

April 2024



# CREAM OF THE CROP

## A Harvest of Ideas for Educators

### Fantastic Fact:

During California's peak production, 72 million pounds of strawberries can be picked in one week.



**CALIFORNIA FARM DAY**  
  
**MAY 3, 2024**



## VIRTUAL EVENT REGISTRATION OPEN

Get ready to discover cutting-edge technologies, ingenious farming practices, and sustainable solutions that are transforming the agricultural landscape. Welcome to California Farm Day: Fields of Innovation, where the future of farming unfolds before your eyes. Let's embark on this exciting journey together!

Join us for an extraordinary virtual journey into the heart of California agriculture. As we explore the theme of "Fields of Innovation," students will witness the remarkable fusion of technology and

tradition driving our farmers and ranchers forward.

Through a mix of pre-recorded segments and live hosts, classrooms will delve into the collaborative efforts of farmers, engineers, scientists, ranchers, builders, and computer programmers. Together, they tackle the challenge of sustainably producing over 400 different products to feed and clothe our ever-expanding world.

Our newest edition of [What's Growin' On?](#) will act as a guide for our Farm Day adventures. There is no cost to participate, register your class today.

**Date: Friday, May 3, 2024**

**Time: 10:00 - 10:50 a.m.**

REGISTER HERE!



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## HOT OFF THE PRESS!

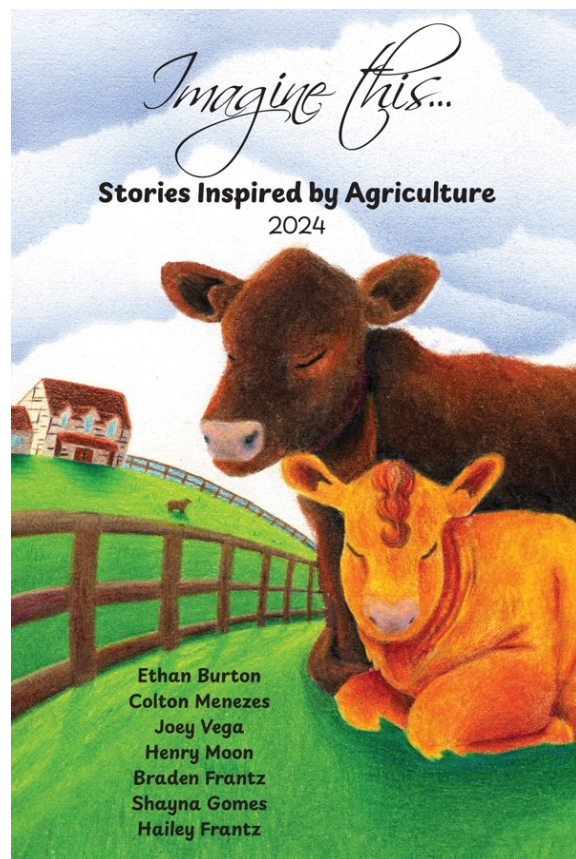
Introducing the 2024 *Imagine this... Stories Inspired by Agriculture* book. Seven student-winning authors were celebrated at the California Capitol to acknowledge this outstanding achievement.

From exploring the importance of the great horned owl, giant sequoia trees, and the water cycle, to raising cattle, sheep and chickens, to growing peaches, this year's stories explore various aspects of California agriculture.

*Imagine this...* is an annual writing contest where students in grades 3-8 write creative tales (fiction or nonfiction) about California agriculture.

Teachers, it is never too early to encourage your students to think about next year's contest! The story submission deadline is November 1, annually.

Check out this [video](#) for writing inspiration!



ORDER THE BOOK



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CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

Interested in ready-to-use lessons, ideas, and knowledge of why integrating agriculture into the content areas of curriculum leads to engaging and effective teaching and learning? This new course, offered through Fresno State University, is an excellent opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of using agriculture as a teaching tool in the classroom.

**CI 180T**

## **INTEGRATING AGRICULTURE ACROSS THE CONTENT AREAS IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**



This course is designed to help elementary school teachers increase their awareness and understanding of agriculture and its value as the context in which to teach core content subjects.

Participants will learn how to access reliable, relevant, and accurate resources to help them integrate agriculture across the elementary curriculum while meeting California Content Standards.

- Hands-on Learning
- Demonstration Lessons
- Collaboration Time
- Digital Portfolio of Resources

**2024**

**LOCATION: ED 400**

The collage features a grid of green and light green squares. The top-left square contains the text "1 WEEK JUNE 10 -14, 9 AM - 4 PM". The top-middle square has a barn icon. The top-right square has "2 UNITS" and a corn cob icon. The middle-left square has an apple icon. The middle-middle square is a photo of a field of young plants. The middle-right square is a photo of a man and a child examining a plant, with "FRESNO STATE" and "Continuing and Global Education" text overlaid. The bottom-left square is a photo of hands holding a seedling. The bottom-middle square has a tractor icon and the text "WATCH YOUR STUDENTS GROW". The bottom-right square has a carrot icon.

[GET INFORMATION HERE!](#)



**Teacher Feature**

**Yolanda Silva**

**Grade Taught: Pre-K  
Early Education Centers  
Oakland, CA**



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

I like everything you can grow in the garden. Strawberries, grapes, blueberries. In school gardens, I like to grow lesser-known items such as sugarcane, golden berries, and pink blueberries!

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

Through an email regarding the annual Ag in the Classroom Conference in 2018. I

attended and fell in love with the work the organization does.

### **How long have you been teaching students about agriculture?**

I have been with UC Agriculture and National Resources for seven years. Before that, I was working at Alameda Nutrition Services as a nutrition educator. However, teaching what and how to eat was not enough for me. I wanted to know where food comes from and that is why I went to school to study permaculture. That is how I fell in love with agriculture. I currently teach gardening classes at 23 childcare centers in Oakland. All my students are children from 3 to 5 years old. They are the best gardeners you can ever have.

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

Without a doubt, what I like most about AITC are the conferences. They are very well-planned, informative, and fun. I attended the 2018 and 2019 conferences; there I found a lot of information that I have used in my classes.

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

Every year I work with about 50 teachers giving them support and technical assistance. For the first time this year, we have organized a group of 10 environment, food, and garden champions who will do gardening and nutrition work.

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

Do not be afraid to start gardening projects! Most children are attracted to nature, they like to "play" with soil, and they are amazed when they see plants grow and are able to eat what they have grown.

### **Any ag-ha moments in your classroom? Where agriculture came alive for your students?**

I have many moments when a child eats a vegetable that we harvest from the garden, his or her eyes shine, and the student asks for more, or when they say that this is the best day of their life...you then realize that you are on the right path.

## Featured Resource



### SCIENCE OF SOUR MILK?

Introducing the latest innovation from National Ag in the Classroom!

Get ready to dive into dairy science with their [newest kit](#), where students become detectives to unravel the mysteries of milk spoilage. With six test tubes, a test tube stand, methylene blue, UHT milk, and clear instructions, it's the ultimate toolkit for scientific exploration.

Plus, don't forget to access the "Blue's the Clue" [lesson plan](#) on the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix for an extra educational boost.

Let the investigation begin!

## Grant Feature



### SALAD BAR GRANT

A salad bar at school means kids have the choice of fresh vegetables and fruit for lunch throughout the school year.

Kids with access to a salad bar in their school cafeteria not only put more fruits and veggies on their plates, but they also eat them!

The Salad Bars to Schools grant includes salad bar equipment and access to salad bar specific training modules available through Chef Ann Foundation's School Food Institute.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)



## COMMUNITY EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### [CA Farm Day](#)

May 3, 2024

Virtual Event

Get ready to discover cutting-edge technologies, ingenious farming practices, and sustainable solutions that are transforming the agricultural landscape. Welcome to California Farm Day: Fields of Innovation, where we explore the future of farming. Let's embark on this exciting journey together! Through a mix of pre-recorded segments and live hosts, classrooms will delve into the collaborative efforts of farmers, engineers, scientists, ranchers, builders, and computer programmers. Together, they tackle the challenge of sustainably producing over 400 different products to feed and clothe our ever-expanding world.

Register [HERE](#).

### [Nourishing Minds: Exploring Child Nutrition Policy in School Food Systems](#)

May 22, 2024

Virtual Event

Delve into the landscape of child nutrition policy in school food systems. We'll examine the impact of current policies, related challenges, and strategies to enhance child nutrition in schools.

Register [HERE](#).

### [Forestry Institute for Teachers](#)

Forestry Institute for Teachers (FIT) is an immersive week-long Professional Learning Program providing interdisciplinary, hands-on experiences for California Educators.

Each year, FIT brings together formal and nonformal educators from across California to learn about current forestry issues and how they influence our everyday lives.

2024 Sessions now open for registration. More information [HERE](#).

### [FREE Mobile Dairy Classroom Assembly](#)

Bring agriculture to life with the Dairy Council's FREE Mobile Dairy Classroom Assembly. Find more information [HERE](#).

### [Soybean Science Challenge](#)

Eleven Ag Pathway video mini-lessons for science classrooms are available through the University of Arkansas Extension Program. Get more information [HERE](#).

[Hilmar Cheese Company Educational Tours](#)

Hilmar, CA

Hands-on activities to explore the science and technology in dairy and cheese making in the Central Valley. Request a tour and find 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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TODAY!**

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