One of the Best Fields for New College Graduates?

Agriculture.

Nearly 60,000 High-Skilled Agriculture Job Openings Expected Annually in U.S., Yet Only 35,000 Graduates Available to Fill Them

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a report in May showing tremendous demand for recent college graduates with a degree in agricultural programs. An estimated 57,900 high-skilled jobs open annually in the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources and environment fields in the United States.

According to an employment outlook report released by USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Purdue University, there is an average of 35,400 new U.S. graduates with a bachelor’s degree or higher in agriculture related fields, 22,500 short of the jobs available annually.

"There is incredible opportunity..."
for highly-skilled jobs in agriculture,” said Vilsack. “Those receiving degrees in agricultural fields can expect to have ample career opportunities. Not only will those who study agriculture be likely to get well-paying jobs upon graduation, they will also have the satisfaction of working in a field that addresses some of the world’s most pressing challenges. These jobs will only become more important as we continue to develop solutions to feed more than 9 billion people by 2050.”

The report projects almost half of the job opportunities will be in management and business. Another 27 percent will be in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. Jobs in food and biomaterials production will make up 15 percent, and 12 percent of the openings will be in education, communication, and governmental services.

The report also shows that women make up more than half of the food, agriculture, renewable natural resources, and environment higher education graduates in the U.S. Other highlights of the report include:

- While most employers prefer to hire graduates of food, agriculture, renewable natural resources and environment programs, graduates from these programs only fill about 60 percent of the expected annual openings.

Even as enrollments in these programs increase and the job market becomes somewhat more competitive, good employment opportunities for the next 5 years are expected.

- Growth in job opportunities will be uneven. Employers in some areas will struggle to find enough graduates to fill jobs. In a few areas, employers will find an oversupply of job seekers.

- Expect to see a strong employment market for e-commerce managers and marketing agents, ecosystem managers, agricultural science and business educators, crop advisors, and pest control specialists.

- Job opportunities in STEM areas are expected to grow. Expect the strongest job market for plant scientists, food scientists, sustainable biomaterials specialists, water resources scientists and engineers, precision agriculture specialists, and veterinarians.


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