WHY IS AGRICULTURE IMPORTANT?  
  
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​The following is an essay by Grace Ann Rich fro Clay County Tennessee. The essay was a winner from Tennessee Farm Bureau's sponsored contest. I think it does an excellent job explaining its topic.  
  
WHY IS AGRICULTURE IMPORTANT?  
Agriculture is important! Without it, we would be hungry, naked and afraid! Agriculture is people caring for people. It is farmers, processors, economist, marketers and businessmen, all working together to provide food, fiber and products for daily life. It is the backbone of our country and it is very important!  
  
Have you ever seen this famous quote from Brenda Shoepp ? Her grandfather taught her that ... "once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher, but every day, three times a day, you need a farmer." This is so true!  The worlds food supply is critical for the health of our population.  Agriculture provides an abundant, healthy, inexpensive variety of foods to nourish our bodies. I'm grateful that dedicated farmers like my dad get up early and work hard all day, often missing their own meals, to provide food for others.  
  
I'm also thankful that agriculture provides fiber to make our clothing, because i don't want to be naked, and I sure don't want my grandmothers to show up to my birthday parties without clothes!  consider your favorite t-shirt. It took a farmer about six months to grow that cotton fiber, which was harvested, sold, processed, transported and marketed -- many hands, working together in the agriculture industry to bring us the products we need and want.  
  
Have you ever stopped to think of what the world would be like without agriculture? Well, I did, and it scared me to death!  Agriculture is the backbone of our society. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, it contributes 17 million jobs and over eight hundred billion dollars to our economy. Without agriculture, our civilization would disintegrate. Imagine having no lumber or drywall, no spark plugs, tires, or hydraulic fluid, no toothpaste, soap or deodorant, no biofuels and no vaccines or medications. Our world would change drastically from the loss of these products, all of which require agriculture inputs. To me,the most frightening aspect of no agriculture would be the loss of our independence.  Our country was established by wise forefathers who knew that we needed to be strong agriculturally to succeed. When we rely on other countries for our food, it takes away our power and makes people weak, dependent and susceptible.  
  
Why is agriculture important? It fills our bellies, covers our bodies, and shelters us. It runs our economy and provides products that are critical to our lives. Most importantly, however, agriculture produces special people -- farmers, extension agents, agriculture teachers, feed salesmen, equipment dealers, businessmen -- people I've found to be hard-working, responsible, smart, kind and giving. Perhaps Thomas Jefferson said it best: "Cultivators of the earth are the most independent, the most wedded to its liberty and interest, by the most lasting bonds."