

AGRICULTURE CAREER GUIDE



Careers in agriculture have been the backbone of Kansas for more than 150 years. With the future full of technological advancements, this industry will continue to grow and have a high demand for qualified employees. Use this guide to decide if this career field full of diverse job opportunities—often with the perk of working outside—is for you. Then visit [LevelUpKS.com](https://www.levelupks.com) and complete the form to find out if you can earn a degree or certificate for **FREE!**

BY THE NUMBERS

AVERAGE SALARY

\$21.54/hour | \$44,800/year

DEMAND

HIGH

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Certificate to Associate Degree (less than 1 year to 2 years)

EDUCATION LOCATIONS

15+ community colleges and technical schools, online and in-person program options

HIGH-DEMAND CAREERS

- Crop Production Operator
- Grain Elevator Operator
- Feedlot Manager
- Agronomy Technician
- Agricultural Sales
- Plant Operator
- Farm or Ranch Manager
- Precision Agriculture Producer
- Agricultural Researcher
- Ag Diesel Mechanic

Read the guide to learn more about each position.

IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU?

If this sounds like you, you may be a good fit.

- Enjoy working outside, with animals, or with machinery
- Are detail-oriented and organized
- Consider yourself adaptable, but also work well in a structured environment
- Are curious and enjoy troubleshooting and problem-solving

TYPES OF EDUCATION

- **Certificates** - short, skill-focused programs
- **Associate Degrees** - general education and specific training
- **Apprenticeships** - on-the-job training with education

AGRICULTURE CERTIFICATES



GET STARTED IN 1 YEAR OR LESS

CROP PRODUCTION OPERATOR

Average Salary: \$15.27/hour | \$31,761/year

Education Required: Certificate

Time to complete education: Less than 1 year

Crop Production Operators support operational agronomy duties for grain co-ops or similar settings, including planting, growing, and harvesting crops and operating and maintaining farming equipment. They also monitor crop health, apply necessary treatments, and ensure efficient farm operations for optimal yields.

GRAIN ELEVATOR OPERATOR

Average Salary: \$18.00/hour | \$37,440/year

Education Required: Certificate

Time to complete education: Less than 1 year - 1 year

Grain Elevator Operators oversee grain intake, quality, storage, and delivery and operate and repair elevator machinery and scales. Grain Elevator Operators must be able to execute detailed safety procedures and regular inspections to ensure that safety expectations are met.



PLANT OPERATOR

Average Salary: \$17.00/hour | \$35,360/year

Education Required: Certificate

Time to complete education: Less than 1 year to 1 year

Plant operators are responsible for the operations of an agricultural plant and the processes involved in turning agricultural products into consumer goods. They oversee daily functions, operate machinery, ensure quality control, and maintain production efficiency.

FARM OR RANCH MANAGER

Average Salary: \$22.44/hour | \$46,674/year

Education Required: Certificate to Associate Degree

Time to complete education: 1-2 years

Farm or Ranch Managers oversee and support all aspects of the farm or ranch, including crop production or livestock care, budget management, proper operation of heavy machinery, and staff supervision.

FEEDLOT MANAGER

Average Salary: \$22.93/hour | \$47,700/year

Education Required: Certificate to Associate Degree

Time to complete education: 1-2 years

Feedlot Managers oversee daily feedlot operations, including safety standards, customer and supplier relationships, equipment and fencing repairs, and staff. They are also responsible for livestock nutrition and health and work closely with veterinarians.

**Listed salaries are approximate and intended as estimates only. Actual offers may differ based on education, geographic location, economic conditions, and other factors.*

READY TO GO?

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Level Up Kansas is a free service for Kansans 18+



AGRICULTURE CERTIFICATES AND ASSOCIATE DEGREES



GET STARTED IN 1-2 YEARS

PRECISION AGRICULTURE PRODUCER

Average Salary: \$22.83/hour | \$47,500/year
Education Required: Certificate to Associate Degree
Time to complete education: 1-2 years
Precision Agricultural Producers use advanced technology (GPS, GIS, remote sensing) and data to monitor and manage crop production. Precision Ag Producers must be able to operate heavy machinery and complex technology simultaneously.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCHER

Average Salary: \$23.18/hour | \$48,210/year
Education Required: Associate Degree
Time to complete education: 2 years
Researchers advance the agricultural field through experiment planning, data collection and analysis, and field operations including planting, pollinating, and harvesting. Researchers develop new techniques and technologies to innovate and advance agricultural production.



AGRONOMY TECHNICIAN

Average Salary: \$22.91/hour | \$47,644/year
Education Required: Certificate to Associate Degree
Time to complete education: 1-2 years
Agronomy Technicians assist with agricultural research relating to plants, animals, and soil. They support agronomists with laboratory tasks, gather samples, conduct experiments, and draw conclusions from the resulting with the goal of improving crop yield and quality.

AGRICULTURAL SALES

Average Salary: \$24.69/hourly | \$51,348/year
Education Required: Certificate to Associate Degree
Time to complete education: 1-2 years
Agricultural Salespeople work for companies that manufacture products like equipment, seeds, or fertilizers. They develop relationships with customers and provide them with expert product knowledge and personalized solutions to enhance their agricultural productivity.

AG DIESEL MECHANIC

Average Salary: \$26.14/hour | \$54,375/year
Education Required: Certificate to Associate Degree
Time to complete education: 1-2 years
Ag Diesel Mechanics service, diagnose, and repair agricultural machinery and light industrial equipment. They are well-versed in the functions of hydraulic systems and diesel engines and also address mechanical issues in electrical, charging, fuel, and heating and air conditioning systems.

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AGRICULTURE CAREERS



JOBS AT A GLANCE

CAREER PATH	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE	AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY	LESS THAN ONE YEAR CERTIFICATE	1-2 YEAR CERTIFICATE	ASSOCIATE DEGREE
Crop Production Operator	\$15.27	\$31,761	✓		
Plant Operator	\$17.00	\$35,360	✓		
Grain Elevator Operator	\$18.00	\$37,440	✓		
Farm or Ranch Manager	\$22.44	\$46,674		✓	✓
Feedlot Manager	\$22.93	\$47,700		✓	✓
Precision Agriculture Producer	\$22.83	\$47,500		✓	✓
Agronomy Technician	\$22.91	\$47,644		✓	✓
Agricultural Researcher	\$23.18	\$48,210			✓
Agricultural Sales	\$24.69	\$51,348		✓	✓
Ag Diesel Mechanic	\$26.14	\$54,375		✓	✓

READY TO GO BUT NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

We're here to help. Level Up Kansas is a **FREE** service for Kansans 18+. We provide unbiased information about certificates and 2-year degree programs at Kansas community colleges and technical colleges. We can also provide resources to help you find existing scholarships and financial aid opportunities that may be available to you.

To get started, visit [LevelUpKS.com](https://levelupks.com) and complete the form to work with our free navigator service. We'll help you figure out your next steps.

STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

Don't give up. Check out the career guides for Healthcare, Manufacturing, Construction Trades, Early Childhood Education, and Computer Science on our website.