# MAKE AGRONOMY

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For you, agronomy can be a fascinating and rewarding profession. If you are now or ever have been at all interested in working with crops and soils, you should consider a career as an agronomist.

What is agronomy? By definition it is the science and practice of soil management and crop production.

There are a great many varieties of agronomists within the two main divisions of soils and crops. Some use their agronomic training in agricultural businesses and industries, in agricultural research, teaching, or extension, or in soil conservation and other types of government work. Others may be farmers that use the soil and plant sciences to produce field crops or to manage grasslands.

Increased needs of a rapidly growing population in the face of declining production of some lands and few new acres that can be farmed, emphasize the important role that agronomy must play in the years ahead.

It has been widely predicted that requirements for agricultural products in 1975 will be about one-third higher than current levels of production. These requirements must be met by increased production per acre rather than by bringing new land under cultivation.

Relatively small acreages not now being farmed can be drained or otherwise improved and brought into production. But it is expected that such acreages will be largely offset by increased land requirements for cities, highways, industry sites and other non-agricultural uses.

This presents a real challenge to agronomists of the future. New crop and soil practices will need to be developed to meet this demand for more food from the same number of acres.

There is good reason to believe that these needs of the foreseeable future can be met, particularly if past experience can serve as any kind of guide.

Many examples could be cited to illustrate progress of the past:

*The development of hybrid corn, new varieties of small grains, soybeans, cotton, sugar beets, forages, and other crops; the introduction of a sizeable array of effective weed killers; the development of improved fertilization and soil management practices.*

These are but a few examples of the agricultural progress that has made our standards what they are today.

But to get this job done, we need the right kind and amount of manpower and brainpower. This is the main concern. The fact that numbers of students graduating in agriculture

# YOUR CAREER

have been decreasing in recent years is common knowledge.

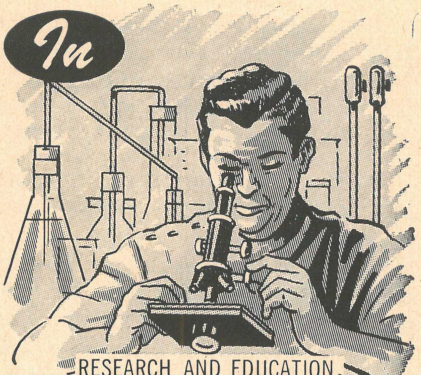
For example, one survey shows that the number of students receiving the B.S. degree in agriculture was 8624 in 1951 compared to 5890 in 1955, a decrease of 30 per cent.

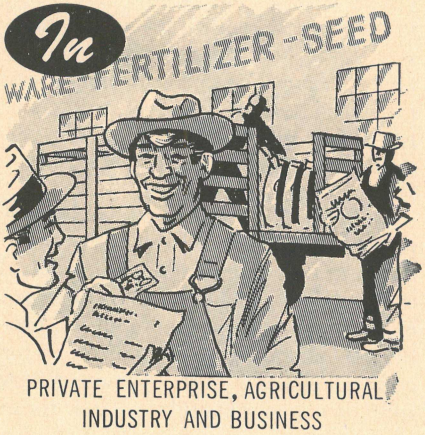
However, it is gratifying that there has been an increase in numbers pursuing graduate study. In 1951, 1145 students received the M.S. degree, and for 1955 this number increased by 40 per cent to 1593. An even greater increase occurred in the Ph.D. category. In 1951, 249 Ph.D. degrees were awarded to students of agriculture, compared to 792 in 1955, an impressive increase of 220 per cent.

Although these figures tell the story for agriculture as a whole, it is much the same for the field of agronomy—*except for one important difference.* Of the total number of students receiving the B.S. degree in agriculture, about 10 per cent are trained in agronomy. On the other hand, about *13 per cent* of those receiving the *M.S. degree* are agronomists and *15 per cent* of agricultural students receiving the *Ph.D. degree* are agronomists.

These significant figures indicate that agronomy is an attractive field for advanced work.

The trend toward higher salaries for agronomists in recent years, or even in recent months in some cases, has been a real boost to the profession. Indications are this trend will continue—as it should, in order to keep pace with other businesses.




Starting salaries for those holding a B.S. degree on the average range from $3500 to $4500 annually; for the M.S. degree, $4500 to $5500; and for those with Ph.D. degrees, $5500 to $7000.

Starting salaries are one thing, and how far one can advance in his chosen profession is another. A most encouraging and stimulating development in the agronomic profession is that opportunities for advancement today are almost unlimited for those who are well trained and have proved their productiveness over a period of years.

Job opportunities for which agronomy graduates are particularly suited are of a wide variety and interesting in nature. Research, teaching, extension, or agricultural industry are available to them. With soils training, one may become a soil surveyor, soil chemist, a soil microbiologist, a conservationist, or a fertility specialist.

A crops man may concern himself primarily with the introduction, selection and breeding of crops, the control of weeds, insects and diseases of crops, or with various aspects of culture, production and management of crops for greater efficiency of production. A turf specialist is a possibility. For those interested in crops or soils, but also with a flare for animals, a career in forage crops or grasslands has special appeal.

It is obvious that there are opportunities in a great variety of fields for those trained in soil and crop science. Where are these openings for agronomists?

Each state has at least one agricultural college and experiment station which employs agronomists. Jobs are available in the Soil Conservation Service or the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, either in Washington, D. C., or in the several different states.

Commercial companies interested in production and sale of seed, fertilizers, lime, fungicides, insecticides, herbicides, and similar agricultural products, employ agronomists.

They are also hired by banks, dairy companies, feed manufacturers, public utilities, and makers of equipment and machinery. By no means to be forgotten is that agronomy provides good training for anyone interested in farming, either for himself or as a manager for someone else. These, together with many others, are opportunities that lie ahead for graduates in agronomy.

What about the amount of training needed in this field? The extent of training, of course, depends upon one's interests and ultimate objective. For many purposes, a four-year college course will suffice. However, research in soils or crops or university teaching or the more specialized phases of industry related to agriculture require graduate training, preferably at the Ph.D. level.

This calls for an additional three or four years of study and research during which an individual is thoroughly schooled in supporting biological and physical sciences.

A man with this training, coupled with an ability to produce, will find rich reward both financially and, above all else, in the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of mankind.

Good jobs are available for those with agronomic training. If you are interested in preparing yourself for one of these, simply drop a card or letter to the Director of Instruction or to the Department of Agronomy, College of Agriculture, at your state university. They will be glad to provide you with any information you request. ◄◄◄