



Starting an Ag in the Classroom Program

1. Get involved on your county AITC Committee – all it takes is a small group with some good ideas and a willingness to make a difference. If your county doesn't have an established committee, start one!
2. See to it that your county establishes a budget to work with – you don't need to spend a fortune. There are many things you can do that won't cost a lot. A budget of \$250 or less can go a long way. Some things to budget for:
 - Materials donated to schools
 - Scholarships for teachers to attend Teachers in-services, training, or other Ag in the Classroom related conferences.
 - Postage, mailings and office-related expenses
 - Amount to reimburse volunteers visiting classrooms or hosting farm tours
3. Promote this program in your local schools – find out who makes the decisions regarding curriculum and make an appointment to visit with that individual – it may be the principal or the curriculum director. Take samples of all the materials that the Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom program has to offer.
4. Start small – evaluate how many schools you can work with based on available time and funds. Set some goals for your program, but keep them realistic and attainable.
5. Assemble a list of farmers from your county who would host a farm tour for local classrooms or go into classrooms to give presentations. If possible, categorize the list by the type of farm. **DISTRIBUTE THIS LIST TO EVERY SCHOOL IN THE COUNTY.** This is a great way to involve Farm Bureau members in a worthwhile project.
6. Distributing free resource materials from Farm Bureau and/or other ag groups is a great way to get your foot in the door. We also have quality items such as books, videos & brochures that are available for purchase. Consider donating books, videos, etc. to schools and/or libraries. A great resource is the website: www.wisagclassroom.org
7. Adopt a classroom – send the class letters occasionally to explain what is happening on your farm during the year. Schedule a day to go into the classroom and make a presentation – the students will love it, especially if you bring some items from the farm for “show & tell.”
8. Plan to bring a van load of teachers to the Teacher Workshops and budget so that you can offer financial support. Also plan to have volunteers attend any type of training sessions that are available.
9. Look for opportunities to apply for funding to assist in your local efforts. Some possible sources include:
 - Ag in the Classroom matching grant program (forms due April 1!)
 - Wal-Mart Foundation, local civic groups & foundations
 - Agriculture-related businesses in your community