

# IOWA ag TODAY

EXPLORING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN AGRICULTURE AND YOU!

ISSUE 4

## AGRICULTURE IN SOCIETY

### Agriculture is a part of Iowa's history.

Tribes in Iowa cultivated goosefoot before corn was important. The Meskwaki people used farming techniques to tap maple trees and raise corn, squash, and lima beans. European settlers that built homes in Iowa also

used the rich soil to grow crops and raise animals. The people of Iowa have relied on the state's geography, climate, and soil to grow food.

As more people moved to Iowa, more food was needed. People began

developing new tools and techniques. They sold or traded what they grew. People shared resources and cities formed. Roads and railways were created to transport goods. Jobs were created because of agriculture.

Today, food, fiber and fuel are traded globally. **Agriculture businesses** help to make, repair, and sell agriculture products. Products often travel thousands of miles to where they are consumed. People around the world earn a living by raising and selling plants and animals.



### GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the study of places and the relationship between people and their environments. Where people live affects what can grow. What grows affects food and clothing. As a result, people in Asia eat a lot of rice. People in Europe eat more bread and pasta. People living near the ocean eat a lot of fish. People inland eat more beef or pork. Food, clothing and how people live is part of their culture. Culture is influenced by agriculture!



**TRY THIS - Draw a model of a farm. How does what you grow affect you, your family, and your community?**



# A HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE IN IOWA

Iowa's history is anchored in agriculture. Explore the events that have made an impact on Iowa's agriculture community.

**THINK & DISCUSS**  
How do you think these events have influenced agriculture today?

## NATIVE AMERICANS SETTLED IOWA

For thousands of years, Native American Nations have lived in, or claimed rights to what is today, Iowa. Throughout history the Ioway, Sauk, Meskwaki, Sioux, Potawatomi, Oto, and Missouri tribes have resided in Iowa. Today more than 10,000 people with indigenous heritage live in Iowa.

1861-1865 ↻

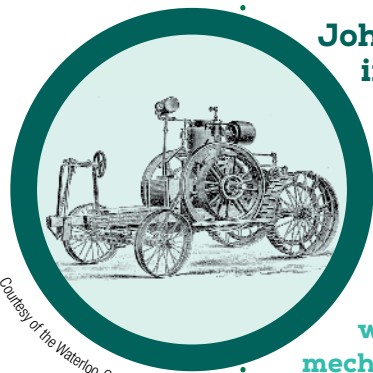
### Civil war

Horse-drawn planters, mowers, reapers, and mechanical threshing machines increased productivity on U.S. farms.

1892

### John Froelich invented the gasoline tractor.

His Iowa-built tractor showed that the future of farm power would be with mechanical power.



Courtesy of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier

1930s ↻

### Great Depression and Dust Bowl led to farming practices that conserve soil.

1983

### Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act

Standards for U.S. migrant workers' wages, housing, and transportation were implemented.

1983-1990

### Farm Crisis

After an economic boom in the mid-1970s, farmers purchased more land and equipment. The drought in 1983 caused fewer crops to be harvested. This and a weak U.S. dollar caused farmers to be in financial crisis.



1833

First official European settlement was established in Iowa through the Black Hawk Purchase.

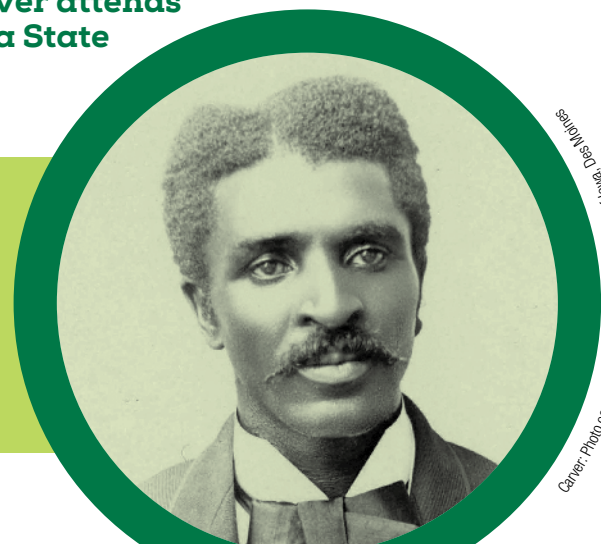
1857

The Meskwaki purchased 80 acres of land for their settlement in Tama County

↻ 1891

George Washington Carver attends Iowa State

Carver researched soil that was "worn out," in the American South and identified crops that increase soil productivity.



Carver. Photo courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa. Des Moines

1973

### First Genetically Engineered Organism

This process is what was later used to create genetically engineered corn, soybeans, cotton, and other crops.

1978

Iowa experiments with ethanol-blended fuel heralding the future biofuel industry in the state and nation.



1990s

Precision agriculture and GPS introduced into agriculture



Autonomous tractor photo courtesy of the John Deere Company

2022

The John Deere Company revealed their fully autonomous tractor





# AGRICULTURE & CLIMATE ACROSS THE USA

We can get almonds, peaches, and bananas any time of year by going to the grocery store. But where do these foods come from? Explore the map to find out.

## THINK & DISCUSS

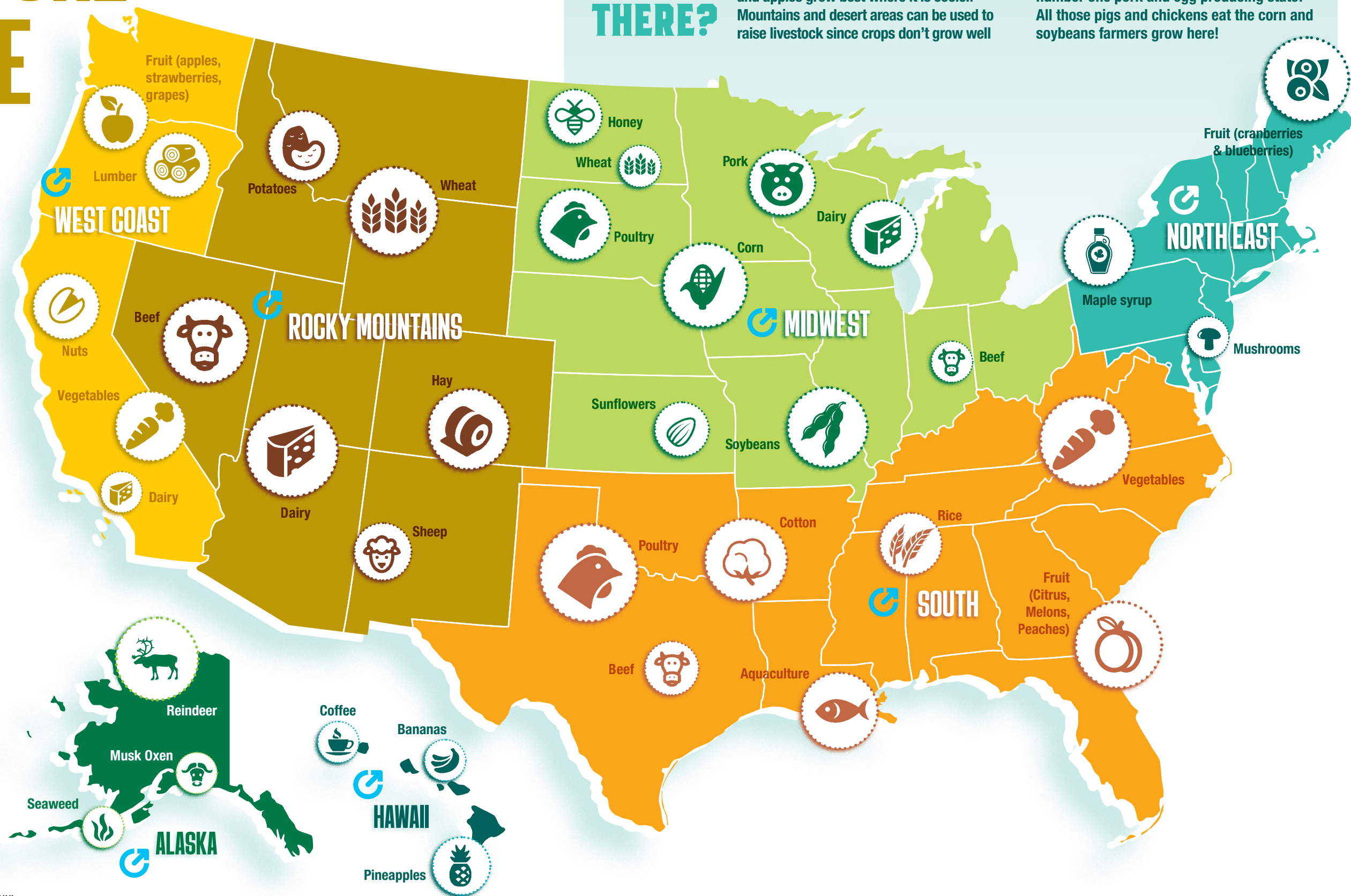
How do natural resources and climate in an area affect what people choose to grow?

## WHY IS THAT GROWN THERE?

WHAT IS GROWN IN EACH STATE DEPENDS ON THE LAND AND CLIMATE. High and low temperatures, growing season, and rainfall determine what crops farmers plant. Some crops, like grapefruit and cotton grow well in warm climates. Others like blueberries and apples grow best where it is cooler. Mountains and desert areas can be used to raise livestock since crops don't grow well

there. But just because you don't see corn in the Northeast or apples in the Midwest doesn't mean you won't find them on farms there!

Farmers also raise livestock where animal feed is grown. That's why Iowa is the number one pork and egg producing state! All those pigs and chickens eat the corn and soybeans farmers grow here!







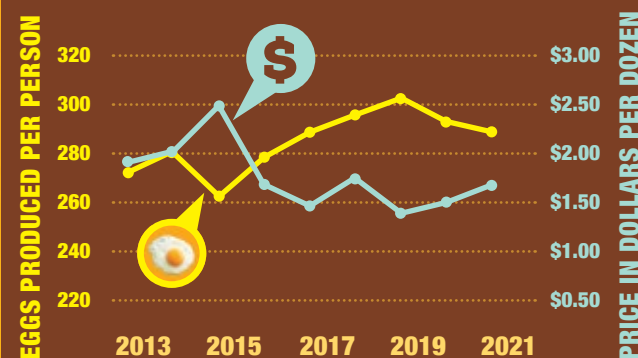
# THE PRICE OF FOOD

**Have you ever had a piece of cake? How about scrambled eggs? When we buy food, we consider nutrition and price.**

If you shop at a store or farmers market with family or friends, you may notice the price of food. Each time you go the price of food might be different. How can a dozen eggs be \$1.80 one month and \$2.95 the next? Prices tend to change based on supply of the product and consumer demand.

Each year during the spring and fall wild birds migrate. When animals move from one place to another, they can spread illness. The bird flu, or avian influenza, is a virus chicken and turkey farmers worry about. There is no cure for avian influenza. A flock that gets sick must be terminated. When many flocks become ill, the supply of chicken, eggs, and turkey decrease. The supply of agriculture products can affect the price we pay for those products at the store.

**DIGGING DEEPER** Look at the line graph. What relationships do you see between egg supply and egg price?



Source: USDA and Bureau of Labor Statistics



## FAMILY AND FARM FINANCES

**Every day, people make decisions about money.**

Business owners and families must weigh the pros and cons of their decisions. Though there may not be one "right" answer, people need to make informed decisions to help their business or family. Explore these scenarios to learn about financial decisions and how people make them!

### A Farmer's Decisions

Kim is a beef cattle farmer. She raises cattle until they are ready for market. Right now, she only has a few **steers**. Kim knows that expanding her business could be helpful for her and her community. If she raises more cattle, she can provide more food to people.

The problem is cattle can cost a lot. To help make her decision Kim starts with a pro-con list and takes it to a loan manager.

### A Family's Decisions

Dwayne is a parent. His family's food budget and nutrition is very important to him. He knows that protein is part of a balanced diet. But buying meat by individual cuts can be costly. He's wondering if he should buy a half beef from a local farmer and a full-size freezer. Would that be cheaper in the long run? He would like to support local farmers.

The problem is a new freezer can be an investment. Dwayne decides to review his credit card balance and talks with a financial advisor.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
A Financial Advisor is a career that can help families and businesses make decisions with money. They can help create savings accounts, retirement accounts, and more.

### Career Corner:

**Ashley Sherod** is a Farm Loan Manager for USDA in southeast Iowa. Farming can cost a lot of money. Farmers often get loans to purchase land, livestock, or equipment. Ashley can help them do that! She works with people who want to start farms to get them the funding they need. She says that communication and math skills are important in what she does!



# FIVE IOWANS WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

## NORMAN BORLAUG

Norman Borlaug was an Iowa native and a plant pathologist. His work in plant breeding is said to have saved over one billion lives. He is one of only seven people to have received the Nobel Peace Prize, the Congressional Gold Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



Borlaug: Photo courtesy of the World Food Prize

## JESSIE FIELD SHAMBAUGH

Jessie Field Shambaugh was from Shenandoah, Iowa. She was a teacher. She thought it was important that her students learn real skills to develop their head, heart, hands, and health. That's right, the Mother of 4-H started the very first 4-H clubs here in Iowa!



Photo courtesy Iowa Women's Archives, University of Iowa Libraries

## THE WALLACE FAMILY

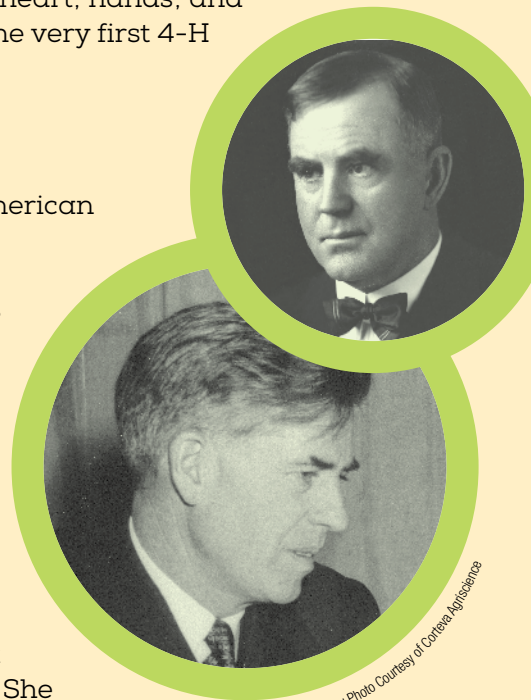
Henry C. and Henry A. Wallace were important in American agriculture. The father and son served as United States Secretaries of Agriculture. They created the *Wallaces Farmer* magazine that still runs today. Henry A. was interested in plants and founded the Hi-Bred Corn Company, which became Pioneer, and now Corteva Agriscience. He went on to become Vice President of the United States.

## SISTER IRENE MUÑOZ

Sister Irene found her calling helping farm workers. Sister Irene advocated for migrant workers' rights. She served on Governor Robert Ray's Spanish Speaking Task Force in the 1960s. She helped provide housing standards for migrant workers.



Photo courtesy of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary



Wallace: Photo Courtesy of Corteva Agriscience

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