

CREAM OF THE CROP

A Harvest of Ideas for Educators

Fantastic Fact:

California is the leading producer of fresh (as opposed to juiced) citrus fruits!



Drum Roll Please....

California agriculture took center stage in so many stories!

Congratulations to our 2022-2023 *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest Regional Winners.

Find a full listing of the regional-winning student authors [HERE!](#)

Stay tuned! State Winners are announced on **January 1, 2023**

Build Them Better: Understanding Cattle Genetics

Tennis stars like Venus and Serena Williams and football legends Peyton and Eli Manning make us wonder—how much of their athletic performance is inherited?

Similar to these sports superstars, the superstars of the cattle world can attribute much of their success to superior genetics. Through careful breeding, cattle ranchers can improve cattle performance, breeding in qualities of good temperament, mothering skills, and high meat quality. In this **NEW** lesson from Ag in the



Classroom, students in grades six through twelve will discover the importance of genetics in beef cattle production, and practice identifying desirable and undesirable traits in cattle.

BUILD THEM BETTER RESOURCE



Teacher Feature



Meghan Manion

**Grades Taught: K-5 Literacy
Specialist/Transitioning to High
School Agriculture
School: Ysabel Barnett Elementary
County: Riverside**

Let's start with the basics: What is your favorite California commodity?

My favorite California commodity to eat is organic avocados! I am grateful to live in a community where avocados grow

abundantly. My favorite commodity to grow is wine grapes. I work part-time for a local vineyard, and I love tending to the vines and learning regenerative vineyard management.

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

I first learned about Ag in the Classroom six years ago while searching for school garden resources online. I attended my first AITC Conference in 2018, and I look forward to future conferences. I enjoy networking with other passionate teachers and learning from them.

How long have you been teaching students about agriculture?

For the past 17 years, I have incorporated agriculture education in elementary classrooms, gardens, and farms. I am passionate about educating students about where their food comes from and how it is grown. Students should understand the importance of eating healthy, nutrient-dense food, and the impacts of agriculture on our planet. I look forward to my next "agventure," teaching high school students regenerative agriculture!

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

My favorite AITC event is the conference. I love learning about programs, resources, and "what's growing on" at other schools, gardens, and farms in California. I especially enjoy the Make N' Take sessions at the conference. It's "agciting" to bring

back creative activities and lessons to my students and garden club.

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

Currently, I am writing and refining the curriculum for the first Agriculture CTE Pathway for Temecula Valley Unified School District. For the past four years, I have networked with the school district, local farmers, engineers, teachers, and community members to plan the development of a five-acre regenerative farm and vineyard located on the Temecula Valley High School campus.

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

Find your people! Network with other teachers and community members who share your passion. Resources abound in your community. I highly recommend researching professional development opportunities hosted by Life Lab in Santa Cruz.

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

Magic and joy are apparent when children work their hands in the soil and grow something they actually want to eat, like kale, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts!

BE OR NOMINATE A TEACHER FEATURE: EMAIL US HERE!



Featured Resource

Calling All Scientists!

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has launched a first-of-its-kind online platform for K-12 and STEM educators who seek to bring science to life through the lens of agriculture. The website provides science educators with valuable resources and professional development to seamlessly integrate agriculture into all levels of education. Materials available include a full unit on genetics and heredity, a teaching guide on how cattle interact with the ecosystem, and much more.



CHECK OUT THE RESOURCE!



Grant Feature

**USDA
Farm-to-School Grant**



OPEN!

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will award up to \$12 million in competitive grants to eligible entities through the Farm to School Grant Program in fiscal year 2023. Each grant

helps implement farm-to-school programs that increase access to local food in eligible schools, connect children with agriculture for better health, and inspire youth to consider careers in agriculture.

Grant application deadline is January 6, 2023

[LEARN MORE](#)



Community Events

For Educators

[Nominations for the "Let's Eat Healthy Annual Leadership Award"](#)
Deadline December 9, 2022

The Dairy Council of California is accepting nominations for the 2023 Let's Eat Healthy Leadership Award. Nominees are individuals who serve as change-makers across California and are driven to activate solutions to address the nutritional needs of children, families and communities. More Information [HERE.](#)

[EPA Environmental Youth and Teacher Award Competition](#)
Deadline January 11, 2023

Do you know any outstanding Kindergarten through 12th grade teachers or youth working to promote environmental literacy and stewardship? If so, encourage them to apply to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's youth and teacher awards.

Every year EPA Region 9 recognizes remarkable Kindergarten through 12th grade teachers and youth through the Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators (PIAEE) and the President's Environmental Youth Award (PEYA). More Information [HERE.](#)

[Champions of Discovery Challenge](#)
Complete challenges by Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Champions of Discovery Challenge offers an opportunity for teachers and students to track their journey of science explorations and celebrate their accomplishments by the end of the year. Throughout the school year, teachers and students explore six unique science-related challenges. As they ask questions, collect data, and meet

scientists from the community, sparks of curiosity lead to investigations, which lead to a greater understanding of the world. More information [HERE](#).

For Students

[Forestry Challenge Forestry and Wildfire Video Contest](#)

Deadline: December 16

In partnership with Next Vista for Learning, the Forestry Challenge is hosting a video contest. Students take a wildfire-related topic they learned as part of the Forestry Challenge, and creatively explain it in a 60-90 second video. Students are encouraged to record their footage at a Forestry Challenge event. Remember that there are many kinds of videos; students can, but don't need to appear on the screen. [HERE](#).

[Purple Plow Challenge](#)

Online

Students can help conserve natural resources locally and protect local ecosystems by addressing current and historical problems associated with the erosion of topsoil that limits the ability to grow food. After thoughtful research to evaluate how these challenges exist locally and globally, students will design, test, and demonstrate a solution that reduces topsoil erosion for their unique location or situation to help conserve productive soil. The final product will be a model which demonstrates a measurable reduction in soil erosion. More information [HERE](#).

[Grow Ag Leaders Scholarship Program](#)

Deadline: January 12, 2023

Bayer Fund is partnering with National FFA to offer ag students the opportunity to receive a \$1,500 Grow Ag Leaders scholarship. High school seniors through college juniors pursuing any ag-related field of study at a trade school, community college, or four-year college or university are eligible to apply. More information [HERE](#).



Show Your Support for Agricultural Literacy

Help us continue providing FREE programs and materials that create an awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students.

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DONATION
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