

A Look into Agricultural Careers: Erin Madden
By Judi Whittaker
NYFB State Promotion and Education Committee

The agricultural industry in New York is vast. There are many career choices that can be found here, from the farmer to all those involved in the rest of the industry and food chain. Our committee is working to show just how varied agriculture can be and encouraging our youth to take a look, or maybe a second look, at what agriculture can do for them. Here is the third of three interviews with people involved with the agricultural industry.

Preparing for graduation or even having graduated already can be an exciting, but stressful time. Many students may be thinking to themselves, what do I want for a career? Many students in the agricultural field may be going back to the family farm, but on the other hand many are not. I was one of those students that did not go back to the family farm full time. So let me introduce myself. I am Erin Madden, a County Executive Director (CED) for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

As a CED I am responsible for directing and managing program and administrative operations for three counties. I help carry out commodity production, commodity/facility loans, conservation, environmental quality, indemnity, disaster, emergency and defense programs under policies established by FSA.

I provide basic FSA farm program services along with the help of my staff. I perform office and field activities as needed to accomplish program objectives. I also manage and direct activities of my staff. As a CED I am able to support my fellow farmers, as well as stay connected with the agricultural community. There is a lot of diversity that comes with working for FSA. My job is always exciting and each day brings a new and exciting challenge. I feel my job is very fulfilling. I always take every chance I get to either work with our producers at the counter or get out to their farms. There are so many different aspects of working in agriculture. My family had a small dairy farm growing up and it was that life style, along with growing up in the agricultural community that showed me there are many aspects.

No matter what career you end up choosing which there are many, being able to make a difference in the farming community has meant the most to me.