

# Candidate Motivation & Behavior in the Agricultural Industry

2014 Survey Results & Analysis



[agcareers@agcareers.com](mailto:agcareers@agcareers.com)

[www.AgCareers.com](http://www.AgCareers.com)

800.929.8975

# Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary .....	2
II.	Demographics.....	3
III.	Currently Employed .....	7
IV.	Currently Unemployed .....	13
V.	Information Gathering .....	18

## Executive Summary

---

AgCareers.com conducted the *Candidate Motivation & Behavior Survey* in the summer of 2014. The survey collected information about what motivates employee candidates in the agricultural industry to look for a new position and ultimately make the decision to change jobs. Information was also collected from unemployed respondents on their job search behaviors. Analysis of results can help employers develop retention and recruitment programs for top talent.

Responses were collected in an online poll format, with 1,518 people completing the survey. Respondents were entered to win one of eight \$100 Visa gift cards.

### Key Findings:

- Eighty-four percent of respondents were currently employed.
- Thirty-five percent of all respondents were actively looking for a new job.
- The majority (68%) of those looking for a new position were currently employed.
- There was a general decline in satisfaction with employers, job duties, supervisor/boss and coworkers the more active the job seeker.
- Candidates thinking about changing jobs or actively looking were very unsatisfied with their supervisor/boss.
- Career growth/advancement and higher compensation were most likely to motivate employees to leave their current job.
- Thirty percent of employed respondents searched for job opportunities while they were at work.
- The majority of participants were open to relocation.
- Nearly 20% of unemployed respondents had been unemployed for more than two years.
- Unemployed respondents felt that the lack of opportunities in their location was the most significant barrier to finding a new job, however 80% of them said they would consider relocation.
- Seventy-two percent of unemployed respondents were willing to accept a salary cut (compared to their last position) in order to secure a new job.
- Participants found out about new job opportunities from online searches, followed by niche job boards such as AgCareers.com.

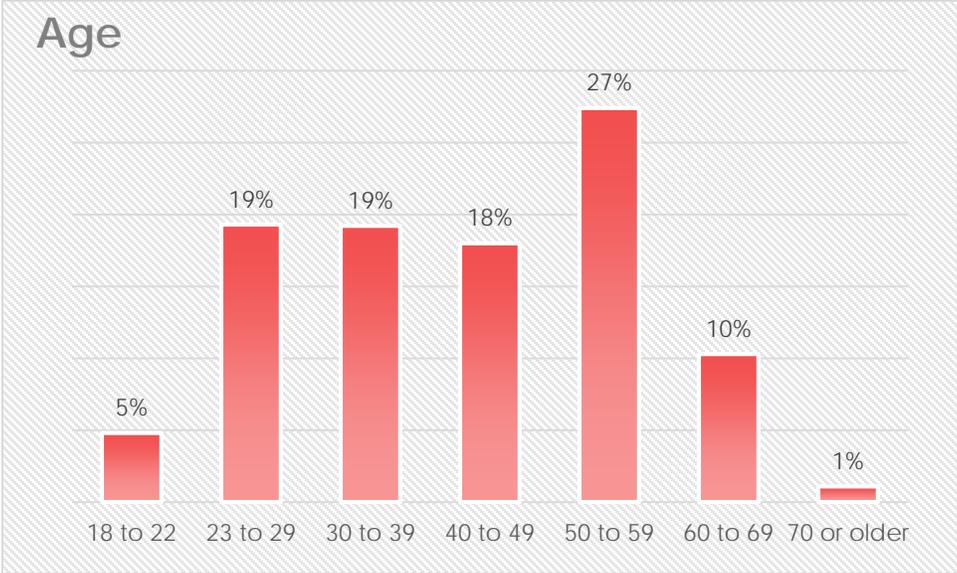
# Demographics

Survey responses are broken out by several demographic categories.

Seventy-one percent of respondents were U.S. residents, followed by Canada (21%) and International (8%). Males made up 62.5%, while females were 37.5% of respondents.

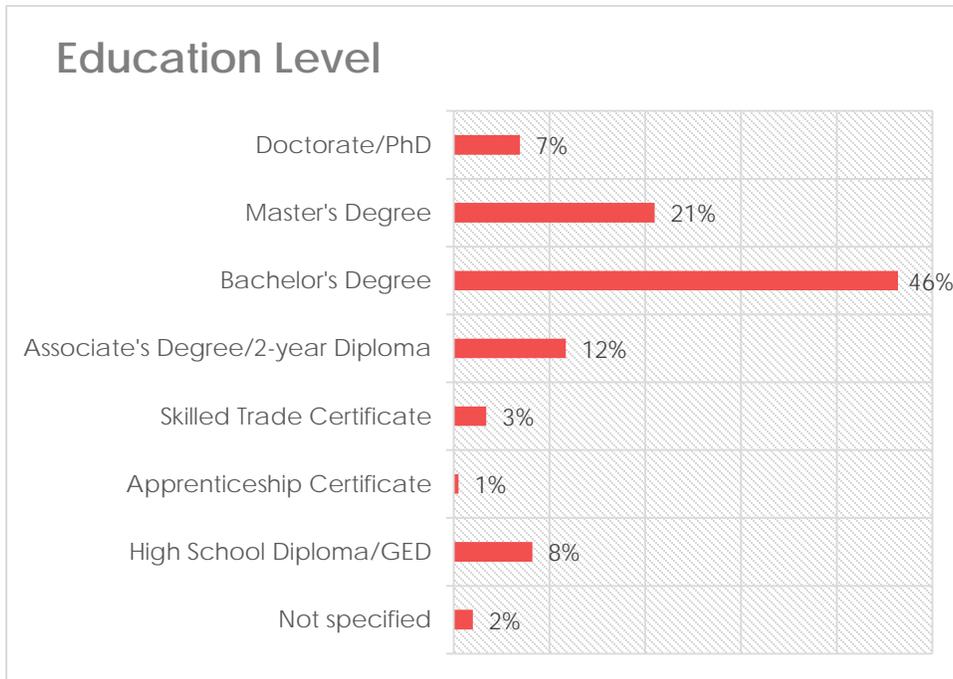
Figure 1 breaks down the age of respondents. More than half (61%) were under 50 years of age.

Figure 1



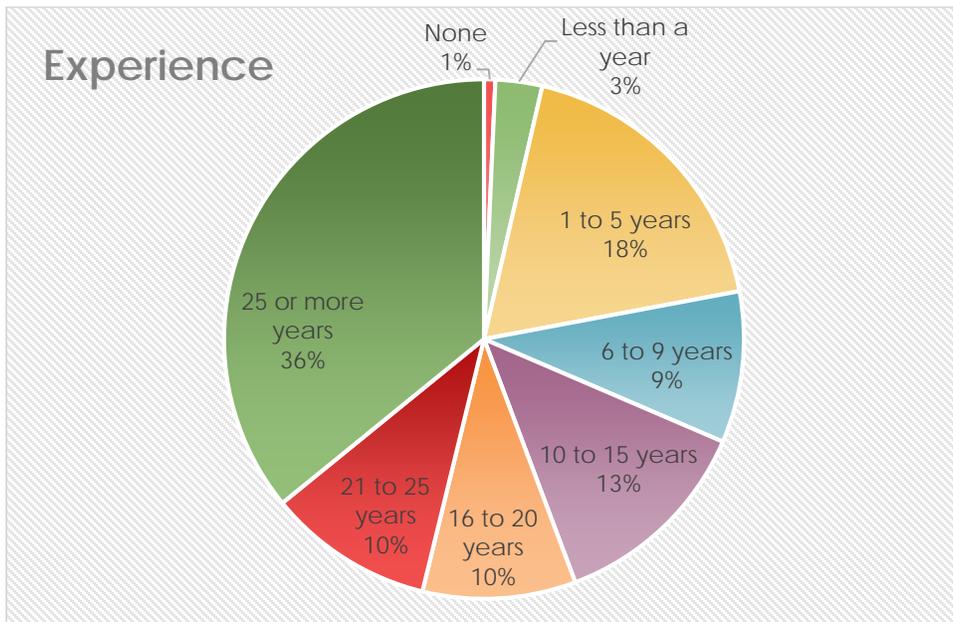
Respondents were asked for their highest level of education attained. Seventy-four percent of respondents had a Bachelor's degree or higher, as shown in Figure 2 on the following page.

Figure 2



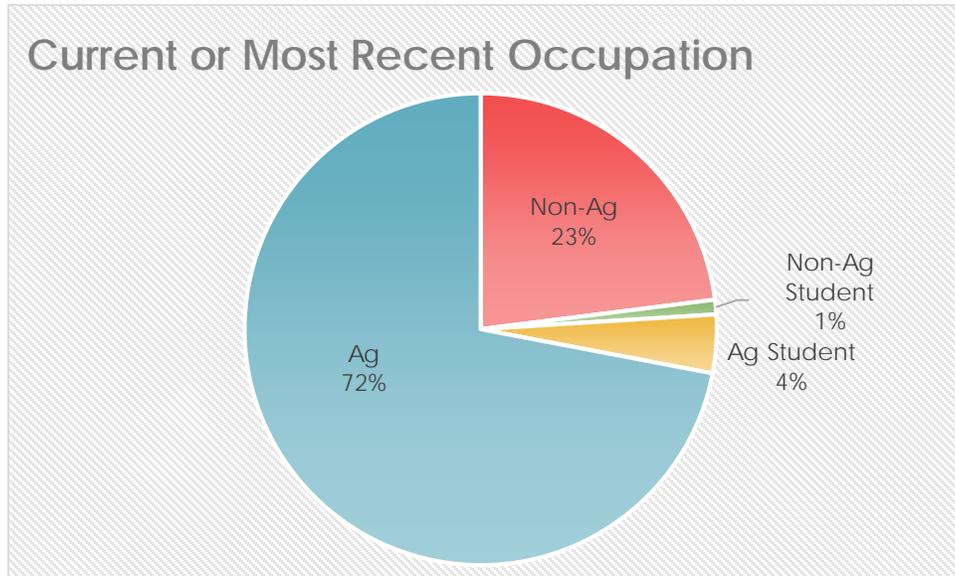
Sixty-nine percent had 10-plus years of work experience, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3



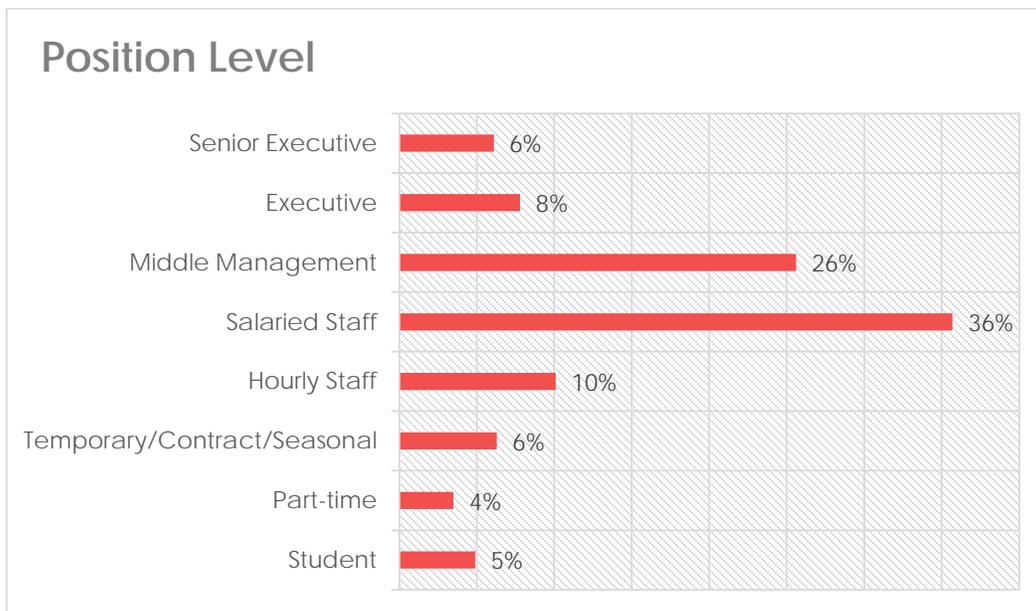
When asked what best described their current or most recent occupation, the vast majority were from the agricultural industry (76%).

Figure 4



Respondents were asked what position level they currently hold or had at their most recent employment. The largest percentage (36%) were salaried staff.

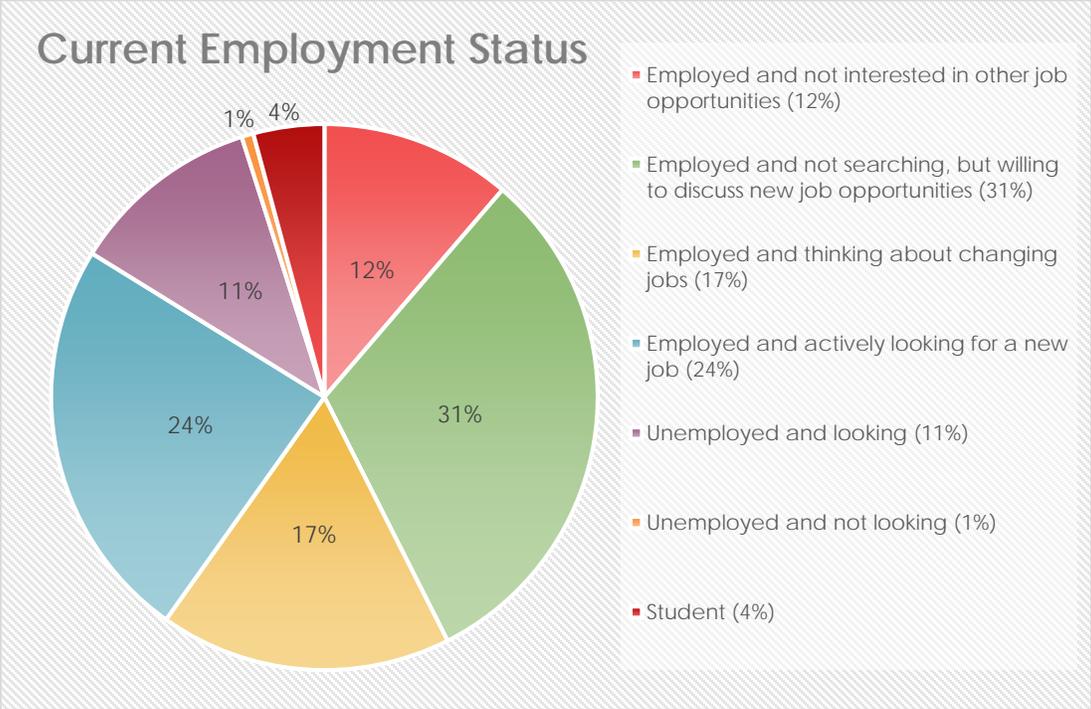
Figure 5



Participants were asked for their current employment status. Respondents that were currently employed were then asked a different series of questions than unemployed respondents.

The vast majority (84%) were currently employed. Thirty-five percent of all respondents were actively looking for a new job; the majority of those looking were currently employed.

Figure 6



# Currently Employed

## Satisfaction

Participants that were currently employed were asked how satisfied they were with their current employer, job duties/responsibilities, supervisor/boss and coworkers. Response options for each were on a scale from "Very Satisfied" (4), "Satisfied" (3), "Unsatisfied" (2) to "Very Unsatisfied" (1). Overall, respondents were most satisfied with their coworkers and least satisfied with their job duties/responsibilities, although only narrowly less satisfied than with their supervisor/boss. The higher the number, the more satisfied the respondent.

Figure 7

Satisfaction with current:	Rating Average
Coworkers	3.17
Employer	3.06
Supervisor/boss	3.03
Job duties/responsibilities	3.02

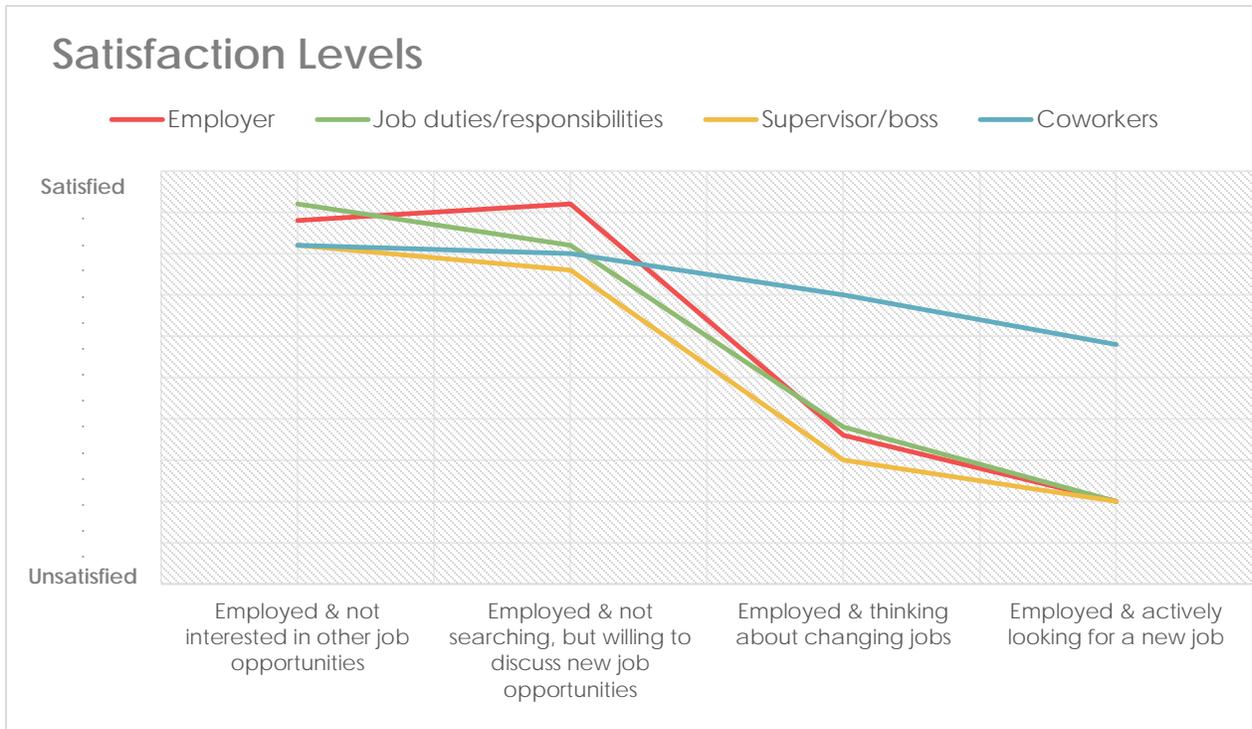
*\*4=very satisfied, 1=very unsatisfied*

Looking at satisfaction by employment level, senior executives reported highest satisfaction levels for each category. Examining satisfaction with their employer, part-time and hourly staff reported lowest satisfaction levels. For job duties/responsibilities, hourly staff was least satisfied. The employment level most dissatisfied with their supervisor/boss was salaried staff. It is understandable that when rating satisfaction with coworkers, temporary/contract/seasonal staff reported lowest satisfaction levels due to their limited engagement in a position and therefore less time to establish connections with coworkers.

Examining responses by gender, overall females were very satisfied with their coworkers, whereas males were very satisfied with their supervisor/boss.

When we further examine satisfaction by employment status, we find a general decline in satisfaction the more active the job seeker as shown in Figure 8 on the next page.

Figure 8



Satisfaction with coworkers appears to have less impact on employees searching for another job as indicated by the more gradual decline in satisfaction and generally overall higher satisfaction.

Employees' relationship with their supervisor/boss can be a make or break component in retention. When we look closer at the extreme levels of satisfaction, candidates not interested or not searching were very satisfied with their supervisor/boss, while candidates thinking about changing jobs or actively looking were very unsatisfied with their supervisor/boss.

## Motivation

Participants that were currently employed were asked to rate the likelihood that select criteria would motivate them to leave their current job for another opportunity. Response options for each were on a scale from “Very Likely” (4), “Likely” (3), “Unlikely” (2) to “Very Unlikely” (1). Overall, career growth/advancement opportunity was most likely to motivate employees to leave their current job, although higher compensation was a close second. The higher the number, the more likely to motivate respondents to leave their job.

Figure 9

	What would motivate you to leave your current job for another opportunity?	Rating Average
#1	Career growth/advancement opportunity	3.48
#2	Higher compensation	3.47
#3	Better benefits	3.24
#4	More flexibility	3.12
#5	Company stability	3.11
#6	Job duties/responsibilities	3.09
#7	Industry stability	2.97
#8	Company is an industry leader	2.96
#9	Different management/coworkers	2.65
#10	Company’s social responsibility initiatives (community involvement, charity, donations)	2.60
#11	Relocation opportunity	2.34

\*4=very likely, 1=very unlikely

When we examine the top motivator for different employment levels, it’s logical that higher compensation was most likely to persuade senior executives and executives to leave their current job. Interestingly, this was also the case for part-time employees. Middle management, salaried, hourly and temporary/contract/seasonal employees were most likely to be motivated by career growth/advancement opportunities.

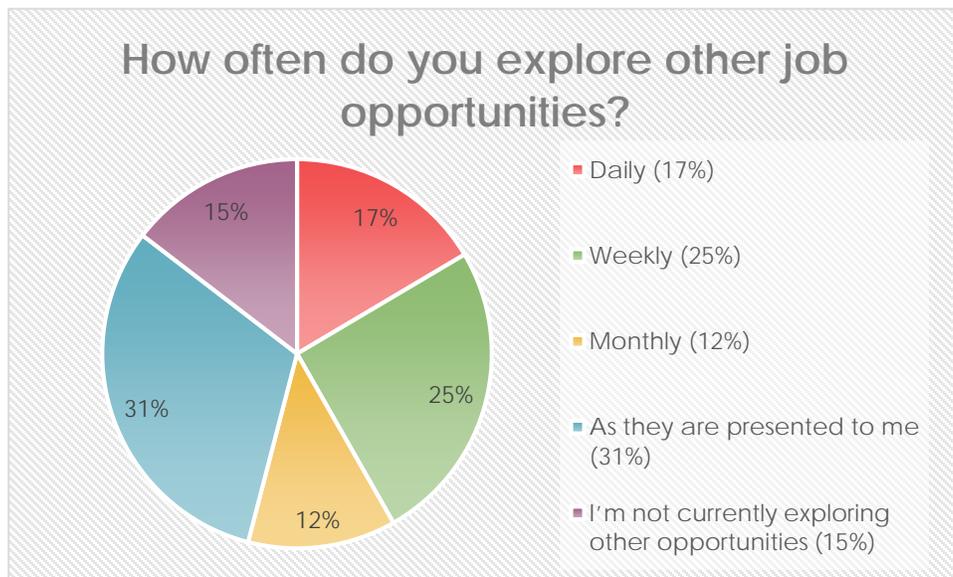
There was a difference in the top motivator depending on respondents’ employment status. For candidates not interested or not searching, higher compensation was most likely to persuade them to leave their current job. For those thinking or actively looking, career growth/advancement opportunities were most likely to motivate them to leave their current position.

Comparing genders, females said increased flexibility was more likely to motivate them to leave their job compared to males. Males indicated that relocation opportunity was a stronger motivator than it was for female respondents. Career growth/advancement opportunities was the top motivator for both genders.

### Job Exploration

Employed respondents were active when it came to their job search activities; 17% were exploring other job opportunities on a daily basis. Interestingly, nearly 30% of them searched for other job opportunities while they were at work.

Figure 10



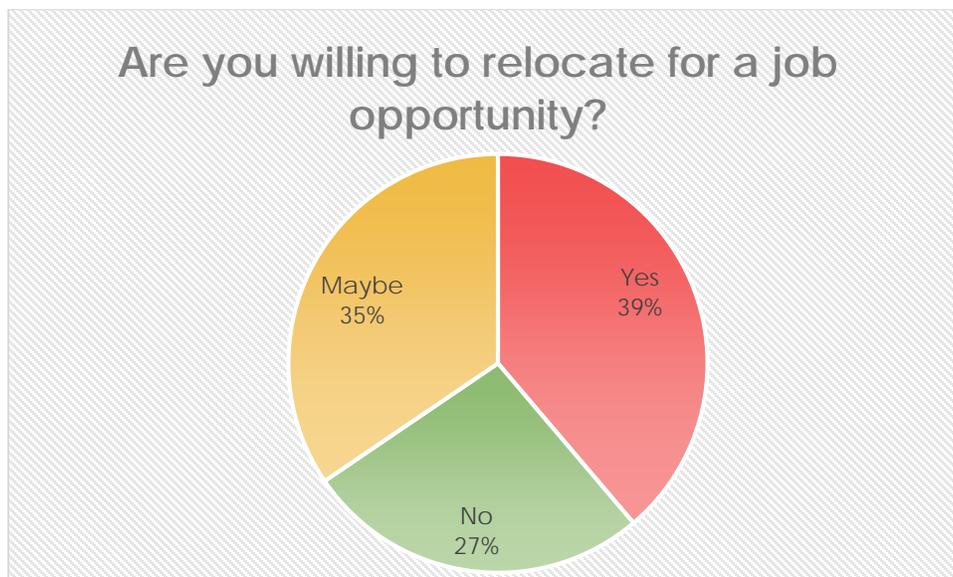
## Relocation

The majority of employed respondents were open to relocation, with 39% indicating “yes” and 35% answering “maybe” when asked if they would consider relocation (see Figure 11).

Males were more willing to relocate than females. When we examine openness to relocation by employment level, temporary/contract/seasonal workers and executives were most open to relocation. Senior executives and part-time employees were least open to relocation.

For those open to relocation, the largest percentage (48%) were willing to relocate “anywhere.”

Figure 11



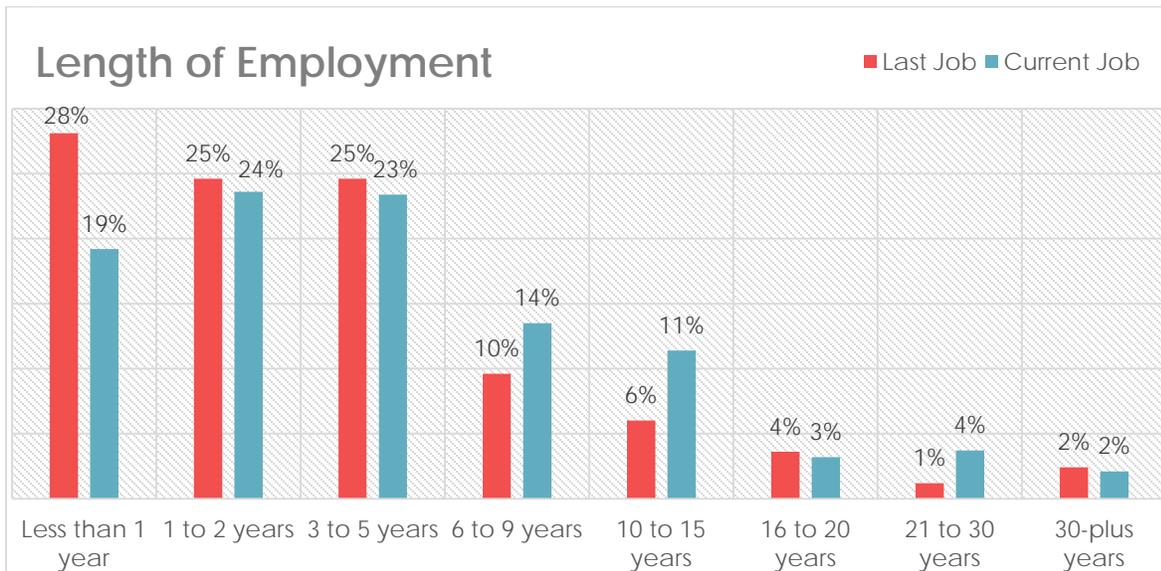
## Employment Specifics

Employed respondents were asked what their employment status was when they found their current job. More than 20% were employed and not interested or not searching for other jobs when they found their current position. Twenty-five percent had been unemployed.

When asked how they found their current job, the most frequently cited source was “referral/word-of-mouth” (50%), followed by “online search” (24%). Respondents were allowed to select multiple answers.

Participants were asked for their length of employment at their last job and their current job. The responses give the impression that employees are generally staying in a role for five years or less. Nearly 80% had been with their last job five years or less; 66% had been with their current position five years or less as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12



## Currently Unemployed

---

Participants that indicated they were currently unemployed were asked a different series of questions. More than half (53%) had been unemployed less than six months.

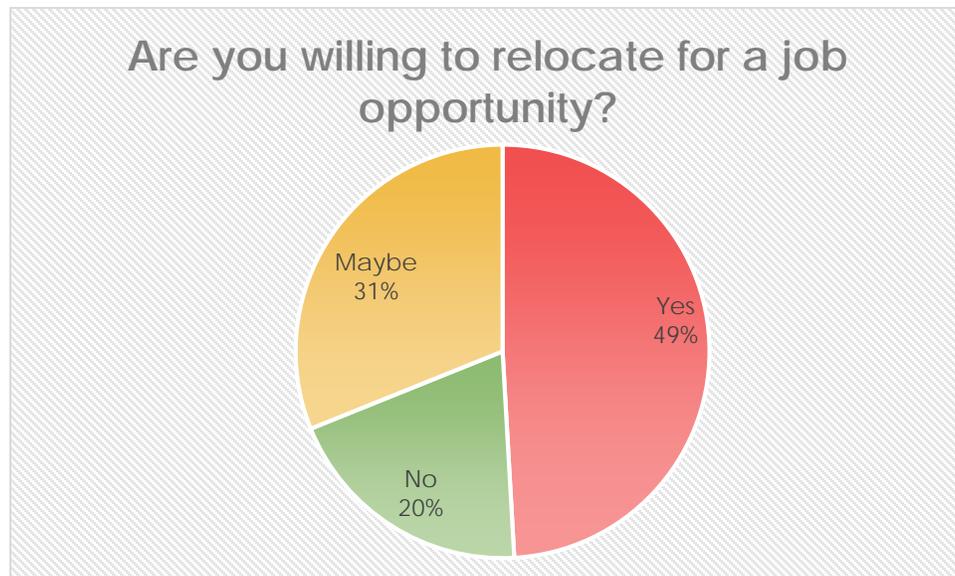
Figure 13



### Relocation

The majority of unemployed respondents were open to relocation, with 49% indicating "yes" and 31% answering "maybe" when asked (as shown in Figure 14 on the next page). Unemployed respondents were more likely to answer "yes," they were willing to relocate, than employed respondents. Like employed respondents, unemployed males were more willing to relocate than females. For those open to relocation, the largest percentage (48%) were willing to relocate "anywhere," the same as employed respondents.

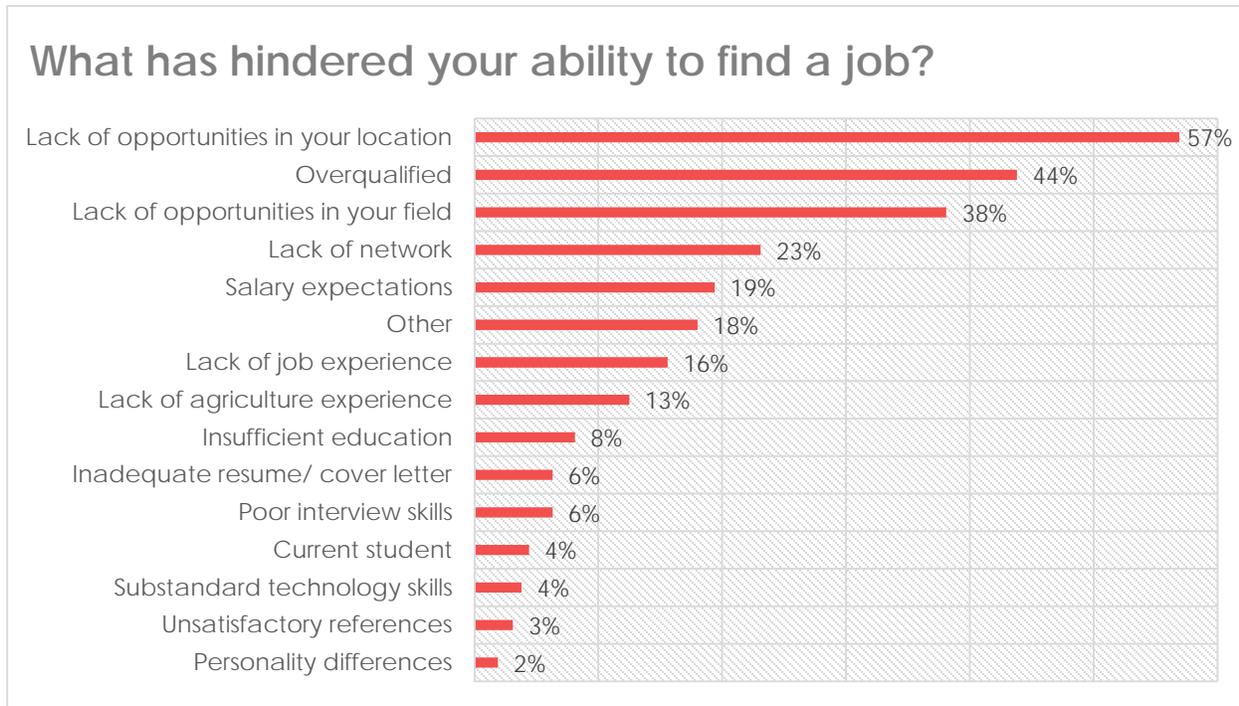
Figure 14



### Job Search Barriers

Unemployed participants were questioned about what they felt had been a hindrance to them finding a job. Respondents were given a variety of barriers and asked to select all that hindered their ability to find employment. The most significant perceived barrier was the lack of opportunities in their location, followed by being overqualified. Participants could also select "other" and specify; by far the most frequently cited other hindrance was age. See Figure 15 on the next page for details.

Figure 15

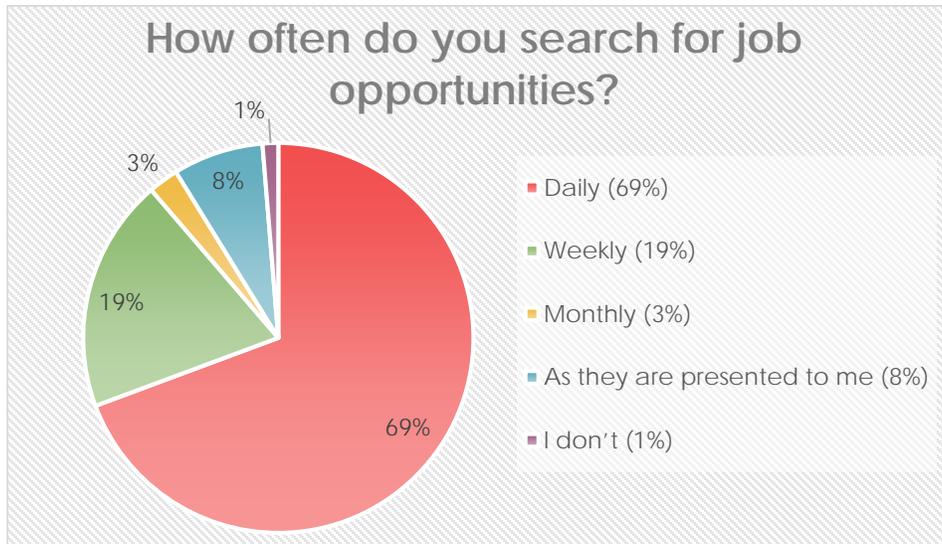


Unemployed participants were asked if they've turned down any job offers in the past year; the majority (72%) had not. For those that had turned down a job offer, the most frequently cited reasons were pay and location.

### Job Exploration

As expected, unemployed respondents were very active; 69% searched for job opportunities daily, as compared to 17% of employed respondents. See Figure 16 on the next page for details.

Figure 16



## Salary

Unemployed respondents were asked if they were willing to accept a salary cut (compared to their last position) in order to secure a new job. The vast majority (72%) were willing to accept a cut in pay. Fourteen percent were willing to accept more than a 20% reduction in salary to secure a new position.

Figure 17



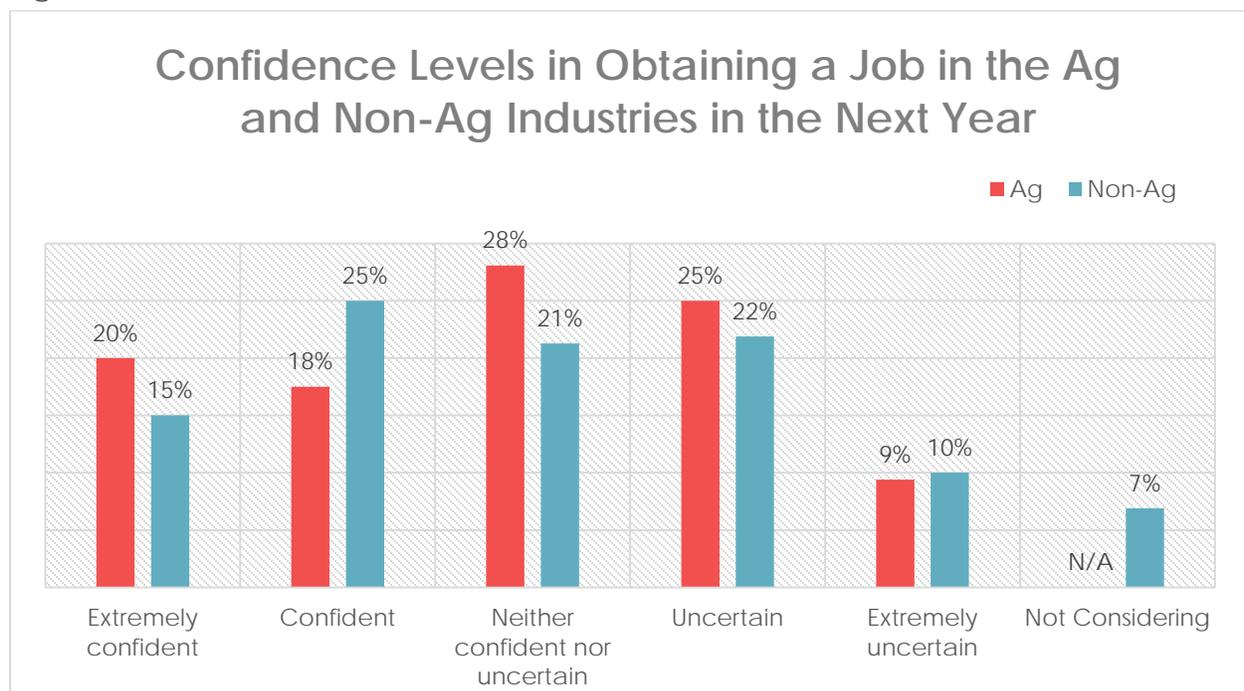
## Confidence Levels

Unemployed participants were asked how confident they were that they would be able to obtain a position in the agricultural industry, and outside the ag industry, in the next year. Overall, confidence levels were very similar (see Figure 18).

When we compare results of this survey to the results from the AgCareers.com *Student Perceptions of Agricultural Careers* survey, we find that ag students were much more confident in their ability to find a position in the ag industry. Sixty-five percent of students were confident or extremely confident, whereas only 38% of unemployed respondents in the current survey were confident or extremely confident that they would find a job in agriculture. Seven percent of unemployed respondents were not considering a job in the ag industry. These findings illustrate the need for further agricultural advocacy, including engagement of older candidates that oftentimes have an abundance of work experience and valuable skills.

When we look at gender differences, males were more confident than females in their ability to find a job in the agricultural industry.

Figure 18

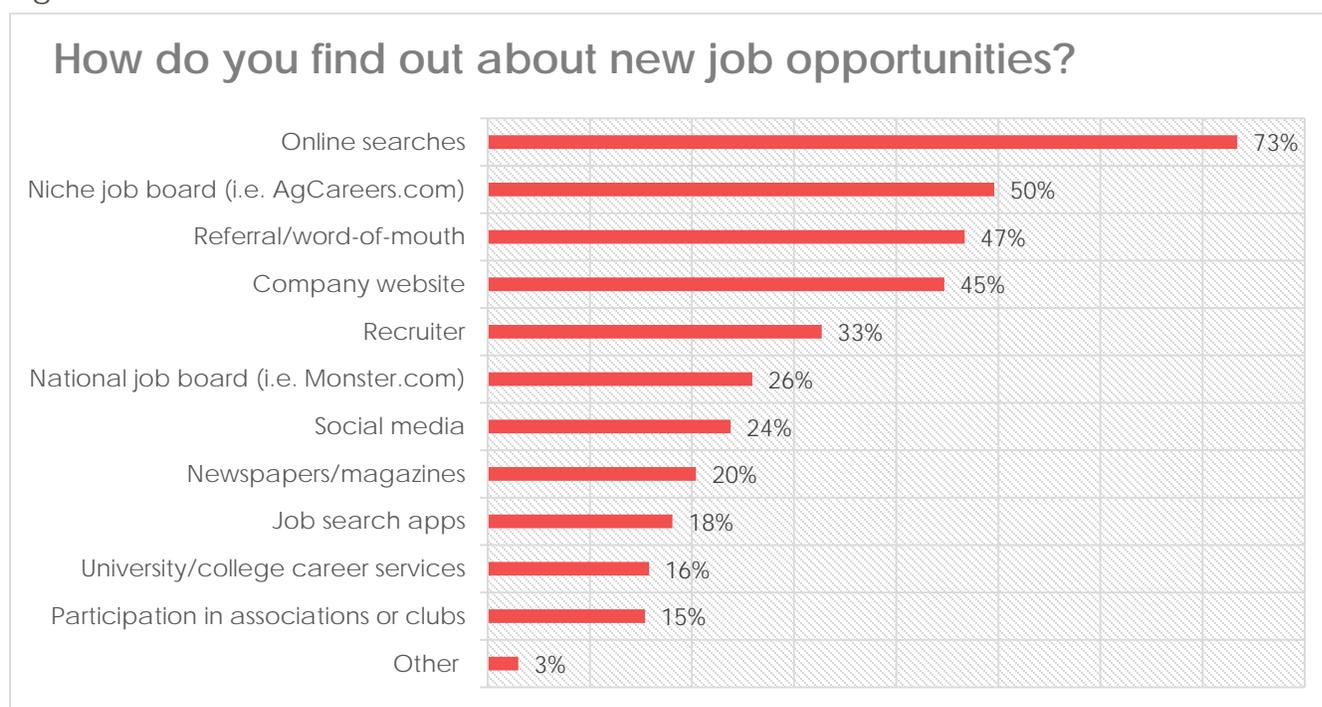


## Information Gathering

All participants (including employed, unemployed and students) were asked how they find out about new job opportunities. The largest percentage said online searches (73%), followed by niche job boards (50%) such as AgCareers.com. Respondents were allowed to select all that applied.

Compared to other employment levels, salaried staff were more likely to use niche job boards; middle management were more likely to use referral/word-of-mouth. Part-time employees had a higher preference for job search apps when compared to other employment levels.

Figure 19

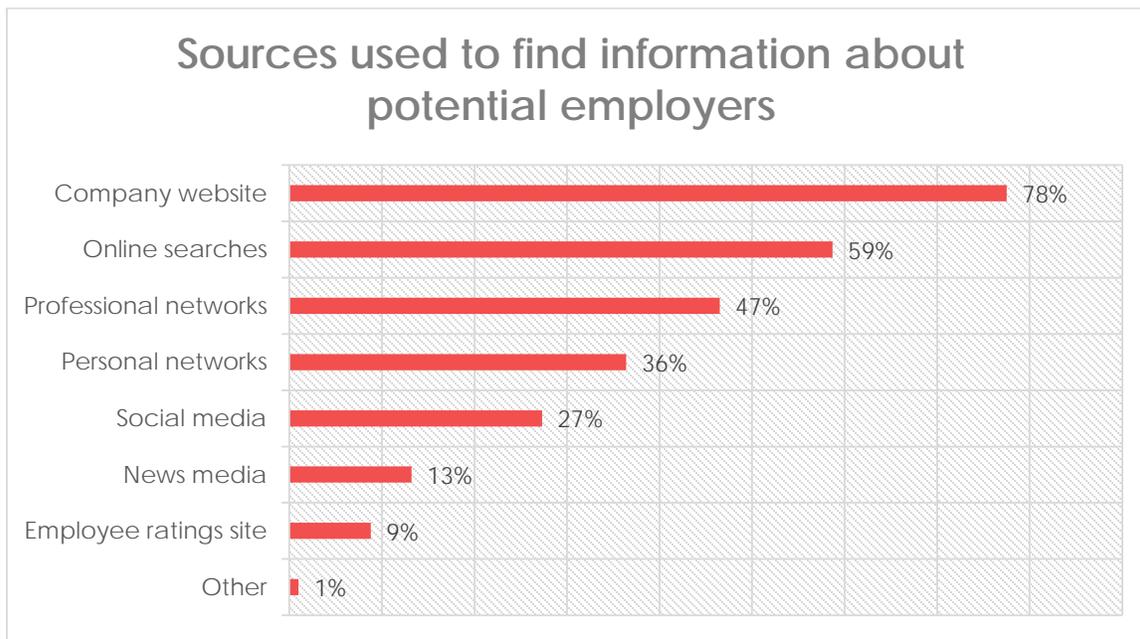


The largest percentage of all participants said they find out more information about potential employers on the company's website. This reiterates the importance of an up-to-date career section on employers' websites while working with other sources such as niche job boards. Online searches are another important information source, indicating employers need to be aware of what online searches yield about their company and make efforts to provide positive online content.

Generally, the higher the employment level (from part-time to senior executives), the greater the usage of networks as information sources.

Respondents were allowed to check all that applied.

Figure 20



## In Conclusion

---

This survey analysis can help employers develop retention and recruitment programs for top talent, and refine current efforts. AgCareers.com can assist in this process with training and consulting options. As illustrated by the results, AgCareers.com has a large following of high caliber candidates. Contact [agcareers@agcareers.com](mailto:agcareers@agcareers.com) or your account manager to find out how you can connect with them!

### Limitation of Liability

This report has been compiled using data which to the best of the knowledge, information and belief of and after due inquiry by AgCareers.com at the time of collection and analysis was accurate and correct. AgCareers.com does not warrant the accuracy of the information provided in this piece.

© 2014 AgCareers.com