

The Iowa State University Ag 450 Farm, a cornerstone of agricultural education, commemorates its 80th anniversary this year. Since its establishment in 1943, the farm has played a pivotal role in educating students and preparing them for a career in the agriculture industry.

The Ag 450 Farm, situated on approximately 600 acres of land and just a short drive from the main campus, has long been a hub for hands-on learning, research and practical experience for Iowa State students pursuing careers in agriculture. Students manage the diversified operation through the AGEDS 450 course. Within the course, individuals are selected for an officer team and this team assists in making various management decisions. The farm includes crop fields, livestock barns and state-of-the-art equipment, ensuring that students have access to the latest tools and resources.

Over the past 80 years, the Ag 450 Farm has adapted to changing agricultural practices and technologies while maintaining its commitment to providing students with a comprehensive agricultural education. Logan Zabel, who served as the 2021 Ag 450 Farm President, shared his enthusiasm for the milestone. "Being part of the Ag 450 Farm is like joining a legacy. My father was the President of the farm when he was in school and was a part of numerous large management decisions, as was I when I was president." Zabel went on to express, "The farm's rich 80-year history and continued commitment to its mission is truly inspiring. The farm has witnessed eight decades of growth, and I cannot wait to see where it goes after the next eight."

Jordan Hammen, an Ag Studies student who is a current Ag 450 Farm officer, emphasized the practical importance of this facility. "The farm is like a living laboratory for us. It's where we put theory into practice, learn from our mistakes and understand the real-world challenges in the industry." This collaborative structure encourages students to work together, fostering teamwork and professional development.

Skills acquired at the Ag 450 Farm, including technical proficiency, decision-making abilities and interpersonal skills, are highly sought after by industry employers. Bailey Sieren, an Ag Studies student enrolled in the course added, "The farm is not just a place to learn about agriculture; it is a place to experience it firsthand. Students who do not have an agriculture background get the opportunity to run equipment for the first time, which prepares them for their future careers in agriculture."

The Ag 450 Farm has fostered a sense of community among students, faculty and staff. Annual events, like the Farm Field Day, bring in people from across campus and the local community to witness the farm's impact firsthand. As part of the 80th-anniversary celebrations, the Ag 450 Farm is planning a series of events throughout the year, including educational workshops, historical exhibitions, and alumni gatherings. These activities will showcase the rich history of the farm and highlight their ongoing commitment to agricultural education.