

Testimony for House Subcommittee on Technical Education and Career Readiness

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Good morning. I first want to thank Chairman Saylor, Chairman Grove, and the Subcommittee for allowing me to discuss the importance of Career & Technical Education, specifically Agricultural Education, in the Commonwealth. My name is Mark Lowery and I serve as a Marketing Specialist for New Holland's North American operations.

Our brand is proud to have started over 120 years ago in a small machine shop in New Holland, Pennsylvania and grow into a global leader of agricultural and construction equipment. Many of our iconic machines like the first commercially successful small square baler and the Haybine and Discbine (for the agriculturally savvy) have built New Holland into a premier manufacturer. But as agricultural technology has advanced, our equipment continues to advance with it thanks to engineers in product development and marketing professionals who work across the globe to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

So what does this mean for Pennsylvania? As a company that manufactures hay & forage equipment in the state, and that is home to global design and engineering teams for our full line of equipment, the availability and readiness of candidates for our wide array of careers is a primary concern. The New Holland site in Lancaster County is home to 1,250 employees that serve in manufacturing and commercial roles to support our business. We are currently have 25 job openings in the Commonwealth with roles ranging from Senior Design Engineers who develop new equipment for the marketplace, Technical Training Instructors who train dealer service technicians to repair our equipment, Systems Control Engineers who ensure that electrical and computer systems are functional and efficient in tractors and combines, and Field Test Engineers who validate our next generation of products in the field so they exceed customer expectations.

Did you notice a theme? Our organization is constantly challenged to fill vacancies in well compensated and competitive careers. As technology in our equipment changes, our workforce needs continue to evolve. As an example, in the span of just fifteen years, precision farming technology has progressed from GPS feedback to simply tell an operator where to drive via a light-bar to autonomous (or driverless) equipment. Even more can be said about the information gathering tools that collect data for farmers to make smarter management decisions. We project that our staffing levels will remain consistent, but the job responsibilities and new openings will be driven by our requirement to innovate and provide more technological features for buyers in the new equipment market.

As we look to find qualified candidates, another key factor in evaluating job seekers is their ability to lead change and lead people. Leadership is expected to drive the change we need to remain competitive. New Holland, and our corporate parent CNH Industrial, have identified participation in high-school based agricultural education programs as an excellent indicator of a potential employee's leadership development potential. Agricultural education's intra-curricular student organization, FFA, strives to promote premier leadership, personal growth and career success for enrolled students. Alumni from Pennsylvania's 160 high school agricultural education programs can be found throughout our organization. They serve in sales and marketing leadership roles, operating sophisticated laser-beds in the New Holland Haytools Plant or developing the latest combines to increase grain harvest efficiency. Our company values the core leadership behaviors and practical aptitudes built in career and technical education programs and we believe graduates will help us ensure that we're building a strong employee foundation for the next generation.

New Holland's confidence in these programs drives our recruitment initiatives to attract qualified individuals. We are a strong supporter of the National FFA Organization and we provide financial support for scholarships, awards, projects and regularly recruit candidates for internships and full-time employment at FFA events. We also contribute curriculum and resources to help foster an interest in the science, technology, engineering and math subjects. Our investment continues as students progress into post-secondary education. Locally, we have a long relationship with the Pennsylvania State University and have invested in biomass and renewable fuels research while cooperating with faculty and staff to provide industry experience for students. New Holland stakeholders also play an active role with the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering's BioRenewable Systems Advisory Committee by providing support and guidance to an academic program that produces ideal career entrants.

We're committed to partnering with educational programs that provide the behavioral skills and technical background that will propel our business forward. New Holland and CNH Industrial will continue to seek opportunities to provide resources that excite students about careers in agriculture, science and technology. I am thankful for the opportunity to participate today and look forward to your questions and discussion.