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**FOUR STATE AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAMS TO RECEIVE  
'FIRE UP GRANT' FUNDING FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS**

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) has selected four state Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) projects for funding this year as part of a competitive grants program called 'Fire-Up Grants' to support the growth of agricultural literacy in pre-kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms across the country.

The purpose of the Fire Up Grants program is to strengthen new and existing state AIRC programs with additional funding and create programs other AIRC state programs can replicate.

Projects funded this year include one that allows students to virtually visit farms in Virginia using tablets and 360-degree videos, and another that uses a digital social media campaign and online evaluation tool to gauge the effectiveness of monthly commodity-themed educational resources and kits used in Minnesota classrooms.

Funding for the competitive grants program came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA).

"We appreciate the USDA/NIFA grant funding we receive so we can support innovative projects being developed by our Agriculture in the Classroom state programs," said Will Fett, president of NAITCO and executive director of Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation. "In addition to helping them reach even more teachers and students in their states, they're creating programs other AIRC state programs can duplicate as well."

Projects selected for funding this year are:

**Start Up Grant**

- **Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom** – 'On the Farm: Anywhere' will allow the Virginia program to purchase tablets students can use to view 'Farm Life 360' interactive videos without leaving the classroom, produce additional videos of farming operations and develop supplemental classroom resources to support use of the videos and provide deeper agricultural understanding.

**Scale Up Grant**

- **Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom** – Expansion of the 'Monthly Agriculture Themes and Supporting Lesson Kits' program with a digital social media campaign and an online evaluation tool will allow the Minnesota program to reach even more teachers and students around the state.

**Jump Up Grants**

- **Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation** – 'Learn, Then Do: A Phenomenon-Based Field Experience' will fund a professional development writers' workshop for teachers who will find phenomena in agriculture through tours of farms and agribusiness, and write phenomena-based, agricultural-themed lessons linked to the Gather, Reason, Communicate framework, a part of the 5E lesson plan model so popular with teachers now.
- **Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation** – 'Increasing Volunteer Engagement and Quality Delivery of Agriculture Literacy Programming' will involve developing a step-by-step guide for volunteers to help them deliver quality agricultural literacy programs and holding statewide and regional trainings to train volunteers on how to use the information effectively in classrooms.

NAITCO is a non-profit organization representing most of the 50 state Agriculture in the Classroom programs around the country. Its mission is to educate K-12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and students about the importance of agriculture by providing them with web-based materials, workshops and awards programs that demonstrate how agriculture can be used to effectively teach core subject areas.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT NAITCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISA GASKALLA at (352) 745-0246 or [info@naitco.org](mailto:info@naitco.org)**