

# Agriculture today: Reasons to celebrate their job

Below are some interesting facts about agriculture today. These points just scratch the surface of the advancements being made in agriculture on a daily basis. All Americans are asked to enjoy and admire the wonders of American agriculture as National Agriculture Week is celebrated March 20-25.

**General statistics:**

Today's average farm is 417 acres compared to 147 acres in 1900.

Today's farmer feeds about 129 people in the United States and abroad. In 1960 that number was 25.8.

42 percent of U.S. total land area is farmland.

U.S. Farmers account for 42.7 percent of the world's soybean production and 34.4 percent of the world's corn production.

Almost 90 percent of U.S. farms are operated by individuals or family corporations.

More than 15 percent of the U.S. population is employed in farm or farm-related jobs.

U.S. consumers spend roughly 9 percent of their income on food compared with 11 percent in the United Kingdom, 17 percent in Ja-

pan, 27 percent in South Africa and 53 percent in India.

Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation's wildlife.

**Production Improvements:**

U.S. Farmers and ranchers produce meat that is lower in fat and cholesterol. The result is beef cuts that have 27 percent less fat than in 1985.

Biotechnology has resulted in better tasting fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are naturally resistant to insects.

Plant breeding has resulted in crops better able to handle the environmental affects of drought and disease and insect infestations resulting in higher yields at harvest and lower costs to the consumer.

**Technology/Equipment Advancements:**

Today's combines can harvest 900 bushels of corn per hour. In the 1930s a farmer could harvest (by hand) about 100 bushels of corn in a nine-hour day.

Precision farming using satellite maps and computer models enables farmers to use less production inputs to produce a higher quality,

higher yielding crop.

Technology products, like John Deere's GreenStar AutoTrac satellite guidance system, improve farming efficiency, reduce operator fatigue and help keep the cost of food down for U.S. consumers.

Farmers use computers and satellites daily to improve the efficiency of their production operations and track production processes on general and special crops.

**New Uses**

Ethanol accounts for the largest industrial use of any commodity crop.

Resins from corn and soybeans are used in production of, for example, John Deere equipment panels.

Some crops are being bred specifically for use in pharmaceutical production.

Soybeans are used in the five major markets currently dependent on petroleum products including: plastics, coatings and ink, adhesives, lubricants and solvents.

Corn also is used in place of certain petroleum-based products in industrial applications.

## Celebrating horsepower

CELEBRATE, from Page 1b

higher quality food and livestock. Biotechnology provides benefits similar to traditional plant and livestock breeding, but does so in a more controlled environment and with faster results.

Advancements made in plant biotechnology provide consumers with better quality products in many areas. And those benefits are just beginning. There are many products in the biotechnology research pipeline that will provide better livestock feed resulting in leaner meat for consumers. Many of these same products will lessen the environmental impact of livestock production, by reducing waste and/or the chemicals found in animal waste.

Pharmaceutical companies are actively working with farmers to develop crops that can go directly from the field to pharmaceutical production - eliminating some of the processing steps that occur in today's operations. This research will significantly reduce the costs required to produce many life-saving drugs.

**New uses benefit consumers, farmers alike**

Research and technology advancements have also resulted in new uses for commodity crops like corn, soybeans and various grains. Use of products like ethanol and soy-diesel will reduce American independence on fossil fuels and improve air quality throughout the United States and the world. Ethanol is the largest industrial use of these commodity crops, but soy-diesel and other uses are emerging every year. According to DeVries, resins from corn and soybeans are used in some of the panels that go into John Deere equipment. "We've really just seen the tip of the iceberg in the use of renewable resources," says DeVries. "The more we can use commodity crops in industrial applications, the better off we'll all be."

**Programs, technology preserve environment, advance productivity**

American agriculture can also be celebrated for its efforts in environmental conservation. Farmers and ranchers provide food and habitat for approximately 75 percent of this nation's wildlife. The current farm bill has provisions for farmers to create environmental habitats that will ensure protection of the land and water resources of this country.

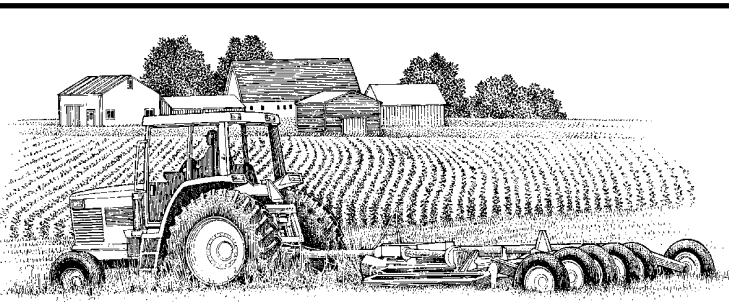
Farmers use computer and satellite technology to map their fields for production inputs. This increases yields and reduces crop inputs like fertilizer and crop protection chemicals. "Most farmers use some form of mapping process in their operations," says DeVries. "What we at John Deere have done is provide them with advanced technology through Field Doc and JD Office to efficiently use those maps and track their production information to help make wise, data-driven decisions about their farming operation."

With today's technology, farmers are better able to match seed characteristics and production practices to soil type and climate conditions. The result is higher yields with lower input costs from more efficient use of chemicals, fertilizers and tillage. Ultimately, that results in more food at a lower cost for consumers.

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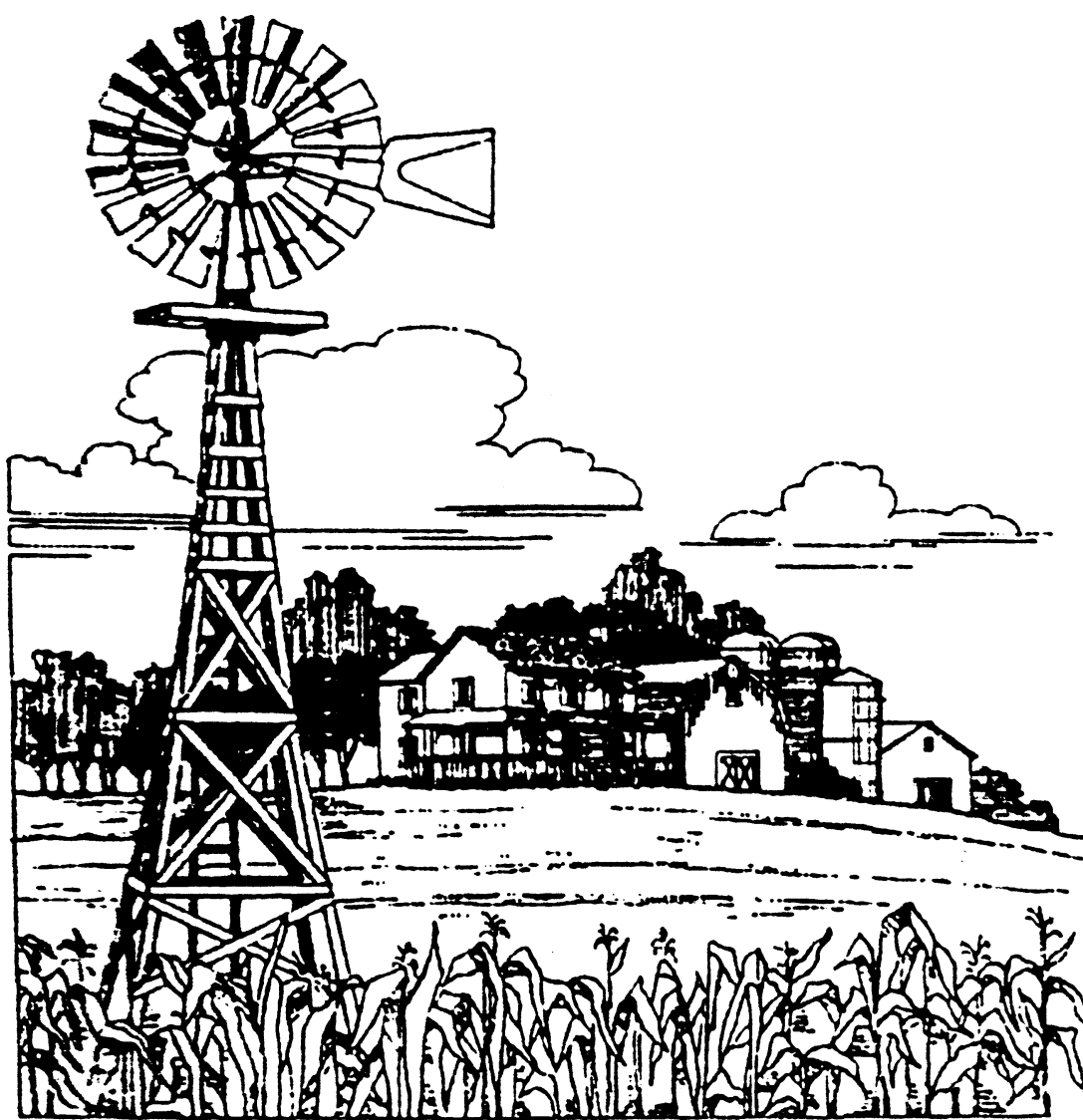
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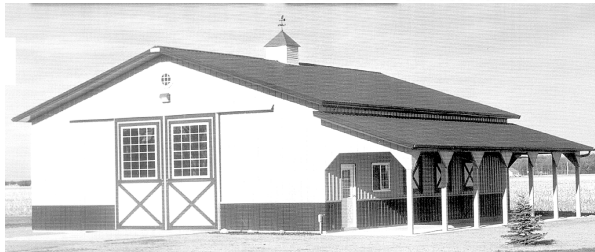


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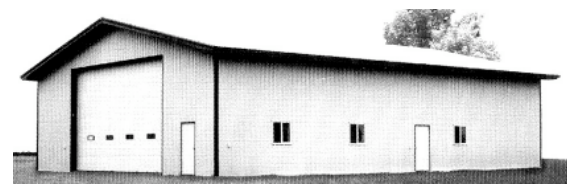
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