

Title: 5 Reasons Kids Aren't Pursuing Agri-science

Science is at the core of understanding and addressing society's most pressing problems, such as providing nutrition and healthcare for a growing population and protecting our planet's natural resources; but our understanding of science – and our children's interest in pursuing related fields – is waning.

Bayer and National 4-H Council launched the [Science Matters](#) initiative last year to spark young people's interest in agri-science and other STEM fields, and as we celebrate National Ag Day on March 20, we're unveiling new research around the next generation's preparedness to solve the global challenges of tomorrow.

Where are the disconnects and why do they exist?



1. Curricula doesn't reflect the perceived importance of agri-science education.

More than 80 percent of teachers surveyed believe ag science is an important discipline, but only 22 percent include it in their lesson plans.



2. The education system as a whole isn't prioritizing agri-science.

The study found nearly half of teachers surveyed – 48 percent – believe there is less emphasis placed on learning the industry as compared to 15 years ago.



3. Teachers feel unqualified and unequipped to teach the subject.

Despite wishing they could spend more time teaching agri-science content, less than half (46 percent) of teachers say they feel qualified. Rural teachers are more confident (52 percent) compared to their urban counterparts (42 percent).



4. Parents agree science is important, but believe schools need to dedicate more time to the subject. 77 percent of surveyed parents say it's important their children see agri-science as an exciting subject, but half (50 percent) believe their children's school needs to dedicate more time to teaching these fields.



5. Awareness around available career fields is low among students.

While parents place high value on careers in agri-science, only 6 percent of urban teachers say their students are familiar with the various career fields that exist beyond working on a farm, and this number only rises to 37 percent among teachers in rural schools.

The result? Students are unlikely to pursue agri-science, and the talent pipeline will suffer: [Data shows](#) that from 2015-2020, only 61 percent of the available 57,900 job openings in agriculture and related industries are expected to be filled by qualified applicants, and this gap will only continue to grow.

To address the opportunities and challenges that come alongside society's growth, we must do more to ignite young people's interest in agri-science and STEM fields. We're proud to do our part by leveraging

Science Matters to reach more than 25,000 students across the U.S., and looking forward to continued collaboration with National 4-H Council to extend our impact further.