchandisers of grains and food animals.

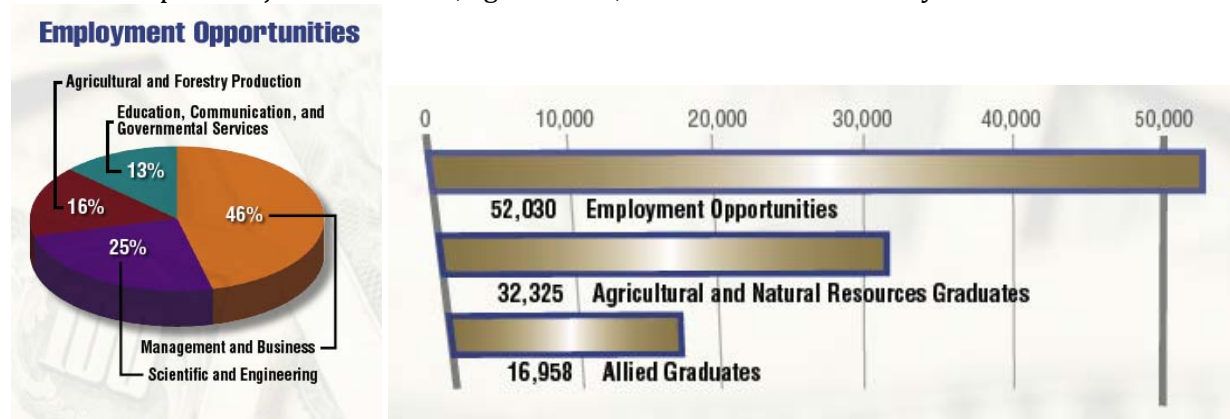
Scientific and engineering occupations will have about 13,000 annual openings. In contrast, some 12,700 qualified graduates will be available each year, leaving a slight shortfall. We project increasing opportunities for graduates with skills in precision agriculture, biotechnology, nanotechnology, new product development, biomaterials engineering, food quality assurance, forest science, animal health and wellbeing, nutraceuticals, and environmental science. Graduates will find fewer opportunities in wildlife science, agricultural machinery engineering, and veterinary medicine general practices.

Agricultural and forestry production occupations will have some 8,000 annual employment opportunities compared to 7,100 graduates with the required expertise. We project increasing opportunities for producers of horticultural crops including fruits, vegetables, and landscape plants, and for growers of specialty crops that provide raw materials for medical and energy products. Expect expanded opportunities in forest products consulting. Due to business consolidation, graduates should find relatively fewer opportunities as farmers and ranchers who produce traditional commodities (e.g., wheat, corn, cotton, soybeans, cattle, and hogs).

Education, communication, and governmental services occupations will provide about 7,000 annual job openings in the nation’s food, agricultural, and natural resource system. We expect about 9,300 qualified graduates each year. We anticipate relatively stronger opportunities in plant and animal inspection, public health administration, foods and nutrition, outdoor recreation, environmental management, high school agricultural science and business teaching, and land-use planning occupations. Limited opportunities are projected for agricultural communicators, farm and ranch advisors, and government farm services representatives.

*Sources of Graduates:*

U.S. colleges and departments of agricultural, food, and natural resources sciences are expected to generate about 32,300 graduates each year between 2005 and 2010. In addition, some 17,000 graduates from allied academic disciplines such as engineering, life and physical sciences, communication, business, and health are expected to have the skills needed to compete for jobs in the food, agricultural, and natural resources system.



## Missouri Agribusiness Academy

[www.mda.mo.gov/abd/agribus\\_academy.htm](http://www.mda.mo.gov/abd/agribus_academy.htm)

The Missouri Agribusiness Academy, established in 1988, annually awards academy memberships through a competitive written application and oral interview process. This year academy members will tour St. Louis agribusiness operations in June 8-12, 2009. Almost all of MDA's academy graduates have pursued careers in agriculture. Past academy members are commonly found in leadership positions such as state and national 4-H and FFA offices, campus organizations, churches and civic clubs.

## Specialty Crop Program Completes First Year

[www.mda.mo.gov/news/2007/PR11302007.htm](http://www.mda.mo.gov/news/2007/PR11302007.htm)

The Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) has completed its first year of a specialty crop program made possible by a \$208,578 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Marketing Service. The program is designed to enhance the competitiveness of Missouri specialty crops and to teach FFA youth the importance of specialty crops as a value-added opportunity. In cooperation with the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry and the Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture and Enology, MDA is educating FFA students and potential growers in the Lexington, Mo. and the surrounding areas and connecting them with local leaders and mentors involved in agriculture.

### ***Q&A with Dr. Terry Heiman, DESE, about the Specialty Crop Block Program***

- Q. What kind of impact is this grant anticipated to have for agricultural education?
- A. The opportunity to team professionals in agri-forestry, viticulture and vegetable production with local Agricultural Education programs is very unique. The access to cutting-edge research and its application for students through their SAEs will be very beneficial.
- Q. How would you define "specialty crop" for the layperson?
- A. A crop that is not grown for the "commodity" market. It has a distinct and usually niche market.
- Q. How would you describe the "climate" (market) for the focus on specialty crop farming?
- A. The trends in food consumption are toward more locally grown produce, a "local cuisine," if you will. Consumers are interested in safe food that they can identify with a particular producer.
- Q. Which schools/FFA chapters will be participating in the grant?
- A. Approximately 10 school in the Lexington area.
- Q. How many students could potentially be involved?
- A. 500
- Q. Why were these schools/FFA chapters selected?
- A. The geographic area selected for the grant is unique in soils and location for specialty crops.
- Q. Will this represent a fairly new emphasis in agricultural education?
- A. The components of the Ag ED program are classroom instruction, leadership development and supervised agricultural experience. This project emphasizes all three components. What makes this different is the emphasis on including practicing professionals providing instruction through hands-on workshops and the linked establishment of individual students projects (SAEs) that encourage entrepreneurship.

For more information on the Specialty Crop Program, contact Lane McConnell, marketing specialist with MDA at (573) 526-4984 or [Lane.McConnell@mda.mo.gov](mailto:Lane.McConnell@mda.mo.gov), Dr. Michael Gold at (573) 884-1448 or [goldm@missouri.edu](mailto:goldm@missouri.edu) or Dr. Keith Striegler, director of the Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture and Enology at (573) 882-6681 or [StrieglerK@missouri.edu](mailto:StrieglerK@missouri.edu).

**USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Missouri Field Office**

[www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Missouri/index.asp](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Missouri/index.asp)

Search Quick Stats for ag statistics by state and county. Other links include County Estimates, Missouri Agricultural Overview, Census of Agriculture for Missouri and Interactive Statistical Map of Missouri.

**USDA Releases New Long-Term Agricultural Projections**

[www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Baseline](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Baseline)

Released in February 2009, *USDA Agricultural Projections for 2009-2018* covers agricultural commodities, agricultural trade, and aggregate indicators of the sector, such as farm income and food prices.

**2007 Census of Agriculture Data Newly Released**

[www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov)

***Census Shows Growing Diversity in U.S. Farming***

*Press Release No. 0036.09. Contact: Ellen Dougherty 202-690-8122 or Marci Hilt 202-720-4623.*

The number of farms in the United States has grown 4 percent and the operators of those farms have become more diverse in the past five years, according to results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture released in February by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The 2007 Census counted 2,204,792 farms in the United States, a net increase of 75,810 farms.

***Missouri's Profile***

[www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/County\\_Profiles/Missouri/cp99029.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/County_Profiles/Missouri/cp99029.pdf)

The 2007 Agricultural Census for Missouri found that the number of farms in Missouri had increased by 1 percent from 2002. The Missouri farm count was up more than 1,000 farms to total 107,825, which puts Missouri second only to Texas in number of agricultural operations. At a record \$7.51 billion, the value of production was up nearly 51 percent from 2002, with crops sales accounting for 47 percent and livestock accounting for 53 percent of total sales.

**Missouri Economic Impact Brief: Agricultural Industries**

[www.missourieconomy.org/pdfs/missouri\\_ag\\_impact.pdf](http://www.missourieconomy.org/pdfs/missouri_ag_impact.pdf)

An October 2008 report on Missouri Agriculture from the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center.

**Missouri Connections**

[www.missouriconnections.org](http://www.missouriconnections.org)

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education sponsors this career and education exploration site. Resources on Missouri Connections include the Missouri's Hot Jobs report and Missouri Occupation Profile Sheets, both available under the "Career Exploration" bullet. The Hot Jobs report is put together by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). To make the Hot Jobs list, an occupation must show a better-than-average outlook through 2016 in terms of average wage, percent growth and total openings.

The Missouri Occupation Profile Sheets are available for more than 250 occupations. The profiles are grouped according to 16 career clusters, one of which is agriculture, food and natural resources. Each occupation profile provides an occupation description, employment trends, wage information, education requirements and programs.