

Sustainable Agriculture

Bachelor of Science Degree

Contact

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Admission Requirements

(In years as established by the college)

A high school diploma with the following specific courses:

- 4 English
- 2 Algebra I & II
- 1 Geometry
- 2 Lab Science (biology and chemistry or physics)
- 2 History/Social Studies
- Academic electives (to equal at least 17 credits)

To ensure current mathematical skills, students should take a mathematics course during their senior year of high school.

Did You Know?

Our program offers a blend of practical, hands-on experience and a firm grounding in the science and basic concepts of farming in an environmentally benign way. We have a learning atmosphere that challenges students to help discover new ways to make our food system safer, stronger and more socially responsible. Our students are active in a wide range of leadership activities on campus and in the wider farming communities of the Northeast.

College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture

Program Description

The Sustainable Agriculture (SAG) Program emphasizes the building of healthy soil through crop rotations, organic soil amendments and erosion management; protecting water quality by reducing synthetic chemical use; managing pest and weed problems with integrated, ecologically sound approaches; increasing farm profits and income stability through diverse, community-based enterprises; and using knowledge of scientific principles to propose and test farming practices that better mimic natural ecosystems. In New England, UMaine offers the only bachelor's degree in sustainable agriculture; other New England programs offer the subject as a minor or concentration. UMaine's also is the oldest such program in the country, and it has been highlighted in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Specialized Information

Students in SAG have the opportunity to participate in a student-run organic farming experience on the 2.5-acre University of Maine Rogers Experimental Farm just 3 miles from campus. The farm is an atypical student farm in that it is managed by the students, allowing them to be more fully engaged in the daily rewards, challenges and decision-making involved in farming. Students have faculty and staff advisors that they can access for guidance along the way, making their work an enhanced learning experience. SAG students also may enjoy participating in the UMaine organic dairy student group, giving them the chance to help manage an organically certified Holstein dairy cow herd.

Students often work with SAG faculty during the summer on research projects around the state on such topics as organic soil fertility management, weed ecology, integrated pest management and organic dairy production. Other recent internships and summer jobs have included working for an organic seed company in New Mexico, interning with a farm equipment retailer in Indiana, serving as an assistant to Cooperative Extension staff and working on vegetable and grain farms in Alaska, Pennsylvania, Illinois and throughout the Northeast.

Associated Honor Societies and Student Organizations

Students are encouraged to join the Black Bear Food Guild (BBFG), UMAD COWS organic dairy student group, Sustainable Agriculture Enthusiasts student club (SAGe) and Tractor Club. They also have opportunities to attend the annual conferences of such professional organizations as the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA).

NEBHE Program

Applicants to this program who reside in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire or Rhode Island are eligible for reduced tuition (in-state plus 50 percent) under the New England Regional Student Program, administered through the New England Board of Higher Education (nebhe.org).

Representative Courses

PSE 100 Plant Science
PSE 105 Principles and Practices of Sustainable Agriculture
PSE 101 Cropping Systems
PSE 140 Soil Science
PSE 141 Soil Science Laboratory

PSE 320 Soil Organic Matter Management
PSE 403 Weed Ecology
PSE 440 Soil Chemistry and Plant Nutrition
PSE 479 Crop Ecology and Physiology
PSE 457 Plant Pathology

Career and Graduate Opportunities

Careers followed by SAG graduates include: organic or sustainable farm manager, seed company curator, educational director at a nonprofit farm, certified crop adviser, Cooperative Extension educator, technician or researcher for public or private research institutions, organic restaurant garden manager, community garden organizer, field integrated pest management (IPM) technician, Farm Service agent.

About UMaine

The University of Maine, founded in Orono in 1865, is the state's premier public university. It is among the most comprehensive higher education institutions in the Northeast and attracts students from across the U.S. and more than 60 countries. It currently enrolls 12,000 total undergraduate and graduate students who can directly participate in groundbreaking research working with world-class scholars. Students are offered 88 bachelor's degree programs, 64 master's degree programs, 25 doctoral programs and one of the oldest and most prestigious honors programs in the U.S. The university promotes environmental stewardship on its campus, with substantial efforts aimed at conserving energy, recycling and adhering to green building standards in new construction. For more information about UMaine, go online (umaine.edu). Equal opportunity information also is available online (umaine.edu/eo).

How do I apply?

Visit go.umaine.edu for an application, as well as information about academics and life at UMaine.



Academic Programs 2011–12

The latest versions of the UMaine fact sheets are online (factsheets.umaine.edu). This fact sheet is intended for informational purposes only and is subject to change.

