

The five **f**'s of agriculture



Around 1760, there were 5 million people living in this nation, with 90 percent of them self-sufficient because of their farming lifestyles. Now, over 200 years later, with more than 280 million people living in America, less than 2 percent of Americans are still farming.

Agriculture reaches past the farm. It has become an industry that not only includes farmers and ranchers but also urban and suburban workers who process, package and transport food to America's customers.

Agriculture is everywhere, but what exactly, is it? Perhaps the best way to describe agriculture is to explore its Five F's. The Five F's of agriculture employ nearly 20 percent of our country's workforce and about 17 percent of Utahns.

farming

is the actual production of food and fiber derived from plants

and animals. Farmers use natural resources such as soil, water, air and sunshine. Farmers must understand economics, business, mathematics and the science involved in getting their crops and animals to market. The science involved in agriculture includes the knowledge of ecosystems, soil, water, weather, chemistry and plant and animal biology.

One of the greatest threats to farming in America is the rapid loss of farmland to commercial and residential development. Urban sprawl and population growth, combined with low commodity prices and increasing costs, have left

American farmers struggling to survive.

Forecasters are predicting that Utah's population will increase by 50 percent over the next 20 years. Homes, schools, malls, golf courses, freeways, restaurants and a host of other places are fast becoming the consumers of irrigated farm ground, wetlands and mountain habitats.

A recent report from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food stated that Utah is the second-fastest growing state in the country for housing units. That report follows a USDA study showing that Utah is losing its farmland to development. The new homes being built in Utah are being built on some of the state's best farmland.

Many farmers want to preserve their land but development pressures often force them to sell. It is often thought that land development generates enough tax income to support urban newcomers. However, land development and the additional people it brings into an area can raise taxes.

food

is made from the raw products taken from the farm. Some products may be eaten raw, like peaches, or processed

into a different product, such as peach jam. Some raw food products, such as wheat, must be processed before they are eaten. For example, bread is a much more digestible way and a better-tasting way of eating wheat than eating whole wheat seeds.

The food industry is the processing and distribution of food. There are many food industry careers: food scientists and engineers, food processors (cooks), package designers, marketers, business people, truckers and grocers and their stores.

Farmers and ranchers work with the cycles of weather, soil, water and other ecosystems to feed our country and a growing world population.



follow the path

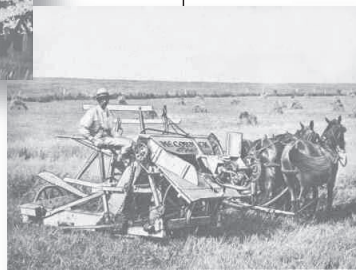
Can you create a path from the foods you eat back to the plants and animals

produced on farms and ranches? Remember to include the processing, such as wheat being made into flour. Don't forget the transportation necessary to bring the products from the farm or ranch to the processor, to the grocery store and finally to you! Look in the Desert News for some favorite foods on your food paths. Circle each one you find.



1798

Johnny Appleseed planted apple seeds.



1836

Cyrus McCormick demonstrated his horse-drawn grain reaper.



1837

John Deere began manufacturing plows.



1843

Sir John Lawes developed commercial fertilizer.

1850

Alexander Twining invented the refrigerator.



1854

Self-governing windmill perfected.



1856

Patent issued for condensing milk.