



California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

Fantastic Fact:

Live Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850.

In this Issue...

- Literacy for Life and Look at Agriculture... Organically! Grant Recipients Announced!
- Resources to learn about Christmas Trees!
- More ways to #LearnAboutAg!

Visit our blog

[#LearnAboutAg@Home](#) for daily activities to incorporate agriculture into your classroom in person or virtually!



Regional Winners of the 2020-2021 *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest have been announced!

[Find them here!](#)



LearnAboutAg

Congratulations Grant Recipients!

Literacy for Life Grant Winners Announced— The 2020-21 Literacy for Life Grants, sponsored by the Oreggia Family Foundation, have been awarded to 25 educators throughout California. Grants of up to \$500 are provided to California K-12 educators to support the integration of agriculture into regular instruction. Christine Klistoff of Fairmont Elementary School in Fresno County was named the 2020 Educator of the Year for her excellence in teaching students about agriculture.

Let's Look at Agriculture Organically! Grant Winners Announced— The 2020-21 Let's Look at Agriculture Organically! Grants have been awarded to 11 educators nationwide. The Look at Agriculture... Organically! Grants are designed to creatively enhance the understanding of organic agriculture for kindergarten through eighth grade students. Grants of up to \$1,000 are awarded to educators nationwide

to support the integration of organic agriculture into regular classroom instruction. The grants are provided through a collaborative effort between the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom and the CCOF Foundation.

Teacher Feature

Christine Klistoff

Grades taught: K-8 Ag Science

School: Fairmont Elementary School

County: Fresno County



How and when did you first learn about Ag in the Classroom?

When I first heard about the Ag in the Classroom Conference, more than 20 years ago, I knew I had to check it out. It was love at first attendance! I have enjoyed learning about each county's great commodities and specialties. It is a blessing that we live in California. I appreciate, and use, the fantastic curriculum CFAITC provides teachers.

How long have you been teaching students about agriculture?

Before attending my first AITC conference, I would often talk about farming, but did not teach agriculture lessons. After I returned from my first conference, I had this fire within me to deliberately include agriculture in as many lessons as I could. We have an amazing principal, Jared Savage, who believes that teachers should teach to their strengths. Our campus is run more like a college than a grammar school. That's why the concept of making our school an Agricultural K-8 school worked out so well and was granted by our district, Sanger Unified. They allowed me to become a full-time Ag in the Classroom teacher. I teach 600 students each week for at least an hour at our school. The students love it and we have tremendous support from our parents and community. With the purchase of the two acres next to the school, our students truly get hands on experiences. Many other schools and districts have visited so they could do the same on their campuses. We have a website and video at growthelegacy.org, if anyone is interested.

What is your favorite AITC program/resource/event and why?

One of my favorite AITC resources is the [Agricultural Fact and Activity Sheets](#). My sixth graders choose a commodity from the sheets to research. Then they give a presentation and make huge poster boards to be hung up in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Describe an agriculture-based project you have been involved in lately.

Last fall our students planted and raised a two-acre corn maize, pumpkin patch, and sunflower garden. It was a fantastic experience! We had our problems though. We had a white fly and aphid problem. The students researched, talked to experts in the field, and tried many methods to get rid of the problems in the pumpkin area. A few of their solutions included releasing 500 ladybugs and washing the plants.

In February and March, the students designed a salsa garden. After laying down their irrigation system and planting, March 13 came and the students went home! Luckily, the community was able to enjoy the large harvest during the pandemic. Pre-Covid, our students also run a weekly Farmer's Market. They choose what to sell, prices, and marketing techniques. They compete for best sales, just like produce brokers. Local packing houses provide the produce we sell.

Do you have any advice for other teachers on how to implement agriculture into their classrooms?

Oh, yes I do! Implementing agriculture in your own classroom is not difficult at all if you look at your NGSS standards with an agricultural lens. Most all Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, and Engineering standards are agriculture lessons. Plants, animals, weather, energy, engineering, at all grade levels go hand in hand.

Featured Resource

Discovering Christmas Trees

Are you looking for a variety of 45-minute activities to explore Christmas Trees with your [\(K-2\)](#) or [\(3-5\)](#) students? The Discovering Christmas Trees lesson on the National Agriculture in the Classroom Curriculum Matrix includes six activities and accompanying resources that take your students through the history of the Christmas tree, the life cycle of the tree, the variety of trees, and their adaptive nature, working on a Christmas tree farm, and the ecology of Christmas trees.



To learn more about California's Conifers, check out our [Forest Resources Fact and Activity Sheet!](#)

Grant Feature

Cal Water H2O Challenge

Deadline: January 31, 2021

Cal Water H2O Challenge is a project-based, environmentally-focused competition for 4-6th grade classrooms. This is a FREE classroom competition teaching kids about caring for water that offers a unique opportunity for upper elementary teachers to facilitate their students' learning of standards-based content.



The Grand Prize for this year's competition is a \$3,500 grant and \$1,000 college scholarships for each participating student. Find out more [here!](#)

Purple Plow Challenge

Join in on the extended Fall 2020 Challenge of *Waste Not Want Not*, where students have the opportunity to learn about the various types of waste products and work together to develop a creative solution of transforming the waste into a useful product. The project is provided by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. The deadline for the Fall 2020 Challenge is December 4. Find out more [here!](#)

California Council for the Social Studies Conference

The CCSS 2021 virtual conference, Cultivating Global Citizens for the 21st Century, is scheduled for March 5-7, 2021. This conference will help educators develop and share the resources, skills, and competencies necessary to cultivate students. Find out more [here!](#)

National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference

Mark your calendar for June 28 - July 1, 2020 to attend the 2021 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Des Moines, Iowa. Surround yourselves with educators passionate about incorporating agriculture into their classrooms! Find out more [here!](#)

Community Events

For Educators

Environmental Education Training

Event Location: Virtual

Event Dates:

- December 1
- December 2
- December 4

Become a Project Learning Tree certified educator in a hands-on workshop for educators. Upcoming professional development trainings will focus on California's Fire Adapted Ecosystems and will be held via Zoom.

California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

Event Location: Virtual

Event Dates:

- December 5
- December 12

Join AEOE for their fall webinar series with workshops focusing on mental health and pandemic trauma for educators, early childhood education in the outdoors, and inspiring green behavior change with remote learning activities.

Virtual CTE Professional Development Seminar

Event Location: Virtual

Event Dates:

- Deadline: January 4-5, 2021

Do you teach 9-12 Career Technical Education? Check out this FREE two-day professional development training opportunity for Agricultural Sciences, Career Exploration, Health Science, Family and Consumer Sciences, Public Safety and Security, and many more subjects!

AgExplorer's Virtual Field Trips

Event Location: Virtual

Event Dates:

- Ongoing

National FFA and Discovery Education have teamed up to create career resources to help explore careers within agriculture. Utilize these virtual field trips to have your students gain a firsthand account of the diverse career opportunities within the agricultural industry.

For Students

2020 Forestry Challenge

Event Location: Virtual

Event Dates:

- December 5
- December 12
- December 19

Are you looking for more ways to dive deep into forestry resources with your students? Challenge your students to build a virtual team to participate in one of the 6 virtual sessions! The Forestry Challenge is an academic event for high school students in technical forestry and current forestry topics.



Show Your Support for Agricultural Literacy

Help us continue providing programs and materials that create an awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students. Make a [donation](#) today!

Stay Connected! @LearnAboutAg

