

# Agricultural Education/FFA

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## Frequently Asked Questions From Parents

**What is Agricultural Education?** *Ag. Ed. (formerly Vo-Ag) is a diverse program for students interested in developing knowledge and skills in a wide array of agricultural topics, as well as leadership and career skills. The program has three main components: class and lab, FFA, and SAE (Supervised Agricultural Experience).*

**Why would I want my child to study agriculture?** *An interested student is usually a good student! More than 20% of the jobs in today's world are involved with agriculture. The opportunities in the arena of agriculture are diverse and numerous. We teach life-long skills that will serve students in many ways.*

**What classes are offered in Ag. Ed. at Northwestern?** *We offer a variety of courses in four primary curriculum areas – Animal Science, Ag. Mechanics, Natural Resources and Plant Science. Our sophomores, juniors and seniors are offered courses in each area, and classes rotate on a three-year basis, allowing a student to major in an area or diversify their study of agriculture.*

**What will my student's school day look like?** *During their freshman year, students take Exploring Agriculture for one period a day. This course is a basic introduction to our four curriculum areas, leadership and the FFA, and safety. During their sophomore, junior and senior years, they select a course they are interested in and will have one class period per day, plus a lab period four days out of seven in the rotation. They will take their remaining high school classes as usual.*

**Can my student be involved with sports, music, etc.?** *Yes, we encourage students to pursue other areas of interest. However, there is sometimes a demand on time and energy that will require planning and organization. The guidance department is often helpful in scheduling students into ag, as well as band, foreign languages, etc.*

**If my student is planning to attend college, will this help or hurt their academic record?** *We believe it to be helpful – showing pursuit of an area of interest, involvement in a state and national leadership organization, as well as having developed career skills through a work experience program. The Ag. Ed. department offers courses at the college and honors level, as well as several UCONN & S.U.N.Y. Cobleskill ESE courses which would be reflected in their transcript, class rank, etc.*

**What is the National FFA Organization?** *The FFA is a national organization for students enrolled in Agricultural Education which develops their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. The opportunities of the FFA are very numerous and very diverse: leadership skills, career exploration, public speaking, teamwork, problem solving, traveling, competing, and the list goes on and on. You can learn more about the National FFA Organization by visiting their website at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org).*

**What type of facilities are available at Northwestern Ag. Ed.?** *In addition to four traditional classrooms, we have: a production greenhouse, a hydroponic greenhouse, a food processing lab, a food science lab, an aquaculture lab, a tissue culture lab, a shop/mechanics lab, a floral design lab, a sales room, companion animal lab and a large animal lab.*

**How many Agricultural Education programs are there in Connecticut?** *There are 22 Ag. Ed. programs in the state, most of which are regional centers, accepting students from surrounding areas outside their school district.*

**How does my student get involved?** *Complete an application requesting information such as interest in ag, experience and interest in school. You must include three letters of recommendation, report cards, test results, attendance, etc. Then a committee decides which applicants are best suited for the program.*

**More Questions?** *Give us a call or stop by the Agricultural Education office!*