



Starting an Ag in the Classroom Program

1. Contact your county Farm Bureau to find out if there are any members on an Ag in the Classroom committee or any past history of a program. Is there a person designated as the county AITC coordinator with the Wisconsin AITC program? Contact Darlene Arneson at 608.828.5644 or darneson@wfbf.com to find out.
2. Ensure 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. Form a committee for your county. Develop an invitation list with names that Farm Bureau, other commodity groups, agriculture education instructors and extension has on their lists can offer. Send out a letter for a committee meeting, do some follow-up phone calls to encourage attendance and have a program that helps them understand the Ag in the Classroom program.
4. Set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) – Evaluate how many schools you can work with based on available time and funds. Evaluate your volunteers and their availability, skills and background.
5. Utilize resources available to you through the Wisconsin AITC Program and the USDA Program. Contact them via telephone, website or mail to get more information. Help in training volunteers, assisting with teacher in-services or other help as available.
 - www.agclassroom.org
 - wisagclassroom.org
 - www.agfoundation.org
6. Report to your county Farm Bureau or interested partners. Let them know about the success you are having. Good communications help develop your program, obtain additional funding and build your volunteer network.
7. Network with other county coordinators at AITC events or on a one-to-one basis. Share ideas, success stories and resources. Ask questions of each other. Most people involved in AITC are more than willing to give help and ideas to new programs.