

Agricultural Education Teacher & West Michigan FFA Advisor

(Critter Barn – Hamilton Community Schools Partnership)

<https://www.critterbarn.org/job-board>

Employer: Critter Barn

Work Location: Critter Barn, 2950 80th Ave, Zeeland, MI, 49464

Reports To: Critter Barn Executive Director (primary) in collaboration with Hamilton Community Schools Administration

Employment Type: Full-Time (School-Year Schedule with Summer Programming)

Date Posted: 03/03/2026

Start Date: August 2026 (or as mutually agreed)

About Critter Barn

Critter Barn is a 36-acre educational farm dedicated to hands-on agricultural education. The farm is home to 400–700 animals annually, along with crop fields, a woodlot, pastureland, and a natural water stream. Our campus serves as a living laboratory where students engage in real-world agriculture, food systems, and natural resource management.

Through a unique partnership with Hamilton Community Schools, Critter Barn provides immersive agricultural education programming for middle and high school students, while also serving elementary students and community learners through additional programs.

Position Overview

The Agricultural Education Teacher will lead and grow a dynamic Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) program serving:

- Three sections of middle school (7th - 8th grade)
- Two sections of high school (9th - 12th grade)

In addition to classroom instruction, the Agricultural Education Teacher will serve as the Advisor for the West Michigan FFA Chapter, affiliated with the National FFA Organization.

The West Michigan FFA Chapter is uniquely structured to serve students from across the region, including:

- Public school students
- Private school students
- Homeschool students

This role requires the ability to build a cohesive, inclusive chapter culture that unites students from diverse educational backgrounds into one leadership-driven agricultural program.

This educator will utilize the full farm as a laboratory classroom, integrating livestock, crop systems, natural resources, and agricultural business into instruction. The teacher will work closely with Critter Barn's Livestock Operations Coordinator to align animal use with established animal timelines and welfare protocols, and with the Education Coordinator to ensure curriculum alignment across grade levels and programs.

This role also plays a vital leadership position in FFA, 4-H collaboration, SAE supervision, and agricultural career pathway development.

Key Responsibilities

Instruction & Curriculum

- Develop and deliver engaging, standards-aligned curriculum in Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.
- Utilize the farm as a hands-on lab to facilitate experiential learning.
- Create daily lesson plans aligned with state standards and AFNR pathways.
- Assess student competencies annually.
- Assist with implementation of IEPs and health plans as needed.

Farm & Lab Integration

- Coordinate with the Livestock Operations Coordinator to plan animal-based learning experiences while adhering to animal care timelines and protocols.
- Integrate crop production, woodlot management, water systems, and livestock operations into instruction.
- Enforce all farm safety rules and maintain clean, organized lab and classroom environments.
- Maintain equipment and instructional materials.

West Michigan FFA Advisor Role & Leadership Development

- Maintain and grow an active FFA chapter affiliated with the National FFA Organization.
- Oversee all Student Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects.
- Prepare students for competitions, conventions, and leadership development events.
- Attend required FFA events including regional, state, and national activities.

4-H & Community Integration

- Collaborate with Critter Barn's 4-H programming (Critter Barn 4-H).
- Work alongside the Agriculture in the Classroom teacher to expand agricultural literacy across the community.
- Foster programming connections between elementary, middle, and high school students, across several school districts including integration with Critter Crew and other youth programs.

Events & Fair Participation

- Support student participation in local fairs including:
 - Ottawa County Fair
 - Hudsonville Fair
 - Berlin Fair
- Coordinate livestock weigh-ins, showmanship clinics, evaluation contests, and fair preparation.

Program Leadership & Collaboration

- Maintain an active Advisory Committee.
- Support recruitment and program promotion.

- Attend AFNR meetings and collaborate with Hamilton Community Schools administration.
- Work cooperatively with Critter Barn leadership to align programming with organizational mission and strategic goals.
- Assist with summer programming and student SAE monitoring.

Supplemental / Extended Responsibilities

May include but are not limited to:

- Officer Training Camp
- State Leadership & Career Development Conferences
- Livestock evaluation and judging events
- Dairy judging and showmanship
- Student SAE monitoring (June–August)
- County Fair participation (multi-day commitment)
- Summer Agricultural Teacher Professional Development

Qualifications

Required:

- Valid Michigan Teaching Certificate with CTE certification in Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources or Eligibility for Annual Career Authorization (ACA)
- Experience with FFA programming and competitions
- Strong classroom management and safety enforcement skills

Preferred:

- 3+ years of agricultural science teaching experience
- 4,000 hours of recent and relevant agricultural work experience (if ACA route)

- Experience in livestock, crop production, and/or natural resource management
- Ability to teach across middle and high school levels
- Passion for hands-on, experiential learning

Ideal Candidate Will:

- View the farm as a living classroom.
- Be confident managing large animal interactions in an educational setting.
- Thrive in collaborative team environments.
- Inspire students toward careers in agriculture and natural resources.
- Embrace Critter Barn's mission of hands-on agricultural education and community impact.
- Be comfortable engaging with students, families, donors, and community partners.

Compensation & Benefits

- Competitive salary (commensurate with experience)
- School-year schedule with summer expectations
- Critter Barn benefits package including:
 - Health insurance
 - Paid Time Off
 - Professional development opportunities
- Opportunity to shape and grow a regional agricultural education model

Why This Role Matters

This position is more than a classroom teaching role. It is an opportunity to shape agricultural education in West Michigan through a unique farm-school partnership model that integrates real animals, real land, and real responsibility into student learning.

If you are passionate about developing the next generation of agricultural leaders and believe learning happens best when students learn, do, and teach, we encourage you to apply.

Employment Terms

This is a salaried position classified as exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employment with Critter Barn is at-will, meaning that either the employee or Critter Barn may terminate the relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice.

To Apply, please upload resumes to Indeed job posting:
<https://www.indeed.com/viewjob?jk=df7660bbfde699e5>