

AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, & Thurston Counties



CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

This toolkit is meant to bring together regional Food and Ag career resources and is meant for youth as well as Career Technical Education teachers and directors in need of more educational connections to our regional food system. This resource was collaboratively developed by GRuB, Thurston County WSU Extension, Thurston County Economic Development Council, and the Thurston Chamber through funding from Career Connect Washington and PacMtn's Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST).

*Spend time outside on the land
Feed your community
Do rewarding, meaningful work
Help create a just and
sustainable food system!*

For PacMtn Career Exploration Resources, see <https://pacmtn.org/local-economy/career-exploration/#food>



WSU EXTENSION
Thurston County



AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

EXPLORE CAREER CONNECTIONS



- **Feed Your Community:** Vegetable Farmer, Grain grower, Mushroom grower, Fruit grower, Microgreens grower, Ranching, Eggs & poultry producer, Traditional Foods forager, Shellfish grower, Seed grower, Greenhouse grower
- **Heal People through Food:** Wild harvested foods, Nutritionist, Dietitian
- **Create delicious products and recipes to share:** Restaurateur, Craft distilling and brewing, Meat cutter, Florist, Baker, Chef, Salsa maker, Pesto maker
- **Help Bring Food to Market:** Grocer, Food Hub manager, Wine merchant, Produce manager, Local Food buyer, WA State Dept. of Ag Regional Food Systems program
- **Use Hands-on Skills:** Farm equipment mechanic, Welder, Equipment operator
- **Protect and Restore the Landscapes:** WA State Dept. of Ag Organics inspector, Conservation Districts (farm planner, watershed restoration, marine and estuary resilience, conservation technician crew lead) Natural Resources Conservation Service (Conservation technician, Soil conservationist, etc), Farmland Trusts, Wildlife Biologist
- **Entrepreneurship:** Farmer, Business coach through Economic Development Councils, Cooperative business development specialist, Ag economist, Accountant
- **Support Women in Agriculture:** Business service provider for the Washington Center for Women in Business, Extension educator for Women Owning Woodlands
- **Share Your Love of Farming Knowledge:** Middle or High School Career Technical Education teacher, WSU Extension educator, Horticulture or agriculture instructor at community college, Future Farmers of America teacher or coach
- **Work with Trees, Perennials, and Flowers:** Certified arborist, Plant nursery owner/worker, Grow flowers for a co-op, retail or farmers markets, Orchardist, Forester, Berry grower, Christmas tree grower, Hay grower
- **Make Positive Change for Food and Agriculture Systems:** County agriculture planner, Food policy expert, Agriculture researcher
- **Work with Animals:** Sheep producer, Shepherd, Targeted grazing manager (rent-a-goat herd), Wool producer (fiber), Cheese dairy, Grass-finished beef producer

MEET ANNIE SALAFSKY

CSA VEGETABLE FARMER AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATOR

I have been working in agriculture since 1990. My first Ag experience was at The Evergreen State College's Organic Farm, where I worked for several years. I used that experience to get a job at a local farm, which led to an opportunity to run an existing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program with another woman. We started with 75 CSA members and 5 acres, eventually growing the farm to over 1100 CSA members with 50 acres under cultivation. Twenty-eight happy years later, we helped two other women buy the farm and the cycle continues! I am currently an Agricultural Educator for WSU Thurston County Extension, which I love. It's a nice way to use the things I learned along the way to help other farmers.



»»» JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Helping local farms apply for grants, which provide them with money to complete projects on their farms
- Introducing elementary school kids to local produce and whole grains
- Helping farmers improve pasture soil health & participate in on-farm field trials
- Working with Spanish-speaking agricultural workers

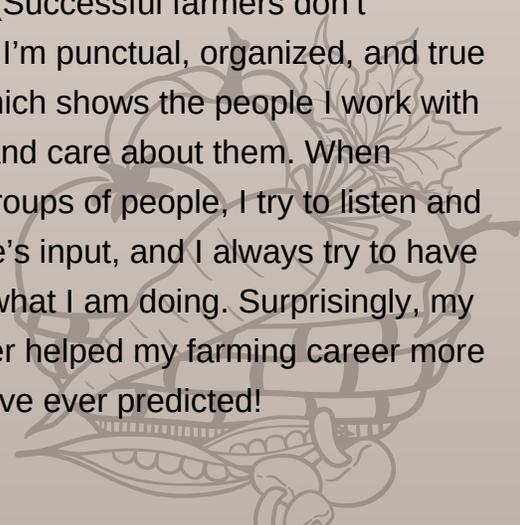
»»» CAREER PATHWAY:

I'm from the Chicago suburbs, so a career in agriculture wasn't something I had ever considered, until my best friend's older sister (the coolest person I knew) said she wanted to be a farmer. After growing my first garden in college, I was hooked and took every opportunity towards my goal of one day owning a farm. In the 1990's, some people were skeptical that two women could run a successful farm. Though it might

have been a little impractical to not know how to fix a tractor, we used our love of art and writing to promote our farm and grow it into a business that grossed almost a million dollars a year. After we sold the farm, I wanted to find a job that used some of the skills I learned farming, so I applied for a job at WSU Thurston County Extension. I worked hard to exceed expectations and be a team player, and I was eventually promoted to the position I now hold.

»»» WHAT HELPS YOU BE SUCCESSFUL?

I strive to be a disciplined worker and I don't procrastinate. (Successful farmers don't procrastinate!) I'm punctual, organized, and true to my word, which shows the people I work with that I respect and care about them. When working with groups of people, I try to listen and value everyone's input, and I always try to have fun no matter what I am doing. Surprisingly, my skills as a writer helped my farming career more than I could have ever predicted!



MEET CHANTAY ANDERSON

NISQUALLY COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM MANAGER

Nisqually Community Garden works toward Tribal self-sufficiency and overall mental, physical, and spiritual health. We grow traditional plants, vegetables, berries, and fruit trees. All produce is distributed directly to Nisqually tribal members & community. We also host classes, provide job training services to tribal members, preserve food and medicines, put on annual events, and work closely with many tribal departments. Our services are offered to Tribal and community members.



»»» JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Planning the crop varieties, successions, and rotations
- Managing people and budgets
- Purchasing supplies
- Visioning and leading new construction projects on the farm
- Organizing community education efforts

»»» CAREER PATHWAY:

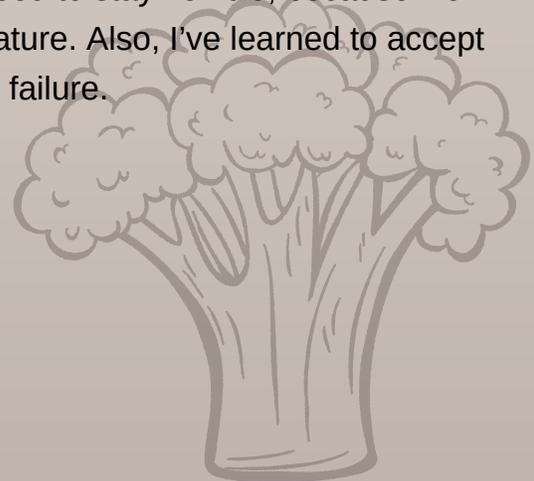
I grew up in family gardens, weeding and planting. I actually went to college for photography, but switched to botany and then natural medicine. Natural medicine wasn't for me, so I interned with the Center for Natural Lands Management on prairie restoration. Being outside in the freezing rain without a bathroom was not my joy either. It was while working in a plant nursery that I found out about a job at the Nisqually garden from two customers. I applied and was hired as a project coordinator. Eventually, I wrote my own job description and worked to get it approved.

»»» WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

My favorite thing about this work is the people we help. Talking to a single mother who is struggling but now has fresh food for her kids because of the garden. Talking to Elders about their aches and pains that are being helped by medicinal salves we make. The people make the work rewarding.

»»» WHAT HELPS YOU BE SUCCESSFUL?

I am constantly learning, doing my own research in the winter, using resources like the Conservation District, WSU Extension, and talking to elders. On the farm, we use the scientific method. We need to stay flexible, because we can't control nature. Also, I've learned to accept and learn from failure.



MEET KATHLEEN NISBET MONCY

GOOSE POINT OYSTERS, OWNER

Goose Point Oysters is a second-generation shellfish farm in Willapa Bay, Washington. The farm grew from a skiff and 10 acres to 2,000 acres with just under 100 employees. The farm grows, processes, and sells oysters and valued-added oyster products to customers, including breeding for oysters. “Oyster chicken nuggets,” as Kathleen refers to them with her kids...way healthier than the alternative!



»»» JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Coordinates production and benchmarks for the farm, processing plant, and hatchery
- Legislative work, educating policy and decision-makers
- President of the local shellfish growers association, representing growers and helping the industry adapt to changing ocean, climatic, and regulatory conditions
- Many other things!

»»» CAREER PATHWAY:

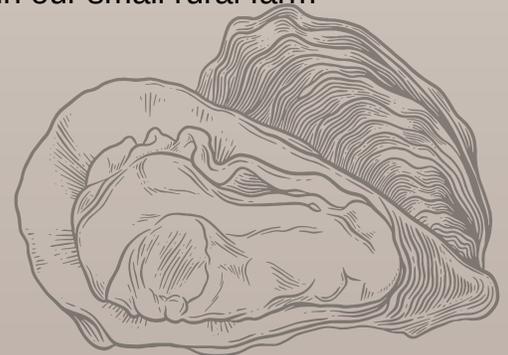
I've worked in every job on the farm and in the processing plant since I was knee-high to a grasshopper: oyster beds, retail store, packing oysters, human resources, and now running the businesses. I studied marine biology and Spanish. When I was in high school, it was suggested I get a degree and leave home to be successful, but that's not my approach. I came back to the farm to grow oysters in one of the healthiest working estuaries in the U.S. and to support the community that raised me by continuing to provide economic stability to our area. I want the younger generation to have pride in our area and help grow it.

»»» WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

One of my first jobs at the farm was in Human Resources, and I enjoy working across Hispanic and U.S. cultural differences with our Spanish-speaking employees. When you bridge cultural gaps, you can create a unified group. We have been able to do this and it is a part of our culture. Many of the Spanish-speaking production managers my dad hired have kids I grew up with, and now we have teenagers growing up and working together.

»»» WHAT HELPS YOU BE SUCCESSFUL?

Supporting people around me to be successful. I believe in a triple bottom line: a healthy estuary, economy, and community will allow all aspects of our area to flourish for generations to come. What we put into is what we get out, and we need to build resilience in our small rural farm communities.



MEET BEAU GROMLEY

HUB CITY HONEY COMPANY, OWNER

At Hub City Honey Company LLC, sustainability and ethical beekeeping practices are ingrained in our core values. We prioritize the well-being of our bees and the preservation of their natural habitats. By partnering with local farmers and landowners who share our commitment to pesticide-free areas, we ensure that our bees have access to diverse, nutrient-rich forage sources. Our honey is carefully harvested in small batches, allowing us to maintain the highest quality standards while minimizing our environmental impact. With each jar of our honey, you can feel confident that you are supporting sustainable beekeeping and contributing to the protection of our precious pollinators.



»»» JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Cultivate experience when people walk in the door of the shop
- Making quality honey and value-added products like candles
- Procuring high-quality products
- Educating the public on the importance of pollinators
- Managing social media and advertising
- Budgeting & financial management

»»» CAREER PATHWAY:

After 15 years serving in the military (4 Marine Corps, 11 Army), I scraped together enough college credits to transfer to The Evergreen State College. Evergreen helped me focus my passion for the food and agriculture community. This passion was then honed through my work gardening and raising bees in the nonprofit world. I wanted to show that beekeepers could make a living off of honey, so I decided to open up my own honey company.

»»» WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

I think the most rewarding part, besides educating and engaging with people, is doing my own thing. To incorporate passion and hobby into a business. To sail the ship and see where it goes. And not knowing where it will go.

»»» WHAT HELPS YOU BE SUCCESSFUL?

I have a strong support network, including my partner, my community of friends, local businesses, and shopkeepers. It really takes a whole bunch of people to make something successful.



MEET CARISSA MILLER

OWNER OF WITHYWINDLE VALLEY FARM

Working with animals is extremely satisfying as well as difficult at times. I love being able to implement best practices in farming and create the farm I wish all farms would be. Sheep are such an incredible resource as a sustainable source for meat, fiber, and applied grazing for ecosystem management. They have less impact on the land than most other livestock. The work I do is one of the oldest trades, and keeping it alive is not only crucial for creating sustainable food systems, but it keeps the knowledge around.



»»» JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

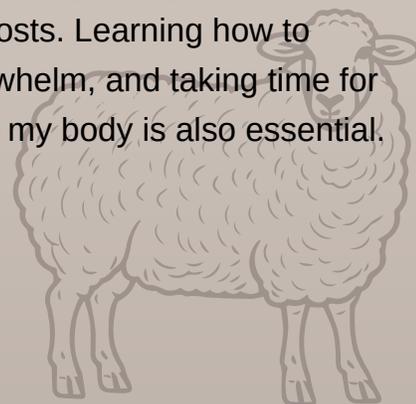
- Shepherding: Rotational grazing with the sheep, moving mobile fencing, weather structures, and water daily. Monthly health checks, oversee summer breeding, and fall harvest.
- Swine herder: Moving pigs every couple of weeks in the woodlands. Picking up food for pigs from the local food bank.
- Natural tanner: Tanning sheepskins with the traditional bark tanning method.
- Marketing, bookkeeping, and sales for the business
- Creating value-added products to sell at markets

»»» CAREER PATHWAY:

I studied environmental studies and zoology at The Evergreen State College, which helped me to understand the importance of sustainable farming as well as our local ecosystem functions and native plants. I learned about farming mostly from my own research as well as mentorships with established and successful shepherds.

»»» WHAT HELPS YOU BE SUCCESSFUL?

By connecting with mentors from established farms, I learn a lot from others' mistakes and successes. I add value to my products and use as much of the animals as possible. Sliding scale pricing has helped make my food more accessible without having to underprice my products. My farm is on my family's land, so I have low overhead costs. Learning how to manage stress, overwhelm, and taking time for myself and caring for my body is also essential.



CAREER HIGHLIGHT

PRODUCE MANAGER

»»» WHAT EXACTLY IS A PRODUCE MANAGER?

A Produce Manager oversees the production of the produce department. They train and manage employees. They are responsible for high-quality fresh produce reaching consumers. They also steer the display designs, inventory, waste control, provide oversight to safety procedures and regulations, purchasing, and manage relationships with suppliers.

»»» WHAT CAN YOU DO IN THE FIELD OF A PRODUCE MANAGER?

- Place orders with suppliers
- Manage produce quality and rotation
- Communicate with suppliers, customers, and employees
- Supervise produce employees through scheduling, training, and general tasks
- Make plans to meet budget and sales goals
- Create or co-create produce displays
- Provide pricing guidelines

»»» WHY IS A PRODUCE MANAGER IMPORTANT?

Produce Managers are important because they oversee the department's operations and make sure that consumers are satisfied. They also train employees to gain successful skills and knowledge. In addition, they create, negotiate, and maintain relationships with suppliers.



»»» WHAT EXPERIENCE IS NEEDED TO BECOME A PRODUCE MANAGER?

Produce Managers need prior retail experience or the ability to start as a produce employee and work their way to a Manager position, each individual employer may require different skills.

Skills may include:

- Ability to lift 50 lbs
- Prior management experience
- Prior grocery experience
- High School Diploma or GED
- Cashiers test
- Northwest Produce Management Resources

»»» WHERE CAN YOU FIND JOBS AS A PRODUCE MANAGER?

- grocery stores
- supermarkets
- fresh produce markets
- retail food chains
- warehouse

»»» WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREERS IN PRODUCE MANAGEMENT?

Salary.com:

<https://www.salary.com/job/searchresults?jobtitle=produce+manager>

Indeed Career Guide:

<https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/what-does-produce-manager-do>

CAREER HIGHLIGHT

BUTCHER

»»» WHAT EXACTLY IS A BUTCHER?

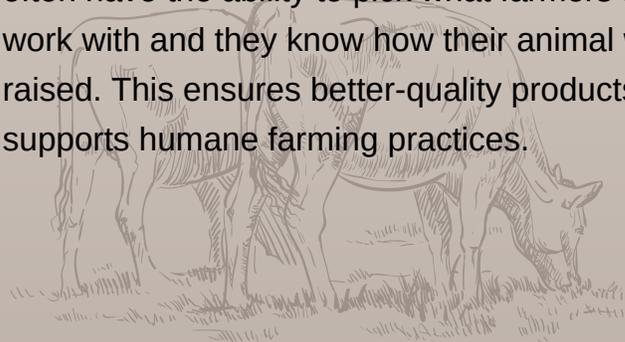
A person who cuts, trim, weighs, and packages certain animals, fish, or poultry for food or market. Many butchers begin as trainees under an experienced butcher.

»»» WHAT CAN BUTCHERS DO?

- Pack, receive, inspect, and store food.
- Cut, trim, weigh, bone, tie, and grind meats, such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish, to prepare in cooking form.
- Store meats in refrigerators or freezers at the required temperature
- Monitor inventory and sales trends and order meat
- Supervise other butchers

»»» WHY ARE BUTCHERS IMPORTANT?

Butchers represent a craft that is the joyful expression of tradition and innovation. They guide us in our relationship with meats, fish, and eggs by choosing the appropriate animals, the quality, and types of cuts. When a butcher works outside of a grocery store in a butcher shop, they often have the ability to pick what farmers they work with and they know how their animal was raised. This ensures better-quality products and supports humane farming practices.



»»» WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT BUTCHER CAREERS?

Learn.org:

[learn.org/articles/How_Can_I_Become_a_Butcher.html](https://www.learn.org/articles/How_Can_I_Become_a_Butcher.html)

Occupational Outlook Handbook:

www.bls.gov/ooh/production/butchers-and-meat-cutters.htm

Career Explore:

<https://www.careerexplorer.com/careers/butcher/>

»»» WASHINGTON/OREGON BUTCHER PROGRAMS:

- **WSU The Western Meat School:**
extension.wsu.edu/regionalsmallfarms/event/western-meat-school/
- **Northwest Meat Processors Association:**
nwmpa.com/apprenticeship-program/
- **OSU Western Meat School:**
workspace.oregonstate.edu/course/western-meat-school
- **Pasture PDX:**
www.pasturepdx.com/butcher-classes
- **We Train Washington:**
www.wetrainwa.org/programs

»»» NORTHWEST BUTCHER RESOURCES:

- **Apprenticeship USA:**
www.apprenticeship.gov/finder/listings?occupation=butcher&location=WA
- **Food Handlers Card:**
doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/food/food-worker-and-industry/food-worker-card
- **UFCW 3000 Apprenticeship Program:**
<https://ufcw3000.org/meat>

CAREER HIGHLIGHT

AGRICULTURE PLANNER

»»» WHAT EXACTLY IS A COUNTY AGRICULTURE PLANNER?

- Protect farmland and support farmers with innovative updates to rules and policies.
- Help farmers navigate county permits and enroll in land conservation programs or easements.
- Help farmers maintain productive farms while protecting the environment.
- Coordinate with regional partners to support a viable local agricultural economy.

»»» WHAT CAN YOU DO IN THE FIELD OF A AGRICULTURE PLANNING?

- Facilitate community meetings for the public to inform agriculture policy
- Research the best agriculture policies from the country to adapt locally
- Organize public participation through Open Houses, community meetings, and online
- Attend County Agriculture Advisory Committee meetings
- Write grants to get funding for innovative program development, such as farmland protection
- Write reports and provide briefings to elected officials for positive change



»»» WHY IS A COUNTY AGRICULTURE PLANNER IMPORTANT?

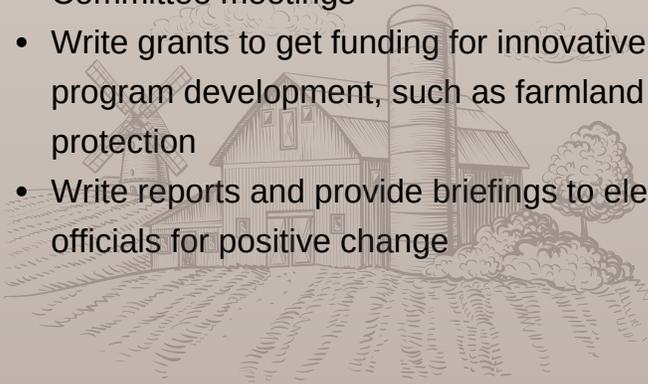
Agriculture planners have the capacity to help shape policy to help farmers, farmland, and our local and regional food systems. They get to influence the rules! Planners are often a critical connection between citizens, administrative leaders, and elected officials. Their job involves understanding the technical aspects of policy and crafting it so it works well.

»»» WHERE CAN YOU FIND JOBS AS A COUNTY AGRICULTURE PLANNER?

- County governments
- State governments

»»» WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE PLANNING?

- **Local & State Government Job Postings**
- **Pierce County:**
<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/3421/Pierce-County-Farming>
- **Thurston County:**
<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/community-planning-and-economic-development/community-planning/agriculture>





LEARN MORE & GET PLUGGED INTO FOOD & AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES

➤➤➤ EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN WASHINGTON, OREGON, & ONLINE

- **Enterprise for Equity (E4E) Agripreneur Business Planning Program:**

www.enterprise-for-equity.org/business-programs

- **WSU Cultivating Success:** www.cultivatingsuccesswa.org/

- **The Evergreen State College:**

www.evergreen.edu/academics/undergraduate-studies/food-and-agriculture

- **Seattle Central College:**

seattlecentral.edu/programs/environmental

- **Walla Walla Community College:**

www.wbcc.edu/academics/educational-pathways/agriculture-and-natural-resources/

- **SPSCC Brewing & Distilling:**

spsc.edu/food-beverage-arts-hospitality/craft-brewing-distilling

- **WSU Undergraduate Programs:**

cahnrs.wsu.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/

- **OSU Undergraduate Programs:**

ecampus.oregonstate.edu/online-degrees/undergraduate

- **WSU Ag Focused Graduate Programs:**

- cahnrs.wsu.edu/academics/graduate-programs/

- **OSU Ag Focused Graduate Programs:**

ecampus.oregonstate.edu/online-degrees/graduate/

- **ProStart - Two-year, industry-backed culinary arts and restaurant management program for high school students:**

chooserestaurants.org/programs/prostart/

- **Big Bend Community College:**

www.bigbend.edu/academics/agriculture/

- **Grays Harbor College - Forestry:**

<https://www.ghc.edu/academics/degrees-and-certificates/professional/natural-resources-forestry>



LEARN MORE & GET PLUGGED INTO FOOD & AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES

➤➤➤ INTERNSHIPS & APPRENTICESHIPS

- **USDA Pathways Program:** <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/careers/student-opportunities>
- **GRuB - GroundED program:** <https://www.goodgrub.org/grounded>
- **GRuB - Growing Home Collective:** <https://www.goodgrub.org/cultivating-community-and-leaders>
- **Zenger Farm - Beginning Farmer Apprenticeship:** <https://zengerfarm.org/portland-farm-apprenticeship/>
- **Americorps Food Security Fellow at Evergreen:** <https://www4.evergreen.edu/>
- **Farms that might host internships/apprenticeships:** <https://www.communityfarmlandtrust.org/>
- **ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture:** <https://attra.ncat.org/internship-list/washington/#maptop>
- **Rogue Farmcorps:** <https://www.roguefarmcorps.org/>
- **Olympia Food Coop working member volunteer opportunities:** <https://olympiafood.coop/join-us/working-members/>
- **Americorps, Climate corps (working lands):** <https://corpsnetwork.org/programs-initiatives/working-lands-climate-corps/>
- **4-H:** <https://4-h.org/>
- **Future Farmers of America (FFA):** <https://www.ffa.org/>





LEARN MORE & GET PLUGGED INTO FOOD & AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES

➤➤ JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

- **Tips on Finding a Job in Sustainability:**
<https://sustainabilityadvantage.com/2010/07/13/5-strategies-to-finding-a-sustainability-job/>
- **Eat Local First:**
<https://eatlocalfirst.org/jobs/>
- **Indeed:**
<https://www.indeed.com/q-Sustainability-jobs.html?vjk=6d0ffab95f4bb2e8>
- **Washington State Conservation Commission:**
<https://www.scc.wa.gov/job-postings>
- **Simply Hired:**
<https://www.simplyhired.com/search?q=agriculture&l=Lacey%2C+WA>
- **Good Food Jobs:**
<https://www.goodfoodjobs.com/search.html#keywords=agriculture&everywhere=1>
- **Agriculture & Natural Resource Center of Excellence Job Postings:**
<https://agcenterofexcellence.com/job-postings/#1567112278235-8367d960-d5de>

➤➤ BOOKS/ARTICLES/WEBSITES

- **Growing for Market magazine**
<https://growingformarket.com/>
- **A Little Bit of Land - Jessica Gigot**
- **Braiding Sweetgrass - Robin Wall Kimmerer**
- **Farming While Black - Leah Penniman**
- **Agriculture & Natural Resources Program Guide:**
<https://agcenterofexcellence.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023-Program-Guide.pdf>

