

## Why Certification?

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All successful certification programs have one common element and that is to serve and protect the public's interest. Many professions require a license to practice such as in medicine, engineering, and accounting. A license is basically a certification program offered by the state. If a profession is licensed, it is generally required that a person have a license to practice in that profession. Certification programs offered by ASA are voluntary, but offer similar benefits to the public as licensing programs. Certification programs set standards for knowledge, skills, and conduct. These standards define the profession of agronomy, which gives farmers, employers, and government agencies a tool to help them choose professionals with the necessary skills to meet their needs. The public may also file a written complaint against a professional with the potential penalties of their certification being revoked or suspended. In summary, certification programs set standards, measure applicants against those standards, and are responsible for investigating individuals that practice outside of the programs' code of ethics. The purpose of all these steps is to protect the public. By protecting the public's welfare, a profession earns trust and respect which are the most important elements in securing a professional's future.

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