

AITC

AGRICULTURE
IN THE
CLASSROOM
1981-2006



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“ . . . while they are reading natural history, might not a little gardening, planting, grafting and inoculation be taught and practiced . . . now and then excursions to the plantations of the best farmers, their methods observed and reasoned upon for the information of youth, the improvement of agriculture being useful to all and skill in it no disparagement to any?” Benjamin Franklin, 1749

History Compiled and Written by
Laurie Adelhardt, Owl Creek Consulting, Berlin, Maryland
June 2006

Introduction

Why should students learn about agriculture? Why should teachers devote valuable class time to the study of agriculture? Because without an agricultural system no society can survive. The capacity and strength of a nation's agriculture determines its health and standard of living. In the United States our agriculture system functions so well that we often forget how critical this role is. The mission of Agriculture in the Classroom is to help students in our society become aware of this essential role through learning about the science, production, nutrition and environmental soundness of agriculture and agricultural practices. Through the development of multiple educational resources, such as lesson plans, teacher in-service and pre-service training, Agriculture in the Classroom programs are at the forefront in educating the public about our food and fiber system.

Agriculture also has a pivotal role in our economy and affects us as consumers, workers, and citizens. Only ten percent of our disposable income is spent for groceries. The agricultural sector provides employment for one out of every five workers in our labor force, and contributes 12.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product from the food, fiber and natural resources sector. The United States was once a rough-hewn, rural society in which more than 98 percent of the population farmed. America has evolved into a prosperous urban society in which less than 2 percent of the population produces the food and fiber for the other 98 percent, plus tens of millions of people throughout the world.

The diverse industry of agriculture creates a large demand for an informed citizenry and a trained workforce. The consumer needs a broad-based knowledge to understand food safety issues, the balance of production and protection of the environment, and the interrelationship of governmental requirements, agricultural production practices, and consumer demands and expectations. There are many professional opportunities in a variety of agricultural areas, but the image of agriculture as a high-technology business needs its place in the classroom to interest and attract tomorrow's leaders and professional labor force.

Americans just can't live without agricultural products and services; and that is the key. The link between agricultural education and the fact that it is everywhere peaks a student's interest - it is something they can relate to. Today, as students of all ages study science, language arts, social studies, environmental education, or math, agriculture can be integrated into their classrooms - so they also learn that it is not just cows, plows, and sows anymore. A thorough understanding of the interdependence of American agriculture with the rest of our economy will provide a sound basis for the decisions that must be made on issues of food quality and safety, environmental stewardship, balance of trade, and other public issues.

Ag in the Classroom History

The groundwork for Agriculture in the Classroom was established in the early 1900s. Educators, both those with an agricultural background and those without such a background, had found that the subject matter of agriculture was a wonderful delivery system for instruction at the elementary school level. Such instruction utilized the position of some of the highly respected educational philosophers, such as Froebel and Pestalozzi. Most elementary teachers used such agricultural projects as gardens, crop products such as corn, and a model farm. Teaching with these models was an effective way to teach science to elementary students.

The building of the farm on sand tables is a project frequently used in primary and kindergarten schools as a center of interest in the daily program rich in subject matter. From the art side it offers a wide field of selection. It possesses a broad historical background and a voluminous literary content, and presents numberless opportunities for the presentation of problems in nature study. The activities of the farm are varied and make an especial appeal to the child because his larger interest in life lies in the matter of feeding. A close connection is easily formed between this interest in his consumption of food and the activities that produce it, and this affords most excellent material for the problem-project type of instruction.

Fox, F.C. (1921). Major Projects in Elementary School. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

As the agricultural industry became more efficient and people could explore careers off the farm, education about agriculture became more vocational rather than general knowledge of its role in the economy and U.S. history. The agriculture community became increasingly concerned about the lack of understanding among the general public and began producing materials for use in schools in the mid-twentieth century. Volunteers from farm organizations began going into schools with educational programs. Agri-Women groups and others were developing and distributing material at the county and state level. In 1977, Jean Ibendahl, a Tamaroa, Illinois farm woman and teacher, developed a program called Ag in the Classroom to teach agriculture's place in the U.S. economy. The program quickly spread to other states.



Jean Ibendahl, Illinois, pictured with Orville Bentley, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Science and Education.

USDA agencies had continually developed a number of educational packages for the nation's schools. The Information Office's Special Programs Division created and distributed a series of booklets, audio-visuals, and teacher support materials on agriculture in 1976, called the "People on the Farm" series. But there was little coordination of effort, little exchange of ideas among the groups, and no central point for national coordination.

In addition, surveys of social studies texts, conducted in 1976 by USDA, revealed there were few references to agriculture in textbooks, and those that did exist were outdated or limited to the geography of agriculture. Agriculture as a science, an industry, or a potential career was not evident anywhere. Agriculture as a critical element in the economy and to international trade was not indicated.

The idea of a central agricultural education effort was favorable to Secretary of Agriculture John Block for several reasons. It was one way to express the Department's balanced views on the issues and interests of farmers and others and to present these views to the general public through educational channels. It provided a focus for much of the information produced by the USDA Office of Information already. It would give educational leaders and teachers with information about the most important industry in America. It also assisted the farmer in telling agriculture's story to the majority of the population.

In June 1981, Secretary Block invited agricultural and educational leaders willing to work cooperatively toward the common goal of educating the public about the role of agriculture to a workshop in Washington, DC. Among the 53 agricultural and educational organizations represented were:

- Agriculture Council of America
- American Agriculture Movement
- American Egg Board
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- Future Farmers of America
- Illinois Council on Economic Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Dairy Council
- National Farm Organization
- National Farmers Union
- National Live Stock and Meat Board
- State Departments of Agriculture
- State Departments of Education
- Wheat Industry Council
- Women for Agriculture
- Women in Farm Economics

During the workshop information was shared about ongoing agricultural education initiatives and what steps would improve efforts to educate people about agriculture. All participants agreed on a program of information about agriculture and recommended that USDA coordinate work towards accomplishing three specific goals:

- Goal 1. Create a national task force to develop guidelines for the preparation of educational materials; develop a model plan for establishing State Action Groups; and, plan what the national group should undertake next.
- Goal 2. Establish a central clearinghouse for information about programs and materials being developed around the country.
- Goal 3. Conduct a second workshop within one year to review progress on the initial recommendations.

The national task force created for these tasks had broad representation from agriculture, business, education and governmental agencies. Members included:

- Dave Bohling, Nebraska Department of Agriculture
- Helen Boyd, American Agriculture Movement
- Betty Carlson, Oregon Wheat Growers
- Cameron Dubes, Future Farmers of America
- Kathy Eastman, Iowa Department of Agriculture
- Carol Ek, National Farmers Union
- Marsha Herndon, American Farm Bureau Federation
- Barbara Hicks, National Live Stock & Meat Board
- James Hield, Cargill, Inc.
- Jean Ibendahl, Illinois Women for Agriculture
- John Lewis, Illinois Council for Economic Education, Northern Illinois University
- David Phillips, U.S. Department of Education
- Nellie Quander, Fairfax County Public Schools
- USDA Staff: Theodore Crane, Sally Katt, Larry Marton, and Shirley Traxler

The Task Force recommended that the U.S. Department of Agriculture should be the coordinator and that it should sponsor regional meetings to help states organize their own programs. They also urged the Department to encourage the support of other national groups. As a result, AITC had the endorsement of all living former Secretaries of Agriculture, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, the National Conference of State Legislatures, most of the Governors of the States, and the major agricultural organizations and commodity groups.

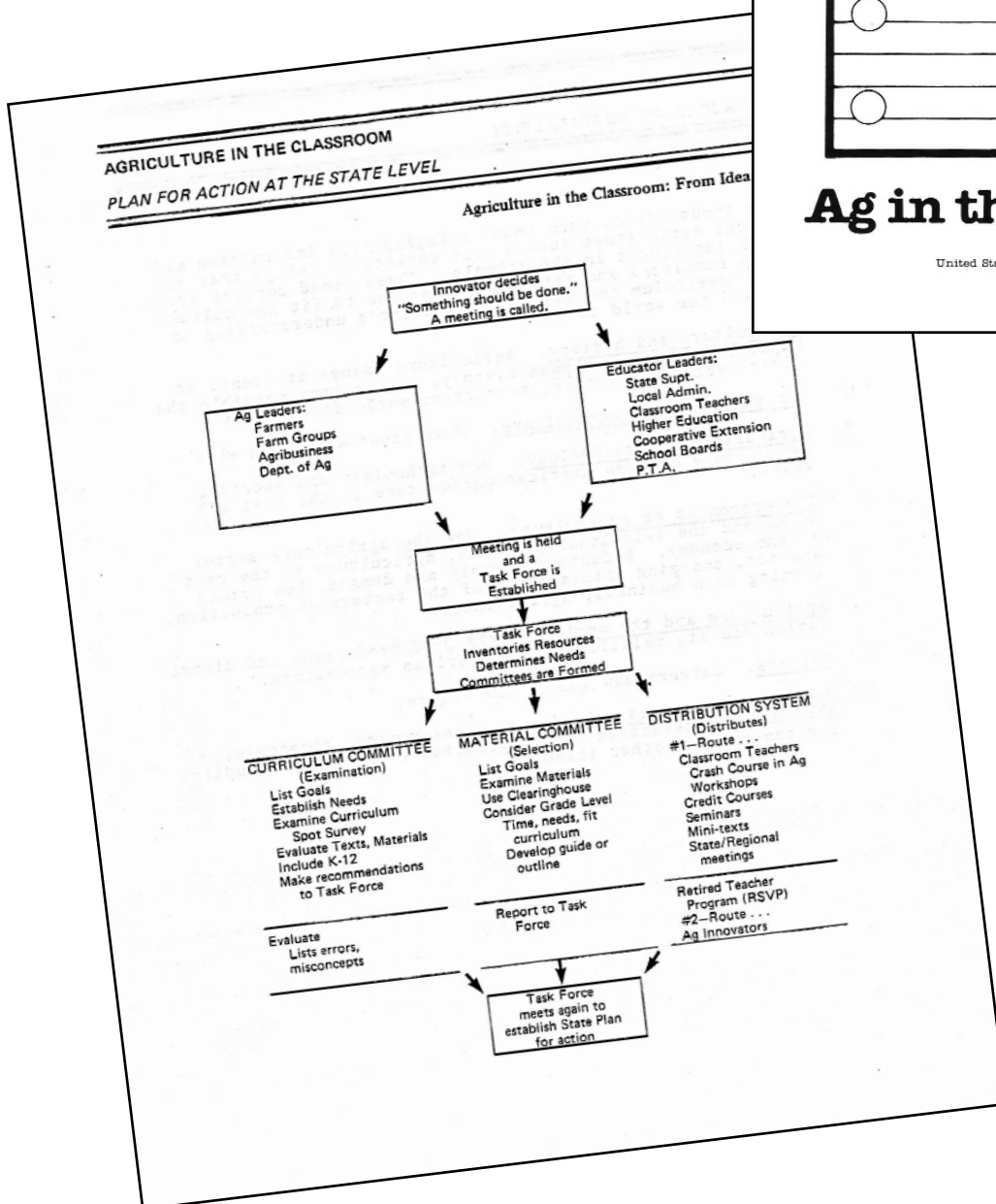
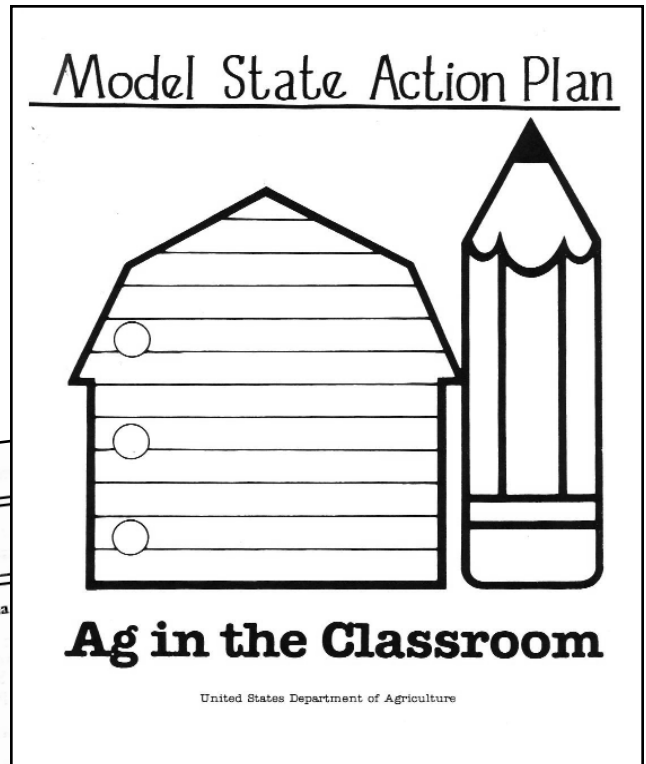
With active support of the Office of the Secretary and Public Liaison Office, Agriculture in the Classroom exceeded all of its goals for the first year. Just under \$25,000 in Special Programs' funds were expended. The Task Force produced:

- A State Action Plan to guide the development of state level groups.
- The framework for a national clearinghouse of information materials and programs on agriculture within USDA.
- A draft Resource Guide to printed and audiovisual information materials.
- A set of concepts to guide the Agriculture in the Classroom program nationally.
- A Declaration of Principle.

The Declaration of Principle was announced by Secretary of Agriculture John Block with a fanfare on

The Task Force decided that agricultural literacy must be addressed at the local level since the constitutional responsibility for education rests with the states. The Task Force developed a comprehensive State Action Plan, to help state task forces work with educational and agricultural entities to foster voluntary incorporation of appropriate agricultural subject content into their school curricula. The Plan was released in May 1982 for the second national workshop on Agriculture in the Classroom.

As states planned and implemented AITC programs, important experience was gained that needed to be shared. A revised and updated Model Plan of Action was initiated in 1983 by the USDA Ag in the Classroom office to serve as a useful planning and management tool. It built on the original plan as well as the knowledge of experienced agricultural leaders and educators to support and reinforce efforts underway.



The second year brought the distribution of the new Ag in the Classroom Resource Guide, and focus was given to review of resources to assure accurate content, quality, and avoid duplication in the development of new materials. The evaluation of materials expanded to surveying textbooks and developing a solid, objective basis for working with textbook publishers in the long-term development of materials with agricultural content. To make long-term improvements in the level of awareness about agriculture in the national life, it was recommended that K-12 curriculum flexible enough to fit existing teaching programs throughout the country be developed.

The first newsletter was also published in 1982 to bind state and local groups together, to encourage cooperation among interested organizations, and to highlight useful products. While the style of the newsletter has gone through various changes, it has remained a constant through the years, providing valuable program information to the states to assist with management, and sharing of resources and successful project ideas.

Irregular Issue No. 1
August 9, 1982

AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

Agriculture in the Classroom celebrated its first birthday on May 17, 1 month ahead of schedule, when 53 representatives of farm, agriculture, and farm-related groups, commodity associations, and educators showed up at USDA to review accomplishments since the first meeting in June 1981 and to recommend programs for the 1982-3 working year.

1981-82 Accomplishments

The first result of the June 1981 session was the appointment of a 16-person task force to develop an action program for agricultural and educational interests. Meeting in September and in January, the task force:

- Began the development of a Resource Guide to audio-visual and print materials on agriculture for use in schools.
- Developed a State Action Plan to suggest to State and local groups ways to get Agriculture in the Classroom programs going in their areas.
- Produced a set of overall concepts to guide the development of the Agriculture in the Classroom program.
- Began review of textbooks.

Classroom were:

Ted Amick, Future Farmers of America; Edna Serton, Past President, D.C. Association of School Librarians; Dave Bohling, Nebraska Department of Agriculture; Duane Bosworth, Soil Conservation Service; USDA; Helen Boyd, American Agriculture Movement; Karl Garry, Maryland State Department of Education; Carl Ek, National Farm Union; Yvonne Freeman, Office of Agricultural Affairs, USDA; Marsha Herndon, American Farm Bureau Federation; Sandra Hays, National Farm Life, Stock and Meat Board; John Bendahl, Past President, Illinois Women for Agriculture; John Lewis, Illinois Council on Economic Education; Jack Matthews, Maryland Farm Bureau; David Phillips, U.S. Department of Education; Nellie Gaudner, Past President, National Association of School Principals; Industry Council; Marton, and Ted C. Governmental and P.

RESOURCE GUIDE.

Task Force, USDA and educational publishers to develop print and audio-visual materials for use in the classroom.

125 books and other materials were selected.

Working with the curriculum and information about the use of these materials.

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Ag in the Classroom

United States Department of Agriculture

Vol. 1, No. 1

June 1984

From the Farm to the Classroom

USDA Sets Goal to Reach Every State

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary John Block launched the Agriculture in the Classroom program in June of 1981 to provide students, the standing about agriculture. Participation in the program includes farm and agribusiness organizations as well as state departments of agriculture and education in about 30 states.

Block recently announced the program had been successful in that it would now be a permanent program and given an even higher priority. "We plan to keep the concept and the program working in all 50 states and to make it a national program," he said.

Block said he would like to see the program work in all 50 states and to make it a national program. "We plan to keep the concept and the program working in all 50 states and to make it a national program," he said.

Hart Appointed Coordinator of 'Ag in the Classroom'

Dr. Peggy D. Hart has been named as the first coordinator of the Agriculture in the Classroom program. She will be working with the USDA and the National Association of State Departments of Education to develop and implement the program.

Hart has been serving as the first coordinator of the program for the past three years. She will be working with the USDA and the National Association of State Departments of Education to develop and implement the program.

Agriculture and History: Teaching students

The basic concept of the program is to provide students with a better understanding of the role of agriculture in the nation's history and the economy. The program is designed to provide students with a better understanding of the role of agriculture in the nation's history and the economy.

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The geography of agriculture: What grows

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The economics of agriculture: How technology

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'Cross-fertilization' Brings New Breed of Ideas to Indiana Schools

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Secretary Block Helps Kick-off Indiana Ag in the Classroom

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Agriculture in the Classroom Notes

June 1984 • Volume 17, No. 6

Fairing well with agriculture in Grades 4-12

Every school year, there is a time when the students are learning about agriculture. It is a time when the students are learning about the role of agriculture in the nation's history and the economy. It is a time when the students are learning about the role of agriculture in the nation's history and the economy.

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AITC Notes

FALL 2002 VOL. 25, NO. 1

Test Scores Reflect Success of AITC's Programs

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Ag Day, March 21, 1983. The Declaration of Principle spelled out the purpose of the Agriculture in the Classroom program and featured the signatures of all seven living former Secretaries of Agriculture.



It was designed to provide State Action Groups a tool they could use to help call to the attention of school officials the significance of the "Agriculture in the Classroom" project.



In a media event to illustrate the broad-based, bipartisan nature of the support for the AITC program, Secretary John Block mailed the Declaration to all the Governors urging their support.

..... BLOCK SEEKS GOVERNORS' SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION



WASHINGTON, March 21--Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today asked all state governors to support a national project keyed to educating elementary and secondary school students about the role of agriculture in the national economy.

During a National Agriculture Day ceremony held at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Block mailed a petition to the 50 governors explaining the educational project and asking the governors to endorse the project. The petition was already signed by seven former secretaries of agriculture.

"When I contacted the secretaries -- Brannon, Benson, Freeman, Hardin, Butz, Knebel and Bergland -- and sought their support, they gave it willingly," Block said. "This is one issue on which we are in complete accord -- the critical importance of educating our young people about the role of agriculture in the national economy."

Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell joined Block in promoting support for the agricultural education project.

The project, known as "Agriculture in the Classroom," is a cooperative endeavor involving representatives of farm and agricultural organizations, educators, state departments of agriculture and education and USDA.

Guided by a 16-member national task force, "Agriculture in the Classroom" is already operating in 17 states.

"AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM" A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

Agriculture is the foundation of human life. The production and distribution of food and fiber have shaped the development of mankind since the beginning of time.

American agriculture affects all of us as consumers, workers, and citizens. As consumers, 20 percent of our personal expenditures are for food. The farming sector provides employment for one out of every five workers in our labor force. And where this Nation was once a rough-hewn rural society in which more than 98 percent of the population farmed, America has evolved into a prosperous urban society in which less than 2 percent of the population produces the food and fiber for the other 98 percent, plus tens of millions of people throughout the world.

This transformation, under which so many now depend on so few for so much, has moved many elements of the policy and decisionmaking process affecting our food supply off the individual farm and into the public arena.

The issues confronting modern American agricultural production are complex and far-reaching. To cite just a few: What action is needed to protect and enhance the Nation's water and soil resources for our children and their children? Is current scientific research adequate for the growing worldwide demand for food? What is Government's responsibility in guaranteeing our food supply? What relationship should there be between American agriculture and international agriculture? What is the relationship between reasonable farm prices and reasonable consumer prices?

Well-thought-out policies covering these and other critical issues require a knowledgeable citizenry. And the foundation for that knowledge can best be started in the Nation's schools. It is essential that our elementary and high school students, as a part of their basic instruction, learn about these fundamental issues. Only then will they be prepared as adults to help make responsible decisions in this critical area.

With the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a group of agricultural representatives, educators, consumers, and State and Federal officials have formed an "Agriculture in the Classroom" task force. This broadly based, nonpolitical national group is developing a general plan, which will help similar State task forces work with educational and agricultural entities. With ongoing dedication and planning, these State task forces will foster voluntary incorporation of appropriate agricultural subject matter into their school curricula.

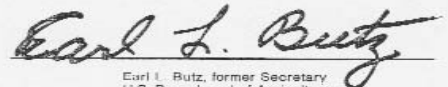
We, the undersigned, commend the efforts of the "Agriculture in the Classroom" Task Force. Further, we urge educators, agriculturalists, civic leaders, state and local officials, and other interested individuals to actively participate in implementing this program.



John R. Block, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture



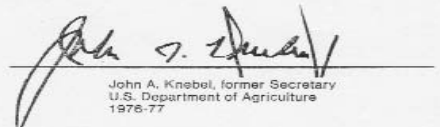
Charles F. Brannan, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1948-53



Earl L. Butz, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1971-76



Ezra Taft Benson, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1953-61



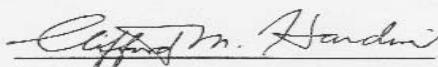
John A. Knebel, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1976-77



Orville L. Freeman, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1961-69



Bob Bergland, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1977-81



Clifford M. Hardin, former Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1969-71

NOTE: Governor:

Would you please sign your name with a black pen on the line provided above. Your signature, along with the signatures of the other Governors participating in this project, will be stripped onto the document that is presented for national distribution to all state task forces.

Three regional meetings were held in 1982, hosted by USDA in cooperation with state departments of agriculture and education, to provide assistance and direction to interested people to help them organize state Ag in the Classroom programs. The meetings were conducted in Lincoln, Nebraska; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Portland, Oregon. They drew a total of 356 participants representing 27 states.

Regional meetings in the southwest and southeast regions were conducted in July and August 1983. Interested groups in each state responded by creating a state task force. From these five meetings, 35 programs were originally established. The broad based support of agriculture, business, education, government and dedicated volunteers was the key element to make AITC a successful program.

"Our goal was to have 25 active states by 1984. Now we've raised our sights, hoping to have all 50 states involved by 1985," said Helen Boyd, Wyoming farmer and representative of the American Agriculture Movement at the 1983 annual meeting.

There are now programs in every state and many U.S. Territories. Canada, with assistance from USDA, developed an Ag in the Classroom program in every Province as well as a national organization. Countries around the world are interested in Ag in the Classroom because they have experienced the same needs in agricultural education.

The USDA plays the important role of supporting the state groups by providing leadership, counsel, and materials, and by maintaining a nationwide network of individuals and organizations that actively support the AITC mission. Specifically, the USDA's responsibility is to:

1. Assist all states to develop effective AITC programs;
2. Maintain a communications network for the exchange of ideas, materials and information among the states, including publishing a national newsletter;
3. Encourage USDA agencies to assist in AITC activities;
4. Assist states in the assessment of their efforts to improve agricultural literacy;
5. Coordinate and promote the goals of AITC to national organizations in the fields of agriculture and education; and
6. Sponsor an annual national AITC conference.

Mission

The mission of Ag in the Classroom is to help students in grades K-12 acquire the knowledge needed to become agriculturally literate. Ag in the Classroom encourages and assists educators to teach more about our food and fiber system and the role of agriculture in our economy and society. Emphasis is placed on integrating agriculture into existing curriculum areas of science, social studies, English and mathematics.

Agriculture in the Classroom activities focus on teaching scientific knowledge related to agriculture using hands-on teaching tools for many subjects. The emphasis of AITC is placed upon integrating the following into the curriculum that is already being taught in the schools:

- *Geography* - Agriculture tells a geographic story of how climate, altitude, soil types, and societal preferences influence what and where elements of the food and fiber system are grown.
- *Careers* - Agriculture is one of the Nation's largest employers in many varied fields: plant and animal science, food production, marketing, transportation, finance, economics, public policy, human nutrition, and environmental stewardship.
- *Science and Technology* - From the invention of the cotton gin to biotechnology, food safety, and GIS, agriculture has changed science and technology in major ways over the past 100 years.
- *Nutrition and Health* - The foods we eat meet our nutritional needs and affect our health, the way we grow and our ability to learn.
- *Environmental Education* - Conservation, environmental quality, natural resources are important to agriculture as production is dependent on these resources.
- *Business and Economics* - Agriculture plays a significant role in national and international economies; effects supply and demand on pricing and products; and the business aspects of farming and related agribusinesses.
- *Political Science* - Land use, biotechnology, environmental quality, world food supplies are affected by legislation and public policy.
- *History* - Agriculture issues or events as major influences in human history and literature making possible that first settled societies, to current world food issues.
- *Mathematics* - Statistics about agriculture are available for a myriad of real world mathematical problems.
- *Language Arts* - Creative writing can be used to describe the benefits of agriculture, life on the farm,



working in research and other fields, agriculture's role in history, the future without agriculture. Agriculture literature provides sources of good reading materials.

Implementation through State Organizations

There is an AITC presence in every state, American Samoa, Guam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, Republic of Palau, and U.S. Virgin Islands. Representatives from Canada have attended many USDA sponsored AITC national conferences and have now hosted two national conferences in Canada. Requests for information about Ag in the Classroom come from many countries around the world and from other organizations that want to learn how to deliver their programs with equal success.

Following the guidelines provided by the original Task Force, state organizations conduct Ag in the Classroom activities following the needs at the state and local level. All types of organizational structure exist, from individual nonprofit organizations to sharing of staff with a state agriculture agency, university, commodity group, or group of volunteers. Whatever the structure, successful programs share a common feature; a combined support group within the private agricultural sector and the dedication of many volunteers committed to the goal of agricultural literacy.

"What we've done is to use Ag in the Classroom as motivation for students to read and write. It's all so logical; I can't imagine why we didn't do it sooner," Jack Keyes, Michigan principal.

States use a wide variety of methods to convey information about the food and fiber system. Training of teachers has proved a very effective means to have educators infuse agriculture in their existing curriculum. With the widening disconnect between urban and rural communities, preservice training has become a popular recourse for state programs to involve the next generation of teachers.



Educational materials have been developed by states and supplemented with materials from national and regional agricultural organizations. A wide variety of resources are used and supplemented with hands-on learning experiences and interaction with related programs, such as activity/lesson plans for students with teacher guides, children's books and magazines, coloring and comic books, computer software programs, materials from commodity groups, newsletters, posters, charts, student reader magazines, teacher resource books, textbooks, and video/audio-film strips.



When AITC materials are developed, the AITC program recommended that the materials be field tested prior to distribution; reviewed for the prevention of bias and stereotypes; high quality; focused upon the entire food and fiber system; adaptive and high readability for all age groups; sensitive to changes in technology; and reviewed with the thoroughness of all teaching aids.

To further educational efforts, funding opportunities, and agriculture promotions, states conduct a variety of activities such as:

- Agriculture fair activities
- Bumper sticker artwork contests
- Calendar artwork contests
- Classroom presentations
- Continuing education credits
- Creative writing contests
- Field trips
- In-service training
- License plates
- Mobile classrooms
- Special speakers
- Summer Agriculture Institutes
- Teacher and school project grants
- Teacher of the Year programs
- Teacher training
- Workshops for educators outside of the classroom



A teacher in Florida, when exposed to Ag in the Classroom, realized how well agriculture fit into what she was already teaching in life science and social studies. She said, "I need to be teaching this. An understanding and an appreciation for agriculture is of vital importance in every child's education."



AITC National Conferences

Starting with the initial organizational meeting in 1981, national conferences remain the key activity to continue the momentum of the AITC program and strengthen state program efforts in the nation. Conferences bring together State Contacts and educators to discuss success stories, share common problems and solutions, and see new educational resources.



Originally hosted at USDA in Washington, sessions focused on training leaders in implementing State Action Plans, working with school officials and educators, and establishing training programs. The format was expanded to include agricultural tours and resource workshops for educators in the late 1990s. State Contacts requested that the conference be held around the country to allow for greater participation. From an original attendance of 53, 2005 conference attendance topped 450.



- 1981 *Inaugural Meeting*, Washington, DC
- 1982 *Annual Meeting*, Washington, DC
- 1983 *Leadership Conference*, Washington, DC
- 1984 *Leadership Conference*, Chevy Chase, Maryland
- 1985 *Leadership Conference*, Washington, DC
- 1986 *Leadership Conference*, Washington, DC
- 1987 *Leadership Conference*, Washington, DC
- 1988 *Educating for the 21st Century*, Washington, DC
- 1989 *Partnerships in Agricultural Literacy*, Washington, DC
- 1990 *Agricultural Literacy in a Changing World*, Washington, DC
- 1991 *Education and Agriculture - A Growing Partnership*, Washington, DC
- 1992 *Understanding the Many Faces of Agriculture Through Quality Education*, Orlando, Florida
- 1993 *Connections*, Washington, DC
- 1994 *Ticket to Teamwork*, Kansas City, Missouri
- 1995 *Agriculture's Investment - Teaching Children*, Washington, DC
- 1996 *Agriculture's Investment Teachers and Children - Learning for a Lifetime*, Monterey, California
- 1997 *Discovery Through Agriculture*, Nashua, New Hampshire
- 1998 *Tradition, Transition, Technology*, Williamsburg, Virginia
- 1999 *Blazing Trails to the 21st Century*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- 2000 *Pioneering Agricultural Literacy*, Salt Lake City, Utah
- 2001 *Corn, Beans, & City Scenes*, Chicago, Illinois
- 2002 *Discovering Agriculture Capital Style*, Washington, DC
- 2003 *Cows, Crops & Country Music*, Nashville, Tennessee
- 2004 *The Cultures of Agriculture*, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2005 *Realizing Agriculture Connects with Education*, Indianapolis, Indiana
- 2006 *Unlock the Treasures of the Garden State...Agriculture is the Key*, Atlantic City, New Jersey

Regional Meetings

The AITC program has been able to grow through the exchange of ideas and philosophies. States also have unique traits which provide for effective grouping into natural geographical regions. Each region arranges meetings to jointly address issues common to their area. Regions were established as follows:

Central Region: Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

Eastern Region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and District of Columbia

Southern Region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia

Western Region: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming



National Resource Directory

To help teachers find agricultural materials for the classroom and to help groups producing materials know what is available elsewhere, USDA created an "Agriculture in the Classroom" Resource Guide. Over 200 organizations and publishers were initially contacted to find materials for the Resource Guide. A variety of print and audio-visual materials, booklets, films, activities and more were listed in the first edition of the Guide. It described each piece of material, indicating the concepts taught, and provided information on price and ordering. The Guide also featured a section listing other sources of educational materials about agriculture. Resource Guides were updated and printed annually until the adoption of Internet use nationwide.

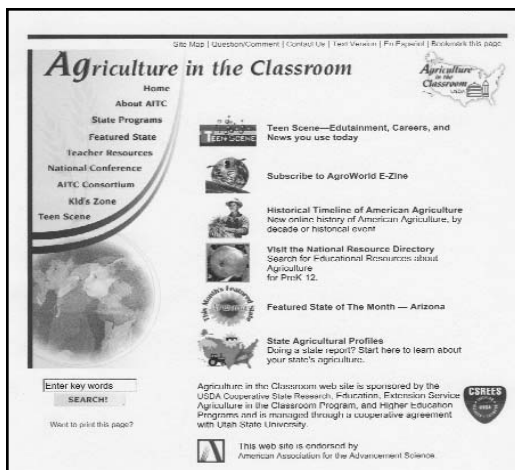
AITC then moved to a web-based directory of agricultural education resources that include printed material, CDs, videos, audio kits, and instructional web sites. These materials are reviewed for accuracy and availability before being included in the directory.

Newsletter

Communication with states was identified as a key factor in starting the AITC program. Newsletters provided the means to share success stories of projects and new resources available within the states. Early newsletters showcased state programs being established. New resources and education materials were continually highlighted. With the introduction of the Internet, email and website information became a more predominant means of communication amongst states.

In recent years program emphasis has been placed on expanding resources and outreach to secondary education. AgroWorld, a bimonthly electronic magazine, was introduced in 2004 for the secondary educators and their students. Each issue features current events, classroom resources, activities, and grant opportunities that enhance standards based on science, applied technology, and social studies curriculum.

www.agclassroom.org



The Ag in the Classroom program developed a website in 1999 to increase visibility of the program nationwide and provide the public, teachers and State Contacts information about general and local information and resources. The website is a useful communication link between AITC state leaders and people interested in learning and teaching through agriculture. State Contacts can find organizational information, calendar of events, and access to grant and award materials. Teacher resources on the AITC website include lesson plans aligned to state standards, program ideas, workshops, conferences and summer institutes, newsletters with lesson plans and state information. AITC's website was endorsed in 2003 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Student information on the AITC

website include state agricultural profiles, kid zone activities, food facts, agriculture fun, virtual field trips, teen scene, career options, biotechnology, environmental education, science fair projects, and more.

Outreach

Conveying the mission of AITC throughout the country and across public and private sectors has been essential for growth and program acceptance. Many of the traditional communication techniques have been utilized by the USDA AITC program and at the state level. All of these translate to effective public relations and marketing.

Some of the methods utilized:

- Logo promotional items for increased recognition
- News releases/feature stories
- Special events such as mall exhibits
- Displays and exhibits at professional educator meetings and trade shows
- Video-audio public service announcements
- Special days/weeks such as Legislative Day, Farm City Week, National Ag Day

Resource Development

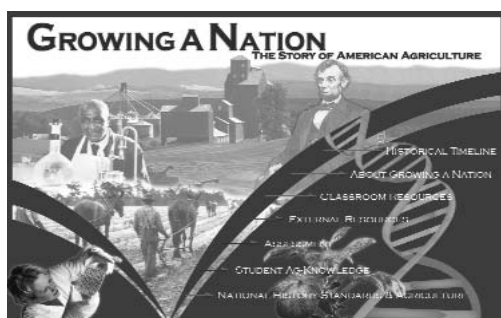
The Ag in the Classroom program works cooperatively with organizations in the development of resources providing educational content and editorial comment, as well as an avenue to share the resources nationwide.

To celebrate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the Ag in the Classroom Program helped create and disseminate "Ag & the Constitution" Teachers Kits. The Kit provided lessons for K-12 teachers and students that discussed agriculture's critical role in American history.

Space Ag in the Classroom (SAITC) is a joint project of USDA's Ag in the Classroom Program, NASA, and the University of Florida that is designed to boost student awareness of the space program and the role of agriculture in our economy and society. The project helps students see the connection between agricultural practices on Earth that relate to space-based research, particularly in the plant sciences.

Support was made available to Project Food, Land, and People for the development of lesson plans for PreK-12 to help people better understand the interrelationships among agriculture, the environment and people of the world. The Resources for Learning lessons were first released in 1998.

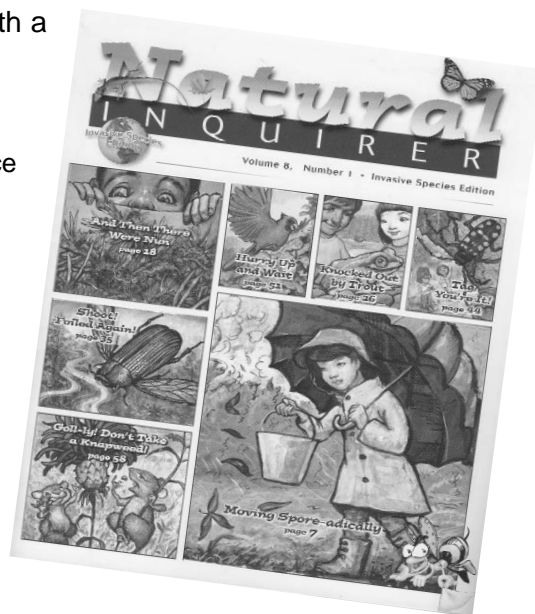
Teaching Educators Agriculture and Conservation Holistically for Urban Society was a collaboration with the Foreign Agricultural Service in 2000 to give traditionally under-represented people greater knowledge of food and agricultural science and research activities. TEACH US focused on urban educators to expand the teaching of food and agricultural science to minority youth.



A lesson series in American history titled Growing A Nation: the Story of American Agriculture was provided development support. The program utilizes innovative CD-ROM technology to link online teacher resources and supports national standards for teaching American history. Educators use the program to teach about agricultural innovations, research and inventions that have positively change and influenced the lives of all Americans, their culture, economy, and quality of life.

The Ag in the Classroom program has worked cooperatively with a variety of federal agencies, including:

- Agricultural Research Service
- Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
- Foreign Agricultural Service
- Forest Service
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Agricultural Library
- National Agricultural Statistics Service
- National Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Bureau of Census
- U.S. Department of Education



Ag in the Classroom Consortium

The Agriculture in the Classroom Consortium was established July 12, 1997 to provide leadership and a professional network for state Agriculture in the Classroom Programs and work to insure continuity of the Agriculture in the Classroom Program at USDA. The Consortium is the professional association of state AITC representatives whose purpose is to assume and maintain an active national role in promoting agricultural literacy programs. In 2003 the Consortium released a Strategic Plan for 2003-2008 to set goals for the organization. See the Plan, along with the Consortium Constitution and Bylaws, and Memo of Understanding between the Consortium and USDA Agriculture in the Classroom Program in the Appendix.



- **CONSORTIUM LEADERSHIP**

1997-1998 Mark Linder, California
1998-1999 Diane Olson, Missouri
1999-2000 Debra Spielmaker, Utah
2002-2003 Charles Curtis, Tennessee
2003-2004 Kevin Daugherty, Illinois
2004-2005 Judy Culbertson, California
2005-2006 Judy Roush, Ohio

Serving partial terms in 2000-2001 were Michele Awad, Virginia and Steven Connelly, Maryland.

Partners

The success of the Ag in the Classroom program has been through the involvement of the private agriculture industry. The Consortium and AITC Program established a Partners Program to formally recognize their support. Partners are involved with Agriculture in the Classroom and promote agricultural literacy. Nominations to the Partners Committee are submitted to the Consortium membership at its annual meeting and are approved through majority vote of the Consortium. No dues are required, however Partners are encouraged to make annual contributions. Partners hold no voting privileges, but time is allotted at the annual meeting to give Partners an opportunity to express concerns and offer guidance as part of the AITC network.

AITC PARTNERS

Agriculture Council of America
Agri-Education, Inc.
Altria Corporation
American AgriWomen
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture
American Farm Bureau Women's Committee
Animal Agriculture Alliance
Canada Ag in the Classroom
Chris Fesko Enterprises
Crop Life America
Dole Food Company
The Fertilizer Institute
First Pioneer Farm Credit
Food, Land & People
Hunt-Tower Farms
Illinois Agricultural Association Foundation
International Food Information Council Foundation
Irrigation Association Education Foundation
Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences
Monsanto Company
Monterey County Agricultural Education, Inc.
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
National 4-H Council
National Agriculture Library
National Agricultural Aviation Association
National Agriculture Statistics Service
National Arbor Day Foundation
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Cotton Women's Committee
National Cottonseed Products Association
National Energy Education Development
National FFA Organization
National Gardening Association
National Mining Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Sweet Potatoes Commission
Natural Resources Conservation Services, SDA
New York Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture Education, Inc.
Potash Phosphate Institute
Progressive Farmer Magazine
Sigma Alpha
Space AITC - University of Florida, Department of Agriculture Education
St. Louis Science Center
Successful Farming Magazine
Tennessee Foundation for AITC
United Soybean Board
USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

- MONSANTO OUTREACH GRANT

At the 2004 National AITC Conference, a unique program was announced as a joint venture between Monsanto and the National AITC Consortium. Monsanto, with a clear commitment to Agriculture Literacy, granted the National AITC Consortium \$50,000 to be used for grants to State AITC Programs in 2005-2007.

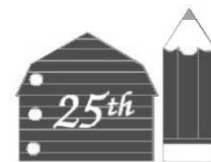
2005 award recipients were:

- Alaska AITC K-12 Educator e-Learning Professional Development Project, Alaska AITC
- Florida Agriculture Literacy Day, Florida AITC
- What The Heck Can You Do With Biotech, South Dakota AITC

AITC Operations

The Ag in the Classroom program was originally funded at \$25,000 annually through the Office of Information, Special Programs Division. In 1985, AITC became an independent program with an appropriation of \$50,000 from Congress through the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) budget. Policy guidance was assigned to the Assistant Secretary of Science and Education within the Office of the Secretary.

The AITC barn and pencil silo logo was registered with the US Patent and Trademark office on December 23, 1986 for the reserved use of the USDA AITC and all state affiliated programs as recognized by the USDA AITC Office. Tax Exempt status was attained in 1994.



In 1992, the AITC appropriation was transferred from the CSRS budget to the Extension Service to better align with programs that deal with youth. This action transferred the administrative responsibility for the supervision of personnel, authorization of travel and procurement to the Extension Service. Ag in the Classroom staff continued to report to the Assistant Secretary of Science and Education for policy guidance. Another shift took place in 1994 when all components of the AITC program were combined and assigned to the Higher Education Programs within the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service to work more closely with outreach programs of USDA.


The efforts of the Ag in the Classroom Consortium and grass-root investment of the state programs have helped bring about dramatic growth in the AITC program to ensure its future. The appropriation for fiscal year 2006 to the Ag in the Classroom program was \$865,000.

- STAFF

1981-1983	Assistance provided by the Office of Information, Special Programs Division (Included Sally Katt and Chris Mosher Wilson)
1984-1985	Peggy Hart named first Director
1986-1993	Shirley Traxler
1994-1997	Betty Wolanyk
1998-2001	Dorothy Jackson
2002-Present	Kathleen Cullinan

Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture: An Awards Program

Seeking to recognize the outstanding efforts of educators in teaching about agriculture, the USDA Ag in the Classroom Program and Ag in the Classroom Consortium established an awards program in 1999. This competitive program recognizes teachers for their successful efforts in teaching agricultural concepts in their curriculum. Teachers are selected by a panel of experts knowledgeable in agriculture, education, and AITC for their outstanding contributions to education about American agriculture. Recipients receive a \$500 honorarium and up to \$1500 in travel expenses to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference.

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Martha Deichler, K-6, California• Betty Kobes, Elementary, Iowa• Diane Lucas, Third Grade, Ohio |  |
| 2001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chyna Hayes, Kindergarten, Nebraska• Kathy Picano, Fifth Grade, Florida• Joanne Witschorke, Fourth Grade, Texas | |
| 2002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rebecca Baker, Second Grade, Missouri• Deni Lopez, Grades 4-5, California• Victoria Richey, Third Grade, Oklahoma• Peggy Wittwer, Fourth Grade, Utah | |
| 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Janet Campbell Gray, Fifth Grade, Florida• Julie King, First Grade, Illinois• Cheryl McGinness, Grades 1-3, Missouri• Norma Musel, Grades 3-12, Minnesota• Carla Diane Wright, Third Grade, California |  |
| 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cathey Anderson, Fourth Grade, California• Amy Duplechin, Sixth Grade, Louisiana• Wava Tulley & Teresa Tucker, Grades 3-4, Wyoming• Steven Tanquay & Don White, Seventh Grade and Agriculture, Maine• Lisa Wiederholt, Fifth Grade, Utah | |
| 2005 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alzina Barnhill, Fourth Grade, Utah• Ferol Empen, Grades PreK - 8, Illinois• Bev Grueber, Fourth Grade, Nebraska• Tina McEnroe, Grades 5-6, California• Ronnie Thomas, Grades 10-12, Georgia |  |
| 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diana Agre and Kim Hofstad, Fourth Grade, Montana• Nancy Jo Miller, Grades 7-8 and 10, Nebraska• Lance Omeje, Grades 4-5, California• Carol Patterson, Fourth Grade, Wisconsin• Cyanne Williams, Fourth Grade, Florida | |



Agriculture in the Classroom Enrichment Grants

Agriculture in the Classroom Enrichment Grants were established in 2003 to strengthen state programs by funding innovative ideas and proven outreach strategies to increase agricultural literacy among teachers and their students. These projects address a state, regional, or national educational need; involve creative or nontraditional approach toward addressing that need that can serve as a model to others; and encourage and facilitate better relationships in the education community.

2003

- Enhancing the Agricultural Literacy of Alaska Students Grades 6-12, Alaska, \$5000
- Production Map and Educators Guide, Louisiana, \$5000
- Mid-Atlantic AITC Curriculum Development Workshop, Maryland, \$7600
- Enhancing Knowledge of Agricultural Issues Through Teacher Training and Implementation of Food, Land and People, Nevada, \$5000
- Window on Your Waterways Professional Development Program, Ohio, \$5000
- Strengthening Oregon AITC by Aligning with State Benchmarks, Oregon, \$5000
- Bringing AITC to Disadvantaged South Carolina School Districts, South Carolina, \$5000
- Wisconsin Farm and Food Connections, Wisconsin, \$5000

2004

- Farm Camp, Louisiana, \$7500
- Finding the Food and Clothing Around You, An Agriculture Resource Guide, Maine, \$7000
- Taking Ag in the Classroom to the City, Maryland, \$7000
- Bringing Green Genes - "My DNA" to the Classroom and Farm, Massachusetts, \$6000
- Food for Thought; A Geography of Minnesota Agriculture, Minnesota, \$7500
- North Carolina Agriculture: An Accurate Portrayal, North Carolina, \$7000
- Enabling Local Watershed Education, Ohio, \$7500
- Ag in the Classroom After School, Oklahoma, \$5500
- Get Oregonized - 4th Grade Oregon Agriculture and History, Oregon, \$7000
- AITC High School Lessons and Teaching Strategies, South Carolina, \$7500
- Agriscience for Elementary Teachers II, South Dakota, \$6000
- School Garden Projects Workshop, Virginia, \$7000
- Virtual Reality Internet Course, Wyoming, \$7500

2005

- Delivering Ag in the Classroom Workshops to Alaska Teachers, Alaska, \$7500
- "Finding the Food and Clothing Around You" Implementation of an Agricultural Resource Guide for Educators, Maine, \$7500
- Crop and Livestock Cards, Nebraska, \$6640
- Learning Through Gardening, New Jersey, \$7500
- Growing Connections to the Curriculum, New York, \$7500
- Online Professional Development Course for Educators utilizing Agriculture in the Classroom Resources and Food, Land and People Program, North Dakota, \$7500
- Translating Oklahoma and New Mexico Ag in the Classroom Curriculum to Spanish, Oklahoma and New Mexico, \$15000
- Oregon AITC Teacher Resource Guide, Oregon, \$7500
- Exploring the Link Between Agricultural Research and Medical Breakthroughs, Tennessee, \$7500

Evaluation

In 1983 the National Research Council's Committee on Agriculture Education in Secondary Schools recommended that to achieve agricultural literacy, agricultural education must change. In its report, *Understanding Agriculture: New Directions for Education*, the Committee stated that the survival of our nation's competitive agricultural industry depended on major improvements in agricultural education. "Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through twelfth grade, all students should receive some systematic instruction about agriculture," the report states. "Agriculture is too important a topic to be taught only to the relatively small percentage of students considering careers in agriculture and pursuing vocational agriculture studies." The Committee cites *Ag in the Classroom* as a model program. "Ag in the Classroom ... is the most extensive effort under way to make elementary school students more knowledgeable about the food and fiber system."

USDA conducted an extensive survey of all states participating in AITC in 1988. The results showed that USDA served an important role in coordination and facilitation of all areas of AITC programming. The national presence had been established without infringing upon state and local autonomy. On the state level, partnerships were developed between various interests of agriculture, business, education and individuals to create each state's AITC program. AITC was regarded as a new, refreshing and flexible educational program designed to supplement and enhance the teacher's existing curriculum. Communication and joint action between diverse groups had evolved as a result of participation in AITC. The ability to reach students who otherwise may not have had an opportunity to learn about agricultural concepts was achieved. Increased awareness of the food and fiber system among educators was an important outcome.

The states identified areas for national assistance to help them attain agricultural literacy goals. These included the need for additional funds, more educational materials, and increased publicity and outreach communication to improve awareness of AITC. At a local level goals included hiring and training a professional staff; developing more effective educational materials to cover all grades K-12; create incentives to reach more classroom teachers; develop an evaluation program; attain more of a commitment from state departments of agriculture and education; derive realistic annual goals; and improve communications and the understanding of AITC at all levels.

In 2001-2002, USDA contracted with Oklahoma State University to study the impact of selected AITC teachers on agricultural literacy. The study assessed the specific agricultural knowledge of selected public school classrooms in grades K-6 that had received instruction from teachers trained by *Agriculture in the Classroom*. The results showed that AITC trained teachers make a positive difference in student acquisition of knowledge about agriculture. Students in AITC classrooms demonstrated more agricultural knowledge achievement compared to students in classrooms with no AITC training.

Recommendations included the need to conduct more teacher training and develop instructional materials for infusing agriculture into upper level elementary grades to enhance achievement about agriculture. It suggested the need for a national agricultural literacy curriculum framework to unify pre-service teacher preparation and provide overall direction for teacher in-service about agriculture. Additional studies are recommended to evaluate projects and identify "best practices" leading to improved teaching and learning about agriculture.

A new evaluation of *Agriculture in the Classroom* was initiated by Arizona AITC and the University of Arizona in 2006. This study will compare students' test scores in reading, science and math of students whose teachers participate in AITC workshops with the scores of students whose teachers did not participate in these workshops. The study will examine the scores in five states.

Closing

AITC serves millions of students and thousands of teachers annually through workshops, conferences, field trips, farm tours, classroom resources, and other educational activities. Animal sciences, natural resources and environmental issues, nutrition, and agricultural careers are subjects taught most often.

Fourth-grade teacher Mary Schultz kicked off her year-long use of Ag in the Classroom resources on National Ice Cream Cone Day in September, where her Michigan students enjoyed eating an ice cream cone and visiting a dairy farm. When the year-end results from the Stanford Achievement Test came in, Schultz found another benefit to her year-long effort to bring excitement and learning into her classroom. Scores jumped dramatically - including one child who rose from the ninth percentile in reading and math to the 56th percentile. "I really believe my enthusiasm paid off," Schultz says. "I attribute this dramatic rise to the enthusiasm that our children had for learning directly to the Ag in the Classroom program."

- Over \$9.25 million is raised and invested by state programs in Ag in the Classroom each year.
- An additional \$2.5 million is provided as in-kind services and donations.
- Funding sources include private donors, foundations, fundraisers, memberships, sale of state license tags, affinity credit cards, land grant institutions and state governments.
- Over 92 thousand new teachers receive intensive training about agriculture and the food and fiber system by state Ag in the Classroom programs.
- Each year, 5 million new students are reached by state Ag in the Classroom programs.
- Over 600,000 volunteer hours are donated to Ag in the Classroom each year.
- Ag in the Classroom programs take place in urban settings, in small rural communities and all sized communities in between.



Ag in the Classroom programs teach about food safety, nutrition, agricultural careers, plant biology, animals, gardening, water and natural resources, environmental issues, pest control and agricultural trade as well as about farms and farming. Ag in the Classroom programs help teachers improve their math, science, reading, and social studies classes by connecting them to the real world.

Giant strides have been made since the inception of the Ag in the Classroom program in 1981. The strength of AITC comes from its grass-roots organization with strong leadership from the USDA Ag in the Classroom

Program. Those associated with AITC aim to assure continued improvement of agricultural literacy and communication of the food and fiber system.

Strategic Plan 2003-2008

*Adopted by the National AITC Consortium
June 25, 2003*

Purpose of AITC Consortium:

The purpose of this organization is spelled out in Articles 1 Section B of the AITC Consortium Constitution, which can be found on the national AITC Website (<http://www.agclassroom.org/consortium/constitution.html>)

The purpose for which this Consortium of State agriculture in the Classroom Programs formed include the following:

1. To assume and maintain an active national role in promoting agricultural literacy programs.
2. To provide input into the selection process of the National Director at the United States Department of Agriculture.
3. To provide leadership and a professional network for state Agriculture in the Classroom Programs and State Contacts.
4. To work to insure continuity of the Agriculture in the Classroom Program.
5. To identify funding sources for agriculture literacy programs that would meet Consortium objectives.
6. To work in cooperation with other national agricultural leadership and/or literacy programs to achieve common goals and objectives.

GOAL 1: To assume and maintain an active national role in promoting agricultural literacy programs.

- > Develop and Implement On-Line Resource Directory
 - By the June 2003 National Conference, release a proto-type of the On-Line Resource Directory.
 - By December 2003 have reviewers in place and Resource Directory in place on the National AITC Website.
 - Ongoing since June 2003 maintenance reviewing of materials, refining website, and updating materials.
- > Continue and Expand Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture Award
 - By 2005 50% of all eligible states will submit applications for the Excellence Award.
 - Work at the 2004 and subsequent Regional Meetings to encourage states to submit Excellence Awards Applications
 - Form a Consortium/USDA Committee to expand Excellence Award beyond teachers including, but not limited to: informal educators, team teachers, volunteers, etc.
 - Committee will consist of the following representatives: Lynda Danos-LA/Kevin Daugherty-IL, Co-Chairs; Willie Grenier-ME, Louise Lamm-NC, Shannon R. Andreen-Shipp-WY, Al Withers-MN, Alternate: Bob Legee-WI
 - Committee to meet via conference call-email and report at the 2003 USDA Consortium Meeting in Nashville, TN. Action by June 24, 2003.
 - Work to encourage more public exposure for Excellence Award Winners.
 - Work with traditional agriculture and education media to showcase teacher award winners.
 - Encourage Excellence Award Winners give at least 2 presentations in the following 12-month period to help publicize the award opportunity.

- > Expand AITC Publicity Efforts
 - Promote AITC Website as gateway to National AITC Program.
 - Offer State Contacts website promotional trinkets for distribution to teacher network in 2004 via Public Relations Committee.
 - Purchase advertising space in teacher publications as budget allows beginning in 2005.
 - Highlight accomplishments in national press release to agriculture media.
 - Provide opportunities for AG friendly texts to be highlighted at National Conference.
- > A Publicity Committee will be formed to address AITC publicity opportunities.
 - Committee will consist of a representative from each region.
Janet Hawkes-NY / Judy Roush-OH - Co-Chair; Committee will be formed at the June 2003 Consortium Meeting
 - Committee will address ways to promote AITC teachers and students via print and website.
- > A Congressional Liaison Committee will be formed to address AITC Congressional opportunities.
 - President Charles Curtis has appointed Diane Olson, Past President, (Missouri) to this role.
 - Congressional visits by State Contacts and the AITC Executive Committee will be encouraged.

GOAL 2: To provide input into the selection process of the National Director at the United States Department of Agriculture.

- > Continue positive working relationship with National Program Leadership of AITC and USDA AITC Staff.
 - Foster open lines of communication between National Office and Consortium Leadership.
 - Foster communication between National USDA AITC Office and Consortium member states.
 - Leadership of AITC Consortium will continue biannual meetings with the National Program Leadership in person, and via scheduled conference calls.
- > Continue positive working relationship with National Program Leadership of AITC and USDA AITC Staff on their priority issues.
 - Offer input and assistance by state in developing programs for use across the nation.
 - Current priority issues for the USDA AITC National Program and for the Consortium include:
 - Science Literacy at the Elementary Education and Middle School Level.
 - Careers in Agriculture.
 - Nutrition / Public Health / Food Safety as related to Agriculture for all levels.
 - Pre-Service Teacher education showing the benefits of incorporating Agriculture into existing curriculums.
 - Agriculture as an International Enterprise for all levels.

GOAL 3: Provide leadership and a professional network for state Agriculture in the Classroom Programs and State Contacts.

- > Develop and distribute new resources for all states provided regularly through USDA AITC and between states.
 - Work with USDA Interdepartmental organizations to develop resources for state use (i.e. Forest Service, Space Ag in the Classroom, Career Choices for Secondary Education, Physical Fitness, Health Nutrition)
 - Maintain and enhance agclassroom.org.
 - Highlight and promote outstanding State initiatives and encourage cooperation and collaboration among states.
 - State features on AITC website
 - Consortium E-newsletter
 - Regional Meetings
- > Provide additional professional assistance to strengthen state programs.
 - Encourage national presence of Consortium and National AITC Staff at Regional meetings.
 - Determine Regional Meeting dates and locations at National Conference.
 - Provide travel assistance to states.
 - Establish committee to implement travel assistance within budgetary constraints.

- > Develop a comprehensive State AITC Report for use at national and state levels.
 - Establish a standard 1-page State of AITC report that can be distributed with national information on one side, and state specific information on reverse
 - Form a task force comprised of a chairman, 1 Non-Executive Committee representative from each region, President Elect, and encourage National AITC Office participation during 2004 for use by 2005 Conference.
 - Debra Spielmaker, UT, has agreed to serve as chair of this committee.
 - Task force should meet via e-mail and conference call and have a report for National AITC consideration by September 2004.

GOAL 4: Work to insure continuity and excellence of the Agriculture in the Classroom Program.

- > Work with textbook publishers on agriculture sections in all texts.
 - Establish contact with various publishing houses and offer assistance and expertise of the Consortium of State Contacts.
- > Encourage State by State Evaluation of the AITC program.
 - By 2005 establish a variety of sample evaluative criteria for AITC evaluation.
 - Highlight State Evaluation from the 2005-2006 Consortium Year at the 2006 National Conference.
- > Hire a Consortium Staff Person or explore donated USDA / National Organization staff to work with Consortium.
 - Consider funding a Consortium Staff Person to be hired during the 2007 Consortium year.
 - Major responsibilities to include media exposure, public relations, fundraising, and grant writing.
- > Continue Regional AITC Meetings.
 - Offer incentives (including funding) for participation at regional meetings.
 - Encourage regions to move meetings throughout the region.
 - Establish dates and location 6-9 months in advance to encourage maximum participation.
- > Increase awareness of AITC by U.S. Department of Education.
 - Initiate Executive Committee Meetings with Department of Education Staff.
 - Encourage State Contacts to work with State Boards of Education and report their work to the Consortium / AITC National Office.
- > Generate long term excitement for National Conference.
 - Offer greater opportunities for regional participation for teachers / AITC presenters / volunteers within National Conference.
 - Offer greater promotional opportunities for upcoming Conferences at National Conferences and via website.

GOAL 5: Identify funding sources for agriculture literacy programs that would meet Consortium objectives.

- > Work to grow the USDA AITC Budget to \$2 Million.
 - Encourage Consortium Leadership to visit congressional leaders associated with AITC.
 - Provide Congressional Leaders with AITC success stories.
 - Involve Partners as appropriate to share in telling the AITC story.
- > Increase state AITC Program Grants.
 - Highlight initial State Mini-Grant Winners at the National Conference.
 - By 2005 50% of eligible states will apply for Mini-Grants.
 - Dedicate a portion of Consortium Auction Funds to Mini-Grant fund.
 - By 2007 grant funding will increase to \$250,000.

GOAL 6: Work in cooperation with other national agricultural leadership and/or literacy programs to achieve common goals and objectives.

- > Increase partnerships to expand impact using existing programs and nationally recognized events.
 - Via exhibits ensure Consortium Leadership is represented at National Events.
 - Highlight new and existing partners via press releases to agriculture and educational media.
 - Collaborate with other national organizations at their meetings.
- > By 2008 hold an Ag Literacy Summit.
 - Work with USDA Intergovernmental Agencies to host an Agriculture Literacy Summit
 - Work with Contacts from Department of Education for potential co-sponsorship.
- > Expand AITC Program within the area of Environmental Education - including Natural Resources and Conservation Education.
 - Set meeting with Environmental Education and Natural Resource Education officials at National Level, and encourage such meetings at the state level.

TIMELINE FOR ACTION

June 2003	Form Publicity Committee (co-Chair Judy Roush, Janet Hawkes) Form Congressional Liaison Committee (Diane Olson Chair) Form State Report Committee Excellence Award Committee Report - Action to be taken On-Line Resource Directory Presentation
October 2003	Consortium / USDA Meeting
December 2003	Reviewers in Place for On-Line Resource Directory
Spring 2004	Encourage Excellence Award Applications at Regional Conference Consortium / USDA Meeting Offer Consortium Trinket to states to use as appropriate
June 2004	Highlight State Mini-Grant Recipients at National Conference
September 2004	State Committee Report Report Publicity Committee Report
Fall 2004	Consortium / USDA Meeting
Spring 2005	Consortium / USDA Meeting Budget for Advertising Space in Teacher Publication
March 2005	50% of Eligible States submit Excellence Applications 50% of Eligible States submit Mini-Grant Applications
June 2005	Update on Continued Review of Materials for On-Line Resource Directory
June 2006	Sample State Evaluations for AITC Effectiveness showcased at National Conference
2007	Consortium Hires Staff Person Grant Funding Increases to \$250,000
2008	Hold National Agricultural Literacy Summit

Agriculture in the Classroom Consortium CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Adopted by the Consortium of States July 12, 1997

Amended June 10, 2005

Article 1: Name and Purpose

Section A: The name of this organization shall be the Agriculture in the Classroom Consortium.

Section B: The purposes for which this Consortium of Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) Programs formed include the following:

1. To assume and maintain an active national role in promoting agricultural literacy programs.
2. To provide input into the selection process of the AIRC National Program Leader at the United States Department of Agriculture and work closely with the National AIRC Program Office.
3. Provide leadership and a professional network for state Agriculture in the Classroom Programs.
4. Work to insure continuity of the Agriculture in the Classroom Program.
5. Identify funding sources for agriculture programs that would meet Consortium objectives.
6. Work in cooperation with other national agricultural leadership and/or literacy programs to achieve common goals and objectives.

Article 2: Membership

Section A: Each USDA Recognized Agriculture in the Classroom program will select one person and a designated alternate to represent their state, District or U.S. Insular area as a voting member of the Consortium.

Section B: The Consortium will recognize four United States Agriculture in the Classroom Regions:

1. Western Region: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming.
2. Central Region: Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin.
3. Eastern Region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, District of Columbia.
4. Southern Region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia.

Section C: Consortium Executive Committee

1. Each region will select two Consortium members from their region to serve on the Consortium Executive Committee. Each regional representative will have one vote on the Consortium Executive Committee.
2. Executive Committee members will be voted in by the members of their respective regions annually at the annual Consortium meeting.

Article 3: Officers

Section A: The officers of this organization shall consist of the President of the Executive Committee, the President-Elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Past President.

Article 4: Dues

Section A: Dues shall be set by the Consortium and paid annually.

Section B: Only members that have paid their dues will have a vote during any Consortium meeting and access to any Consortium benefits including grants.

Article 5: Meetings

Section A: The Executive Committee will meet at least annually.

Section B: The Consortium membership will meet at least annually.

Article 6: Amendments

Section A: This Constitution may be amended or changed at any Consortium business meeting by a two-thirds vote of at least 50 percent of the total Consortium membership.

Section B: Any proposed amendment must be submitted to the Consortium Membership at least 30 days, in writing, prior to the meeting at which the voting will take place.

Article 7: Bylaws

Section A: Bylaws will be added as needed to govern this organization.

Section B: Bylaws can be added or amended at any Consortium business meeting by a majority vote of at least 50 percent of the total Consortium membership.

BYLAWS

Article 1: Basic Policies

Section A: The organization shall be non-commercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.

Section B: The name of the organization or the names of any members in their official capacities shall not be used to endorse or promote a commercial concern or in connection with any partisan interest or for any purpose not appropriately related to promotion or purposes of the organization.

Section C: The organization shall not -- directly or indirectly -- participate or intervene (in any way, including the publishing or distributing of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

Section D: Upon the dissolution of this organization, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed to one or more non-profit funds, foundations, or organizations which have established their tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as agreed upon by the Consortium membership.

Article 2: Membership and Dues

Section A: Membership in the organization shall be made available without regard to race, color, creed or national origin.

Section B: Members will be invoiced annually January 1.

Section C: Dues will be \$100.00 for each state.

Article 3: Officer Duties and Responsibilities

Section A: President-Elect and President of the Executive Committee

1. The President-Elect of the Executive Committee will be selected by the State Consortium representatives annually. The President-Elect will serve for one year, and then become the President the following year.

2. The President will serve for one year and then serve for one year as the past-president.
3. Any Consortium Representative will be eligible for the Office of the President-Elect and can be nominated during the Annual Consortium Meeting. Votes will be tallied by a written ballot, and the nominee with the most votes will become the President-Elect of the Executive Committee.
4. Duties of the President:
 - a. conduct meetings and business of the Consortium.
 - b. serve as the contact between the USDA National Director and the Consortium.
 - c. serve as the contact between the agricultural industry and the Consortium.
5. Duties of the President-Elect:
 - a. conduct meetings in the absence of the President.
 - b. assist the President and accept duties as assigned.

Section B: Secretary

1. The Secretary will be elected from the Executive Committee by the Executive Committee.
2. The duties of the Secretary shall be to:
 - a. keep accurate minutes.
 - b. carry out necessary correspondence.
 - c. call meetings to order in the absence of the President or President-Elect.
 - d. maintain a current copy of the constitution.
 - e. count votes.

Section C: Treasurer

1. The Treasurer will be elected from the Executive Committee by the Executive Committee.
2. The duties of the Treasurer shall be to:
 - a. act as the custodian of the Consortium funds.
 - b. invoice states and collect dues.
 - c. keep accurate financial records.
 - d. serve as Chairman for the financial committee.
 - e. keep an accurate list of Consortium members.
 - f. file IRS documents as needed

Section D: Past President of the Executive Committee

1. The Past President continues as a member of the Executive Committee for one year, to provide guidance and assist the active Executive Committee President.
2. The Past President will have one vote on the Executive Committee.

Section E: Regional Representatives of the Consortium

1. Each Region shall have 2 representatives to the Consortium Executive Committee. Representatives will serve a two year term and will be elected to staggered terms of office. The Secretary and the Treasurer of the Consortium will be regional representatives of the Consortium.
2. The duties of the Regional Representative shall be to:
 - a. represent regional interests at Executive Committee meetings, and act as a liaison in communication between members of the region and the Executive Committee.
 - b. attend (when possible) meetings of the Consortium, and the Consortium Executive Committee.
 - c. plan, Facilitate, and Host regional meetings of the Consortium annually.
 - d. assist the officers of the Consortium in fulfilling the goals and objectives of the Consortium.

Section F: Term of Office

1. No officer will serve more than three consecutive terms.
2. Regional Representatives will be voted upon by their regions and will be subject to their regional rules for selection.

Section G: Officer Vacancy and Resignation

1. The President-Elect of the Consortium will serve on the Executive Committee for 3 years. The first year as the President-Elect (defector vice president), the second year as the President and the third year as the Past President. If at any time during his/her term of office he or she must resign, the Executive Committee must receive his or her resignation two months prior to their departure.
2. If any officer or Regional Representative of the Consortium Executive Committee cannot complete his or her term of office, he/she must submit his/her resignation to the President in writing prior to their departure.
3. If the President cannot complete his or her term of office, he or she must submit a resignation to the President-Elect two months prior to his or her departure.

Section H: Officer and Executive Committee Replacements

1. President-Elect: A nomination form will be sent out to each state Consortium member to submit nominations at least 60 days before the Annual Meeting. A list of candidates will be available at least 30 days before the Annual Meeting and sent to the members.
2. President: The President-Elect will become the President and nominees and balloting will be conducted to elect a new President-Elect.
3. Secretary and Treasurer of the Executive Committee: Since these officers are elected by the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee will conduct another election to determine the member who will hold the vacated office.
4. Regional Representatives of the Executive Committee: If a regional representative is unable to fill the term of office, the office will remain vacated until the next annual meeting, when a new representative will be elected to fill the remainder of the term.

Section I: Eligibility for Grants

1. As member of the Consortium Executive Committee, primary interest will be in developing the National AITC Program.
2. Service in Leadership Roles should not grant the impression of favoritism when being considered for grants and awards. Therefore any Consortium Regional Representative may apply for various grants administered by the consortium but the regional representative may not personally financially benefit from involvement in said grant.
3. The President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and Past President are not eligible to apply for the ACE grant during their term of service.

Section J: Professional Services

1. The Consortium Executive Committee may hire professional services to assist them in administering specific programs.
2. Any person/entity who is hired to administer a specific program on behalf of the consortium is ineligible to apply for any grant they administer.
3. The Consortium Executive Committee will not enter into professional services for terms longer than 18 months to insure adequate review of programs.

Article 4: Nominations

Section A: Nominations for President-Elect will be taken annually at least 60 days before the Annual Meeting.

Article 5: Elections

Section A: The election of the President-Elect and Executive Committee Members will be conducted at the Annual Meeting.

Section B: A list of nominees will be mailed 30 days prior to the annual meeting to each state in the Consortium.

Article 6: Meetings of the Consortium

Section A: Annual Meeting

1. When at all possible the Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference; however, the Annual Meeting may be convened at anytime during the year as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee upon 60 days notice to the Consortium voting membership.
2. The privileges of making motions, debating, and/or voting at the Annual Meeting shall be limited to Consortium Members or their designated alternate upon evidence or receipt of payment of dues.

Section B: Consortium Executive Committee Meetings

1. When possible members of the Consortium Executive Committee will meet in Washington D.C. for a fall and spring meeting.
2. The Fall meeting will, when possible, be hosted by the USDA, and the consortium executive committee (President, President-Elect, Past President, Regional Representatives) along with Committee Chairs (as recommended by the Executive Committee) will be invited.
3. The Spring meeting will be hosted by the Consortium, and the Executive Committee will attend along with other members of the Consortium and guests as invited by the Executive Committee.

Article 7: Fiscal Year and Audit

Section A: The fiscal year for the Consortium shall be from August 1 to July 31, inclusive.

Section B: The books and financial records of the Consortium will be internally audited at the close of the fiscal year and at any other time deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

Article 8: Parliamentary Authority

Section A: The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Consortium in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not in conflict with these bylaws.

Section B: Upon adoption of this Constitution, in its first year, each region will select their two Regional Representatives and they will designate one to serve a two year term and the other a one year term.

Article 9: Committees of the Consortium

Section A: Committees of the Consortium will be appointed by the President with approval of the Executive Committee. Standing Committees include Outreach and Public Relations. Other committees can be named by the President. Members of the Committee will reflect a geographic balance when possible.

Section B: Outreach Committee

1. The purpose of this committee will be to assist the Consortium with maintaining contact with Congressional leaders.
2. Members of the Consortium and the Outreach Committee will assist Congressional leaders by providing accurate and timely information on AITC programs.

Section C: Public Relations Committee

1. The purpose of this committee will be to assist the Consortium with promoting the AITC program in various media sources.
2. Members of this committee will assist the Executive Committee in promoting AITC programs across the nation and in specific regions.

Article 10: Partners of the AITC Consortium

- Section A: The purpose of the Partners of the AITC Consortium will be to serve in an advisory capacity as part of the Agriculture in the Classroom network. Entities involved with Agriculture in the Classroom and who promote agricultural literacy may be Partners of the AITC Consortium. These entities will include, but not be limited to non-profit organizations, agribusinesses and individuals.
- Section B: Nominations to Partners will be submitted to the Consortium membership at its annual meeting and will be approved through majority vote of the Consortium.
- Section C: Representatives from the entities serving on Partners will not have voting privileges; however, they are invited to attend the annual Agriculture in the Classroom Consortium meeting to offer guidance and advice as part of the total Ag in the Classroom network.
- Section D: Members of Partners will not be required to pay dues, but they are encouraged to be contributors to the Consortium or to the annual Agriculture in the Classroom conference.
- Section E: Partners of the AITC Consortium will be reviewed annually at the Consortium meeting for continued membership as Partners.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE
AND
THE AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM CONSORTIUM

Whereas, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a longstanding responsibility to ensure that future generations are agriculturally literate and that young Americans are encouraged to pursue higher education and career opportunities in the food and agricultural sciences;

Whereas, Congress has appropriated funds to the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) with a directive to carry out an Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) Program;

Whereas, the AITC Program encourages K-12 educators to integrate information about the food and agricultural system across their curriculums to assist students in understanding the pivotal role of agriculture in the U.S. and world economy, to introduce students to environmental and social issues impacting agriculture, and to expose them to higher education and career opportunities in the food and agricultural sciences;

Whereas, USDA administers and oversees the expenditure of Federal funds for the AITC Program in conformance with Federal laws and regulations and maintains a national program leader and staff to provide national leadership for the AITC Program;

Whereas, since the inception of the AITC Program in 1981, USDA has sought to develop a network of partners to carry out the program at the State and local levels, and USDA has worked to foster the development of active and effective AITC programs in each of the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, the Republic of Marshall Island, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau;

Whereas, USDA encourages the selection of State, District and other official AITC Contacts, recognizes newly designated Contacts, and maintains the official list of AITC Contacts;

Whereas, USDA recognizes AITC Contacts as partners in carrying out the AITC Program at the State and local levels;

Whereas, this network has matured and officially formed the AITC Consortium, which plays a strong role in addressing nationwide issues and needs of the AITC Program;

Whereas, the Consortium maintains a role in promoting agricultural literacy programs, provides leadership and a professional network for State AITC Programs, and works to ensure continuity of the AITC Program;

Whereas, the Consortium coordinates national interests of the State members, recognizes outstanding State programs, and encourages all States to have membership, representation and voting rights; and,

Whereas, the USDA and the AITC Consortium share mutual interests in providing leadership, communication links, and educational efforts to leverage resources, complementing national agendas, and avoiding unnecessary duplication;

Therefore, with the intent of maximizing the effectiveness of the AITC Program, USDA/CSREES and the AITC Consortium hereby execute the following memorandum of understanding (MOU) with respect to their cooperative efforts in support of the AITC Program.

I. USDA/CSREES will:

- Recognize the AITC Consortium and its Executive Committee as representatives of USDA's State and local partners.

- Keep the AITC Consortium informed in the development of initiatives to maintain and strengthen the AITC Program.
- Foster public input from all sources regarding initiatives to maintain and strengthen the AITC Program.
- Work with the Consortium to plan an annual AITC national conference.
- Ensure that AITC Program activities are planned and evaluated in an output and impact framework consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act.
- Encourage involvement in the AITC Program of other USDA agencies, other Federal agencies and other public and private organizations that have an interest in promoting agricultural literacy programs.
- Help identify and encourage collaborations with other agencies and organizations that will advance an understanding of the science of agriculture and career choices in the food and agricultural sciences.

II. The AITC Consortium will:

- Recognize USDA/CSREES as its primary Federal partner in conducting the AITC Program.
- Draw its membership from USDA recognized AITC Contacts and/or their designated alternates.
- Plan and host an annual AITC national conference in cooperation with USDA/CSREES.
- Identify educational materials at the State and local levels for use in carrying out AITC initiatives mutually agreed to by USDA/CSREES and the AITC Consortium.

III. USDA/CSREES and the AITC Consortium mutually agree that:

- The AITC Consortium's Executive Committee and senior USDA/CSREES staff administering the AITC Program will meet at least annually to coordinate activities to sustain and strengthen the AITC Program, and review the previous year's accomplishments under this MOU.
- The AITC Consortium's Executive Committee and appropriate USDA/CSREES staff administering the AITC program will participate bi-monthly or as needed in conference calls to coordinate activities between meetings.
- The capacity of USDA to carry out activities under this MOU is subject to the availability of funds and resources.
- Specific projects or activities that involve the obligation or transfer of funds or resources among the parties to this MOU will require the execution of separate agreements or other instruments which must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations. This MOU becomes effective when signed by the CSREES Administrator, and the AITC Consortium President and will remain in effect for five years unless superseded by a new agreement or terminated by either party with 90 days written notice.
- State AITC programs will remain autonomous in their administration and program priorities and initiatives in their respective States.
- State AITC programs are not party to this agreement as individual States.
- USDA's recognition and working relationship with each AITC State Program will not be affected regardless of the State Program affiliation within the AITC Consortium. This agreement does not restrict any party's participation in USDA sponsored activities.

Original Signed by

Colien Hefferan, Administrator, CSREES and Michele Awad, President, AITC Consortium



Ag in the Classroom Program
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Cooperative State Research,
Education, and Extension Service
Washington, DC
www.agclassroom.org

