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Planting Seeds for the Future

Thomas Jefferson once said, “Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.” Those who partake in developing our country’s agriculture industry are helping to both strengthen their future and the future of not just our country, but the world. Similarly, George Washington said “Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man.” Both Jefferson and Washington knew that the agriculture industry was the most crucial to the world, but it can not thrive without educators to train more agriculturalists so this industry can stay alive. Everyday, people use something in one way or another that was derived from the agriculture industry. This enterprise is made strong by those who work daily in their field of expertise, who found their way through agricultural education. Whether it be they were active participants in their local FFA chapter or they simply took an agriculture class because it peaked their interest, agricultural educators had some form of impact on both their education and career choice. Agricultural education impacts every single person on a daily basis. Regardless of if they know it or not, some still don’t realize the importance of agricultural educators, agricultural education, and the future of the agriculture industry.

The growing need and importance of agricultural educators is causing for a demand to have educated teachers who can instruct the future of the industry. With this growing need for agriculture educators to teach the future of this ever growing enterprise, teachers who can portray the key elements of agriculture are crucial. Agriculture education helps students to gain passion and respect for the industry, so they want to support it more than they are already encouraged to (Megan). Having teachers to properly show precisely what agriculturalists do on a daily basis helps to achieve gaining more future workers in husbandry, which is the goal of all agriculture teachers. The sole job of teachers in this enterprise is to highlight all aspects of the industry and in doing that, encourage and educate students on the importance of husbandry. Additionally, with the growing need for more and more food production for an ever-increasing population, the need for someone to teach the younger generation on the specifics of agriculture and agriculture related jobs is only growing. “Meeting future food needs requires adequately preparing students for vocational and professional careers in agriculture” (“Teaching and Learning”). The world needs people who know the science behind feeding the world, and the only way that’s possible is by having agricultural educators. Furthermore, agricultural educators help to put people out in the world who will be participating in something bigger than just one simple job. According to Dr. Larry Case “...The purpose of agriculture programs in local public schools is to produce capable, knowledgeable contributing citizens”. Moreover, agriculture teachers are informing students that to be in agriculture they don’t just have to be a farmer or a rancher: “Our future leaders in agriculture are today’s FFA members. With more than 300 satisfying careers in agriculture to choose from, they know there are many opportunities to employ their talents. Through agricultural education, FFA members are ‘amplifying’ their preparation for career

success" (Armstrong). With this in mind, the teachers who are educating students on agriculture are teaching them more than just how to be farmers or raise animals. According to Megan, students learn abilities in solving issues and gaining social partners in high places. Through agricultural teachers, students are learning how to interview, study, communicate with not just peers, but professionals as well. Agricultural educators are more than just teachers, and their importance is only growing with the growing need for the agriculture industry to prepare for a growing world to help.

Just as agricultural educators are important, the curriculum they teach is equally crucial. Agricultural education coupled with agricultural educators are the foundation of the industry's future. According to Robert Martin and Stephen Campbell, agriculture teachers help future agriculture industry leaders gain a deeper knowledge of their future industry and careers. In order for the people who are expected to run this industry later on in their life to be able to do so, they must have an in depth knowledge of the industry, which is what makes agricultural education such a key element in this enterprise. Additionally, students can not just have surface level insight about agriculture, they need teachers who can ensure understanding of all aspect of agricultural education. "As agricultural educators we must play an integral role in preparing and supporting students for agricultural careers, building awareness of the industry, and developing leadership skills through education" declares Dr. Larry Case. This role Case speaks of is not just simply standing in front of students and telling them about what goes on in agriculture, but showing them with hands on experiences in farming, leadership, and business. However, that's not a role that just anyone can walk in and fulfill; a deep understanding and passion for agriculture is necessary in order to help prepare more people to partake in the industry.

Moreover, agriculture and agricultural educators do not just teach and are not just about farming and not anyone can teach that either. Agricultural education is not just about agriculture, it teaches interrelationships between the agriculture industry and businesses through the economic structure of the world, and more specifically the nation (Martin). In comparison, FFA Advisors and agriculture teachers are necessary to keep the industry alive and running (Ryan). In order for this enterprise that helps feed and take care of all of our nation and the world to keep going, it will continue to be necessary to have agriculture educators. Additionally, agricultural educators aim to ready students for jobs, strengthen cognizance, and management for the agriculture systems (Case). The importance of agricultural educators goes far beyond just teaching them what's required, agriculture teachers instruct students in learning leadership and fulfilling leadership opportunities not just in agriculture, but in all fields in the workforce. Likewise, educators in agriculture are needed because they are not just the run of the mill people. Teachers in agriculture are supposed to nurture the highlight of ambitious chances in owning a business and taking part in the industry (Case). With the many aspects of this enterprise, comes even more aspects to learn, which only emphasizes the point that agricultural educators and agricultural education are crucial.

Agricultural educators and agricultural education are becoming more and more crucial to society, even though less and less want to go into the agriculture field. Teachers who know agriculture and educate students who want to pursue careers in agriculture are the future of the agriculture industry. In order for the world to be able to survive, the necessity for people to go into the agriculture field, while having the proper education to do their job correctly, is a growing concern. The only way for this to no longer be an issue is to have more agricultural educators

who enjoy their job, and have a passion for it, so that way their passion for agriculture spreads to their students. Thus, putting more people into the agriculture industry and helping to ease the burden off of those currently in the industry. Plus, agricultural educators have a job where the curriculum can change, so agriculture teachers do not have to worry about getting bored with what they teach.

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