

Job Fair: Companies Eager To Hire Ag Graduates

NEWARK, Del. — The large meeting room at the University of Delaware Perkins Student Center was bustling with activity.

Wall-to-wall booths staffed by representatives from 35 companies were drawing interested students. The room hummed with

eager conversations about the future and jobs.

This is a scene not often played out these days in a job market that looks bleak for many college graduates. Yet the College of Agricultural Sciences career fair, held last month at the University

of Delaware, is proof that agriculture has a lot to offer the well-prepared, career-minded graduate.

When other fields are downsizing, a degree in agriculture still means choices. In fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that 50,000 new graduates are sought each year to fill jobs in the ever-expanding field of agriculture.

Karen Roth, assistant to the dean of the college, began the career fair for agricultural sciences majors five years ago.

"People assume they know what agriculture is, but fewer than 10 percent of our graduates actually work on a family farm. There are so many opportunities beyond production agriculture," Roth said. "At the fair, students are exposed to the many different opportunities in agriculture."

"Though job interviews can and do come out of this event, students take part for other reasons — it's a good place to begin networking," Roth said. "It's also an opportunity to make contacts for summer internships with industries and laboratories."

This year's fair attracted nine new companies. Most of the businesses are from Delaware, where agricultural industries seem to be



A poultry-processing company representative talks with a student about job opportunities during the University of Delaware College of Agricultural Sciences career fair last month.

thriving, and Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Among the businesses that set up career booths to attract the latest crop of agricultural graduates are pharmaceutical manufacturers, poultry processors, stock breeders, environmental and recycling firms, government, agencies, pest control firms, commodity wholesalers, public gardens, environ-

mental agencies, and chemical corporations.

A representative from a commodities wholesaler said about the career fair, "We come every year. Our business is continually expanding, and we're looking for people with business skills and a background in agriculture. In our business, you can't beat the combination."

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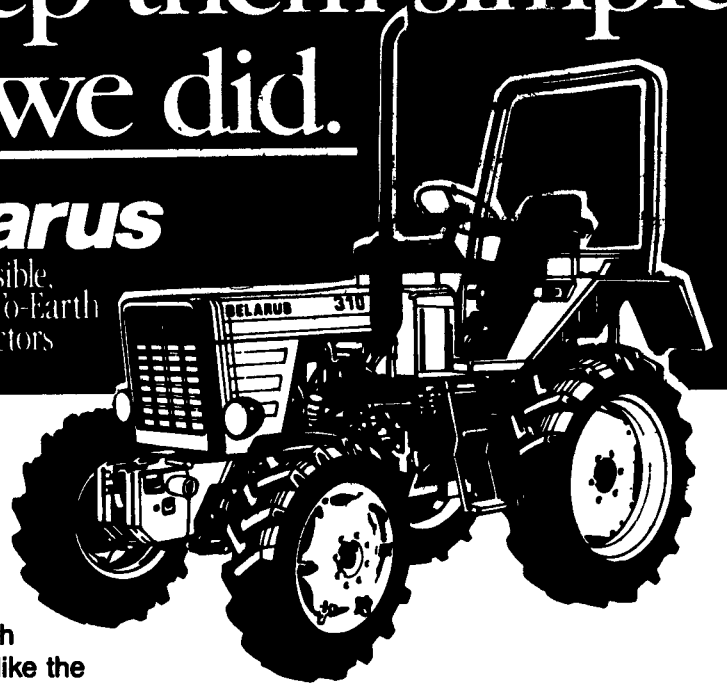
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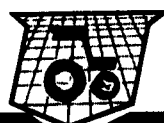
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