

What is Agriculture?

Agriculture is the business, science and practices of growing and selling plants and animals to be used for food, fiber, fuel and much more.

When you woke up this morning, you had your first encounter with agriculture. Your sheets and pajamas were probably made with the fibers from cotton plants.

Did you wash or shower with soap? That soap is made from fat from cattle and oil from plants such as palm, corn and soybean.

Did you eat cereal, eggs, milk, bacon, pancakes, buttered toast or juice for breakfast? Thank agriculture for providing this food.

Did you pack a lunch in a paper bag, or finish your math by writing on paper? That paper comes from another agricultural crop -- trees. Corn and soybeans may also be used to make that paper and the ink.



Photo by Travis Harvey

Did you ride to school today? The bus or car likely ran on biofuel made from soybeans or corn. The metal used in the car, bus, or bike was also manufactured using tallow to move the hot steel around. Tallow is the fat from cattle.

Think of the 6 Fs

When you think of agriculture, think of these six words: food, fiber, fuel, forestry, pharmaceuticals, and flowers.

- **FOOD** that comes from plants and animals.
- **FIBER**, the raw material from plants and animals that we use to make cloth, clothing, rope and more. Fiber can be made from cotton, wood, wool and even corn.
- **FUEL** made from crops like corn, soybeans and sugarcane. Fuels made from plants grown on farms are called **BIOFUELS**.
- **FORESTRY** that grows trees to be made into lumber to build homes and businesses. Or it can be made into a variety of paper products.
- **PHARMACEUTICALS**, which is a big word for medicines. Many medicines are made from products we get from plants and animals.
- **FLOWERS**, turf grasses, shrubs and trees that make our landscapes beautiful.



Top 10 Ag Counties in Colorado for Value of Agriculture Products Sold

County	Amount of Sales	Type of Agriculture Products
Weld County	\$1.9 billion	Cattle, dairy, nursery, poultry, wheat, corn, sheep, hay, vegetables
Yuma County	\$1.2 billion	Cattle, corn, wheat, hogs
Morgan County	\$615.3 million	Cattle, wheat, corn, hay
Logan County	\$566.9 million	Cattle, wheat, corn, hay, proso millet
Kit Carson County	\$499.8 million	Cattle, wheat, corn
Prowers County	\$318.2 million	Cattle, wheat, hay, corn, sorghum
Washington County	\$220.7 million	Wheat, proso millet, corn, cattle
Phillips County	\$208.0 million	Corn, wheat, proso millet
Crowley County	\$161.5 million	Cattle
Otero County	\$144.2 million	Cattle, hay, corn, vegetables

Agriculture is everywhere

Using 11 percent of the land on earth, or 1.5 billion acres, farmers and agriculturalists must provide food for the 7.6 billion people in the world. This is a challenging task that is getting harder every day as farmland is developed and the population around the world continues to grow.

Agriculture's primary job is to feed the world. Most people hear agriculture and think of farmers and ranchers out in their fields all day or in pastures checking their livestock. That is what I think of when I hear the term agriculture, or that is what I used to think of anyhow. Then I got more involved with agriculture and I realized that agriculture was so much more than just food production. The agriculture industry depends upon science, technology, transportation, processing, packaging, marketing and many, many more functions to ensure that a safe, affordable and abundant food supply can be produced and delivered to consumers at stores and restaurants. In addition to food, agriculture also provides footwear, clothing, energy, building materials, cosmetics and recreational activities.

So when someone asks me today, "What is agriculture?" I know that I will be able to confidently say that agriculture is in everyone's everyday lives. From the fruits, vegetables and flowers in your garden to the seats in your car, the paint on your house, the local construction sites or even science experiments in your class, agriculture is EVERYWHERE!

In addition to the products, agriculture also produces important life skills such as speaking in public and becoming a leader. First I want to talk about leadership. Leadership is a very important skill to have because businesses and corporations must have someone who can lead them into the future or they will not survive the challenges that the industry will face in the next generation. Public speaking is in many ways very similar to leadership. In my mind, public speaking is very important in any line of work, agricultural or not. Being able to speak to people and tell them about agriculture, what you do and more importantly, why you do it, is very important. This could be in school, on a bus or airplane or a job interview. If you are able to have a good conversation and answer their questions, they will remember you in a positive way and also have a more favorable, informed opinion about where



By Sam Scanga, Ault

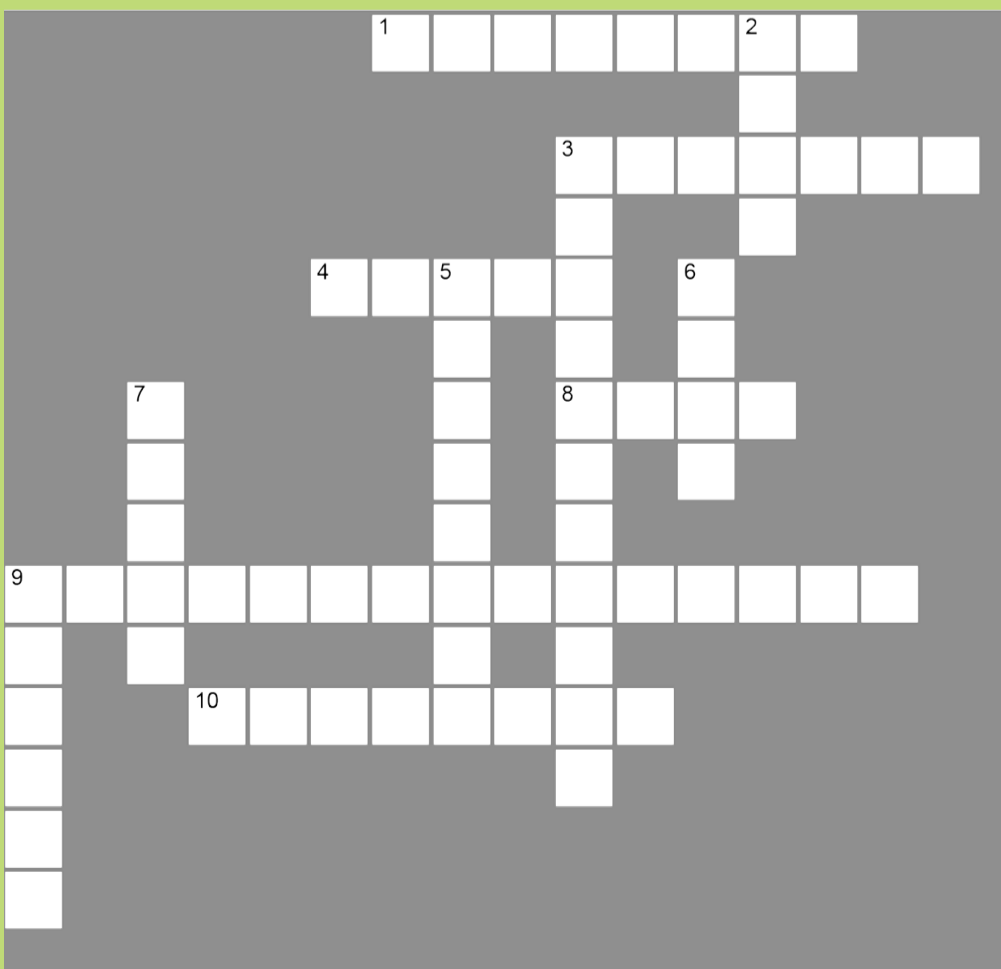
their food comes from. It is always good to be able to speak up and tell your story. Leadership and public speaking are very good skills that can take anyone a long way in life.

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I hope that by me writing this article I have been able to teach you something about the importance of agriculture, or even teach you what agriculture is really about. If you want to learn more or get more involved with agriculture a great place to start is where I started, by joining a local 4-H club. 4-H is an organization and club for anyone, ages eight to eighteen and offers learning opportunities through hundreds of different projects. FFA is another organization offered through your school that focuses on building the future leaders of agriculture through education, career events and training. Agriculture is one of the many

traditions of the great nation we live in and is not only the foundation and lifeblood of the human race, but also a way of life that is enjoyed by many and provides for all.

Solve the crossword puzzle



ACROSS

1. Fuel made from crops
3. We get meat, leather and other products from these
4. Raw material from plant or animals used to make cloth, rope and more
8. There are over 4,200 uses for this crop
9. Big word for medicine
10. Science of growing trees

DOWN

2. Meat from sheep
3. The business, science and practices for growing and selling plants and animals
5. Chickens raised for meat
6. The meat from hogs
7. A grain used to make pasta and bread. Stems are used to make straw.
9. Make their own food and are a source of food for animals

What agriculture is to me?



By Kaysa Merwin,
15, Rocky Ford

Agriculture is a way of life for me. I have been involved in agriculture for more than eight years, so most of my life. And let me tell you, life on a farm is fun and challenging; you learn

many life lessons growing up on a farm. I started out having chickens and goats. Now I am adding cattle into the mix.

Colorado, the Centennial State, is the eighth largest state in area, with approximately 66.3 million acres. There are 33,800 farms and ranches in Colorado, 56.1 percent of those farms grow crops. In 2016, over six million dollars was made in Colorado from farming to ranching.

I strive to live by the second paragraph of The FFA Creed by E.M. Tiffany, "I

believe that to live and work on a good farm, or to be engaged in other agricultural pursuits, is pleasant as well as challenging; for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associated which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny."

This means early days and late nights taking care of animals. It means preparing for fairs and shows, only to load up your animal and say your final goodbye. It opens up new beginnings with each animal you get in hopes of success. Connections have to be made with fellow farmers and ranchers, as well as your local businesses. These connections have to be made in order to learn how to feed and take care of animals.

Living the lifestyle that I live has taught me how to be responsible, the importance of keeping accurate records, how to love and let go and how to communicate clearly with others. I have learned how to feed and raise



Kaysa Merwin and her steer caught the attention of this young girl at a show. Photo submitted by Kaysa Merwin.

animals, how to help them if they need help when having their offspring. Most importantly I have learned how to have faith in myself and my abilities.

The FFA Creed

I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds - achievements won by the present and past generations of agriculturists; in the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.

I believe that to live and work on a good farm, or to be engaged in other agricultural pursuits, is pleasant as well as challenging; for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associations which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny.

I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly, with such knowledge and skill as I can secure, and in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve our own and the public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil.

I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining; in the life abundant and enough honest wealth to help make it so--for others as well as myself; in less need for charity and more of it when needed; in being happy myself and playing square with those whose happiness depends upon me.

I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task.

The creed was written by E.M. Tiffany and adopted at the Third National FFA Convention. It was revised at the 38th and 63rd Conventions.

Reciting the FFA Creed has become—in its own, unique way—a rite of passage. While almost every FFA member (past and present) can still recite at least parts of the creed.



Agriculture is family and business

Family and business, that's what agriculture means to me. Growing up in a household where agriculture is your income and your daily routine, it's hard not to be a part of it.

Starting with 4-H and learning so many things helps you grow with your family, but also teaches a very important lesson, economics. Buying and selling your animal, feed, and anything else all need to be accounted for to have a good project. Planning your spending on your livestock teaches responsibility, but also creates a chance to have fun with your family.

I have gotten closer with my family through long road trips to pick up goats or to go to jackpot shows than through any other experiences. When you are able to laugh with somebody, it really highlights the whole trip. When agriculture has been your whole life, it can start to dull, because you've grown up with it. But through new experiences such as shows or going to pick up your animal, you can really see how special your life is.

One of my favorite experiences with this was when I went to my first junior national cattle show. I was dragged out of my house to something I did not want to go to, but I was shocked as to the great things I would learn. I participated in so many of the activities and had a great time at the show. Leaving that show, I experienced the same feeling as when I first showed - it was like a renewal of appreciation for agriculture itself.

This is why agriculture means so much to me and my family. They are the ones who always show me how great it is. As the business of the family, it puts food on the table, which is why agriculture also means business. Agriculture isn't just a fun show, but an industry that is essential to life in our society. For my family it is a business that supports us, and to me it also means my family.

By Soren Freund, 14, Elizabeth



Soren Freund participating in the quiz bowl contest at the junior national cattle show.

The many definitions of agriculture

Agriculture means creating new ways to help us live. Agriculture plays a very important role in my life and my community. Even though some people may not know how agriculture impacts their lives, it does. It helps to create jobs and is important to the economy. You cannot go a day without agriculture.

Agriculture helps you live, no matter where you live. It is very important to me because it is the main way we make a living in our rural community. Agriculture creates millions of jobs all around the world. Sure, manufacturing companies make some of the products produced by farmers and ranchers into everyday objects, but the people making those products are where it starts – on the farm or ranch.

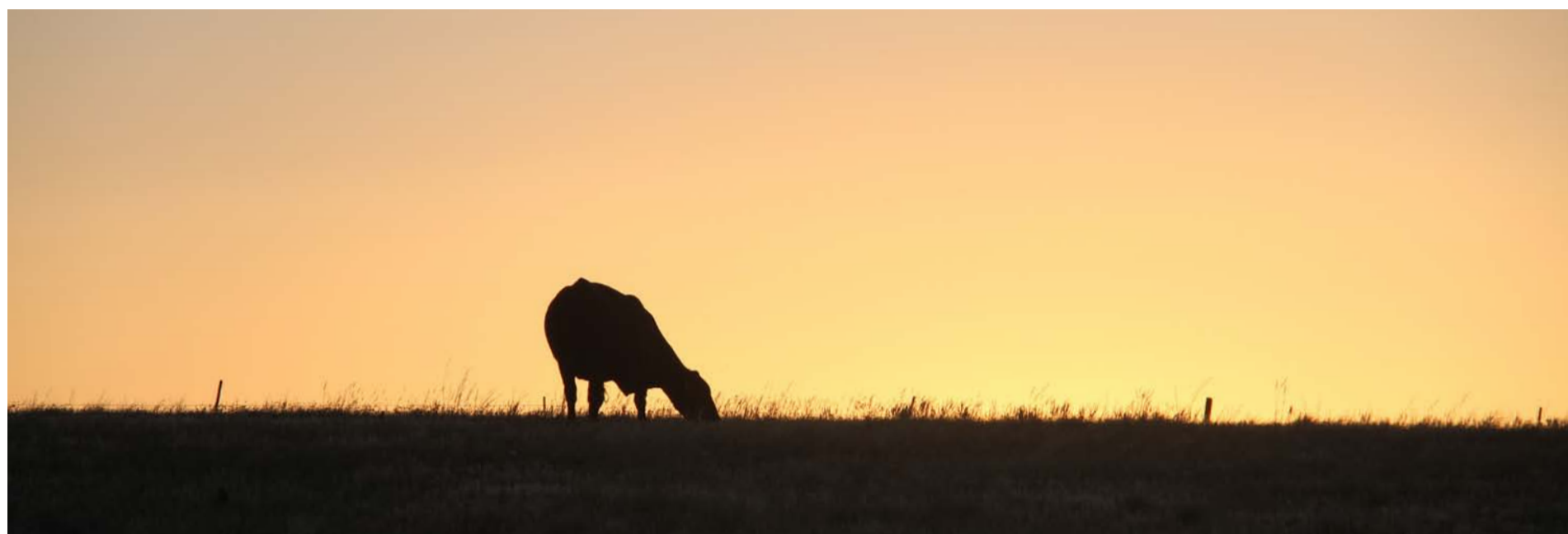
Personally, I show market pigs and market beef cattle at my local county fair and at the famous National Western Stock Show. These animals that we show will soon turn into the steak, hamburger, pork chops or

bacon for you to eat. Aside from food, there are farmers who grow cotton to make clothes. Animal hides are used to make your sports balls. There are many other agriculture products that touch your lives every day.

My pig and beef projects connect me to agriculture. When I sell them in the fall, I will use that money to help pay for my college education to pursue a career in agriculture. I want to continue the agricultural tradition in our family. This is a big priority for me so our family can keep feeding people all around the world.

Agriculture is not just a job, but also a feeling and an emotion. It is waking up to a beautiful sunrise and the wide open spaces of rural living. It is the great community always willing to lend a helping hand when needed. It is the joy of knowing what we do as farmers and ranchers matters. Agriculture means providing for a great today and for a better tomorrow.

By Bradie Midcap, 14, Wray



Agriculture Day at the Capital

Food competition, celebration of state's ag industry one of the most popular events under the Golden Dome

A celebration of Colorado's agricultural producers and agribusinesses is set for Thursday, March 22, at the Capitol Building in Denver.

The ag organizations that make up the Colorado Agriculture Council will once again host Agriculture Day at the Capitol, starting at 10:30 a.m. and featuring the teaming up of 14 local chefs with various lawmakers and ag representatives in a cook-off competition of Colorado-grown foods. Lunch will be served around 11 a.m.

Producers, the public and media are all invited to attend the event, which takes place as part of National Agriculture Week.

The Colorado ag event at the State Capitol has become one of the most popular events under

the Golden Dome – attended by about 1,000 people, including the governor, state legislators, farmers, ranchers and many others.

Each year, the event showcases all that Colorado's agriculture industry does for our state, highlighting its efforts in feeding Colorado's 5 million-plus people, its stewardship of our resources, and its \$40 billion economic impact – a top two or three contributor to the state's economy each year.

The event also recognizes the ag industry's incredible generosity to those in need, as Colorado producers continue to be some of the biggest supporters of the state's food banks. In 2017, the ag industry's product and monetary contributions to Colorado's five Feeding America food banks totaled up to \$23.2 million.

Crossword puzzle answers

ACROSS

1. Fuel made from crops: **Biofuels**
3. We get meat, leather and other products from these: **Animals**
4. Raw material from plant or animals used to make cloth, rope and more: **Fiber**
8. There are over 4,200 uses for this crop: **Corn**
9. Big word for medicine: **Pharmaceuticals**
10. Science of growing trees: **Forestry**

DOWN

2. Meat from sheep: **Lamb**
3. The business, science and practices for growing and selling plants and animals: **Agriculture**
5. Chickens raised for meat: **Broilers**
6. The meat from hogs: **Pork**
7. A grain used to make pasta and bread. Stems are used to make straw.: **Wheat**
9. Make their own food and are a source of food for animals: **Plants**

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