



## Loss of Teacher in Agriculture

The National Association of Agricultural Educators reports that the United States is facing a shortage of agriculture teachers, leaving many schools unable to fill open positions. According to Dave Else, director of the Iowa Regional Education Applicant Placement Program in Cedar Falls, numerous schools are actively searching for vocational agriculture instructors.

Wade Miller, professor and interim chair of Agricultural Education and Studies at Iowa State University, says the shortage is especially noticeable in Iowa. Each year, the state sees 20 to 25 job openings for agriculture teachers, yet only a small number of qualified candidates apply. Miller noted that while about 20 graduates earn teaching licenses annually, many choose careers in other agricultural industries or continue their education instead of entering the classroom.

Since the early 2000s, there has been an ongoing shortage of Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers, especially in School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE). Agriculture teachers often have more responsibilities than other teachers, including advising FFA chapters and supervising Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs). These added duties can increase stress and make it harder to keep teachers in the profession. To avoid shutting down programs, some school districts hire less qualified candidates to fill open positions.

Many agriculture teachers leave the profession within their first five years. New teachers face challenges such as classroom management, lesson planning, FFA responsibilities, paperwork, and working with parents and administrators. Mid-career teachers often struggle most with limited time, planning courses, and staying motivated.

### Agriculture education Salary In Iowa

In Iowa, the average salary for a starting out Ag teacher is \$52,697. As of July 1st, 2025, 62,000 is the minimum pay for Ag teachers with 12-year experience in Iowa.



### Iowa Education 2024-2025 Vacancies

The Iowa Department of Education has provided updated details on teacher vacancies across the state. An estimated 661 unfilled teaching position, that number represents 1% of Iowa's approximately 38,000 teaching jobs.

## Local FFA Program in Trouble

The Iowa FFA Association is a statewide youth organization serving more than 20,500 students (about the seating capacity of Madison Square Garden) through around 270 local chapters. Recently, Des Moines Public Schools announced a temporary pause for the 50-year-old agriscience program at Central Campus for the 2025–2026 school year. District officials cited declining enrollment as the reason for the decision, emphasizing that the pause is intended to allow time to rethink and strengthen the program rather than eliminate it.

School leaders plan to form a steering committee made up of students, parents, community members, and agriscience industry partners to help redesign the curriculum. In a joint statement, the superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools and the director of Central Campus confirmed that the FFA chapter will remain active during the 2025–26 school year. Students will participate through independent study, allowing them to complete projects, earn credentials, and take part in FFA competitions and activities.

