

## AGRI-FISHERY ARTS AND WHY IT NEEDS EXPANSION

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Among the least offered strands under the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track is the Agricultural-Fishery Arts (AFA). Even if the features of the strand are promising, it is ironic that a few institutions are offering it. The reasons could expand from a lack of practicum spaces and funding and places to conduct immersion. Nevertheless, this is among the most critical strands in senior high school as it talks about crop production and animal raising (Llego, 2014), professions that no longer interest many youngsters. Food security could be achieved shortly if only the government would fund institutions to offer such a strand.

In terms of scope and skills, it wants to develop in the agriculture and aquaculture fields, AFA has numerous programs in store. AFA strand is committed to training the students to raise animals and be involved in animal productions such as poultry chicken, swine, and the like. There is also a good focus on crop production and pest management, landscape installation, food processing, fishery wharfing, and slaughter operations (Nucum, 2018). Learners will be enabled to be entrepreneurs, such as starting their tilapia business or doing hydro-phonic farming at home, and become employment-ready with these foundational skills that they could use in their start-ups. National certification (NC) and Certificate of Competency (COC) are issued by TESDA after assessments, which gives more chances of being hired by different companies.

Nevertheless, with the large population of graduates opting to pursue tertiary education, various courses apply to this strand. AECC (2024) listed the best courses related to such a program. Students may take up Plant Biochemistry, Agriculture

Genetics, Agricultural Engineering, Agronomy, Plant Biotechnology, and many others. These courses will land jobs in food science and animal raising. These courses leverage the advanced technologies of farming that may contribute to the goal of sustainable development and fulfilled food security in the future. Science integrated with farming and local produce improved through non-conventional yet technological ways will be the assets to save the agriculture and aquaculture industries. If this happens, the country will lessen its dependence on other nations regarding rice supplies and other crops.

The population of learners enrolling for TVL track courses increases each year, and it is high time that more institutions offered AFA as a flagship strand and invested in campaigning for the youth to know how essential it is for everyone. It deserves the recognition of the community as this is one of the most promising ways to secure the future and save the nation from hunger in the coming decades. In the bigger picture, this strand can develop individuals who will save the decreasing production of rice and the diminishing quality of products from the country. Through the programs under this strand, Filipino learners will know how to feed the country as they begin becoming leaders in the near future.

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