

## Agriculture as a Career

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As I was sitting in church one Sunday, I listened to the pastor tell the parable of the slaves receiving talents. One received five and went out to double his earnings. Another slave received two talents and became productive to earn four talents. The last slave received one talent, but instead of using what he had to help the world, he became scared and ashamed and buried his only talent in the ground. As I pondered this story, the pastor went on to explain something that really hit me: Stewardship is how to make a difference. We currently have enough food to feed the entire world, yet there is still hunger. There are hundreds of options through agriculture to create renewable fuels, yet we are still dependent on foreign oil sources. Becoming a steward for agriculture is why I have chosen a career in this industry.

I have lived on a seed grain farm all of my life, but it was not until I was in high school that I realized the true impact agriculture had had on me. When I joined the FFA Agricultural Communications team at my high school, I was forced to think about the agriculture industry in my hometown of Cokato, Minnesota. I was challenged to think about the “talents” my community possessed and how we could bring our roots in agriculture back into our daily lives. By doing this, I was also forced to realize the impact agriculture had had on me. My family farm has been in operation for three generations. Agriculture has provided my family with a source of income as well as the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. I love helping in the corn growing process through all of the seasons and my two favorite organizations to be involved in are agriculturally based, 4-H and FFA. This was when I realized I wanted to be an advocate for agriculture. Agriculture is an industry that I feel passionate about and I need to use the talents I have been given and make agriculture a part of my career.

This revelation brought me to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, where I am currently majoring in Agricultural Industries and Marketing and minoring in Mass Communications. I am able to take courses that help me make progress in my goals using my passions in agriculture and communication. My ultimate objective upon graduation is to obtain a career in communications or public relations for an agricultural business. I want to educate the public about advancements in the agricultural industry and how we will continue to feed and clothe the world.

Besides my education, I have been able to become an advocate for agriculture through other aspects of my life. In April, I finished my term as the Minnesota State FFA Secretary where I had the opportunity to meet with agricultural leaders from across my state and government officials. While meeting with Gene Hugoson, Minnesota Secretary of Agriculture, I was intrigued to hear about the current state of the industry in Minnesota and where technology will bring agriculture globally in the future. The world needs promoters of agriculture to continue to make strong advancements.

This past summer, I also had the opportunity to work with the University of Minnesota Extension Service in Wright County. While I primarily worked with 4-H members and their families, learning about agriculture through livestock identification and how to properly promote and execute countywide programs, I was also exposed to other sectors of Extension. I learned about horticulture through managing invasive species, nutrition through assisting with distributing healthy meals for the elderly and low-income families, and even how agriculture plays a role in consumer decision making. Through constant exposure to the ever-changing industry of agriculture and working to enhance my written communications skills, I was developing my skills to be a steward for agriculture.

Stewardship is defined as attending to the concerns of people. To me, there is no better reason to choose agriculture as a career. I am able to take my two passions of agriculture and communications and make an impact in the industry that provides life to everyone. Instead of burying my talents in the ground, becoming a steward for agriculture by choosing agriculture as a career is how I will take what I have to help the world.