

Many colleges and universities have recently turned out this year's brand new crop of graduates, and I hope as they look to begin their careers some will consider jobs in agriculture.

I can remember graduation being an exciting and nervous time, leaving the structure of college classes and schedules for your first real job.

I was lucky because I knew what I wanted to do and where I was going to work, but many graduates leave school and start the process of looking for a job.

Some people may be surprised by all the opportunities available in agriculture and agribusiness. Often when people think of agriculture, they only think of a farmer, but in reality there are a lot of people who support the efforts of farmers. Agriculture and agribusinesses employ about 16 percent of the state's workforce or 686,000 people

At the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, we have scientists, agronomists, foresters, engineers, truck drivers, marketing and public relations specialists, veterinarians, environmental specialists, accountants, human resources specialists, computer technicians and more.

Many of these same kinds of jobs, plus more, exist at farms and agribusinesses. I would encourage young people who are beginning to look for jobs to consider agriculture as a career. I believe agriculture has a bright future ahead, as the population continues to grow. Agriculture provides us with the essentials – food, housing and fuel. That means it is an industry that we will continue to need.

Agriculture is going to need bright, young minds to push the industry forward. I teach an advanced agriculture class at N.C. State University, and I am continually impressed by the students. I am proud that we have strong agricultural leaders on the horizon and it is exciting to think about what the future holds.