

National Ag Day celebrates first day of spring

What Is Ag Day?
It's a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless other across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

When Is Ag Day?
Ag Day is celebrated on the first day of spring. National Ag Day falls during National Ag Week, March 16-22.

Who Hosts Ag Day?
The Agriculture Council of Amer-

ica hosts the campaign on a national level. However, the awareness efforts in communities across America are as influential - if not more - than the broad-scale effort. Again this year, the Ag Day Planning Guide has been created to help communities and organizations more effectively host Ag Day events.

What Is Ag Day All About?
Ag Day is about recognizing - and celebrating - the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
Why Celebrate Agriculture?
Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis. But too few people truly understand this contribution. This is particularly the case in our schools, where students may only be exposed to agriculture if they enroll in related vocational training.

By building awareness, the Agriculture Council of America is encouraging young people to consider career opportunities in agriculture. Each American farmer feeds more than 144 people ... a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more - and doing it better. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

Population growth creates need for food

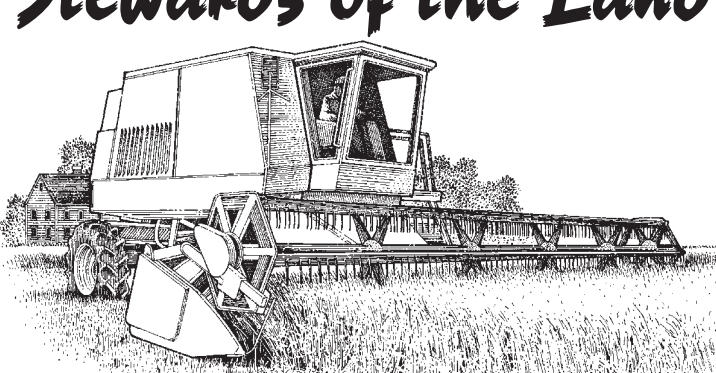
World population is at 6.2 billion today, and is expected to reach 7.5 billion by the year 2020. There will be millions of new mouths to feed, many of whom rely on United States food production to meet this need.

The United States Is Best Positioned To Meet This Growing Need
Agriculture is America's No. 1 export. About 17 percent of raw U.S. agriculture products are exported yearly. The United States is out front in technological advances. U.S. farmers and ranchers produce more than 200 raw commodities yearly for do-

mestic and export markets.
In 1999, one farmer produced enough food to feed about 144 people each day. Agriculture generates 20 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. One-fourth of the world's beef and nearly one-fifth of the world's grain, milk and eggs are produced in the U.S. The United States exports \$43.5 billion in agriculture products and important \$26.4 billion in farm products, equaling a positive net trade balance of \$17.1 billion. One in three U.S. farm acres is planted for export, and 25 percent of gross farm income comes

directly from exports. Through research and changes in production practices, today's food producers are providing Americans with the widest variety of foods ever. Research and advancements in biotechnology are now in the marketplace with tastier fruits and vegetables that stay fresh longer and are not damaged by insects. Consumers derive health benefits from changes in farm production including less fat in meat and longer lasting fresh fruits and vegetables. For every hour, the U.S. exports \$6 million worth of agricultural products.


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