



Agricultural and Food Scientists

Ever wonder how come that cheeseburger tastes so great? Why that prime rib was so delicious? Why those apples are so juicy and sweet? There are reasons why food tastes so great and it's not because it just is, well in most cases it isn't. With the help of Mother Nature, agricultural and food scientists study and analyze ways to improve the quality of food we eat everyday. Agricultural and food scientists look for ways to improve the soil we need to grow the vegetables in, enhance the quality of those vegetables, improve the quality of the meat we eat, and more. They find the best ways possible, while eliminating the threats that can harm our food. Diseases can destroy crops of vegetables if agricultural and food scientists are not prepared to handle such threats.

There are specific types of food scientists who aid in the process of improving what we eat. **Soil scientists** study the properties of the soil to help plants, grow the best way possible. Soil is the foundation of plant growth, so ideally the best soil will grow the best plants, which make for a better quality of food for us. There are different types of soil; and finding the best combination of soil is very important for growing the highest quality of vegetables. The level of nutrients in soil also varies; growing plants in soil that lacks the necessary nutrients to help the plant reach its potential, won't do anyone any good. Soil erosion can cause landscapes to change over time; soil scientists aid farmers to reduce the amount of erosion in their area in order to ensure good farming.

Plant scientists help in improving the quality of the plants and in preventing against pests that could destroy the crops. Genetic engineering is increasingly becoming more widely used to produce more nutritional vegetables by creating better seeds. Different pests live in different environments and affect different types of crops, like rice, cotton, corn, oats, soybean, grain, and wheat. Some of these pests are, cabbage loopers, slugs, diamondback moths, harlequin bugs, maggots, stinkbugs, cutworms, spider mites, crayfish, and many more. Plant scientists research and develop ways to destroy these pests without destroying the plants in the process.

Animal scientists work with livestock to ensure that they have the proper nutrition to produce the highest quality of milk, meat, poultry, and eggs. A happy animal is a healthy animal is a tasty animal, so it is said. Like in humans, what we eat and put into our bodies will be what we get out of them. If we eat healthy foods we will have a healthy life and feel good. The same goes for animals, what they eat will affect their quality, which in turn, will affect the food they will produce. The lifestyle the animals have, will affect the food we get from them. **Animal scientists** look to improve the living conditions

of the animals, by trying to reduce the amount of diseases that are contracted, and increase their productivity.

Food scientists research and develop ways to improve the quality of food by finding new technologies for storage, transportation, and preservation. Once the food is ready for consumption, storing and preserving the food is important, so that it is able to retain its nutritional value. What is the point of having quality food if it will go bad before it is able to get to the market place? Food storage is critical to ensure the prevention of diseases and other forms of threats that can affect the consumer. Many of us enjoy eating healthy foods with plenty of vitamins and nutrients. **Food scientists** analyze the vitamin and nutrient content of the food to ensure it has the right amount of additives.

With the population growing, food consumption will also increase; so **food scientists** with the aid of other scientists, need to produce and maintain the quality of the food we eat. Adapting to the changing environment will be a concern for most **agricultural and food scientists**. In this field, there are continuous threats and other issues that need to be addressed: pests may become immune to the pesticides, climate changes will affect crop growth, and those who want to eat healthy will continue to demand for healthy foods. The methods we use today might not be effective in the future, so coming up with the latest technologies, and practicing safe procedures is a never ending matter when it comes to food.

By entering the **agricultural and food scientists'** profession, not only will you provide a valuable service for everyone in the world, you will also earn a good living wage. On an average, food scientist makes \$54,000 per year and recent graduates just starting out earn around \$32,000 per year. There are many opportunities for advancement if you become certified in your field of interest. The American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Science of America are the leading organizations,



Science Job Feature

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