



South Dakota High Demand & High Wage Career

Career Cluster:
Agriculture



Agricultural Equipment Operators

Standard Occupational Code 45-2091

What They Do

Drive and control equipment to support agricultural activities such as tilling soil; planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops; feeding and herding livestock; or removing animal waste. May perform tasks such as crop baling or hay bucking. May operate stationary equipment to perform post-harvest tasks such as husking, shelling, threshing, and ginning.

Is This For You?

Work Interests are described in the following categories (compatible with Holland's Model). People who tend to succeed in this career are:

Realistic (Doers) — Prefer to work with objects, things, machines, tools, plants or animals. They have mechanical ability, enjoy being outdoors and working with their hands.

Conventional (Organizers) — Detail oriented and organized. They like to analyze data, keep financial records and do research. They can be counted on to be accurate and enjoy structure and closure.

Work Styles (personality tendencies) of people who perform well in this occupation have:

Dependability — A tendency to be reliable, responsible, and consistent in meeting work-related obligations.

Abilities reflect a person's aptitude to acquire skills and knowledge. The following abilities are important for success in the career:

- Control Precision
- Multi-limb Coordination
- Near Vision
- Depth Perception
- Far Vision
- Problem Sensitivity
- Arm-Hand Steadiness
- Oral Comprehension
- Rate Control
- Reaction Time
- Response Orientation
- Hearing Sensitivity
- Manual Dexterity
- Oral Expression

Work Activities

- Operating Vehicles, Mechanized Devices, or Equipment
- Inspecting Equipment, Structures, or Materials

Education & Training

While a high school diploma or equivalent may not be required, work experience in the type of agricultural operation involved is especially important without it. Postsecondary education in an appropriate ag field would be helpful.

A registered apprenticeship is another option for preparing for this occupation. To learn more, visit StartTodaySD.com or contact your local Job Service office to get started.

Recommended Levels* for the National Career Readiness Certificate

Applied Math	4
Workplace Documents	4
Graphic Literacy	4

*Using the median skill level.

Where They Work

The South Dakota industries which employ the largest number of agricultural equipment operators are:

- Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods
- Self Employment
- Food Manufacturing

South Dakota Employment & Wages

2024 Employment	2034 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Average Annual Openings	Annual Median Wage	Annual Average Wage
1,566	1,706	140	8.9%	256	\$48,060	\$47,470

Additional References

- Labor Market Information Center**
www.dlr.sd.gov/lmic
- Career OneStop**
www.careeronestop.org
- O*Net Online**
www.onetonline.org
- mySkills myFuture**
<https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>

Provided By

Labor Market Information Center
South Dakota Dept. of Labor and Regulation
605.626.2314

Visit dlr.sd.gov/hotcareers to obtain the most recent workforce data and trends and more resources, including this document. Also available are explanations of the terms used in this occupational profile.

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