

USU Agricultural Educator Honored for Outstanding Teaching

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Utah State University Assistant Professor Tyson Sorensen received the Outstanding Early Career Award for the American Association for Agricultural Education's Western Region. Sorensen is known for preparing future agriculture educators by calling on his experiences as a high school teacher in addition to theory and college course curriculum.

"Dr. Sorensen is very deserving of this award," said Brian Warnick, associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, and fellow agricultural education professor. "He is an outstanding teacher and researcher in agricultural education and provides a significant amount of service to the profession on a national, state, and local level. His work ethic is phenomenal and he is an excellent example to his students. I am pleased that he was recognized for his outstanding work."

Sorensen recognizes that agricultural education goes beyond traditional farming and ranching and opens doors to technology, business, economics, science and a host of other disciplines.

"It is about cows and plows," Sorensen said. "But it is much more. Ag education is about drones, genetic engineering, food science, natural resources, business, public policy, leadership, communications and more. It is about preparing students to solve some of the world's greatest challenges related to food security, energy, natural resources, and water. I help prepare future teachers to make a difference in the lives of their students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and college and career success through agricultural education."

Applying what students have learned in other classes to agriculture can help confusing concepts make sense and provide real-world context, according to Sorensen.

"For example, we take the x, y and z formula someone didn't quite grasp in math, and we provide context to it as the student uses it to build something or figure out how much concrete or potting soil to order," Sorensen said. "Then it makes sense."

Sorensen earned bachelor's and master's degrees at USU and his PhD at Oregon State University.

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