



California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

Fantastic Fact:

Approximately 90% of the U.S. avocado crop is grown in California!

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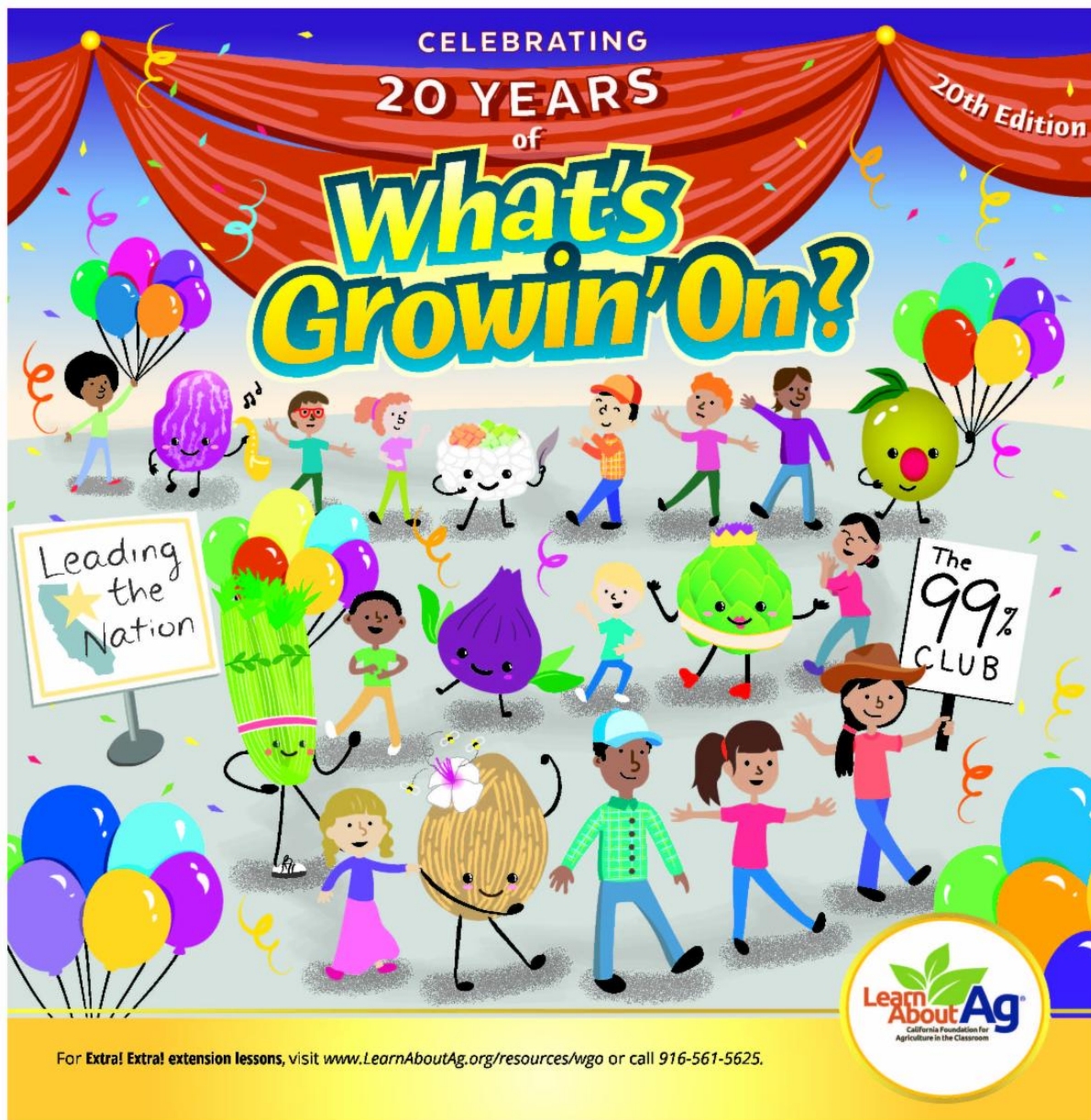
- **NEW! What's Growin' On?**
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Imagine this... Stories Inspired by Agriculture

From a heroine parasitic wasp to a talking nectarine tree to cilantro saving the day and much, much more, the new *Imagine this...* book is hot off the press and ready to read! Order yours today. [HERE!](#)





Introducing the newest edition of *What's Growin' On?*

Heard of the 99% Club? Foods such as olives, figs, almonds, kiwi, and many more are members of this club. The golden state supplies our nation with 99% of the production of these commodities. Simply put, California is nearly the exclusive grower of these crops in our country.

See these commodities come to life in the newest edition of our 16-page educational newspaper *What's Growin' On? Leading the Nation*. A variety of activities, trivia, graphics, and readings provide something for every learner. Activities are aligned to California Academic Standards for 3-8 grades.

Order your FREE classroom set here [HERE!](#)

Vanessa Fanchin

Grades: 4

St. Patrick Catholic School

County: San Diego



Let's start with the basics:

What is your favorite California commodity?

California is blessed with a long list of wonderful commodities so my favorite California commodity changes with the seasons. In the spring and summer seasons, I look forward to vine-ripened tomatoes and local strawberries being eaten right off the plant. In the fall I love harvesting summer squash, especially butternut squash, which I then cook in a crockpot in my classroom and make into soup.

During the winter it's cauliflower, such as the new color varieties like cheddar and purple. Almonds and walnuts are healthy all year long and are often included in my daily meals as a favorite snack or topping.

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

My first exposure to Ag in the classroom was from another 4th-grade teacher, Mrs. Ramirez, at South Oceanside Elementary School. I had heard about and seen their school garden so I requested a visit and tour. Mrs. Ramirez was very gracious and shared a lot of resources including some from the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC). She told me someone had done the same for her so she wanted to "pass it on." As she passed on one resource after another, we soon realized her daughter and son were my students when they were 2nd graders. Learning about Ag in the Classroom has been beneficial both professionally and personally.

How long have you been teaching students about agriculture?

Informally, I have been teaching my students about agriculture since I started teaching 25 years ago. My formal education is in Food Science and Nutrition so I always had a heart for bringing those lessons into my classroom as well as into my own children's lives by having fruit trees and a garden for them at our home. It's been about 5 years since I began formally teaching students about agriculture. It began with building a new school on our current campus in 2016, which included plans for two school gardens. A Master Gardener and San Diego AITC grant provided the foundation we needed to start the school gardens and learn about agriculture. Both informal and formal education contribute to me being a lifelong learner in teaching agriculture in the classroom.

What is your favorite AITC program, resource, or event and why?

There are many wonderful resources offered by AITC and each year I tap into the ones that work with our students for that year depending on our focus. I have used the National AITC Curriculum Matrix to successfully search for lesson plans, attend wonderful conferences, receive grant funding, and even attend a STEM conference in Kansas City, Kansas learning about cattle. I love learning about agriculture from those who know so much about the subject and help teachers integrate agriculture into their classrooms. Of all the resources, the California AITC Conference was the weekend that ignited a passion to pursue bringing agricultural learning to my students by learning more about agriculture myself.

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

Our Fall Garden Market is our most recent agriculture-based project. Our students harvested, priced, and sold a variety of items grown in our school gardens to our school community. To everyone's delight and surprise, the market made \$850, which exceeded our expectations. The students then collaborated to recommend how those funds should be used for future projects in the gardens and to make a 10% donation to a community need. Our next big project will be the addition of succulents to our school gardens. The students are working to establish two raised beds that will be specifically designed for succulents. The succulents will be propagated and finally sold in the Spring Garden Market this year.

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

My recommendation for implementing agriculture into your classroom is to visit a school site where they have a garden or agriculture program already in place. I have found teachers are very open and willing to share their journey to make yours easier. I also recommend establishing a relationship with a Master Gardener. Our Master Gardener, Sue Temple, has been paramount to our success. She keeps me informed about all things garden-related and makes my wishes come true with her support. Next, research the resources AITC offers. I was so humbled by all of the free materials they offer and the knowledge I gained at the conferences is priceless. The National AITC Curriculum Matrix is thoroughly amazing.

Any Ag-ha moments in your classroom? Where agriculture comes alive for your students?

My favorite impact moments in my agricultural journey are sweet and savory. During the Christmas season, I learned that students asked their parents for gardens for Christmas! During our tastings, I've had parents requesting the recipes we tried in class because their child loved what they tasted and wanted to share it with their family. After the completion of our incubation project, I have families requesting to adopt our baby chicks and quail. When these moments come about, it's evidence of the impact learning about agriculture has on our students.

**Are you an educator including agriculture in your classroom?
Be a future Teacher Feature!**

*Please send an interest email to info@LearnAboutAg.org.
You can also reach us on social media, links below.*

Featured Resources

New Book Alert!

Just in time for strawberry season - a new book starring this California crop. Just released from [Feeding Minds Press](#), which publishes accurate and engaging books about agriculture, follow along as lead character Jolie is on a mission to grow her own strawberries from seedling to table!



Grant Feature

2022 California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program

The California Department of Food and Agriculture, through its California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, focuses on supporting local and regional farm-to-school projects that promote nutrition education, sustainable food production and procurement, and high-quality student experience. More information on the 2022 application process can be found [HERE!](#)



More Ways to LearnAboutAg®

Don't Miss This!
Updated time!
May 14, 2022

Want a fun, engaging and interactive webinar that will provide participants with hands-on activities for teaching youth about

agriculture?

Sign up [HERE!](#)

SUPER SATURDAY

A FREE ZOOM WEBINAR FOR EDUCATORS

MAY 14, 2022 | 9 AM-2 PM



WORKSHOP WILL INCLUDE:

- Virtual Field Trip
- Materials for 5 Hands-On Activities
- Registration Bag Full of Classroom Resources

The webinar sessions will provide participants with engaging hands-on activities for teaching youth about agriculture!

SPACE IS LIMITED - REGISTER TODAY!
WWW.LEARNABOUTAG.ORG/PROGRAMS/WEBINAR



Community Events

For Educators

Native American Agriculture Fund Scholarship Program

Application Deadline:
April 28, 2022

The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) is pleased to partner with the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization to help sponsor teachers to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference "Empire State Of Agriculture" scheduled for June 28-July 1, 2022 in Saratoga Springs, New York. To be eligible to receive a scholarship, you need to either: teach at a Tribal government-operated school, a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school or a BIE-supported school, a school on a reservation teaching Native students; teach at a non-reservation school that has a high percentage of Native American students; or be a teacher with Tribal affiliation. Application found [here.](#)

California Bumble Bee Atlas

Dates: Ongoing

California Bumble Bee Atlas is a collaborative community science effort to track and conserve the state's native bumblebee species. Get more details and training information [here.](#)

School Meals Podcast

Dates: Ongoing

Dairy Council of California and Natomas Unified School District (NUSD) collaborated through the Let's Eat Healthy initiative to launch a three-part podcast series titled, How Do School Meals Support Students' Health and Well-being? Listen to the podcast series [here!](#)

Art and Agriculture Santa Paula Art Museum

Dates: Ongoing

Art About Agriculture is an annual exhibit to promote awareness of agriculture by exploring its many facets through art—from workers to water, from machinery to fields, to the food that goes on our plates. See related Art Integration Lessons [here.](#)

Forestry Institute For Teachers

Registration now open!

Forestry Institute for Teachers is a week-long residence workshop for California educators. Join natural resource professionals and credentialed educators to explore forest ecosystems and the impact they have on our communities. 40 hours of Academic Credit is available! More information [here.](#)

For Students

Water Education Lessons for Life

Dates: Ongoing

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has a variety of programs to engage students of all ages with activities focused on artistic expression, engineering, science and teamwork. Find out more [here.](#)

GROWMARK Foundation Announces 2022 Agricultural Scholarship Program

Application Deadline Date:

Midnight April 14, 2022

The GROWMARK Foundation is offering a \$1,500 scholarship program for students in the United States pursuing two- or four-year degrees or trade school certification in an agriculture-related field. Application found [here.](#)

San Joaquin County AgVenture

Event Location: Tracy, Ca

- April 14, 2022

San Joaquin County AgVenture is an agriculture and nutrition education program for 3rd graders in San Joaquin County. Each student has the opportunity to attend one FREE AgVenture event throughout San Joaquin County based on their school location

where they will learn about local agriculture, nutrition, water, and soil and so much more. For more information contact sjcagventure@yahoo.com.



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!

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