



August 2011
Ag in the Classroom Newsletter
for County Leaders

Ag in the Classroom Fall Information Meetings – 2011

The Fall Ag in the Classroom Information Meetings offer an opportunity to learn more about Ag in the Classroom, educational resources, and activities you can use to teach others about agriculture. They are open to Ag in the Classroom (AITC) volunteers, 4-H Extension staff and club leaders, agriculture education instructors, FFA Food for America committee chairmen, FFA Alumni, commodity groups, home school parents, teachers, Farm Bureau members and others interested in learning more about Ag in the Classroom and educational resources about agriculture.

What will be covered?

The meetings will feature agricultural education resources, AITC Matching Grant and Teacher Mini-Grant information, 2011-12 essay contest topic and lessons, Soybean Science Kits, Outstanding Teacher Award Program, and other Wisconsin and American Farm Bureau AITC resources. There will be time have discussion, ask questions and share ideas about programs and activities.

Dates, Locations and Schedule

We are currently scheduling the meetings so that there will be at least one meeting per Farm Bureau District. The meetings will be held in October and November 2011. Watch the Wisconsin Farm Bureau website for locations, dates and times as the meetings are finalized with the Farm Bureau district coordinators and field staff.

Registration Details

There is no charge for the meetings. Registrations are helpful but not required so that we have adequate resources and refreshments. Questions? Contact Darlene Arneson – see contact information below.

Time to clean off the desk after a busy summer! Did you turn in your

- Soybean Science Kit Report?
- 2010 Matching Grant Report?
- 2011 Teacher Mini-Grant Report?

And don't forget to start working on

- 2011 County AITC Report due November 10
- White Reinhardt Mini-Grant applications
- Encourage a teacher (or two) to fill out the Outstanding Teacher Award and the White Reinhardt Educator Scholarship

2011-2012 Essay Contest Topic

“Why crops and plants are important to Wisconsin agriculture”

The Wisconsin Farm Bureau - Ag in the Classroom Essay Contest helps students in 4th and 5th grades learn more about Wisconsin agriculture, Wisconsin agribusiness, and how they are connected to agriculture. Last year we have about 1,953 students participate in the essay contest.

This year's topic will be “Why crops and plants are important to Wisconsin agriculture”. Our 2012 Book of the Year will be Cris Peterson's book “Seed Soil Sun”. The book and essay topic will allow us to educate students about the connection with the soil to growing crops that feed our animals and food for humans. We will again link the book, the accompanying lessons that we write for our Book of the Year, various Wisconsin educational resources, and other Ag in the Classroom lessons into resources for teachers, students and volunteers to use in promoting and preparing essays.

Essay Contest Details:

- The essay is promoted in grade schools and home school networks throughout the state by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and county Farm Bureaus starting in September.
- The essays must be between 100 to 300 words in length and are judged on content, grammar and spelling, and neatness.
- We will keep the deadline schedule with essays being due to the county programs by April 1.
- The nine District winners (one will also be the State winner) each receive a classroom presentation in late May that includes a lesson, prizes and recognition, and a Wisconsin snack.

Watch the Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom website for more details, lesson plans and other resources. All information should be posted by mid-September! For more information, contact Darlene Arneson at darneson@wfbf.com or 608.828.5719.

Calendar of Events and Deadlines

October 14	White Reinhardt Educator Scholarship application due to Wisconsin AITC
October 14	White Reinhardt Mini-Grant applications due to Wisconsin AITC
November 10	Outstanding Teacher applications due
November 10	County Ag in the Classroom annual reports due

Please note: It is very important that the County AITC annual reports be sent in on time. Our DATCP report is due in early December (rather than January) and your information from your report is critical as we fill out the report. Please consider starting it now!

River Falls Student is Ag in the Classroom Essay Winner

Brenna Nowak, a fourth grade student from River Falls, is the statewide winner of the Agriculture in the Classroom's essay contest. Wisconsin fourth and fifth graders were asked to write a 100 to 300 word essay with the theme, "If I lived on a dairy farm, I'd want people to know that...". Brenna is the daughter of Dale Nowak and Michelle Rivard. Gina Holter is Brenna's fourth grade teacher at St. Bridget's School in River Falls.

A total of 1,953 Wisconsin students wrote essays for the competition sponsored by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board/Wisconsin Dairy Council, Foremost Farms USA and We Energies.

The finalist from each of Wisconsin Farm Bureau's nine districts across the state will receive a certificate and educational resources for their teacher and a classroom presentation on Wisconsin agriculture. Those finalists include:

- District 1 – Macayla Church, fifth grade, Williams Bay Elementary, Williams Bay (Walworth County)
- District 2 – Matthew Ryherd, fourth grade, Sacred Heart School, Reedsburg (Sauk County)
- District 3 – Devon Schmitz, fifth grade, St. Mary's of Assumption School, Richland Center (Richland County)
- District 4 – Morgan Becker, fifth grade, St. Peter and Paul School, Independence (Trempealeau County)
- District 5 – Kayla Doll, fifth grade, Home School, Mt. Calvary (Fond du Lac County)
- District 6 – Owen Simonar, fourth grade, St. Mary's School, Luxemburg (Kewaunee County)
- District 7 – Benjamin Schmidt, fifth grade, St. Paul Lutheran School, Bonduel (Shawano County)
- District 8 – Christy Nutt, fifth grade, Hill Road Home School, Phillips (Price County)
- District 9 and State Winner- Brenna Nowak, fourth grade, St. Bridget School, River Falls (St. Croix County)

Wisconsin Well Represented at AITC Conference

Wisconsin had four representatives at the National Ag in the Classroom Conference in Fort Lauderdale, FL last month. Betty Krcma, Green Bay agri-science instructor; Lisa Condon, American Agri-Women from Dodge County; and Wisconsin AITC Coordinator Darlene Arneson and her husband, John, attended.

Krcma was the recipient of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's White Reinhardt Educator Scholarship to attend the conference. Arneson received an ACE Grant for the agricultural literacy project "Telling Our Agricultural Story". Condon staffed an exhibit for the American Agri-Women on their educational resources.

Teachers, volunteers, and Ag in the Classroom state contacts and staff from across the country saw Florida agriculture firsthand and participated in interactive workshops that show them how to incorporate real-life agricultural applications into their language arts, math, nutrition, science and social studies classroom lessons. Almost 400 participants attended the conference themed "Discover Education's Hidden Treasure: Agriculture," which was being

hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Florida Agriculture in the Classroom and the Southern Region Agriculture in the Classroom states. The conference included tours of a tropical fruit packing house, school gardens, tropical plant nurseries, dairy farms and ranches and other stops in South Florida. Teachers and agriculture industry leaders conducted workshops and shared their perspectives as they mingle with teachers at the conference which will be held June 22-25 at the Marriott Harbor Beach Resort & Spa in Fort Lauderdale. Information about the 2011 conference and the 2012 Conference which will be in Loveland, CO can be found at www.agclassroom.org.

It has been a busy summer for AITC! Some of the highlights were:

- Summer Teacher Training- Coordinated classes, State Fair experience and tours for teachers taking the one credit and three credit options with UW-River Falls. The exciting part was working with a science teacher from Milwaukee Vincent who now plans to get his agriculture certification and start an FFA Chapter in Milwaukee!
- Farm Technology Days- Contacts were made with a number of teachers and home school parents. This continues to be a great venue for AITC to network with other educational programs and exhibitors. We get great traffic through the Youth Tent and Mark and Aaron Zimmerman, Youth Tent Co-Chairs, were excellent to work with.
- Wisconsin State Fair Camp- We had over 320 incoming 2nd-6th graders this year. We had 80 students on the first two days it was offered and then 160 on the day we coordinate with organized summer schools or daycare facilities.
- Lots of travel- Darlene had the opportunity to attend the National Conference in Florida with three other Wisconsin people; Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators in Green Bay; Wisconsin Environmental Education Board meeting in Green Lake; several county fairs including Washington County (Ag Adventure Tent), Dane County (AgriVersity) and supplied resources for DATCP's display building at Wisconsin State Fair; and some volunteer training (Barron County).

Looking ahead

- Our new Book of the Year will be "Seed Soil Sun" by Cris Peterson. This is also the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's Book of the Year so we can really offer some excellent companion educational resources.
- The essay contest topic for 2011-12 will be "Why crops and plants are important to Wisconsin agriculture". Sponsors are being secured and educational resources developed for the start of the school year.
- District AITC informational meetings and trainings will be held this fall. Most will be scheduled between county annual meetings and our WFBF Annual Meeting. An AITC workshop will be presented at the WFBF Annual Meeting.
- There have been some cancellations of teacher's conventions beginning with the Northwest Wisconsin (Eau Claire) and WEAC (Milwaukee) and possibly the Central Wisconsin (Wausau) conventions.

**Watch for the updated Ag in the Classroom
website – coming soon!
www.wisagclassroom.org**