

How to prepare for a career in Agriculture? [continued]

What should I do about Further Education?

Try and decide which sort of career path you want to follow. There are many options, and different colleges and universities will have different strengths and specialties. Again, take your time and seek lots of advice. Your school will have advice to give and can help you match your strengths with your ambitions. Don't let that stop you looking elsewhere for help and advice as well.

Can I get help with funding for Further Education?

This is always worth exploring. Enquire about bursaries and scholarships both at your school and at your chosen college, they will have information about what is available. There will probably be many options to explore. Don't forget to consider an apprenticeship with a local farm or company, these can often directly or indirectly help fund F/E. There are also local societies and charities who can provide bursaries, examples are the Melplash Agricultural Society and the Dorset Community Foundation.

How can I get work experience before, during or after my course?

Again, talk to your school or college they will have some guidance. Don't be afraid to write to or speak to potential employers. They will be impressed that you want work experience and are not afraid to ask for it.

What should I do if I don't want to go to college?

If you would like to be more 'hands on' from the start, consider an apprenticeship which will give you some formal training alongside working in the industry. Talk to either Kingston Maurward College or someone in the Industry such as The Melplash Agricultural Society.

Where can I get unbiased advice on agricultural careers and education?

The Melplash Agricultural Society can give advice on career options and further education options. The Society has a large network of members who may also be able to help with work experience, apprenticeships or career opportunities.

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WHY CONSIDER A CAREER IN
AGRICULTURE?



It's a fast growing industry

To keep pace with population growth, we have to grow more food in the next 35 years than we have grown in the last 2000 years.

The only way this is possible is by harnessing new technology such as self-guided tractors, laser and software controlled spraying and fertilising, precision cultivation with GPS accurate to 3mm, skilled genetic management, advanced nutrition management, the list is endless.

It's an industry that desperately needs new young employees with new skills

The average age of UK farmers is 59. There is no way they can manage the technology revolution that is coming. New employees will have a tremendous opportunity for rapid career progress.

The skills needed are predominantly science and maths based but there will always be a need for people who are good team players and who can become good managers.

This is an industry that will pay good salaries for the right people. Some examples are 26 year old dairy manager £ 30,000 pa plus a rent free house, 27 year old agronomist £ 32,000 pa, 30 year old Combine Harvester maintenance engineer £38,000 pa.



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It's a very big business

Agriculture isn't just farming, it's all the industries that contribute to providing our food and looking after our environment.

The UK agricultural industry employs over 300,000 people in farming and an estimated 350,000 people in supporting industries. Over 64,000 people are directly employed in farming in the South West.

The UK agricultural industry's gross output is £24 BN.

It's the fastest growing subject at UK universities*

Studies show that students have an excellent chance of finding employment in the industry within 6 months of finishing their agricultural course.

Starting salaries are competitive with all other industries.

It's not just farming, there are multiple career options from animal nutrition to commodities trading, from forestry to horticulture.

**Guardian Newspaper*



How to prepare for a career in Agriculture?

What subjects should I take at GCSE and beyond?

Take the subjects that you enjoy and at which you are good, but make sure that they include Maths and some of the Sciences. This way you can keep your options open for the widest range of career opportunities.

Should I stay on at School or go to a specialist College?

Consider both options. Talk to your school and to one of the specialist colleges. If your school has strong A level classes in Maths and Science it will probably be best to stay on and take A levels there. However A levels are not for everyone and it may be that you would be better going down a more practical route at a specialist College. Take time to seek advice from both, it's a life changing decision.

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