

## **General Agriculture**

Agricultural workers maintain the quality of farms, crops, and livestock by operating machinery and doing physical labor under the supervision of agricultural managers.

### **Work Environment**

Agricultural workers typically work outdoors. Some work primarily with crops and vegetables. Others handle livestock.

Agricultural workers' work can be difficult. To harvest fruits and vegetables by hand, workers frequently bend and crouch. They also lift and carry crops and tools. Workers may have limited access to drinking water and bathrooms while working in fields.

Agricultural workers risk exposure to pesticides sprayed on crops or plants. However, exposure can be minimal if safety procedures are followed. Tractors and other farm machinery can cause serious injury, so workers must be constantly alert. Agricultural workers who work directly with animals risk being bitten or kicked.

Some agricultural workers also called migrant farm workers, move from location to location as crops ripen. Their unsettled lifestyles and periods of unemployment between jobs can cause stress.

Many agricultural workers have seasonal work schedules. Seasonal workers are typically expected to work longer hours during planting or harvesting times or when animals must be sheltered and fed.

### **How to get Qualified**

Agricultural workers receive on-the-job training. Many do not need a high school diploma before they begin working, but employers require animal breeders to have either more work experience and training or a college degree.

The agricultural industry like the labour market on a whole is changing due to advances in technology and science. Persons in the industry now require bachelor's degrees, skills certificates and master's degrees. As the industry moves to operating with more science, technology and agricultural machines it will require individuals with higher level skills and certificates in order to function effectively and efficiently.

Other qualifications/skills required:

***Listening skills.*** Agricultural workers need to work well with others. Because they take instructions from farmers and other agricultural managers, effective listening is critical.

***Manual dexterity.*** Agricultural workers need excellent hand-eye coordination to harvest crops and operate farm machinery.

***Physical stamina.*** Agricultural workers need to be able to perform laborious tasks repeatedly.

***Physical strength.*** Agricultural workers must be strong enough to lift heavy objects, including tools and crops.

***Technical skills.*** Agricultural workers must be able to competently operate complex farm machinery. They also occasionally do routine maintenance on the machinery.

## **Job Outlook**

Employment of agricultural workers is expected to decline by three percent between 2010 and 2020. However, agricultural workers should have good job prospects overall.

Despite increasing international demand for food and meat, fewer agricultural workers may be needed as agricultural and livestock establishments continue to consolidate.

Technological advancements in farm equipment raise output per farm worker, which could also affect employment for agricultural workers.

In addition, the agriculture industry is expected to face increased competition from foreign countries, particularly Central America and China, because of trade agreements with those regions.