

What can you do with a Food Studies Minor?*

Food Studies is a rapidly growing field, so some of the jobs that Middlebury graduates will fill have not been created yet. Regardless of the work you do, your liberal arts education will help you to be comfortable with multiple perspectives on the human/environment interface. Some of the key skills that will become increasingly important for jobs in food and agriculture are the ability to analyze and understand systems; to work well in teams of people who have different perspectives and backgrounds, as well as independently; to understand how racial and social inequity affect food and resource access; and to communicate orally, in writing and with figures and graphs.

Vermont's Farm to Plate Network (<https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/>) created several resources for people seeking jobs. You can find Career Profiles and a booklet on Exploring Food System Careers on their website under "Resources and Stories". These resources emphasize jobs that don't require graduate degrees. Middlebury students are also likely to go into work requiring advanced study.

Fortunately, a growing number of universities in the US and abroad have very good graduate programs. Look for possibilities under "Program Listings" on the [Sustainable Agriculture Education Association](#) web-page or on the [Agriculture, Food & Human Values Society](#) web-page. Note that Canada, Europe and England have excellent programs that are often much cheaper than graduate schools in the US.

The possible career paths listed below will give you a better idea of where you might go with your interests and skills. Doing one or more internships is a very good idea, both to learn what kinds of work you enjoy (and really don't enjoy) as well as to build up your resume. Seek out internships through Vermont Farm to Plate's [job list](#), the Idealist.org, the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group's [job resources](#), or the COMFOOD-JOBS [listserv](#).

Possible pathways:

- 1) **Work on a farm, aquaculture facility or fishing boat.** You will need experience to be a farmer or fisher; so if you are interested, start while you're a Middlebury student at The Knoll or with another internship. Farms almost always hire extra workers during the growing season. Starting your own farm is an option as well, but you'll need business skills such as accounting and business planning, practical skills like driving a tractor and fixing machinery, capital to buy land and equipment, and knowledge of how to grow food. Farmers and fishers need to be versatile and they need people-skills to market their products successfully; it's no longer enough just to know how to produce or catch food.
- 2) **Direct or work with a program serving farmers or communities,** such as by serving beginning farmers, managing an urban garden, starting a Farm-to-School program, or addressing community needs for healthy food. The program might be through a governmental agency (such as city government, Cooperative Extension or the Natural

Resources Conservation Service) or a non-governmental organization. Consider getting a one-year appointment through [FoodCorps](#), if this interests you. If you are interested in better food systems planning, learn GIS.

- 3) **Teach children (or adults)** about gardening, nutrition, where food comes from, and making better food choices. You might want to get a Teaching Certificate to expand your options.
- 4) **Start or run a food- or farm-related business.** Your business might add value to farm products (such as by processing) or fill another niche in the food system, such as distributing or marketing food. Basic business skills and accounting will be essential for this job, as well as for running a farm.
- 5) **Work in institutional food service** (e.g., in a public school or hospital cafeteria), **catering or the restaurant industry.** Many institutions are interested in sourcing more sustainable options and hire people to help with this.
- 6) **Work with a non-governmental organization, a state or federal agency or an international agency that analyzes or advocates for food or agricultural policy changes** in the US or internationally. This field is likely to grow rapidly over the next few years.
- 7) **Be a food-writer.** Interest in food and nutrition is growing rapidly, and you can place articles related to trends in food and agriculture in many different places.
- 8) **Conduct research on the health, environmental, economic and social impacts of food system alternatives.** Understanding the impacts of what we eat and how it is produced, distributed and marketed is increasingly important, as scientists have illuminated how significant the food system's contributions are to major challenges such as whether populations are food secure and healthy, whether biodiversity is lost or conserved, whether the food system releases or stores greenhouse gases, and whether freshwater is protected. This option will require a M.S. and perhaps a Ph.D. if you want to be able to get funding to design and conduct your own research.

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