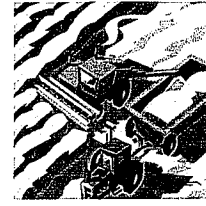




## Agriculture



Agriculture is the artificial cultivation and process of animals, plants, fungi and other life forms of food. There are almost 2 million people who farm or ranch in the United States today. Almost 90 % of the U.S. farms are owned and operated by individuals or family corporations. 97.2 % plan to farm or ranch for life. During a recent survey 90 % of farmers want their children to follow in their footsteps.

American agriculture provides many jobs such as retail and wholesale sales, and processing and marketing. Today's farmers are true professionals. Nearly 30 % of today's farmers have attended college with many of them receiving a degree. Nearly 83% of today's farmers use computers to help operate their farms more efficiently.

American farmers are producing more food on fewer acres which leaves more space for the wildlife to live such as moose, elk, bear, deer, fox and rabbits. Today's farmers raise several animals such as pigs, chickens, cows, and veal calves to help produce food. Pigs give us meat such as ham and pork. Chickens not only produce eggs they also are a form of meat. Cows give us milk as well as different kinds of meats such as hamburger, steaks, liver, roasts and the famous cow tongue. Not only do farmers raise animals they also grow vegetables such as corn, beans, squash, carrots, cauliflower, cabbage, potatoes and tomatoes. There are some farms that grow cotton and tobacco and raise sheep to make use of their wool for clothing and blankets.

Farmers have a big responsibility of making sure their crops are growing safely. They need to use special chemicals that will not harm their crops but will grow. Farmers also need to feed their animals with special feed to help them to grow and be strong.

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Federal and state governments are responsible for safeguarding the food supply before it can be purchased in a store.



Weather can also be a huge factor in today's farming. A change in temperature and too much rain could destroy some of the farmer's crops. It would also cost the farmers a lot of money to replant and rebuild their crops.

In today's society it costs a lot of money to live and operate a farm. Electric bills, farm machinery, special feed for the animals and chemicals to keep crops growing. Sometimes farmers need to call in a veterinarian to take care of sick or injured animals. All of this can be very expensive. Some people do not realize all the time and energy that raising a farm can take.

Farmers are also starting up "Agri-tainment", which is where farmers are doing more hayrides, corn mazes and petting zoos to help them with the cost of living on a farm.



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