

Agricultural Workers

SOC: 45-2021 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$35,980 Median Salary	22,500 Employment	-3.0% Growth Rate
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■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: See Requirements (BLS)

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Medium Risk - 42.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.
This job has some routine elements but still requires human judgment and interaction.

■ Work-Life Balance

8.2/10 - Excellent work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	9.0/10	Investigative	7.0/10
Artistic	3.8/10	Social	5.6/10
Enterprising	5.6/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Dexterity, Listening skills, Mechanical skills, Physical stamina, Physical strength

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Agricultural Workers are hands-on labor and production professionals who perform essential tasks to **grow crops, raise livestock, and support day-to-day farm and ranch operations**. Their work ensures food, fiber, and agricultural products are produced efficiently and safely. This role is physically demanding and seasonal in many regions, but it is foundational to the global food supply. This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy outdoor work, physical activity, and contributing directly to food production.

What Do Agricultural Workers Do?

Agricultural workers carry out a wide range of tasks depending on the type of farm and season.

Common responsibilities include:

- Planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops
- Feeding, herding, and caring for livestock
- Operating farm tools, machinery, or irrigation systems
- Applying fertilizers, pesticides, or treatments under supervision
- Sorting, grading, and packing agricultural products
- Maintaining barns, fields, fencing, and equipment
- Following safety, sanitation, and environmental practices

Types of Agricultural Work

Agricultural workers may specialize based on farm operations:

- Crop Farm Workers: Grow fruits, vegetables, grains, or specialty crops.
- Livestock Workers: Care for animals such as cattle, poultry, or dairy herds.
- Nursery and Greenhouse Workers: Grow plants, flowers, and trees.
- Farm Equipment Operators: Operate tractors and agricultural machinery.
- Seasonal or Migrant Workers: Support peak planting or harvest periods.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Agricultural workers combine physical ability with practical farm skills.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Most agricultural workers enter the field with minimal formal education and learn on the job:

- No Formal Education Required (typical): Training provided by employers
- On-the-Job Training: Learning specific tasks and equipment use
- Safety Training: Required for machinery or chemical handling
- Equipment Operation Experience: Beneficial for advancement
- Continued Skill Development: Learning new agricultural techniques

Where Do Agricultural Workers Work?

Agricultural workers are employed in diverse farming environments:

- Crop Farms and Ranches
- Dairy, Poultry, and Livestock Operations
- Greenhouses and Nurseries
- Orchards and Vineyards

- Agricultural Processing and Packing Facilities

Work is primarily outdoors and may be seasonal or weather-dependent.

How Much Do Agricultural Workers Earn?

Earnings vary by crop type, region, and experience:

- Entry-Level Workers: Typically earn hourly or piece-rate wages
- Experienced Workers or Operators: Often earn higher pay
- Supervisory Roles: May earn more with added responsibility

Compensation may include housing, transportation, or seasonal benefits.

Is This Career Difficult?

Agricultural work is physically demanding and often performed in challenging weather conditions. Workers may lift heavy loads, perform repetitive tasks, and work long hours during peak seasons. The challenge lies in endurance, consistency, and adapting to environmental conditions.

Who Should Consider Becoming an Agricultural Worker?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy outdoor, hands-on work
- Are physically active and resilient
- Prefer practical tasks over desk work
- Can handle seasonal schedules
- Want to contribute directly to food production

How to Prepare Early

- Build physical strength and stamina
- Learn basic safety and equipment use
- Gain experience through farm, garden, or outdoor work
- Develop reliability and teamwork skills
- Explore agricultural training or seasonal job opportunities

Agricultural workers sustain the food system through hard work and hands-on skill—transforming land, labor, and care into the crops and livestock that nourish communities and economies around the world.