Agriculture Careers
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All about Agriculture Careers

**Agriculture: The Science of Farming**

Agriculture, or farming, is the science of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock. It is the nation’s largest industry, employing approximately 23 million people in over 250 career areas. However, less than one percent of the population claims farming as their occupation. The remaining agricultural jobs can be segmented into seven areas: plant sciences, animal sciences, agricultural mechanics, agricultural business, environmental services, food science, and natural resources.

**Illinois and Agriculture – A Great Combination**

In Illinois, food and agricultural product processing contribute significantly to the state’s economy. There are almost 1 million agriculture-related jobs in Illinois, making up over 13% of employees in the state. Illinois is one of the top ranking states in meat packing, soybean processing, dairy manufacturing, corn processing, feed milling, and vegetable processing. Its fertile soil, favorable climate, availability of good transportation, and industry make it one of the top agricultural states in the nation.

**Educational Words:**

*High School Diploma* – this is awarded for the completion of high school.

*Associate’s Degree* – this is awarded by community colleges, junior colleges, technical colleges, and universities for the completion of a study that usually lasts two years.

*Bachelor’s Degree* – this is awarded for an undergraduate course that generally lasts four years.

*Certification* – these are papers showing that a test or procedure was passed for a particular subject.

**Why Illinois?**

- Illinois leads the U.S. in processed food sales.
- Illinois is 2nd in the nation in corn and soybean production.
- Illinois is 4th in the nation for the number of farmers’ markets.
- Illinois ranks 4th in the nation for agricultural exports.
- Illinois is 5th in the nation for processed food exports.
Career Racing

Common Core:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3; RI.4.9; SL.4.1; SL.4.4

Materials Needed:
- Career Ag Mag
- Race Board– 1 per student
- Career cards– 1 per student (some students may have the same card)
- Pencil– 1 per student
- Computers and internet access

Directions:
1. Introduce the word “agriculture” on the board in front of the class.
2. Have the students take a minute and recall any information they already know about agriculture. Tell them to be prepared with words to describe the word agriculture during the class discussion.
3. Have the students share their definitions and thoughts with the person sitting next to them.
4. Come together as a class and have students share their thoughts. Capture words and phrases on the board around the word “agriculture.”
5. Provide students with this definition of agriculture, to help bring all of their ideas together.
   - Agriculture refers to the production and delivery of food, fiber and fuel that humans need to survive and thrive.
6. Introduce the Ag Career Race! Hand out a card containing a brief description to each student.
7. Students will silently read their card, without sharing it with anyone. Answer any questions that students may have about the different careers (one-on-one).
8. Pass out the race board to each student. Make sure they all have a pencil before continuing.
9. Explain the directions for the game.
   - Each person is given a game card with a career in agriculture. This will be their career for the day. When someone asks, “What do you do?” they respond, “I am a ______ and I _____” and fill in the blank with the career given and what that person does. For example, “I am a veterinarian, and I help sick and injured animals.” Try elaborating by having the students research the career they were given. Have them give more examples of what they would do if they were actually working with that career.
   - Each student also receives a race board, which has different careers listed. Their goal is to get the initials of each person who has the career listed on their board.
   - When I say “Go,” begin meeting your classmates. Ask “What do you do?” and they will respond, “I am a __ and I __.” Find their circle on your board, and get their initials. The first person to have all the circles initialed wins!
10. If students finish early, ask them to return to their seat and review the careers listed. Have students put a star next to the top three careers which are most interesting to them. Students should be prepared to share why these careers stood out.
11. Lastly, have students individually play “My Little Ag Me”, available at www.myamericanfarm.org.

Adapted from American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAREER CARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Florist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love designing flowers for weddings and special events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tractor Mechanic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep tractors and equipment running on the farm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welder</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am an operator who joins metal parts together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Engineer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work to improve the natural environment, and to provide healthy water, air, and land for human habitation and for other organisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutritionist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan food and nutrition programs, and supervise the preparation and serving of meals. I promote healthy eating habits and suggest diet modifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meet the people in your class and ask them, “What do you do?” After they respond, have them write their initials in the correct box.
# Career Match

**Common Core:**
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1; W.4.4; W.4.5; W.4.6; W.4.9

**Directions:**
Cut out each of the following agriculture job titles and the descriptions. Match each job with the correct description. Put them in order, from which job you like the most, to the job you would like the least. When you are finished, type a 1-page paper about your number one job choice. Spend time researching the job before completing the assignment. Include reasons why you chose that specific job and a detailed description of what the job requires.

1. Agricultural AVIATOR
   - A. I work for one of the world’s leading supplier of plant genetics. I study crops like corn and soybeans, so we can help farmers grow better crops for consumers.

2. Agricultural Education TEACHER
   - B. I study what animals eat, and figure out what and how much they need to eat and stay healthy.

3. Crop SCIENTIST
   - C. I harvest trees so that you can have access to a variety of products made from wood, like paper and pencils. I work hard to effectively manage the environment, by planting new trees while protecting the soil, water and air.

4. Agricultural PHOTOGRAPHER
   - D. Crop dusting is one of the most common forms of my job. I work hard to keep plants healthy by stopping pests and disease.

5. Animal NUTRITIONIST
   - E. I make sure the food you eat is healthy, safe and tasty. I also have fun coming up with new food products and ways to eat food!

6. Greenhouse MANAGER
   - F. I study how animals behave, and how they interact with others. I work at a zoo with specialty animals like tigers and zebras.

7. Meat SCIENTIST
   - G. I am proud to raise healthy pigs which provide you with a nutritious and lean source of protein, pork!

8. FORESTER
   - H. I work in a public school to teach information about agriculture. My students may become farmers, mechanics, researchers, or simply informed consumers.

9. Animal BEHAVIORIST
   - I. I am in charge of buildings that are used to grow plants, including flowers, vegetables, fruits and even some trees.

10. Swine PRODUCER
    - J. I am involved in agriculture through my creative art. My work is used in magazines, newspapers, books, journals, advertisements and websites.

Adapted from American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.
Career Assessment

Common Core:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3; W.4.1; W.4.4; W.4.5; W.4.6; W.4.9

Materials Needed:
- Holland’s Interest Assessment and Hexagon Graph Worksheet for each student.
- Copies of the “Responses to the Career Assessment” and the “Agricultural Career Options” worksheets.

Directions:
1. Provide each student with a Career Assessment and Hexagon Graph worksheet. Ask students to answer the questions on the Career Assessment worksheet.
2. Go through the responses to the Career Assessment. Ask each student to indicate which characteristics they chose by making tally marks on the Hexagon.
3. At the conclusion of the questions, have the students add the number of tallies after each characteristic.
4. The students should have one or two characteristics with more tally marks than the others. Ask them to color these areas on the hexagon.
5. Hand out the Responses to the Career Assessment and the Agricultural Career Options worksheets. These worksheets include areas of study and career possibilities that may interest persons with these characteristics.
6. Ask each student to choose one or more career(s) from the career possibilities list that interests him or her.
7. Each student should research the career he or she chose and list job responsibilities, education requirements, salary, and how it relates to production agriculture.

Adapted from Utah Ag in the Classroom

Lesson Extender:
An Ag filled Hour

Have the students keep a journal of everything they did for an hour or two during the day. They will take that information and write a one page paper describing which agricultural careers were used during that hour(s), and what a persons job would require if they chose that career. See the section “An Ag Filled Day” on the Career Ag Mag to see examples.
Career Assessment
Holland’s Interest Assessment

1. Do you enjoy working outdoors?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

2. Do you prefer to work with:
   _____ Things
   _____ Alone
   _____ Ideas
   _____ People
   _____ People and Ideas

3. Do you like to work with tools and machines?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

4. Do you enjoy investigating what makes things the way they are?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

5. Mark which of the following skills apply to you: (mark all that apply)
   _____ Athletic ability
   _____ Mathematical and scientific
   _____ Artistic skills
   _____ Leadership and speaking
   _____ Numerical
   _____ Social skills

6. Do you like to solve problems?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

7. Do you have a good imagination?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

8. Are you interested in human relationships?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

9. Do you like to help others with problems?
   _____ Yes
   _____ No

10. Are you interested in economics and politics?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

11. Do you like to try to convince people?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

12. Do you enjoy working with words and numbers?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

13. Do you carry out tasks in detail?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

14. Do you follow through on others’ instructions?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

15. Do you enjoy creating original work?
    _____ Yes
    _____ No

16. Mark which of the following best describe you:
    (circle all that apply)
    a) I like to do what people expect of me. I am truthful and practical. I like to save my money. I don’t like to brag about myself.
    b) I like to question and find out about things. I like to work by myself and do a good job, but I don’t brag about how good I am doing.
    c) I like to work by myself and come up with new ideas. I sometimes do things differently than others would. I am creative.
    d) I like to help others. I am friendly, patient and understanding. People can trust me.
    e) I am outgoing and popular. I think that everything will turn out for the best. I like to explore and I have lots of energy.
    f) I like to do what people expect of me. I like to save my money. If something doesn’t work the first time, I will try again until it does work.
Responses to the Career Assessment

1. If you answered yes, put a mark by Realistic.
   6. If you answered yes, put a mark by Investigative.

2. If you marked Things, put a mark by Realistic.
   7. If you answered yes, put a mark by Artistic.

   If you marked Alone, put a mark by Investigative.

   If you marked Ideas, put a mark by Artistic.

   If you marked People, put a mark by Social.

   If you marked People and Ideas, put a mark by Enterprising.

3. If you answered yes, put a mark by Realistic.
   8. If you answered yes, put a mark by Social.

4. If you answered yes, put a mark by Investigative.
   9. If you answered yes, put a mark by Social.

5. If you marked Athletic Ability, put a mark by Realistic.
   10. If you answered yes, put a mark by Enterprising.

   If you marked Mathematical and Scientific, put a mark by Investigative.

   If you marked Artistic Skills, put a mark by Artistic.

   If you marked Leadership and Speaking, put a mark by Enterprising.

   If you marked Clerical or Numerical, put a mark by Conventional.

   If you marked Social Skills, put a mark by Social.

   If you marked a, put a mark by Realistic.

   If you marked b, put a mark by Investigative.

   If you marked c, put a mark by Artistic.

   If you marked d, put a mark by Social.

   If you marked e, put a mark by Enterprising.

   If you marked f, put a mark by Conventional.
Hexagon Graph Worksheet

INVESTIGATIVE—People who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate or solve problems.

REALISTIC—People who have athletic or mechanical ability, prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants or animals, or to be outdoors.

CONVENTIONAL—People who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, carry out tasks in detail or follow through on others’ instructions.

ENTERPRISING—People who like to work with people, influencing, persuading, performing, leading or managing for organizational goals for economic gain.

SOCIAL—People who like to work with people to enlighten, inform, help, train, or cure them, or are skilled with words.

ARTISTIC—People who have artistic, innovative or intuitive abilities and like to work in unstructured situations using their imagination and creativity.
Agricultural Career Options

My name is_____________________________

My career characteristics indicate that I am:

I am interested in these careers:

**Realistic DOERS**
- Appliance Mechanic
- Aquaculturist
- Automobile Body Repairer
- Automotive Engineer
- Automobile Mechanic
- Baker/Chef
- Carpenter
- Construction Worker
- Diesel Mechanic
- Electrical Engineer
- Farm Equipment Manager
- Farmer
- Farm Manager
- Forester
- Groundskeeper
- Industrial Supervisor
- Instrument Repair and Maintenance
- Laboratory Technician
- Machinist
- Maintenance Repairer
- Mechanical Engineer
- Oceanographer
- Truck Driver
- Water Quality Specialist

**Investigative THINKERS**
- Agronomist
- Biochemist
- Biologist
- Cartographer
- Chemical Engineer
- Chemical Technician
- Chemist
- Computer Engineer
- Computer Programmer
- Computer Systems Analyst
- Ecologist
- Economist
- Electrical Engineer
- Hazardous Waste Technician
- Horticulturist
- Industrial Arts Teacher
- Management Consultant
- Marketing Research Analyst
- Research Analyst
- Software Engineer
- Statistician
- Technical Writer
- Veterinarian

**Artistic CREATORS**
- Advertising Art Director
- Advertising Manager
- Copywriter
- Graphic Designer
- Journalist/Reporter
- Landscape Architect
- Photographer
- Writer/Editor
## Agricultural Career Options

### Enterprising PERSUADERS
- Advertising, Marketing
- Public Relations Manager
- Advertising Sales Representative
- Financial Planner
- Financial Manager
- Buyer
- Computer Operator
- Cook/Chef
- Credit Manager
- Educational - Training Manager
- Educational Administrator
- Food Service Manager
- Foreign Service Office
- Industrial Engineer
- Interpreter
- Journalist
- Lobbyist
- Manufacturer’s Representative
- Office Manager
- Restaurant Manager
- Retail Store Manager
- Sales Representative
- Stockbroker

### Social HELPERS
- College Professor
- Community Planner
- Dietician
- Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher
- Home Economist
- Occupational Therapist
- Park Naturalist
- Personnel Recruiter
- Personnel, Training
- Labor Relations Specialist
- Public Health Educator
- School Principal-Administrator
- Secondary School Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Teacher’s Aide

### Conventional ORGANIZERS
- Accountant
- Administrative Assistant
- Bank Teller
- Budget Analyst
- Computer Operator
- Cost Accountant
- Financial Analyst
- Internal Auditor
- Safety Inspector
Think Like a Farmer

Common Core:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3; SL.4.1; SL.4.4

Background:
The job of a farmer requires much more than knowing about crops. Today’s farmer uses computers and global positioning technology (GPS) to help determine where to plant crops. Other aspects of a farmer’s job requires knowing about animal science, weather, and stock markers. Farmers use this knowledge to make decisions everyday.

Materials Needed:
- Career Ag Mag
- Farmer “Scenario Cards”
- Tape
- Markers
- Paper

Directions:
1. Start off by asking students what skills farmers need to do their jobs. Record the responses on the white board or a large piece of paper.
2. Prepare Farmer “Scenario Cards” for student use. Sample scenario cards are included. Each student will receive one scenario.
3. Prepare a category chart on the white board or wall for students to place cards on. The categories represent the knowledge/skills farmers need to do their jobs. Include the following categories:
   - Animal science
   - Technology
   - Meteorology (weather)
   - Botany (plants)
   - Bookkeeping
   - Commodity markets
   - Other
4. Have students read their card aloud. Then, have students place it in a category and explain why they put it there.
5. Finally, have students predict changes in agriculture for the year 2050.

Discussion Questions:
1. Did you discover anything new?
2. What type of training and education do farmers need?
3. What are you learning in school that might relate to a farmer’s job?
4. How does a farmer use technology? How do you use technology?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FARMER SCENARIO CARDS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your soybean plants are not growing very well this year. The plant color is light green and the leaves have small black spots. Is this a new plant disease?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farming requires book and record keeping. You need a quick, easy way to organize this information.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last year, corn was extremely profitable. Should you only plant corn?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weather forecasters are predicting heavy rains this week. You planned on spraying fertilizer. Should you?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The price for corn keeps changing. Should you store your corn? Or, should you sell it?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A cow has a broken leg and needs care NOW. There is no time to call for help. It is up to you!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You need to get the latest information on the prices of farm products.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The last spring frost is predicted for April 14. It is April 13th and the weather is still very cold. Do you prepare to plant crops on April 15? Or, do you wait?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You are working in the fields and the temperature drops. Is a storm coming? You need current information about the weather.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You are a first-time pork farmer. Your sow just gave birth to a litter. What do you need to consider?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is 2 AM. Your favorite mare is giving birth to a filly SOON! The veterinarian is 30 minutes away.

After 10 years of farming in California, you decided to relocate and farm in Illinois. You need to make decisions about what crops to plant.

It has been raining for two weeks straight. Do you plant now or wait?

There are 50 acres of farmland for sale near your property. This land was once owned by organic farmers, but would be an asset to your successful farm. Do you buy?

Soybean prices rose to $6.80 a bushel. Do you sell now? Or, do you wait?

Your combine just broke down. Weather predictions indicate a large hail storm next week. You need to get the combine fixed and the crops out of the field.

There is a new beetle eating your crops. What do you do?

It’s tax time. You need to determine your farm’s earnings for the year.
Background/Directions:
The Smith brothers researched each career featured at the local career fair and then attended the fair. Each of them picked two careers that interested them. Use the clues to find out each person’s career choice. The chart below will help you identify what you learned from each clue. In the square where the vertical and horizontal lines meet is where you mark your possible answers. Read each clue and record the information on the chart. When you find a true match, put a yes in the appropriate box. When you prove a combination false, put an x in the box. Continue until you find all the answers. Each person will have two careers. Each career will have only one person.

1. The person who enjoyed learning about veterinarians also chose feedlot manager.
2. Daniel did not pick the forester.
3. Joshua was not interested in being a farmer or a feedlot manager.
4. Daniel did not choose the writer.
5. Bret was not interested in being a photographer or a food safety specialist.
6. Jacob did not choose the teacher.
7. Michael did not choose to be a forester.
8. The person who chose to be a farmer also chose the writer.
9. Bret picked either the writer or the feedlot manager.
10. Jacob did not choose the food safety specialist.
11. Bret was not interested in being a forester.
12. Michael did not choose the farmer or the food safety specialist.
13. Jacob chose either the food safety specialist or the conservationist.
14. Joshua did not choose the forester or the writer.
15. The person who chose the chemist did not choose the teacher.
16. Bret did not choose the feedlot manager.
17. The person who chose the photographer also chose the teacher.
18. One person chose both the chemist and the food safety specialist.
19. Joshua chose either the conservationist or the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Forester</th>
<th>Vet</th>
<th>Chemist</th>
<th>Photographer</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Feedlot Manager</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Food Safety Specialist</th>
<th>Conservationist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
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<td>Daniel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
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<td>Michael</td>
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<td>Bret</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Logically Thinking (Answer Key)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farmer</th>
<th>Forester</th>
<th>Vet</th>
<th>Chemist</th>
<th>Photographer</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Feedlot Manager</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Food Safety Specialist</th>
<th>Conservationist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bret</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jacob chose **Forester** and **Conservationist**.
Daniel chose **Chemist** and **Food Safety Specialist**.
Joshua chose **Photographer** and **Teacher**.
Michael chose **Veterinarian** and **Feedlot Manager**.
Bret chose **Farmer** and **Writer**.
Let’s Interview!

Common Core:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3; SL.4.1; SL.4.4

Directions:
1. Exposing students of all ages to the world of work can broaden their perspectives and spur them to more interesting and productive careers! Take time to conduct mini interviews with each student.
2. Give the students a list of sample questions that they will ask their peers and also answer themselves. Allow the students to practice with their classmates before meeting one on one with the teacher.
3. The students will now meet with the teacher. Use some of the questions below during the interview. The students will become more comfortable with speaking and listening and will have the opportunity to see the teacher modeling how to answer interview questions.

Lesson Extender:
Ask questions related to a specific career that the child has researched and is interested in.

Questions to ask the student:
1. Would you like to work alone or in a group?
2. Would you rather work inside or outside?
3. Would you prefer working during the day or the night?
4. Would you mind wearing a uniform?
5. Would you like to make things or sell things?
6. Would you rather travel or stay close to home?
7. Would you like to work with your hands?
8. Would you rather give directions or follow directions?
9. Would you rather use communication skills or math skills?

Questions the student can ask the teacher:
1. What were your favorite school subjects?
2. What did you like to do with your free time?
3. What career did you think about when you were a child?
4. Did you follow the career path you dreamed about when you were a child? Why or why not?
5. Who helped you make your career decision?
6. What did you learn in school that helped you the most?
7. What is your favorite thing about the work you do now?
8. What skills in elementary school did you learn that you use in your work now?
Recommended Reading/Links

Books:


Careers in Agriculture by Christopher Benson ISBN-13: 9780898120172

Career Links:

Ag Career Apps (search the app store on your smartphone):
Ag Career Finder
Agcareers.com

Illinois Farm Bureau:

Agriculture Council of America:
http://www.agday.org/education/careers.php

Department of Labor:

Illinois Agriculture Education:
http://www.agricultureeducation.org/

Careers/Occupations/Colleges in Illinois:
http://www.mycareer.com/career-profiles/

My Next Move:
http://www.mynextmove.org/find/browse?c=11

Video interviews of people working in ag from Utah’s Agriculture in the Classroom:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7B61381EE0438243

USDA AITC National Resource Directory:
http://www.agclassroom.org/directory/index.cfm
Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom

1701 Towanda Ave.
Bloomington, IL 61701
Phone: 309-557-3334
Fax: 309-557-2098

www.agintheclassroom.org

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Ag Mags are four-page colorful agricultural magazines for kids. They contain information about agriculture, classroom activities, career interviews and bright pictures.

To place your order for this **FREE** resource, visit [www.agintheclassroom.org](http://www.agintheclassroom.org) to find your county contact information.