

Crop Production

Crop production is the process in farming that focuses on the growing of crop. It involves planting, fertilizing, harvesting, and herding. Farmers have to be knowledgeable of soil condition, fertilizers, seeds, irrigation systems. Crops are often exposed to the natural elements of the environment and natural disasters and as such, farmers have to monitor conditions closely and plan strategically to ensure that the crops survive or new crops are produced.

Work Environment

Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers work outdoors and may spend some time in offices. Some farmers and ranchers maintain and operate machinery, and they sometimes do strenuous physical work.

The work environment for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers can be hazardous. Tractors and other farm machinery can cause serious injury, so workers must be alert on the job. They must operate equipment and handle chemicals properly to avoid accidents and safeguard the surrounding environment.

How to get Qualified

Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers typically gain skills through work experience and usually have at least a high school diploma. As farm and land management has grown more complex, more farmers and ranchers now have a bachelor's degree in agriculture or a related field. Additionally, a number of government programs help new farmers get training.

Job Outlook

Employment of farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers is expected to decline moderately by 8 percent from 2010 to 2020. The continuing ability of farms to produce more output with fewer workers will cause some farmers to go out of business.

As land, machinery, seed, and chemicals become more expensive, only well-capitalized farmers and corporations will be able to buy many of the farms that become available. These larger, more productive farms are better able to withstand the adverse effects of climate and price fluctuations on farm output and income.

Agricultural managers should have more opportunities. Owners of large tracts of land, who often do not live on the property they own, increasingly will seek the expertise of agricultural managers to run their farms and ranches as businesses.

Despite the expected continued consolidation of farmland and the projected decline in overall employment of this occupation, an increasing number of small-scale farmers have developed successful market niches that involve personalized, direct contact with their customers. Many are finding opportunities in horticulture and organic food production, which are among the fastest growing segments of agriculture. Others use farmer's markets that cater directly to urban and suburban consumers, allowing the farmers to capture a greater share of consumers' food dollars.

