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EIGHT TEACHERS SELECTED FOR THE 2024 NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING ABOUT AGRICULTURE AWARD

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO), U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) and Farm Credit partner each year to honor teachers in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade (Pre-K-12) from around the country for the innovative ways they use agricultural concepts to teach reading, writing, math, science, social studies, STEM, STEAM and more.

"These outstanding teachers recognize that agriculture also is a perfect foundation for teaching biology, chemistry, climatology, math, and literacy, in ways that any age or level of students can understand, value and apply to their daily life," said USDA NIFA Director Dr. Manjit Misra. "When a student makes that real-life connection to the lessons and activities their teachers share, students continue to learn and value the true meaning of those lessons when they leave the classroom. Innovative teachers like these are often responsible for awakening a student's love of learning, nature and science."

"National Agriculture in the Classroom is honored to recognize and celebrate these talented teachers for their innovative approach to teaching core academic concepts through the lens of food and agriculture," said Katie Carpenter, president of NAIYTCO and director of New York Agriculture in the Classroom. "Their effort to provide authentic learning experiences for their students is critical to creating an agriculturally literate generation who understands and appreciates the source and value of agriculture in their daily lives."

"Teachers are key partners in agricultural literacy education, helping to shape the next generation of agriculture advocates through intentional and engaging activities," said president and CEO of the Farm Credit Council Todd Van Hoose. "Farm Credit is proud to honor these innovative educators and support their ongoing commitment to growing future leaders."

This year's winning teachers are:

Primary:

- Selina Green Warren, a kindergarten teacher at Kingfield Elementary School in Kingsfield, Maine, has integrated school gardens into classroom curricula for fourteen years. She has established two school gardens, engaged community partners for garden events, and mentored teachers in her county and state embarking on their school garden journey. Her passion for agriculture and education continues to bring new learning opportunities to her students and community.
- Jennifer Crosthwait, a kindergarten teacher at Skyline Elementary in Stillwater, Oklahoma, strives to provide an accurate representation of agriculture to her students, and aims to provide them resources and experiences to help them grow and raise food with their own families. She desires all students to experience agriculture firsthand.

- Carrie Allord, a third-grade teacher at St. Francis Catholic School in Minnesota, brings agriculture to life through a variety of experiences for her students. From classroom hens that lay fresh eggs, to farm tours, farmers class visits, and hands-on agriculture activities, students are exposed to a variety of agricultural topics as they meet educational standards through the journey of agriculture in the classroom.
- Krista Bond, a third-grade teacher at Pocosin Innovative Charter in Creswell, North Carolina, knows learning about agricultural literacy helps to create students who are more self-sufficient. She has coupled her expertise of technology with her ever-growing knowledge of agriculture to compile, adapt, and create meaningful real-world opportunities for students to learn about various technologies involved in precision farming.
- Laura Highbaugh, an AgSTREAM teacher at Creekside Elementary in Sonora, Kentucky, has had a passion for agriculture since a child, first growing up on a farm and then marrying a farmer. She credits her many farm life experiences to helping her in the classroom.
- Amanda Stanko, a STEM teacher at Corpus Christi Catholic School in Bloomington, Illinois, incorporates Agricultural literacy into her STEM class weekly. Teaching a wide age range of students, she has the ability to tailor agriculture units towards each grade level.

Secondary:

- Monica Chamberlain, a sixth-grade teacher at Hamilton Central School in Hamilton, New York, is passionate and energized about using agricultural practices within her teaching each and every day. Her students are active participants throughout the year in state-level agriculture in the classroom programming, and love taking part in any experience where they have a chance to solve a real-world problem.
- Amy Goodyear, a high school biology teacher, at Heritage High School in Leesburg, Virginia, has found that opportunities abound to utilize agriculture as the hands-on medium for required content. Knowing not only does agriculture provide a real-life meaning and framework to learning, but it also affords students experiential learning, she utilizes many agriculture in the classroom lessons throughout the year.

They will be honored at the 2024 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference “Agriculture Elevated,” taking place June 24-27 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

USDA/NIFA provides leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture-related sciences. It invests in and supports initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture. NIFA applies an integrated approach to ensure that groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach the people who can put them into practice. To learn more about USDA/NIFA, please visit <https://nifa.usda.gov/>.

Farm Credit supports rural communities and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow. To learn more about Farm Credit, please visit <https://farmcredit.com/>.

NAITCO is a non-profit organization representing Agriculture in the Classroom programs in most of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Its mission is to educate Pre-K-12 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. To learn more about NAITCO, please visit www.agclassroom.org.

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