



Careers in Agriculture and Horticulture

Summary Research Report

May 2022

Authors: Family Kids & Youth



Contents

	Page
Background	3
Research Objectives	3
Recruitment Approach	4
Executive Summary	6
The Findings	7
- Awareness and Perception	7
- Communication	8
- Interaction	9
Recommendations	10
Key Actions	12



Background

The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH) was established in July 2021 with the aim to support individuals within the agriculture and horticulture sectors to become more competitive and sustainable through an on-going programme of continuous professional development.

The industry is currently facing labour shortages, and TIAH is committed to attracting a diverse range of people to bring a wealth of skills to include business, scientific and technical abilities to enable it to drive innovation, improve business management and meet the industry's future needs. To understand how young people perceive a career in agriculture and horticulture, and particularly in farming and growing, TIAH commissioned FK&Y to carry out research December 2021-March 2022.

Research Objectives

The main question proposed by TIAH:

What are the barriers that prevent newcomers from pursuing a career in agriculture or horticulture?

Further questions include:

- How do influencers – careers professionals or those supporting career switchers view a career in agriculture or horticulture?
- How do young people at secondary school Years 8-11 (12-16 year olds), 16-18 year olds (sixth form secondary school/FE level) and 18 year olds (HE level) feel about working in agriculture or horticulture?
- What are the barriers, and does living in an urban area, or coming from ethnic minorities affect their perception?

- How do career switchers feel about working in agriculture or horticulture – what influences them and what is their perception of opportunities available?
- How do other influencers affect opinion and outlook – especially teachers, parents, grandparents?
- What information and examples do these groups require and what is the best way to reach them?

Recruitment Approach

For the qualitative phase of the research, we took a mixed approach to recruitment, working with our network of schools and recruiters across the country to ensure:

- A mix of locations – people from rural/urban/suburban areas in the North, Midlands, Southeast and Southwest. N.B the qualitative research is not nationally representative

Diversity of participants:

- Social class
- Ethnicities and backgrounds
- Different types of schools/teachers e.g. inner city, suburban, rural, alternative provisions, SEND
- Young people with range abilities (academic, less academic, SEND) and interests (some already interested in the sector)

Phase 1 - Qualitative Research

2 online focus groups (November 2021)

- 6 Careers Teachers recruited from our School Panel across England
- 6 Careers Advisors working in FE colleges/National Careers Service across England

Phase 2 - Qualitative Research

Secondary School

- 2 focus groups with 12-13 (Y8) and 14-15 year olds (Y10)

16-18 year old (school/FE college)

- 2 focus groups with 16-17 and 17-18 year olds

18-21 year olds

- 2 focus groups with 18-19 and 20-21 year olds

Career Switchers

- 2 focus groups with 26-30 year olds – seriously considering career switching

Teachers

- 1 focus group – Teachers of 14-16 year olds

Parents

- 2 focus groups – Parents of 12-15 year olds and 16-18 year olds

Grandparents

- 1 focus group – Grandparents of 12-18 year olds

Phase 3 - Quantitative Research

A nationally representative sample of children and young people, career switchers, parents and grandparents, and STEM/Geography teachers were interviewed online in March 2022.

The online interview lasted 20 minutes with a final sample of:

- 1,014 young people aged 13-23
- 532 parents / grandparents
- 263 STEM/Geography teachers

Executive Summary

- **Low awareness of the sector** – at home, school and amongst career switchers – means that this sector is frequently not considered when it comes to thinking about future careers, except, unsurprisingly, those that have a connection to farming and growing
- **Many urban young people feel detached from the sector**, with no sense of belonging to the countryside
- **There is very little understanding of modern farming and growing**, technological advances, or the opportunities that exist within the broader list of job roles available in modern farming and growing
- **Perception of the sector is dated** – driven by limited knowledge within the school curriculum of these opportunities, an apparent lack of contact from the sector with schools, and a sometimes confusing representation in the media
- **Once explained and better understood, the sector is perceived to offer exciting and attractive opportunities to young people** – especially the notion of STEM-related careers, and jobs that will help and support the environment and sustainability



The Findings:

1. Awareness and Perception

Low awareness of the sector – at home, school and amongst career switchers

- This means that this sector is not considered when it comes to thinking about future careers
- The exception to this is those who live rurally AND have farming and growing in the family or extended network
- Animal care, vets and land management are the most popular choices in the sector
- As awareness of the sector is low, many young people, parents and grandparents are also unaware of modern farming and growing, technological advances and opportunities that exist, and the broader list of job roles in modern farming and growing

Perception of the sector is dated

- Farmers working long, labour intensive hours every day of the year with low incomes
- Based in the countryside
- Farming and growing is passed down through generations
- A sector that lacks diversity

This dated perception is driven by:

- A curriculum that can date quickly with respect to the advances in modern farming and growing
- A lack of contact with the sector
- A lack of information from the sector
- Dated representation in the media - traditional farming and growing and the difficulties faced



2. Communication

Communicate modern farming and growing

- Very few young people, teachers, careers advisers, parents and grandparents are aware of modern farming and growing and how it relates to STEM
- It is felt jobs in STEM related areas of the sector and the environment and sustainability will be big pull factors for the sector
- Consider up to date learning resources for schools and careers influencers
- Work with organisations involved in modern farming and growing – especially those that young people can relate to
- Demonstrate diversity – there is a belief modern farming and growing will increase this
- Communicate opportunities in urban/semi-urban locations
- Communicate salaries
- Ensure promotion of the sector includes references to food, tech, engineering and science

To increase interest in farming and growing communicate:

- What can be fun and rewarding about farming and growing
- Communicate clear 'Ways in' for young people without connections to farming and growing
- Could also be of interest to those attracted to construction and gardening
- Appeal to SEND – especially the more traditional labour-orientated roles

Communicate with parents and grandparents

- Views are largely based on a dated representation in traditional media meaning some would not encourage their young people to go into the sector

Communication with schools, colleges and universities

- Lack of information from the sector means perception is dated and the sector is not talked about or recommended
- Link information to business, scientific and technical subjects (STEM)
- Communicate with subject teachers as well as careers teachers/advisors

3. Interaction

Young people need more contact with the sector

- Trips to farms, allotments and modern farming and growing
- Sector visits to educational settings
- Lack of contact with the sector means many young people in urban areas do not have a sense of belonging the countryside, or knowledge about the way in which food is grown or reared, or how it arrives on their plates

Communication channels

- Communicate on social media, TikTok and YouTube – go to online spaces they are already using
- Young people want to see and hear from people they can relate to
- Traditional media – for parents and grandparents and some career switchers
- Podcasts and Ted Talks are popular with university students and career switchers
- Websites are popular but need clear signposting – this could be done through social media



Recommendations

- There is an opportunity to increase awareness and change perceptions of the sector to address the shortage of young people coming into farming and growing
- A central hub would be very useful but would need to be well sign-posted

Traditional and modern farming and growing

- Some young people who might be interested in farming and growing are not aware of what job opportunities exist, so there are missed recruitment opportunities in farming and growing
- Suggestion to provide college courses in urban areas
- Communicate work experience and short-term contracts
- New media content needs to be by young people for young people on platforms they use
- It is extremely important to increase and demonstrate diversity with relatable and diverse public figures promoting farming and growing – reach out to diverse urban areas
- Promote farming and growing initiatives for secondary schools, colleges and universities

Modern farming and growing

- There is a need to communicate, to young people and their influencers, the advances in farming and growing and the opportunities this brings
- Communicate with schools, colleges, and universities through appropriate STEM channels
- Begin discussions around updating the curriculum and create learning resources for schools
- Initiate training seminars for secondary school and college teachers and universities

- Introduce the idea of vertical farming and growing areas within schools
- Encourage fashionable restaurants/cafes to introduce vertical farming and growing areas to generate awareness and interest
- Partner with well-known companies such as Dyson to improve the image of farming and growing

Communications should focus on issues that will capture young people (and their influencers) attention and then explain the relevance to farming and growing –

content could include:

- The environment
- Why farming and growing is changing – education is key
- What is in the food we eat, where it is from, and what this means for the planet? Particularly important for urban young people
- The advantages farming and growing will bring to the planet e.g. less water – make it relevant to their lives
- The nutritional benefits of food grown through farming and growing e.g. no pesticides, not necessarily genetically modified
- Demonstrate health, wellbeing, and cooking from chefs and nutritionists

Communications should go on to explain:

- Sustainability **and** renewable energies
- The rewards and excitement of being involved with cutting edge technology/future robotics to improve the world by making the sector more sustainable and profitable
- Urban opportunities
- Apprenticeships schemes and work experience opportunities



Key actions:

- Increase and communicate diversity in the sector
- Consider updating classroom learning resources
- Work with organisations involved in modern farming and growing
- Increase sector visits to educational settings
- Introduce in-person contact with the sector
- Increase educational trips out to farms, allotments and modern farming and growing
- Use traditional media also to communicate with teachers, parents, and grandparents

Communicate

- What can be fun and rewarding about traditional farming and growing
- That modern farming and growing will evolve and adapt to technology and research
- Modern farming and growing job roles
- The horticultural side to engage vegetarians, pescatarians and vegans
- Opportunities in urban/semi-urban locations
- Salaries
- 'Ways in' to farming and growing for young people without connections
- With young people on social media and through influencers



© Family Kids & Youth