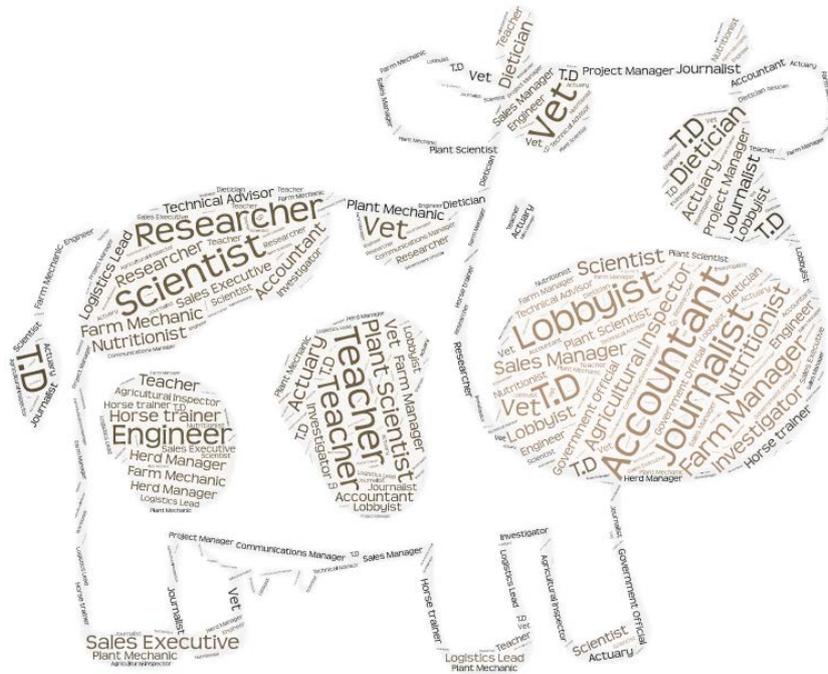




# Careers in the agri-food sector in Ireland



## Background:

- The Agri-food and drink sector accounts for 7.6% of Ireland's economy-wide GVA, 10.7% of Ireland's exports and 8.4% of total employment
- In 2016, Gross Agricultural Output (GAO) was valued at €6.92 billion
- 7,886 students sat the Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science exam in 2017
- Over 173,000 people were employed in the Agri-Food sector in 2016
- The number of students interested in studying a Level 8, third-level degree in agriculture or horticulture has increased by just over 20% in 2017
- A total of 591 CAO applicants this year had a Level 8 agriculture or horticulture degree as their first preference
- Last year, agriculture and horticulture degrees received a total of 2,328 preferences as part of the CAO application process; this year that figure jumped to 2,798 – an increase of 470

**Jobs in the sector:** The agri-food sector encompasses everything to do with food production, to business markets, education and even government. Starting at farm level there is a shortage of a skilled and educated workforce. The chance for people to become skilled is there, with courses offered across the country in local Teagasc branches or agricultural and horticultural focused colleges. These jobs include farm workers and managers, herdsmen, tractor operators, animal care people such as hoof trimmers. Other jobs can be found in the sports horse industry as groomers and riders along with in the horticultural sector as pickers and growers. In recent years, we have seen many big multinational company's set up centres of excellences in Ireland such as Kerry Group. Having these companies based in Ireland creates a demand for a highly skilled workforce. By studying agricultural, horticulture, forestry or food allows access to the vast number of jobs in the sector. Jobs in the sector range from researchers and food scientists to businesses managers, account managers, sales and production.

Studying an agricultural related degree or cert opens a world of choices and opportunities. Agricultural is not just key to our economy but across the world. Being an Ag Science graduate leads to opportunities both home and abroad both at farm and industry level. These opportunities can be seen below with testimonials from recent graduates who are now working in the sector.



# Careers in the agri-food sector in Ireland



## Graduate Testimonials:

**Name:** Johnny Gleeson

**Role:** Education and Development Officer, Family Farm developed by Agri Aware and Dublin Zoo



**Studied:** BSc. Animal and Crop Production, UCD and MA in Education, UCD

I graduated from UCD in 2014 with a degree in Animal and Crop Production and this year (2017) with a Professional Masters in Education. I was lucky in a sense when I started studying Ag science for Leaving Cert the class had a few students, like myself, that were from the town. The two years of been taught by a very passionate teacher inspired me to study agriculture at 3<sup>rd</sup> level and allowed me to fall in love with the subject before I ever stood foot in the UCD Ag building. Days spent in lectures on UCD campus to days in Lyons Estate and professional placement in third year really set me up for the working world. My first job was working on Clongowes Wood dairy farm. As I was fresh out of college I wanted to use the knowledge I had gained in college first hand at farm level. Both the theoretical and practical skills I learned in my degree allowed me to have the confidence in driving performance of the herd and increase production of the farm. I am currently the Education and Development Officer for Agri Aware. I am based at Family Farm, Dublin Zoo to educate the public and schools about the importance of farming and the benefit it has to our lives.

**Name:** Shane Maher

**Role:** Pig Research Assistant, UCD Lyons Research Farm

**Studied:** Agricultural Science, Waterford IT & Animal Science, UCD

I wouldn't consider myself to be from a farming background but I am from the country and would have had a small contribution on relatives/ neighbours farms. It was from this that sparked my interest in Ag. After 5 years of college, I am now a graduate of both Waterford I.T and UCD. I concluded that Animal Science in UCD was my 'dream course' and I was devastated when I fell 10 points short in my Leaving Cert results. However, it turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me. I knew I didn't want to do the leaving certificate again so I decided to take the scenic route by spending 3 years studying a Level 7 in Agricultural Science at Waterford I.T. I enjoyed the practical, hands on approach that WIT offered. The highlight for me was our final year research project, whilst challenging, it was my introduction to my current field now of research. Transferring to UCD for 2 years to complete a level 8 in Animal Science was over whelming at first but I was quick to adjust to the big smoke. UCD also had its many benefits and the highlight for me, and many others was the Professional Work Experience (PWE) element where we got to spend 20 weeks on farms and/or in industry. In 10 years' time, I hope to have a PhD completed and would love to be a researcher and lecturer. You get so much more than a degree from college. You have great experiences and make so many lifelong friends



**Name:** Rachel Morris

**Role:** Graduate Brewer, Diageo

**Studied:** Food & Agribusiness Management, UCD

I took up agricultural science as an eight subject for my Leaving Certificate just six months before I sat my exams. From the day, I first joined the class, my teacher knew she wouldn't have an easy year with her new student having to ask what 'silage' was or what she meant by 'ploughing'. However, the following August when I opened my results, I received an A in Ag science. For me, choosing Food & Agribusiness Management was the best decision. First year classes such as crop & animal science, chemistry and physics gave me the background I needed in understanding part of the food industry before learning the economics, strategy and marketing of the food industry. I am now in a graduate role with Diageo. I never expected myself to be working in a brewery, and I am now studying for my Brewing Diploma, and will then progress to a Masters in Brewing.

For more information on Agri Aware and our initiatives for second level students please email:

[info@agriaware.ie](mailto:info@agriaware.ie) or call 01 4601103

Alternatively visit [www.agriaware.ie](http://www.agriaware.ie) for more information