



Ag in the Classroom Newsletter- January 2008

Outstanding Teacher – Wendy Weiner, Milwaukee

Congratulations to Wendy Weiner, a second grade teacher at Parkview School in Milwaukee, who is the 2008 Outstanding Teacher Award recipient! Wendy will be our candidate for the USDA Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award. Wendy has been teaching for 21 years – 15 years at her current school. Wendy has a farm background and her project based classroom utilizes science and models in studying about plants such as sunflowers, apples, pumpkins, peanuts, recycling and other curriculum areas. A presentation in Wendy's classroom is being arranged for January 2008.

Amazing Corn Booklets

Thank you to the Wisconsin Corn Promotion Board for approving the printing of more **Amazing Corn** Activity booklets! They are available free from our Resource Order form. The booklets have also been incorporated into our Fun Faces Lesson Plans! Thank you to Bob Oleson and all WI corn growers!

Soybean Science Kits- 10 more on the way!

Thank you to the Wisconsin Soybean Program for sponsoring ten more Soybean Science Kits for counties that didn't have close access to a kit. Contacts have been made to possible kit coordinators and the kits should be available in mid-January for usage. If all placements are confirmed by the time of this mailing, a complete listing will be included. If not, please check the website for the listing and watch for it in future mailings. The Wisconsin Soybean Program is also sponsoring the lesson plan booklet accompanying our new book of the year **The Super Soybean**. Thank you to Bob Karls and all Wisconsin soybean growers!

AITC Resource Guide- The county AITC Coordinators are receiving a list of all teachers in their county that were sent the Resource Guide mailing. Please read the memo accompanying the list. If there are two AITC coordinators for a county, only one was sent the listing.

New Resource Order Forms and Book Order Forms- January 1

The new Resource Order forms and Children's Book order forms are now available. Please note that there are several pricing changes on the resource form due to the increase in printing and postage costs. The new Book of the Year, **The Super Soybean**, is now available. A lesson plan/activity booklet will accompany all orders and is sponsored by the Wisconsin Soybean Program.

Please discard any old order forms! Many of the book titles on previous forms are no longer available. We are able to get more hard cover copies of **Popcorn!** but they won't be available until last January 2008 when the publisher reprints them. They have been out of stock since early summer.

Teacher Mini-Grants- Due January 15

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is offering grants up to \$100 each to Pre-School through High School teachers to fund projects that promote agricultural literacy in the classroom. Grants can be used for innovative lessons, activities, projects, resources, presentations, school fairs and other projects. Projects should focus on integrating agriculture into a variety of curriculum areas. Priority will be given to applicants for resources that will last more than one school year as opposed to funds for field trips, consumables and "one-time" use. There is \$1500 budgeted for this grant program.

Just a reminder when ordering supplies and writing checks:

Please remember that we have two separate accounts handling AITC resources. Please make the check out to the correct entity. **Do not make checks out to “Ag in the Classroom”.** Incorrect checks have to be returned so please take time to write them to the correct account. Thank you!

Please use:

- Wisconsin Farm Bureau **Foundation** – Books and Video/DVD orders
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau **Federation** – AITC Resource Orders (i.e. Ag Mags, Farm Facts)

2007-08 Essay Contest – Postmarked by January 15

“From the farm to my home”- The 2007-08 Ag in the Classroom’s Essay Contest for 4-5th grade students will help them learn how various commodities are grown, raised or produced. There are a number of handouts in this mailing that deal with the essay contest. Please make sure that all people involved with your contest are working together as you select your winner. Consider rewarding schools and students that submit essays with some type of recognition (i.e. returning the essays, classroom presentation, book for classrooms that participate, incentive for teacher of county winner). If essays are sent to the WFBF office first, they will be sent back to the county Farm Bureau secretary.

- January 15, 2008- Essays are due to the county Farm Bureau from the schools
- February 15, 2008 – County winning essay due to the District WFBF Women’s Committee member
- March 10, 2008 – District winning essay due to Darlene Arneson
- March 28-30, 2008 – Selection of state winner at the WFBF Women’s Leadership Seminar in Appleton

Matching Grants- Due April 1

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation is offering matching grants of up to \$500 to groups sponsoring programs or projects that promote agricultural literacy. Grants will be awarded for amounts up to \$500 to applicants that secure or provide equal matching funds for the proposed project. The proposed project must be targeted to grades K-12 and should enhance student knowledge of the contribution made by agriculture. Projects that use funds toward an ongoing, sustainable education effort will receive preference over those that involve a “one-time” program.

Teacher Training and Classes- 2008

There will be a 3-credit class offered on the UW-River Falls campus and a 1-credit class at Wisconsin State Fair. The class at River Falls will be from July 28 – August 1 with a follow-up session on August 13. The one credit class is on Tuesday, August 5, in West Allis right at the Wisconsin State Fair. The classes are geared towards K-8 grade teachers but all educators are welcome to attend. More information can be obtained by contacting Dr. James Graham, 715-425-3555, james.graham@uwrf.edu, or www.uwrf.edu/ag-education/summer. Wisconsin Farm Bureau is offering scholarships for both classes- the forms are included in this mailing. County Farm Bureau’s are also encouraged to offer some type of assistance to teachers that want to attend either class.

Fun Faces Lesson Plans Update

The Fun Faces of Wisconsin Agriculture Lesson Plans have been well received by teachers. Over 240 3-ring binder style lessons and many more CD-ROM versions have been distributed. The lessons are now available in CD-ROM only or can be downloaded from the website. The lessons feature ten Wisconsin commodities and are for 4-6th grade students. The lessons are correlated to 4th grade Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.

State Fair Camp

Wisconsin State Fair Camp is a one-day event held during the fair for incoming 4-5th grade students. Three sessions are being offered for 2008- Friday, August 1; Tuesday, August 5 (for repeat and older youth); and Friday, August 8. Urban youth are treated to a day of exploring the various parts of the fair. Contact Brian Bolan, 414-266-7050, or brian.bolan@wisconsin.gov for more information. Because of the expanded number of camp dates, the need for volunteers and additional FFA chapters to assist is needed. Please contact Brian Bolan or Darlene Arneson if you might be interested.

News Release Requests

If you have an interest in being emailed (preferable method) any Ag in the Classroom press releases that you can use for your county Farm Bureau newsletter, in local newspapers and radio stations, or to use for other purposes, please return the postcard sent in this mailing. News releases are also available from the www.wfbf.com website under "Media Center" and "News Releases".

Ag Day- Consider reading to classrooms and children's groups

Once again we encourage you to use the new Book of the Year (or any agricultural related book) and offer to read at a local school, library group, childcare facility, senior citizen or nursing home facility, or other group. What a great way to share a book about agriculture, a snack or treat, and some time discussing where food comes from. You can utilize some of the lessons or activities developed for our new books that are sent with orders. Lesson plan/activity booklets are available for **Popcorn, A Young Shepherd, Harvest Year** and **The Super Soybean**. Booklets will be developed for all books in our program as time permits. County AITC Coordinators are also receiving the 2008 Ag Day Guide. Others can order one (free of charge) by contacting www.agday.org or 913-491-1895.

Spring Volunteer Meetings

After a successful round of Fall AITC Information Meetings, the evaluations suggested having similar meetings in the spring to update volunteers, extension agents and others about current AITC programs. The spring meetings will be coordinated with the Essay Contest district classroom presentations. Watch for the dates, locations and times as they will be announced after the district winners are selected and meeting arrangements have been made.

Ag in the Classroom Dates and Deadlines

Please review the list of dates, deadlines and events scheduled so far for 2008 for Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom. If you need additional information about any of the dates or activities, please contact Darlene Arneson. Additional dates will be added as they are scheduled.

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2008 Ag in the Classroom Calendar

January 15	Essays due from schools to County Farm Bureau offices
January 15	Teacher Mini-Grant applications due
January 30	Ag Day at the Capitol- AITC Display
February 8-9	Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention – Janesville- AITC Display and Workshop
February 15	County Essay Winners due from County Farm Bureau's to District Women's Chairmen
February 23	FFA Farm Forum – AITC Workshop
March 1	Fond du Lac Chamber Ag Showcase- AITC Display
March 3-5	Wisconsin hosting Central Region AITC Meeting in Madison
March 7	Central Wisconsin Teacher's Convention – Wausau – AITC Display
March 10	District Essay Winners due from District Women's Chairmen to Darlene Arneson
March 14	Northeastern Wisconsin Teacher's Convention – Green Bay – AITC Display
March 28-30	WFB Women's Leadership Seminar- Appleton- AITC Display and Workshops
March 31- April 1	Wisconsin Social Studies Convention – Madison – AITC Display
April 1	AITC Matching Grant applications due
April 4	Cluster A Career Fair- Eau Claire
June 10-12	Wisconsin FFA Convention – LifeWorks Expo – AITC Display
June 15	Final reports due for 2008 Teacher Mini-Grant Recipients
June 16-21	National AITC Conference- Costa Mesa, CA
June 30	Final reports due for 2007 AITC Matching Grant Recipients
July 1	Soybean Science Kit Annual Reports due
July 7-8	Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators Conference- Madison – AITC Display and Workshop
July 15-17	Farm Technology Days – Greenleaf – AITC Display
July 28-Aug 1	UW-River Falls Ag Ed 702 Course in River Falls
August 1	Wisconsin State Fair Camp – West Allis
August 5	UW-River Falls Ag Ed 789 Course at Wisconsin State Fair
August 5	Wisconsin State Fair Camp – West Allis
August 8	Wisconsin State Fair Camp – West Allis
August 13	UW-River Falls Ag Ed 702 Course Follow-up
November 10	County AITC Reports due
December 5 – 8	Wisconsin Farm Bureau Annual Meeting – Wisconsin Dells
December 10	Outstanding Teacher Awards due