



Prairie **Farmer**

5 reasons farm kids are more successful in life

Mindy Ward May 13, 2016

Graduation season is in full swing. Whether it is a child graduating kindergarten, eighth grade, high school or college, parents across the country are beaming with pride. But I truly believe that farm kids will find success more often than those who were not raised with an agriculture upbringing.

Here are 5 reason I believe farm kids make it in the real world:

1. Work ethic. There is nothing like daily chores to make a farm kid appreciate hard work. But what sets them apart is their motivation. When things fall apart in college--as sometimes they do--farm kids do not quit. They pick themselves up and start again--a lesson learned on the farm. Farm kids know what it is like to raise livestock--feed and water every day--only to sell it at market for a loss. It does not deter them; they have a passion for work. They head back to the farmstead and start all over. This work ethic became evident when my eldest went to work in a non-agriculture related field. She found that coming in early and staying late was not the norm. That working hard was not the goal of all employees. That individuals wanted to get by doing the bare minimum. Still, it does not deter her. She works because she is a farm kid and a hard work ethic is all she knows.

2. Community service. Farm kids start early learning the importance of service. At just 8 years old, they learn the 4-H Pledge that includes the line-- "I pledge my hands to larger service." They take part in picking up trash or participating in a can food drive for the local food shelter. Then they continue their service in the FFA where farm kids gain experience serving as leaders in their chapter, schools and communities. I believe farm kids will continue to serve in college and their own communities as adults because ag youth organizations made it part of their lifestyle.

3. Communication skills. Farm kids learned the "elevator speech" long before their classmates. Once again, youth organizations like 4-H and FFA teach them to introduce themselves properly. And farm kids seem to be able to talk to just about anyone. They grew up visiting with young kids at FFA barnyards and adults at Farm Bureau meetings. Meeting and talking to people, otherwise known as networking, in college is one of the biggest ways to become successful and this is no problem for farm kids across the country.

4. Professional development. Being raised on a farm teaches kids how to take criticism. It is not easy to listen to a judge explain where you went wrong in raising an animal. However, when faced with critiques farm kids do not sass, argue or yell. Instead, they stand with their animal in front of a crowd and acknowledge a judge's perspective. Why? Because showing livestock taught them criticism is the only way to get better. It is a lesson they will carry into college and future jobs.

5. Family values. Farm kids are taught that family comes above all else. Whether it is gathering at the homestead for holidays or birthdays, kids raised on a farm understand it is important to show up for family events. But more importantly, farm kids are taught to help other families. From the time they watched their dad combine corn for a farmer who fell ill to loading up a meal with their mom to deliver to an elderly neighbor, farm kids understand family is the cornerstone to their existence. Family is the foundation they will build on for future generations of farm kids.

Congratulations to all of our farm kids graduating this year. Take what you have learned growing up in the industry and make a difference in not only your life, but in the lives of others.

