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Message from Mark Dawson

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, my only experience with California agriculture was in kindergarten, when a nice farmer brought his cow to school so we could see where milk came from. It wasn't until I joined Farm Bureau and started working with the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC) that I realized California is not only big on agriculture, it has the largest agricultural economy in the nation.



MARK DAWSON,
BOARD MEMBER

One of my highlights from last year was participating in the California AITC Conference. There, I met hundreds of teachers from all across the state, who were dedicated to educating their students about agriculture. But, they faced a similar challenge – limited budgets and students, like me, that knew little or nothing about where their food came from. That's where Ag in the Classroom comes in. When we place quality lesson plans and resources (free of charge) into the hands of our teachers, we help them shape the minds of our next generation. Through this effort, we can educate Californians about the importance of sustaining agricultural production.

It is an honor and a privilege to work with CFAITC, and I hope you will join me this year in supporting and contributing to its vital mission. 🌱

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October 2015

hands on agriculture

GROWING... WITH YOUR SUPPORT

Seed Survivor Tours California Again!

We depend on plants for food, medicine and oxygen, and they're also fun to have around. Why not learn about them in a 32-foot mobile classroom with talking walls? Agrium's Seed Survivor Mobile is an interactive plant nutrient classroom on wheels, and it will be making its way across California, starting in November.



SEED SURVIVOR WAS AT THE 2012 WORLD AG EXPO AND WILL BE RETURNING ON ITS 2015- 2016 TOUR.

California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC), Agrium and Crop Production Services (CPS) have teamed up again to make the experience available to California students. With its focus on plants, Seed Survivor teaches the basics of agricultural production. CFAITC Executive Director Judy Culbertson believes this interaction is beneficial, not only to youth.

"Seed Survivor is a great way to introduce students to agriculture," Culbertson says. "We use plants for food, clothes, animal feed, and countless other products. It's important to nurture the curiosity youth have for plants as an opportunity to explore and understand all aspects of agriculture. We're thankful to Agrium and CPS for their partnership in this effort."

With dynamic presenters, interactive displays and a seed-planting activity, Seed Survivor offers something for all learning styles. Participants discover what plants need to survive: water, light, soil and nutrients. The program teaches a number of Next Generation Science Standards.

CFAITC last hosted Seed Survivor Mobile in 2011 to 2012, when one trailer visited 84 schools and four community events, reaching more than 22,000 students. This year, two trailers will visit students in K-6. Register for a presentation on SeedSurvivor.com, and call CFAITC at (800)700-2482 with any questions. 🌱



upcoming events:

Come aboard the...
California AITC Conference
The Queen Mary
Long Beach, CA
Oct. 22-24, 2015



National Agriculture Week Events
Northern & Southern CA
March & April 2016

California Milk Advisory Board: A Real Loyal Supporter



Promoting knowledge about California's number one commodity is an important part of what we do. The support of Real Milk experts has been a great benefit as we strive to provide accurate and interesting information to teachers and students. For this reason, we would like to thank the California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) for their continued funding and collaboration.

A common goal to educate consumers has been the basis of a strong relationship between CFAITC and CMAB. Since 1994, CMAB has consistently provided funding for developing new curriculum, coordinating events like the annual California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, promoting National Agriculture Week and assisting with general operating expenses. The results of this dedication include fun teaching resources like the *Say Cheese* activity sheet and the *Milk Matters! Discovering Dairy* unit.

The 24 dairy farmers governing CMAB place value in the opportunity to showcase their farms and products for students to see, understand and appreciate. Board member Brad Scott of the San Bernardino district first learned of the organization at his county Farm Bureau meeting. Ever since, Scott has been a devoted advocate and friend of CFAITC.

"CMAB represents just one of many agricultural commodities in our state," Scott says. "It is important to get these groups involved with CFAITC to help communicate the message about California agriculture and its economic and nutritional benefits to residents."

In a world where real facts can be hard to come by, it is critical that CFAITC continues to bring agricultural education to teachers and students. This effort would not be possible without loyal partnering organizations. Thank you, CMAB, for keeping it real and being our friend. 🌿

THE **SAY CHEESE** AG-BITES ACTIVITY SHEET SHOWS TEACHERS HOW THEY CAN MAKE 12-14 OUNCES OF FRESH MOZZARELLA CHEESE IN 30-60 MINUTES. THE SHEET INCLUDES SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR MEETING SCIENCE, NUTRITION, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS.



Reaching Every Student... with Popcorn Genetics!



SUZANNE SQUIRES

What do a zookeeper, popcorn, and teaching have in common? Just ask Suzanne Squires, teacher at Los Olivos Elementary School in Santa Barbara. Squires was awarded a Literacy for Life grant last fall and was the 2015 California State Teacher of the Year.

"I'm my own species of teacher," Squires says. Teacher by accident, Squires earned her bachelor's degree in animal science and started her career as a zookeeper. After working with penguins, eagles and other birds, she became a quarantine biologist for the Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office, identifying pests and diseases.

Although she enjoyed her work, concern for potential budget cuts led Squires to pursue a teaching credential. Her mother had always said she should be a teacher, and after student teaching, Squires had to admit mom was right. She has been teaching seventh and eighth grade for twenty years now. Squires teaches science, agriculture, health and multimedia. She approaches learning like no other.

"There aren't too many science teachers who are also agriculture teachers," Squires says. "I don't really fit either mold. I bring in the other parts of agriculture that sometimes get forgotten. I've modeled a lot of things in the classroom after my work as an agricultural biologist."

"Just that little bit of awareness is critical."

Fusing science and agriculture, Squires develops teaching ideas to keep the classroom interesting. "I love curriculum," she says. "One of my favorite parts of being a teacher is coming up with new projects."

When the school gardener approached Squires with a variety of popcorn seeds, her "wheels started turning," leading to the Popcorn Genetics project. Sixth grade students planted the corn, and Squires' seventh graders harvested, separated the kernels by color and counted them. They even popped a few kernels to taste the four varieties. Finally, students planted the first generation of kernels, and they will repeat this process again with the second generation. Squires has found this model useful for engaging students.

"The project gives a good representation of genetics. Most kids like popcorn, and they also like to talk about the products," Squires says.

By involving students from the point of a single kernels to a finished product, Squires strives to reach all students and let them know the agricultural industry offers a variety of opportunities...

Read the full story and find out what happens next in Squires' Popcorn Genetics project!

www.LearnAboutAg.org/hoa



California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC). Our mission is to increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students. Our vision is an appreciation of agriculture by all.

{800} 700-AITC (2482)

www.LearnAboutAg.org

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