

The Month of March celebrates National Agriculture Week, March 18 – 24, and National Ag Day on March 20. Most people, when they hear "agriculture," think about farming. Farming is at the heart of the agribusiness industry, but the farmers who actually produce food and fiber products for the United States make up only two percent of the population. Agribusiness, on the other hand, is the number one industry in the U.S. and employs nearly 20% of the population. Agribusiness includes not only farm production, but also the many businesses and organizations that support and provide inputs to farmers. This input supply sector includes the businesses that provide seed, fertilizer, chemicals, feed, fencing, equipment, and other inputs to farmers. It also includes the financing sector, insurance, consulting, and services such as veterinary care. Agribusiness also includes the output marketing sector, which is everything it takes to get the product from the farmer to us as consumers. In celebrating the abundance that agriculture provides us each day, and the men and women who make up the many businesses and organizations within agribusiness, we highlight the program SVCC offers to students in this important industry.

"The SVCC Agribusiness program helped prepare me for my coursework at Virginia Tech, and I still use concepts I learned there in everyday life," said Ellen Crowder, a Halifax native.

Crowder is employed at Meherrin Ag & Chemical in the area of feed and animal health sales. She received her Associates degree from SVCC in Agribusiness and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agribusiness Management from Virginia Tech. A long-term goal is to obtain a Masters in Agribusiness from Kansas State University.

Mathew Lynch, an Area Forester for Brunswick County with the Virginia Department of Forestry, started his Agribusiness degree at SVCC.

He said, "Southside is an excellent place to begin your college education. I was able to get the core classes that most four-year colleges require you to take in a much smaller and personal learning atmosphere. It also helped me develop the way I learned and studied and help me transition better into a four-year college."

A graduate of Greensville County High School and SVCC with a degree in Agribusiness, the Purdy native transferred to Virginia Tech where he majored in Forestry. His current plans are to continue working for the Commonwealth of Virginia with a possible entrepreneurship/private industry venture in the far future.

Drew Jackson of Keysville came to SVCC through the Governor's School of Southside Virginia where he received an Associate's degree in Humanities. Drew also took dual enrollment agribusiness courses while in high school. A graduate of Randolph-Henry High School, he transferred to Virginia Tech graduating in December 2017 with a Bachelor's degree in Agribusiness.

"SVCC is a wonderful place to start furthering your education. The faculty and staff were always very helpful, and made my experience there a great one," he said.

Jackson is employed with Altria as a Leaf Specialist. He hopes to continue his career and advance through the company as possible.

As March draws to a close, let's take a moment to thank the farmers and other members of our agribusiness industry who feed and clothe the world.