



OPEN YOUR MIND

Careers in Agriculture





There are so many different careers and jobs in the agricultural industry.

Whether you're into science, communication or business – agriculture has it all.

You can work outside in the field or inside, perhaps in a lab, with people, animals or plants, using your head, your hands and your heart – people who work in agriculture are passionate about what they do.

Agricultural careers can take you around the State, around the country and even around the world.

There's jobs throughout the food and fibre supply chain, from helping to produce crops and animals, to manufacturing and processing right through to marketing, trade and the media.

There are endless job opportunities – the world will always need to produce food and water in harmony with the environment.

Where will agriculture take you?

CASE STUDIES

Tara De Landgraft

Rural & Resources Journalist,
ABC Radio

Education

Bachelor of Agribusiness Marketing,
Curtin University of Technology (Muresk)



It's great to feel like you make a difference to people's days.

That's what I get to do as a rural and resources reporter with ABC Radio.

I love being able to get out of the office at least three days a week to speak to farmers and industry people.

In doing so I travel a lot and help people tell their stories, report on new research and investigate the big issues.

The job's an amazing mix of creativity and deadlines, as you work with a really tight team to put together programs about everything and anything to do with agriculture.

Many of my stories are heard State-wide and even nationally through the ABC network.

My career journey started with a Bachelor of Agribusiness Marketing, which had an excellent hands-on practical component.

Learning about something in a class and then being able to go out an hour later and test it in the field was great.

It had a great work placement program too, which helped me get my foot in the door to the ABC.

Steven Tilbrook

Research Agronomist

Education

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Honours), University of Western Australia.

Agriculture is a really dynamic industry, where there's always something happening.

I think it's that sense of being at the 'leading edge' that drew me to a career in agriculture.

There are so many opportunities – especially now – with many exciting developments as new technologies are discovered and we learn how to use them.

I did a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, which gave me a

good mix of the practical and the theoretical.

Qualifications in agriculture can take you anywhere in the world. I spent eight months in Kuwait working as an environmental scientist, collecting data on the oil damage from the first Gulf War.

I currently work for an agricultural research company, where I do contract work for a wide variety of research and development clients.

Most of my work is doing field experiments. It's a great mix of hands-on work and office analysis.

One of the best things is that I get a lot of independence and flexibility, and I really enjoy following the experiments through from start to finish.

What really gives me a buzz is that I get to be at the cutting edge of research so I can learn first-hand about new technologies and products.

Daniel Gibbins

Secondary Teacher, Agricultural College

Education

Bachelor of Agribusiness Marketing, Curtin University of Technology (Muresk); Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary Agriculture), Curtin University of Technology (Bentley)

For me studying agriculture was not something I ever thought I would do, so in a way it was a difficult decision to make.

I had always planned on a career in the armed forces, something my father and grandfather had done, but after going to an agricultural college I really knew this was where I wanted to be.

After Yr 12 I completed a Bachelor of Agribusiness Marketing at Muresk, near Northam.

Muresk really helped expand my understanding of the agricultural industry and farming. I was able to "get my hands dirty" and be involved in the university farm on a daily basis.

The Diploma of Education was a great experience, particularly when I was able to get into the classroom with the kids.

Now I'm a teacher and I really enjoy making a difference to students' lives by developing their

knowledge and skills and helping them to develop as individuals.

After growing up in the city, I'm surprised how much I really do enjoy living in the country.

It's hard to explain but there's definitely something special about living out here; whether it's the mates you make, the lifestyle itself or just being on the land – it's fantastic and definitely the most fun I have ever had.



Kristen Kennison

**Viticulture Research & Development Officer,
Department of Agriculture and Food**

Education

Bachelor of Horticulture (Agribusiness) with Honours, Curtin University of Technology; PhD candidate, Curtin University of Technology



I studied a horticulture agribusiness degree because I wanted a career where I could work in plant production.

The course was really diverse, covering both horticulture and business management. It gave me the skills and knowledge to get a job in a whole range of industries.

I particularly enjoyed the field trips to parks and gardens, table grape growing properties, cut flower

producing properties, large wine companies and the Canning Vale markets.

I now work with the Department of Agriculture and Food on wine grapes as a research and development officer.

I'm involved in research to see how smoke can affect the taste of grapes and wine and another project testing new varieties of grapes to be used to make wine.

I love so many things about my job. The people within the viticulture industry are fantastic to work with and I enjoy making a difference and contributing to a dynamic industry.

I also like the mix of working indoors and outdoors and enjoy the responsibility of managing research trials.

Ryan Meldrum

Bank Manager

Education

TAFE Certificate III (General Agriculture); Bachelor of Agribusiness (Farm Management), Curtin University of Technology (Muresk)



I followed in my father's footsteps and decided to study Farm Management.

I completed a Bachelor of Agribusiness. The course was very broad, covering economics, business management, finance, tax, law, statistics, animal and plant production, soil science and domestic and international marketing.

This general background knowledge is still useful today in my current role as a rural bank manager.

I work mainly with farmers but also many other people in the agricultural industry who are all down to earth and helpful.

It's very satisfying knowing that my team and I can assist clients to be successful and they do appreciate our work.

I've moved into a managerial position relatively quickly and I'm looking forward to improving my skills and knowledge as my career continues to develop.

My agribusiness degree has certainly been a benefit and it continues to create opportunities as my career goes forward.

Megan Meates

**Project Officer,
Industry Grower Group Network**

Education

Bachelor of Science in Animal Science (Honours), University of Western Australia and Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism, Curtin University of Technology



I was studying a wildlife ecology component of Animal Science at first. It wasn't until towards the end of my degree I realised the job prospects for agriculture were more appealing than an environmental career and decided to head in that direction.

Agriculture takes the science outdoors to the paddock and allows you to work with innovative farmers. It has really amazed me how welcoming the agriculture community is.

In my current role as a project officer with an industry grower group network, I help members link in and collaborate with other growers, researchers and the wider community to help improve their own businesses and futures.

I love how there is so much variety to my job.

One minute I'm a journalist writing up stories for newsletters and magazines, next I'm travelling across the state talking to farmers

and participating in events, then I'm an event manager, organising an event or tour for grower groups. Agriculture is a great industry to work for.

People who work in agriculture have a passion for the industry and I believe that's the key to a meaningful career.

John Shannon

**Field Extension Officer,
Horticultural Industry Association**

Education

Bachelor of Rural Science (Honours), University of New England, New South Wales



Studying agriculture can lead to careers you'd never expect – there are just so many different areas you can get involved in.

I've had a few different jobs now and I think my degree has helped me move around in the industry.

My Bachelor of Rural Science gave me a good technical overview. It helped train me to solve problems by looking at them

strategically to come up with the best result – that's been really useful in my work.

You certainly make a lot of mates in agriculture and I'm still friends today with people I studied with at uni.

These days I'm a Field Extension Officer for a horticultural association.

I spend most of my time going onto farmers' properties to help them solve problems facing their businesses.

I also do 'big picture' stuff working with government to make things better for farmers.

It's really rewarding making a difference in a dynamic and exciting industry like agriculture.

Kirsten Skraha

Community Landcare Coordinator

Education

Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management (Honours), University of Western Australia



I grew up in the city but I'm an outdoor kind of person, so studying natural resource management was an obvious choice for me.

I could combine my love for outdoors, animals and the environment all in one.

The course I did at the University of Western Australia was great because there were so many job opportunities at the end of it.

I could work in anything from wildlife rehabilitation, national park management, mining rehabilitation, research studies and the links to agriculture.


I decided to do some work experience, which was amazing. I tagged tiger sharks in Shark Bay and tracked wolves in Yellowstone National Park in the US.

Agriculture is important across Australia and the world, so it

has the potential to take you anywhere!

I'm currently the BestFarms Environmental Management Systems Coordinator for the Blackwood Basin Group.

I help people to manage their farms and businesses in harmony with the environment.

I'm also now farming with my husband and wouldn't want to be anywhere else. 

Peter McGilchrist

Animal Researcher

Education

Bachelor of Rural Science (Honours), University of New England, New South Wales; PhD Candidate, Murdoch University



Agriculture was not a course I expected to do at university as I couldn't see a clear career path, so it was a bit daunting as an 18-year-old school leaver.

But after a while I got to see the vast opportunities and the good dollars that exist.

It really suited me as I have a passion for the land – from the dirt to the pastures and the animals that graze them.


I'm a PhD student at Murdoch University working with the Cooperative Research Centre for Beef Genetic Technologies.

The extension side of research is really what interests me, like the practical things farmers can use to do better business.

I like the fact I'm working in all sorts of areas, from collecting samples in a feedlot, farm or abattoirs, giving a lecture or working in the laboratory - all in the same week.

I think I will definitely stay in research and continue lecturing after my PhD.

I've also had the opportunity to work overseas in Costa Rica on meat quality and also some animal nutrition work in Kenya.

I couldn't imagine working in another industry where the people are as passionate as they are in agriculture. 

Richmond Loh

**Veterinary Pathologist,
Department of Agriculture and Food**

Education

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, Murdoch University; Master of Philosophy, Murdoch University



I decided to study veterinary science because I wanted to do something related to medicine and health and because I like animals.

I really liked the small class sizes and that you could get to know the lecturers.

While a lot of the course focuses on small animal medicine and surgery, it's still got a lot of scope so you can get into research, epidemiology and policy.

I was interested in aquatic animal health, which initially led me to a job in Tasmania. During my time there, I developed an interest in pathology and research.

Five years later I came "home" to the Department of Agriculture and Food because of the calibre of its staff and there's such good support and on-the-job training.

We use a lot of CSI-like forensic technology – without all the beautiful people – investigating animal diseases.

I really like working on diagnosis and working out why an animal is sick or dying.

I like the feeling that I can contribute to improving the health of animals and assist farmers with production.

Kirk Reynolds

Market Development Manager

Education

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Honours), University of Western Australia



I really liked the idea of dealing with people and working outdoors – that's why I decided to study agriculture.

Studying agricultural science at the University of Western Australia was great.

I enjoyed the field trips and the practical units, like science and communication, ecosystems, plant and animal sciences.

I now use that knowledge in my work.

I'm currently working with an agricultural fertiliser company, where I'm involved in a whole heap of roles.

Things like training staff, management, marketing and promotion and helping farmers to improve their businesses.

There are so many avenues in agriculture.

I recently bought a small farm and I love the lifestyle and experience. This has given me insight into farming and given me more cred.

Now I can "practise what I preach!"

Breanne Best

Technical Officer, Department of
Agriculture and Food

Education

TAFE Certificate III (Agriculture)



I didn't expect I would be working in agriculture at all until I got a casual job doing field and lab work with weeds and crops at the Department of Agriculture and Food.

I really enjoyed the job and it inspired me to go for a traineeship with the department.

Now I'm a Soil Acidity Technical Officer, which I really love!

The job combines my two favourite things: working outdoors and travel. I've been from Geraldton to Esperance, working with different people and learning new things all the time.

Basically my work involves helping farmers to understand their soils and how they can make the most out of them and grow better crops and make more money.

I get to look after experiments in paddocks taking soil and plant samples. I also spend some time in the lab doing analysis.

To get this job I did a TAFE Certificate III in Agriculture. I really enjoyed the course because it was hands on and we spent so much time outside.

James Eyres

Agronomist

Education

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (Honours), University of Western Australia (UWA)



I knew from about 15 that I wanted to study agriculture so it was a pretty easy decision to make.

The career advisors at school wanted me to go in a different direction but eventually they gave in and agreed with me.

My degree has served me well in giving me the foundations from which I can help people make

decisions that make a difference to their businesses and their lives.

I particularly enjoy getting out of the office and working with farmers in the paddock.

It's great watching a season unfold and tackling tricky problems with farmers to help them make the most out of their land and opportunities.

One of the rewarding parts of my job is having access to leading edge information that I can pass on to my clients to improve their operations.

I've got a great network of peers and clients, who I enjoy working with. Agriculture is a really friendly, interesting and rewarding industry to work in.

For more information:

Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia
www.agric.wa.gov.au

Curtin University
www.curtin.edu.au

Murdoch University
www.murdoch.edu.au

University of Western Australia
www.uwa.edu.au

Agrifood Skills Australia
www.agrifoodskills.net.au

Food, Fibre & Timber Industries Training Council (WA) Inc.
www.ffaiftrainingcouncil.com.au

Rural Skills Australia
www.ruralskills.com.au

Training WA
www.trainingwa.wa.gov.au