

Agricultural Science for Leaving Certificate

Topics covered in this subject are as follows;

- Soils
- Soil Texture
- The General Structure and Function of Plants
- Farm Crops – Cereal and Roots
- Farm Crops – Grassland
- Tree and Shelter
- Principles of Genetics
- Structure and Function of the Animal Body
- The Cow
- The Sheep
- Pig
- Pollution
- Farm Safety
- Farm Buildings – *for school assessment only*
- Farm-House Environment – *for school assessment only*

This subject has a continual assessment element and a terminal exam. The terminal exam is worth 300 marks (75%) and the continual assessment element is worth 100 marks (25 %).

The terminal exam like all subjects has some multiple choices involved. The continual assessment element is based on an external examiner interviewing the student on;

- Their Farm Experience
- Plant Identification
- Animal Identification
- Experiment Interpretation

Students who come from a farming background or with a keen interest in Biology benefit from doing this subject.

Agricultural Science

Theory

This is a very interesting subject which students get involved in. In class students learn about different farming methods, such as how they feed their livestock to detailed description about the 4 stomach digestive system of the dairy cow. You learn about different grass species and about why the farmer uses Maize, or "Corn" as the Americans call it in their silage production. Students investigate the different plant families and the whole range of insects which the farmer has to deal with on a daily basis.

Experiments

As well as understanding all these terms the students get involved in the experiments which coincide with the relevant text. They experiment as the best process for silage production, what the dry matter digestibility of a sample of grass is, the presence of sugars in grass, the effect of different fertilisation rates on barley just to name a few.

Field Studies

Another area which students love to partake in is the field studies. Throughout the 2 year programme, students must visit local dairy farmer to see best practices in real life situations. They visit local entrepreneurs who have set up their own butter producing factory. Visit the annual Ploughing Championship to see all the machinery, the new technology and of course the livestock section.

Assessment

This 2 year programme consists of 75% terminal examination and 25% continual assessment. The continual assessment mark consists of experiments completed and examined orally, portfolios completed on a farming enterprise of their choice, portfolios completed on both the plant and non-food producing animals which again they will be examined orally.

Where to next?

Students benefit greatly in this course if they come from a farming background or even have a genuine interest in agriculture and are keen to learn. Jobs leading from Agricultural Science might include any field in the farming enterprise, Teagasc which is a consultancy agency for farmers, some area in the field of science or even in engineering most likely gauged at the Agricultural Engineering disciplines.