

The sciences, art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and in varying degrees the preparation and marketing of the resulting products; this is the definition of the word agriculture. However, the word agriculture carries a lot more meaning than what is stated in the definition. It means the food on our table, the clothes on our back, and the roof over our heads. The agricultural careers in our community are extremely important. Perhaps one of the most important agricultural careers in our community is simply an agricultural teacher.

Ag teachers are perhaps the most important of agricultural careers, as they have such an influence. Every day a teacher will come into contact with at least a hundred kids. The teacher, more often than not, has a big influence on the kids, and can influence the direction they choose to go. The influence on their directions can be the difference between a kid going to jail or going to college. A large amount of kids that are considered outcasts, take an agriculture class to get away from other classes and the monotony that comes with them. Little do they know that their Ag class can often help get them through high school. For example, when a kid is deemed bad by one teacher it is often the same with the rest. However, when this kid gets into his or her agriculture class they can find sanctity in the work they are doing. This work can often lead into the interest in a future after high school and on into college. The careers that follow college will greatly benefit the agricultural community.

Ag teachers also teach much needed information, whether it is teaching students what kind of grass is in a pasture, or how to correctly weld. Some people may not ever use these skills ever again, but most will. It is an Ag teacher's duty to teach future generations the necessities to survive the real world. These necessities are how to create or even fix what is needed, when it is needed. The teacher can teach important skills such as how to correctly artificially inseminate a

cow, or even how to palpate a cow. They can also teach much needed lessons in the shop, such as how to correctly lay a bead down or even put a chicken coop together. Some people will never need these abilities to sit behind a desk or do some other similar job, but they now have the capabilities to not only sit behind a desk but to also work as needed.

Ag teachers are also considered to be coaches. For example, in our FFA chapter we have a large focus on Livestock Evaluation, or better known as judging. Judging is very important to us as it helps to put kids into college on scholarships. Judging helps teach students how to properly and confidently speak to another human being. Another major aspect that Ag teachers focus on is showing. Showing is the exhibiting of livestock, which can range from rabbits and chickens to cattle and horses. This opportunity also helps to build confidence, as it builds the ability to present yourself and professionally exhibit your animal. Judging and showing are extremely important as they teach much needed life lessons. These life lessons will help in any career or direction a person goes. A student will need the ability to confidently exhibit themselves and speak confidently to others to be successful in life.

So the question is, just how important are Ag teachers? Considering the influence that they have on kids determines their importance. They determine the future direction that the agricultural community will take. The future generations will look up to those that have been influenced by their Ag teacher.