The farming and food supply industry offers more varied career paths than you might think, with many using cutting-edge technology and techniques to put food on our plates every day.

Farmers themselves are a vital part of this process and British farmers produce a massive 63% of the food we eat, supported by a large, multi-faceted industry that employs 3.5 million people in the UK.

It offers competitive salaries and great opportunities to progress in diverse working environments such as trading grain on the markets, developing new technologies to make farming more efficient or changing the way people think about food with your media skills.
Farming and food supply has several distinct sectors, each with a lot of diverse and challenging roles. Get to know the different areas you can work in:

**RESEARCH IT**
Innovation in the agricultural sector moves quickly, and constant research and development is essential to keep ahead of growing demand. Research centres like Rothamsted are dedicated to making farming systems more efficient and finding solutions to industry challenges.

**MAKE IT**
Agricultural machinery plays a vital role in producing food in huge quantities, and often uses advanced technology such as complex IT systems. Large machinery manufacturers such as Case work to design, make and maintain this machinery for the farmers of today and the future.

**SHIFT IT**
Whatever is produced, made or processed needs to be moved around. Logistics is all about getting the food from the field, to the factory and to the people who are going to eat it. Logistics firms like Nidera need employees with good organisation skills to maximise efficient systems.

**TRADE IT**
Agriculture is a truly global industry, and prices are driven by changes in supply and demand all over the world. Merchants like Gleadell keep on top of changing prices to make sure their farmers get the best deal.

**GROW IT**
The UK is one of the world’s biggest producers of wheat, but growing food on an industrial scale takes a lot of skill, technology and science. Many organisations develop products to help farmers grow healthier crops, and agronomists like Hutchinsons advise them on their decisions.
EXPLORE YOUR CAREER IN FARMING

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RAISE IT
Keeping animals housed, fed and healthy is extremely rewarding, but challenging too, and farmers need support from organisations who develop nutritious feed mixtures, design housing and treat sick animals. Livestock is managed on a range of scales, from independent producers to large organisations like 2 sisters.

MANAGE IT
Agriculture is big business, and like all businesses there are opportunities to manage people and projects at a range of organisations – from small charities to global brands. This exciting and ever-changing industry needs talented, flexible people who are ready to take on a challenge.

CHANGE IT
We are all affected by the way food is produced, and farmers and agribusinesses are guided by advice and policies from government and independent organisations such as the National Farmers’ Union who represent the interests of British farmers in the political sphere.

RENEW IT
Although we need to produce enough food to keep up with population growth, it is increasingly important to do it in way that protects the planet for future generations. Organisations like Natural England are committed to finding sustainable solutions that work for farmers, consumers and the environment.

FIND CASE STUDIES OF REAL PEOPLE WORKING IN THESE SECTORS AT: www.brightcrop.org.uk
If you’re ambitious, there is real scope to progress in this industry. And you can choose where you’d like to start, too; there are opportunities at all levels, whether you’re planning to start working after GCSEs or are a PhD graduate.

**At 14**

76% of young people haven’t settled on a career by the age of 14, so choosing GCSE subjects is all about keeping options open, playing to your strengths and trying something new.

Lots of agricultural careers are based on STEM subjects, so choosing these will stand you in good stead for later courses or jobs. Complementary subjects such as Business and Geography can also build a strong foundation of knowledge and develop important problem solving skills.

You could consider vocational courses like NVQ and BTEC awards at Level 2. Studio schools offer an environment influenced by the workplace, with a varied timetable that includes work placements. With many recent changes to qualification structures, schools may be able to offer flexible options that work alongside local colleges.

**At 16**

A change in the law means that everyone has to continue with school or training until they are 18. This might mean continuing with an academic route, but it is worth considering what vocational or combined options are available – you can combine part-time education with 20 or more hours of employment or volunteering a week.

If choosing A Levels or Further Education courses, narrowing from lots of GCSEs can be challenging. It might be helpful to focus on what you need for the next stage, such as how many UCAS points are needed for a university course, or what skills are needed for a particular job.

**Apprenticeships:**

Apprenticeships are widely available in many areas of farming and food supply, offering the opportunity to work and learn skills whilst earning (the average net wage of an apprentice is £200 per week). You will earn nationally recognised qualifications whilst starting your career with an established employer. Get hands on, learn what you need to know and also earn – this is becoming a very popular career route.

Apprenticeships are open to 16-24 year olds, and depending on your existing qualifications you can start at one of three levels – Intermediate, Advanced and Higher.
AT 18

Lots of institutions, from Russell Group universities to specialist institutions such as the Royal Agricultural University and Harper Adams University, have faculties dedicated to agriculture or offer degrees in agricultural subjects through related schools such as environmental sciences or engineering.

It is important to do your research and look beyond the obvious – there are many options to consider, from a BEng in Food Process Engineering to a BSc in Applied Farm Management. There are also plenty of degree subjects that can be applied to agricultural workplaces, such as our case study Matthew, who studied Ecology.

Many agribusinesses offer competitive graduate schemes, so there are opportunities to learn more about the sector whilst progressing your skills and experience in a working environment.

If university isn’t for you, you can also build on your existing qualifications with advanced vocational courses such as NVQ level 4 and BTEC professional awards. Specialist land-based colleges offer the widest range of courses, which can also be studied as part of an apprenticeship.

Volunteering and work experience placements can help you decide what you enjoy doing and inform your choices.

FIND OUT MORE ON THESE WEBSITES:

Bright Crop features real life case studies of careers in food and farming and has a network of Ambassadors to deliver talks in schools – [WWW.BRIGHTCROP.ORG.UK](http://WWW.BRIGHTCROP.ORG.UK)

The National Apprenticeship Service is the best place to find information on apprenticeships and opportunities – [WWW.APPRENTICESHIPS.GOV.UK](http://WWW.APPRENTICESHIPS.GOV.UK)

Landex lists land-based colleges across the UK – [WWW.LANDEX.ORG.UK](http://WWW.LANDEX.ORG.UK)

EDGE Apprenticeships offer a new way to kick start your agricultural career in the East of England – [WWW.EDGEAPPRENTICESHIPS.ORG](http://WWW.EDGEAPPRENTICESHIPS.ORG)

LANTRA has detailed information about different agricultural career paths – [WWW.LANTRA.CO.UK](http://WWW.LANTRA.CO.UK)
JOIN A LOCAL YOUNG FARMER’S CLUB
There are 624 Young Farmers’ Clubs in England and Wales for young people aged 10-26. These provide opportunities to develop skills, work with local communities, travel abroad, take part in competitions and attend social events. You don’t need to be involved in farming to be a Young Farmer – just someone who appreciates the countryside and enjoys rural life. Find out more from the National Federation of Young Farmers’ Clubs – www.NFYFC.org.uk

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NEWS IN THE FARMING PRESS
People working in the agricultural industry keep up to date with the latest news and developments. Try reading the specialist farming press to help you understand the industry and what big issues are affecting it. The key publications are:

- Farmer’s Weekly (newspaper and online)
- Farmers Guardian (newspaper and online)
- Student Farmer (magazine and online)
- Farming Today (BBC Radio 4)
- News releases from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA
The farming community was one of the earliest adopters of social media. Use your time online to display your knowledge and follow people within the industry to make connections.

Use networks like LinkedIn and Twitter to improve your profile and make yourself more attractive to employers.

If you use Twitter, follow @FarmersoftheUK for an insight into the daily activity of a different farm each week and join in the weekly Twitter chat #AgriChatUK every Thursday at 8pm.
ATTEND AN EVENT
Nothing really beats face-to-face networking. Contact local agricultural societies to find out about events in your area.

Contact details can be found from the Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations – www.ASAO.co.uk

GET WORK EXPERIENCE
Getting some work experience can really help you make decisions and stand out when looking to get a job. This could be on a farm, but consider other agricultural workplaces, such as a vegetable packing house or a lab. If you want practical, on farm experience, helping out with lambing is a great place to start because farmers always need more hands and many placements don’t require any experience.

Find opportunities on the National Sheep Association lambing list – www.nationalsheep.org.uk/nextgeneration/lambing-work-experience.php

CONSIDER STEM SUBJECTS WHEN CHOOSING OPTIONS
Because food and farming is such a large industry, there are roles for people with a wide range of qualifications. However, a significant proportion of roles are STEM based, so studying these subjects may give you more options later on.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS
Inspire your students with a visit from a Bright Crop Ambassador – real industry professionals from within the farming and food supply industry who volunteer their time to talk students in schools about career paths.

FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STARTING YOUR CAREER IN FARMING AT - www.brightcrop.org.uk
WHAT DO YOU?
As a trainee electrical engineer, my main job is to ensure the voltage distribution systems in our plant are working safely and reliably. I do this by organising the maintenance and servicing of all the equipment associated with the system.

As well as keeping current equipment in working order, I plan and carry out new installations and upgrades. This could be to solve problems we are having, or to increase the efficiency of the plant. I have gained an in-depth knowledge of these systems so I can usually diagnose and fix most issues we have on site.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU HAVE?

- 3 A levels in Maths, Physics and Electronics
- NVQ level 2 and 3 in Chemical, Pharmaceutical & Petrochemical Operations
- NVQ level 2 and 3 in Process Technology – Chemical Process
- Foundation degree in Electrical & Electronic Engineering

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?
I enjoy the challenge of understanding and working with something you can’t see, and applying logic to problems. I also enjoy the variety because, although my focus is electrical, I have a good understanding of the mechanical and automation side of the process as well.

WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE PEOPLE TRYING TO GET INTO AGRICULTURE?
Agriculture isn’t just farming, there are thousands of different career paths in agriculture and each one is just as important to feed the world.
What do you?
I work for AB Agri, and I am responsible for buying the raw materials that will be processed and made into animal feed. This involves negotiating prices and contracts with suppliers of the materials, and I have to follow the global markets and track global crop production to make sure I am always up to date.

I also analyse the raw material market and build strong relationships with our customers so I can advise them on what’s happening and make recommendations.

What qualifications do you have?
• A-Levels in German, History and Business Studies
• Degree in German

What do you like most about your job?
Every day is different; I’m constantly learning new things, and the people in my department are extremely helpful and supportive. I also really enjoy the amount of contact I have with customers. I have a passion for agriculture, and really enjoying working in the industry!

What one piece of advice would you give people trying to get into agriculture?
Be enthusiastic and willing to learn – the people in this industry are fantastic and will really help you to go far.
What do you?
I deal with growers on a daily basis, walking their fields and planning what recommendations to make. I advise them which type of seed to use and what chemicals or fertilisers they should apply to make the crop grow and be healthy. I base my recommendations on precise measurements of the field conditions and I also get involved with planning which crops will be grown in the future.

What qualifications do you have?
• BSc in Ecology with Biology

What do you like most about your job?
I most like being outside every day in all weathers and dealing with farmers. It’s really satisfying watching a crop grow and knowing that it was your expertise that helped produce it.

What one piece of advice would you give people trying to get into agriculture?
Don’t be afraid to really push yourself.

Bright Crop inspires young talent to explore the wide choice of careers in farming and food supply.
If you need more help with your career choices, you can find a wealth of support and opportunities on the following websites:

**BRIGHT CROP**
Bright Crop inspires young talent to explore the wide choice of careers in farming and food supply.

**THEBIGCHOICE.COM**
Find quality advice and opportunities in apprenticeships, part time jobs and training on this youth careers portal.

**SCHOOL LEAVERS GUIDE**
This interactive app guide brings together expert advice, guidance on career steps and positions from top employers on tablet and smartphone.

**NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE**
The official place for careers advice and information in the UK.

**NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE**
Everything you need on apprenticeships and the best vacancies on offer.

**LANTRA**
The UK’s Sector Skills Council for land-based industries, can help you with training, skills and opportunities.