

YOUR GUIDE TO AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

Ag literacy starts here





The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational foundation, provides educators with free materials, training, and information to promote student understanding of California agriculture. ©2021

Welcome!

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC) invites you to explore this guide and utilize the materials, ideas, and concepts that have proven successful in many counties across California! Agricultural literacy is a key step to link production agriculture to public and private school students. California's vast economy and the future of the farmers and ranchers in this state rely upon consumers making educated decisions about agriculture and all its related fields. There are hundreds of free resources at **LearnAboutAg.org.**

CFAITC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The mission of CFAITC is **to increase the awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students.**

Through the collaborative efforts of CFAITC, local, and statewide Agriculture in the Classroom programs, CFAITC's vision, **an appreciation of agriculture by all,** will be accomplished.

CFAITC's programs and projects are made possible by the support of the agriculture industry and individuals interested in agriculture and education.

PURPOSE OF GUIDE

This guide will serve as a tool to enhance and enrich local program work in counties throughout California. CFAITC's goal is to support agricultural education through guidance, partnerships, materials, and resources.

This guide will support agricultural literacy efforts and provide information on the following topics:

- Ideas for local program planning.
- Tools and templates for organizing agricultural literacy projects.
- Information about CFAITC and its programs and resources.

The success of each program or plan differs in every county. The following pages are full of ideas, suggestions, and recommendations that have worked in counties and may be useful as you make Agriculture in the Classroom happen in your county. CFAITC is just an email (info@LearnAboutAg.org) or phone call (916-561-5625) away, and our goal is to assist you however we can. We appreciate your dedication to agriculture and depend on your grassroots efforts to contribute to a well-educated student population.



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WHAT IS AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM?

Agriculture in the Classroom is designed to help kindergarten through twelfth grade students acquire the knowledge necessary to understand where their food and fiber comes from. Through various programs and resources, educators are encouraged to incorporate agriculture into their lessons in all subject areas and to point out the important role agriculture plays in our economy, society, and daily lives.

California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CFAITC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing educators with free, quality resources, trainings, and information to enhance student understanding of California agriculture.

WHY TEACH ABOUT AGRICULTURE?

Agriculture is everywhere. It is the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the houses we live in, and the plants we enjoy. A well-rounded education should include hands-on experiences and true-to-life learning at the most fundamental level. By exposing students to agriculture through engaging lessons and activities, we hope students will be inspired to continue to learn about food and fiber and, ultimately, gain an appreciation for all that agriculture provides.

WHEN TO TEACH ABOUT AGRICULTURE?

You don't have to be an agriculture instructor to incorporate agriculture into your classroom. The time is right now! Ag in the Classroom creates resources that allows teachers to weave agriculture into all subject areas. We have simple activities that can be implemented in minutes, as well as units that can be used for a longer course of study. All our resources are aligned to California Education Standards.

HOW CAN YOU TEACH ABOUT AGRICULTURE?

Ag in the Classroom has developed hundreds of **FREE** resources for you to use in any educational environment. All resources are available online for download and most are available to order free of charge. **Watch this video to see how a few teachers use agriculture in their classrooms** – **LearnAboutAg.org/LetsGetStarted.**



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CFAITC RESOURCES

What's Growin' On?

Each year, a new edition of *What's Growin' On?* joins the collection. The 16-page educational newspaper highlights California's vibrant and diverse agricultural industry with current and accurate information. A variety of activities, trivia, graphics and readings provide something for every learner. Activities are aligned to California Education Standards. *For more CFAITC resources go to https://learnaboutag.org/resources/.*

Agricultural Fact and Activity Sheets

Agricultural Fact and Activity Sheets provide teachers with an easy way to provide the facts about agricultural topics or commodities paired with a lesson plan to use in the classroom. Each sheet in our ever-growing set (now at 44) introduces an agricultural commodity, plant nutrient, or agricultural topic. Produced in black and white for ease of use by teachers, these are a "hot commodity" with educators around the state.

Ag-Bites

Ag-Bites are bite-sized ways to bring agriculture into your classroom. These one-page sheets explain how

to perform hands-on learning activities with students in various grade levels (K-12). Our set of Ag-Bites now includes more than 18 lessons for teachers to use with their students on topics ranging from Desktop Gardens to Making Recycled Paper to Garden in a Glove.

Lesson Plans and Units

CFAITC's lessons and units have been written, field-tested, and reviewed by educators. Cooperative learning, individual and group problem solving, and critical thinking activities encourage students to "construct" their knowledge about agricultural concepts. The lesson plans help students develop skills in science, mathematics, English/language arts, history/social science, health/nutrition, visual and performing arts, and are aligned to California Education Standards. Lessons are free for download and many are available in hard copy.

Some of CFAITC's most popular lesson plans have been adapted for distance learning! Each Google Slide presentation includes activity instructions, editable student worksheets, brainstorming templates, and embedded links to related videos and online games.

Great Reads

We have included some of our favorite books about agriculture on our Great Reads webpage. The books are categorized for elementary, middle, and high school students with Amazon Affiliate links attached. These links provide a simple way to buy great books about agriculture while supporting CFAITC's agricultural literacy efforts.

#LearnAboutAg@Home Blog

Join our new blog - LearnAboutAg@Home! Ag in the Classroom is sharing ag-tivities on our social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) that help teachers and parents throughout California ensure their students can continue learning where their food and fiber comes from when they are out of their classrooms. Every day, at 10 a.m. Ag in the Classroom shares fun, education ag-tivities that can be enjoyed at home. The ag-tivities are listed on our blog for easy reference and sharing.



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Agriculture in the Classroom Conference

CFAITC hosts an annual teacher conference that includes a wide range of exciting and informative roundtable sessions, workshops, exhibits, field trips, and more. This agriculturally-themed conference provides teachers with free, factually accurate, teacher-tested curriculum, and agricultural awareness for every subject and grade level. Conference attendees learn new skills, and network with other educators and industry professionals while discovering exciting resources. Scholarships are available on a limited basis to assist teachers in attending the California conference.

Imagine this ... Story Writing Contest

California students in grades three through eight creatively explore agriculture by writing narratives about commodities of their choice. The winning stories from each grade level are illustrated by high school art students and published in our annual story book, *Imagine this*... Stories Inspired by Agriculture.

The *Imagine this*... Story Writing Contest aligns with the 4 C's of California State Board of Education's Common Core Standards— collaboration, critical thinking, creativity/innovation, and communication—while connecting students to the world around them!

University Student Teacher Program (USTP)

USTP workshops are offered at no cost to college credential programs and are designed to introduce pre-service teachers to agricultural literacy and its many possibilities in the classroom.

Workshops provide examples of:

- Overview of the importance of agriculture.
- Lesson plans with agricultural themes for subjects already being taught at elementary and secondary levels.
- Teacher-developed, field-tested resources, and lesson plans.

Taste and Teach

Raley's in Northern California, and Stater Bros. in Southern California, sponsor our very popular Taste and Teach program. Teachers from around the state apply to receive a binder of resources with lessons for teaching subjects around a different commodity each month. Each teacher receives a gift card to shop at Raley's or Stater Bros. to purchase the commodity being taught for the students to taste.



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CFAITC AWARDS, GRANTS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Literacy for Life Grants

Literacy for Life grants, sponsored by the Oreggia Family Foundation, are designed to help initiate new projects or expand existing ones that promote agricultural literacy. Grants of up to \$500 are provided to California K-12 educators to support the integration of agriculture into regular classroom instruction.

Outstanding Educator

Each year, CFAITC selects one passionate and deserving applicant from the Literacy for Life Grant applications to be the Outstanding Educator of the year. The Outstanding Educator will receive a \$1,000 award and is recognized at CFAITC functions. CFAITC recommends the Outstanding Educator for the National Teacher of Excellence Award at the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference.

California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference Scholarships

We are pleased to offer a limited number of scholarships for California educators (formal and informal) to attend the California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference each year. Priority is given to current certified California teachers who have not received scholarships in previous years. Scholarships are awarded on a rolling basis and dependent on sponsorships from our donors. Scholarships will cover the cost of registration, which includes meals, tours, and all presentations. Attendees are responsible for their own transportation and lodging.



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COUNTY PROGRAM PLANNING

Define your Mission

A clear mission statement with concise, achievable goals and objectives can help develop and sustain your Agriculture in the Classroom program. Teachers have goals and objectives for every lesson taught in their classrooms. Your Agriculture in the Classroom committee should also have goals for both short and long-term planning.

Agriculture in the Classroom committees may choose to focus on promoting agriculture to the general public and consumers. Committees will plan promotion and outreach to the community as well as to teachers and students. Ultimately all students will become consumers and will need to make informed decisions about agriculture.

Exhibits (ex: County Fairs)

Exhibits have always been a good way to showcase agriculture at community events. Hosting a booth display at a community event or county fair can be a unique opportunity to reach a large number of consumers/public as well as targeted groups such as students and teachers all in the same venue!

Ideas for an exhibit:

- . What's Growin' On? Student Newspapers (Contact CFAITC to request copies)
- . Free brochures/pamphlets/posters/stickers promoting agriculture.
- . Educational resources for teachers/parents to take.
- . Fun hands-on activities that can be facilitated for students.
- . Facts and information about agriculture in your county.
- . Materials providing links to other resources for agricultural literacy.

National Agriculture Week

Held in March of each year, National Agriculture Week is a great way to celebrate agriculture with your community. CFAITC celebrates with two special events, California Ag Day at the State Capitol and the *Imagine this...* Story Writing Contest Awards Ceremony.



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MAKING YOUR LOCAL AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL

Build an Agriculture in the Classroom Committee

Agriculture in the Classroom is truly a grassroots movement that requires leadership and oversight from individuals interested in helping to establish agricultural literacy efforts within a local area. A committee can take on many shapes and sizes and include many different types of community members. The key is to find individuals who can generate resources and time for the program and are committed to furthering agriculture in their local community. The rest is truly a labor of love! It is helpful to engage members of your local agriculture and education communities including teachers, 4-H, FFA, Farm Bureau, County Office of Education, industry representatives, etc.

Getting Started

Before getting started in program work, it is recommended that you begin with some simple planning and a list of what goals you would like to accomplish.

Planning may be as informal or as formal as you choose to make it. Below are some suggested guidelines for helping to focus the energy of your local committee:

- Select leadership roles within the committee, such as Chair or Co-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, etc. (This step is not always necessary, but as the committee becomes more involved, it may be important to develop.)
- Discuss what resources are available and what assistance is needed in your local community and schools.
- Identify funds available for program work. Determine if any funding is available from local agriculture organizations or from other local sources.



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OUTREACH IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Every county has different agriculturally-related organizations, different sized schools, and diversity in terms of rural, suburban, and urban populations. Collaborative partnerships are a useful tool essential in maximizing your education program while utilizing your human, financial, and educational resources more efficiently. Outreach is an effective and useful way to engage your community and all types of media should be used including social media, newspapers, press releases, etc.

CFAITC specifically focuses on teachers and students as a part of society that we can educate and help make a difference for California agriculture. There are a few key points to consider:

- Identify the information you wish to share and why it relates to teachers and students.
- Be familiar with the media and terminology.
- Develop a good contact list for media in your area.

Several benefits of including the media in Agriculture in the Classroom activities are:

- 1) Exposure and visibility, which will help promote your programs and events to teachers, agriculturalists, and your community.
- 2) Building a positive relationship with local media, which also may mean more receptiveness on the part of media to tell your story.
- 3) Teachers, students and education in general often have a positive or "feel-good" story to tell which will interest the media.

Personal contact with members of the media can help create a better understanding of agriculture and an organization's mission.

Social media can be used as a tool to promote agricultural literacy and education. You can find CFAITC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, and our blog. Social media provides huge exposure and is generally free. These platforms may help you find a new audience, more followers, and help you reach more educators. Using social media can lead to huge exposure for your organization.

f facebook.com/learnaboutag

instagram.com/learnaboutag

twitter.com/LearnAboutAg

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pinterest.com/learnaboutag

youtube.com/user/LearnAboutAg W learnaboutagathome.wordpress.com



AGRICULTURAL WORKSHOPS

Agricultural Literacy Workshops

Workshop sessions are an easy format to attract teachers because they become personally engaged. Not only are educators interested in learning new ideas that physically engage their students, but they are also more interested in the shorter time commitment compared to a week-long seminar.

Getting Started

- Set a date, reserve a facility (often at a school site), determine agenda for event and begin planning!
- Determine your budget and, specifically whether you will charge a fee for participation.
- Invite presenters who will offer hands-on information that can be distributed for a low cost and can be offered to a large group of participants.
- Develop correspondence several months before event to invite educators to attend.
- Food is a good thing! Plan to have refreshments for the participants.
- Determine if you will offer a Continuing Education Unit for participation. If so, make necessary arrangements with a local university.

Examples may include:

- A reception for teachers.
- 1-hour educational in-service for teachers after school to explore incorporating agriculture into their classrooms.
- Inviting local teachers to your local annual meeting or convention.
- Inviting CFAITC to participate at local industry meetings.



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AG/FARM DAY EVENTS

A Farm Day can provide interactive experiences and hands-on learning for students of all ages. Farm Days come in all shapes and sizes! What works for one school or county may not work for another. Use the following guidelines as a rule of thumb, keeping in mind that situations vary according to factors such as school size, whether it's an agricultural or non-agricultural region, or even whether the volunteer group is an active force at that site. Don't hesitate to eliminate some of the suggestions below, or to add others. Each Farm Day is unique!

Several Months Out – Lay the groundwork for the event

- Gather a committee and establish themes and deadlines.
- Find space for the event (school site potentially) and determine which areas are best for farm animals, farm equipment, or exhibits requiring water or electricity.
- Set a date and invite participating schools. Encourage them to reserve transportation early.
- Submit necessary work requests to custodians/grounds/facility staff.
- Brainstorm a list of presenters, exhibitors, and other guests. Look for diversity in types of presentations. Examples Include: local farmers, commodity organizations, 4-H and FFA groups, etc.
- Invite the local community to support the event.

Two Months Out – Program and Presenters

- Send an invitation or make direct contact with presenters (schedule back-up presenters).
- Develop a team of volunteers to help facilitate the Farm Day.
- Start planning the tentative schedule as presenters' responses are received.
- Organize times and schedule make sure to let everyone involved know the detailed plan.
- Create a suggested lesson/activity for teachers to prep their students with prior to Farm Day.
- Plan an easy lunch menu for presenters and guests. Consider asking a community group to provide the meal and look for donations early (meal, paper products, drinks, handwashing stations, garbage and recycling cans, etc.).

One Month Out – Details!

- Encourage teachers to include agricultural lessons in their curriculum prior to the Farm Day.
- Create a list of those attending the Farm Day and provide a schedule to participants.
- Assign presenter locations based on need/space requirements.
- Confirm details with presenters and teachers: contact information, address, schedule, arrival time, map of event, parking information, visitor passes, etc.

Week of Farm Day and After Event

- Send reminders to all presenters: plan for cancellations and have back-ups ready!
- Follow up on volunteer assignments, lunch, presenters, and facilities logistics.
- Encourage teachers to prepare their students for the event; discuss behavioral expectations.
- Thank everyone who participated and prepare articles and photos for school and local newspapers.
- Evaluate what worked well and how the event can be improved.



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SUMMER AGRICULTURAL SEMINAR

The rewards of sponsoring a Summer Agriculture Seminar event can be very gratifying and can help secure additional exposure and credibility for the local Agriculture in the Classroom committee.

Many Summer Agricultural Seminars have taken shape into a 2- or 3-day event with a mixture of field trips, industry panels, lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on activities for the educators. Costs associated with putting on a Summer Agriculture Seminar vary from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars depending on size, scale, length of the program, and additional funding that may be secured by other donors. In preparation for a summer event, plans and committee meetings will start many months prior to the seminar.

Timeline:

8-10 months out:

- Form your staff committee.
- Plan committee meetings to discuss responsibilities and organization for the event.
- Determine length of event (1-day or multi-day).
- Set the date for the event. (Keep in mind school year calendars in your local area.)
- Identify a site for the event.
- Identify a timeline and tentative plan for how the event will be organized.
- Identify presenters for the event.
- Begin to secure funding for event.

6 months out:

- Send out a request for presenters.
- Begin to organize resource materials to be shared with the participants.
- Draft promotional correspondence and flyers.
- Contact a local college/university to arrange for CEU credit information (optional).
- Begin to plan any off-site tours/panels/discussions to be held.
- Distribute flyers to schools.
- Organize transportation.
- If possible, set up a website with event information.
- Secure freebies and door prizes for attendees.

3 months out:

- Confirm presenters needed throughout the event.
- Confirm tours/panels/discussions and lectures to be held during the event.
- Begin to organize the agenda or program plan for the event.
- Open registration for teachers/participants.
- Send reminder notices for the event to presenters and participants.
- Confirm site for the event and all related travel plans for off-site events.
- Confirm with volunteers to make sure everyone is on track.
- Continue to collect resources that will be given to participants.

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SUMMER AGRICULTURAL SEMINARS CONT.

1 month out:

- Finalize agenda for the event.
- Print programs or correspondence for attendees/presenters/volunteers.
- Confirm attendees and presenters with confirmation letter.
- Plan food needs based on attendance.
- Secure donated items and funding for event.
- Develop an evaluation of the event.

1 week out:

- Organize volunteer committee to help compile free teacher resources.
- Confirm and print final event agenda/program.
- Organize site if possible, decorate and set-up room(s) prior to the event (including resource library, tables/chairs, audio visual equipment, refreshment station, etc.).
- Meet with the local volunteer committee, assign duties, responsibilities, review agenda for the event.

Week of Event:

- Organize daily agendas, handouts, evaluations and prizes.
- Make any last-minute contacts with presenters/tour sites.
- Be prepared and make agenda for each day clear.
- Be a strong and positive representative for agriculture.
- Make sure to take pictures.
- Remember to have participants evaluate the event.
- Give lots of freebies and door prizes.
- Have fun!

Post-Wrap Up ... (Your work is not quite over!):

- After event, make sure to meet with your volunteer committee and discuss changes and ideas for future events.
- Properly thank everyone involved in the event for their help.
- Review evaluations from the event.
- Send thank-you letters to sponsors, volunteers, tour guides, presenters, teachers, etc.



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FUNDRAISING IDEAS FOR VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES

Here are some helpful hints and tips for planning successful fundraising campaigns. There are many ways to accomplish raising money to fund a project. Fundraising events can generate good public relations and exposure for an organization, while allowing an organization to raise additional money from people who are already making contributions. Fundraising can also widen an organization's donor pool by attracting people whose interest may be in the event rather than the organization.

Key Tips to Fundraising:

- 1. Knowing who to ask is more important than knowing how to ask.
- 2. Research your prospective donors. Get acquainted and court the potential donor.
- 3. Personalize your ask. Every request for money should be tailored whether asking for a small gift or a large gift.
- 4. Let your potential donor know who currently donates if requested. People want to give to organizations that their peers support.
- 5. Assume a "YES" contribution in all communication.
- 6. Fundraising letters should be short.
- 7. Don't take a "NO" personally. Take it as a challenge. Persistence pays; it may be a yes next time.
- 8. No matter how many times you said thank you, say it again.

Writing Effective Fundraising Letters

People give for a variety of reasons. There must be a compelling reason for donors to give, and you must be able to communicate this reason to them. Donors are drawn to success, so be professional and positive in your requests. Often donors will give because they feel it benefits them personally, whether it be through recognition or just the knowledge that they have invested in something important to them.



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CFAITC & NATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION HISTORY

CFAITC History

The roots of CFAITC reach back to the 1980s when the program was administered through the California Farm Bureau Federation's Agricultural Education Program. The Farm Bureau's efforts began when San Francisco educators made a request to the California Farm Bureau Federation for an agricultural field trip for their teachers. This simple request eventually led to the development of the San Francisco Farm Day in 1980, when 10 groups of agriculturists from as far away as Fresno traveled with their farm animals to San Francisco to teach 10,000 students about agriculture. The demand for agricultural literacy grew rapidly and, in October of 1986, the California Farm Bureau established CFAITC to create an entity solely dedicated to improving the understanding of agriculture.

learnaboutag.org

National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization History

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)–Agriculture in the Classroom Team, support state programs by providing a network of opportunities to improve agricultural literacy — awareness, knowledge, and appreciation — among K-12 teachers and their students. The strength of Agriculture in the Classroom comes from its grassroots organization and the fact that educators are very much a part of the movement. Giant strides have been made since 1981 when it was formed. Agriculture in the Classroom is regarded as a refreshing and flexible educational program designed to supplement and enhance teachers' existing curriculum.

Educators can enhance their curriculum using the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix. The Matrix is an online, searchable, and standards-based curriculum map for K-12 teachers. The Matrix contextualizes national education standards in all subject areas with relevant instructional resources linked to State Content Standards.

agclassroom.org

CFAITC continues to work today on behalf of the agriculture community. It operates with its own Board of Directors and fundraises independently to fund its free resources and programs that are provided to its growing list of 20,000 California teachers and every school in California.



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PARTNERS & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Partners are like-minded organizations we work with to promote awareness and understanding of agriculture through formal and informal education. These are educational programs that feature agriculture, nutrition, school gardens, careers and/or other related areas. You can reach out to these organizations at the state, local or national level.

AgVentures!: iacagventures.org/school-tours

American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture: agfoundation.org

California 4-H: 4h.ucanr.edu

California Association of Resource Conservation Districts: *carcd.org* and Local Districts: *carcd.org/rcds/find*

California Beef Council: calbeef.org

California CattleWomen: cattlewomen.org

California Farm Bureau Federation: *cfbf.com* and California County Farm Bureaus: *cfbf.com/county-farm-bureaus*

California Farm to School Network: farmtoschool.org/our-network/California

California County Fairs: cafairs.com/fair_list.asp

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA): cdfa.ca.gov

California FFA Association: calaged.org

California Master Gardener Program: mg.ucanr.edu

California School Garden Network: csgn.org/networks/CA

California State Fair Farm: calexpostatefair.com/animals-and-agriculture/farm-tours

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PARTNERS & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY CONT.

- California Women for Agriculture: cawomen4ag.com
- County Agricultural Commissioners: cdfa.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap
- Dairy Council of California: *healthyeating.org*
- Life Lab: *lifelab.org*
- Master Gardeners Local Coordinators: mg.ucanr.edu/FindUs
- National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization: agclassroom.org
- Nutrients for Life Foundation: *nutrientsforlife.org*
- UC Cooperative Extension and State Offices: ucanr.edu/county_offices
- United States Department of Agriculture: usda.gov



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EVALUATION FORM

Once you have had the opportunity to use this guidebook, please take a few moments to complete this evaluation form. This guide is intended to help you make Agriculture in the Classroom come alive in your county. *We value your opinions*.

Online Version of Evaluation Form: http://form.jotform.com/211306125172139

Name	County
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Please answer the following questions:

- 1. I have a better understanding of the free resources available from California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom Y N
- The guide and/or workshop provided new ideas and resources that I will be able to use in my community.
 Y N
- 3. I will share resources and activities with colleagues. Y N

Additional Comments:

(Please let us know which sections you found most beneficial and why. Also, let us know which sections you think could use more information or if there is something you would like assistance with that we didn't cover. *Thank you.*)

Please mail this completed evaluation to: California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom 2600 River Plaza Drive, Suite 220, Sacramento, CA 95833-3377 (916) 561-5625



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