

Connecting Children to Agriculture

Virginia Foundation for
Agriculture in the Classroom
2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT



AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM
AgInTheClass.org

**Our mission is to educate Virginia's children
about the importance of agriculture.**

**We meet our mission by
*Connecting Nearly Half-a-Million Children
to Agriculture Annually!***



On the cover: In partnership with HYVE Indoor Farming Systems of Staunton, two schools won a new resource for a hands-on experience with plant systems. Stratford Landing Elementary School in Alexandria and Northampton Middle School on the Eastern Shore received a HYVE™ state-of-the art, LED lighted growing system known as the LF-ONE. With the new systems, they could grow completely inside or start plants indoors, then transplant to school gardens too.

Message from The Chair

Understanding the sources of our food and growing an appreciation for the incredible people who make up the food, fiber and fuel industry is why the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom was created 28 years ago. From farmers and processors, to equipment and technology companies, to livestock and environmental stewardship, to farm financial institutions, there is so much to learn and appreciate. Agriculture in the Classroom connects children to agriculture through activities in-class and hands-on, online and on-the-farm that grow a curiosity to ensure their future and the future of our industry.



Our innovative programs include:

- Online lessons, activities, farm tours and resources for educators, parents and students!
- School grants awarded for in-class projects, farm field trips, gardens and many creative teacher ideas!
- Educator training & newsletters for a better understanding of agriculture by anyone who “teaches” and helping with the use of lessons for students that align with state standards!
- State and national recognition for teachers who excel at bringing agriculture into their classroom as an example for all!
- Volunteer engagement & agricultural instructors that connect real farmers and agricultural professionals with students!
- And, FarmLife 360 videos that bring the farm to life on mobile devices in 3D and 360 degrees when we can’t visit the farm in person. It’s a completely transparent way to see the farm up-close!

Our programs have always been robust, but it’s even more important now. With the pandemic changing the way schools operate, we expanded resources online and made more lessons simple for our newly appointed educators, “parents”.

Starting early in March, hashtag events on our Facebook page offered great activities at home, while also engaging children in farm fun. Cooking, new technologies, gardening and math on the farm all combined to help families better understand the roll agriculture plays in their everyday lives. The 2020 school year will bring more program opportunities like these!

Special times call for unprecedented measures and Virginia’s Agriculture in the Classroom is stepping up to the challenge. Thank you for supporting our efforts through the Foundation. Your donations, no matter the size, make it possible. It’s so important for the future of our industry, but more importantly for the children who will be introduced to the incredible world of agriculture thanks to you!

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bertsch Cox'.

Bertsch Cox

Foundation Chair and CFO of James River Equipment Company



Leading Educational Efforts through the Pandemic

35 original content educational activities were added during the first weeks of the pandemic!

On March 13, 2020 school changed overnight for children across the Commonwealth. Parents and teachers were in search of how students would learn without a traditional school day. Poised with a vast website of resources, new Farm Life 360 educational videos and an active Facebook page, our program launched three weekly educational hashtag events including: #TeachMeTuesday, #ThinkerThursday and #AgSunday!

Reposting useful resources from educational partners, such as Farm Credit Knowledge Center, National Agriculture in the Classroom, American Farm Bureau, Southern States and Corteva filled in the gaps each day.

FarmLife 360 is growing on YouTube with 10 videos that offer 360-degree experiences that can be viewed in 3D to get up-close and personal on the farm. Viewers can look all around, hear all the sounds and move closer to equipment and livestock than they ever would be able to do in person. Our new Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom YouTube channel is now available with news stories, farm tours and other great videos added since March!

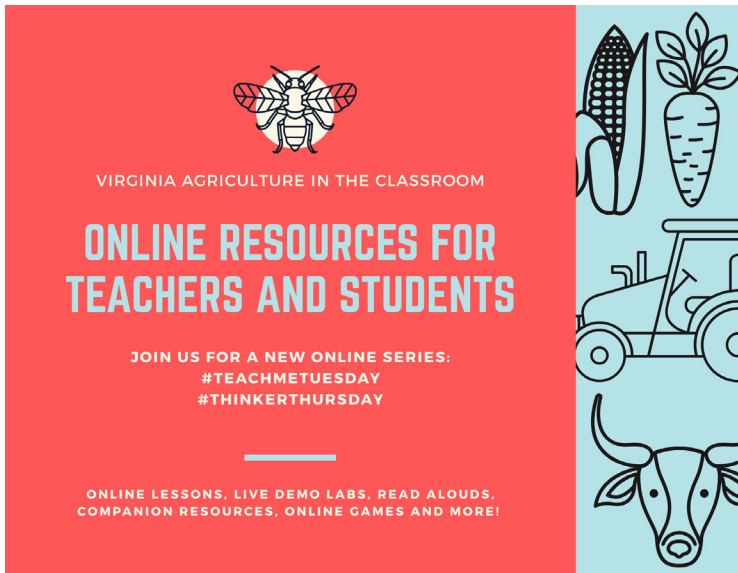
New Ag In the Classroom (AITC) Educational Hashtags Events

#TeachMeTuesday
#ThinkerThursday
#Ag Sunday

Last 3 Months of “School”

200,000 people visited AITC Facebook
or shared online lessons, live demo labs,
virtual tours and online games

58,000 people viewed AITC Video Posts



Meaningful Tools for Educators Turn Ideas into Reality



Grants

Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom
Awarded **85 Grants** to **56 Localities**
during 2019-2020 school year

Providing **35,000 students** with **hands-on agricultural experiences**

Projects included:

🌱 Hydroponics 🌽 Garden development 🐔 Animal agriculture 🥗 Health and Nutrition
🔬 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) 🤝 Leadership Development



Our Grant Program in Action

Central Academy Middle School Agri-science classes in Botetourt established four Elementary school garden spaces and led in demonstrations with growing trays. When school went virtual, the groups met online to continue discussing the plant growth at school and home with their garden starter kits.

"The AITC grant provided students and school families with a gardening experience that otherwise would not have been possible. During this uncertain time, when we have witnessed food and agriculture production concerns, I am proud of our work to provide vegetable plants to students and families this year."

~Agri-science teacher Jennifer Hannah

Recognizing Outstanding Teachers for Incorporating Agriculture



Pamela Hall is a STEM teacher at Carrollton Elementary School in Isle of Wight County and the Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom 2020 Teacher of the Year. She was also recognized as a 2020 National Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture Award recipient by the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization in June.

Pam sets the example for her students and uses hands-on approaches including studying plant and animal life cycles, taking farm nature walks, visiting with farmers, making ice cream, investigating and raising pollinators and experimenting with hydroponics.



Professional Development Motivates Teachers



Training provides educators with curriculum, resources and knowledge to bring agriculture to life for their students.

Over 12,000 educators received professional development and our What's Growing On in Virginia newsletters. Innovative lesson plans and standards-based options are offered at no cost, along with an interactive Virginia map that focuses on the geologic regions and the associated farms there.

On-farm training initiated in the Summer of 2019 connected teachers to agricultural experiences that helped them connect personally.



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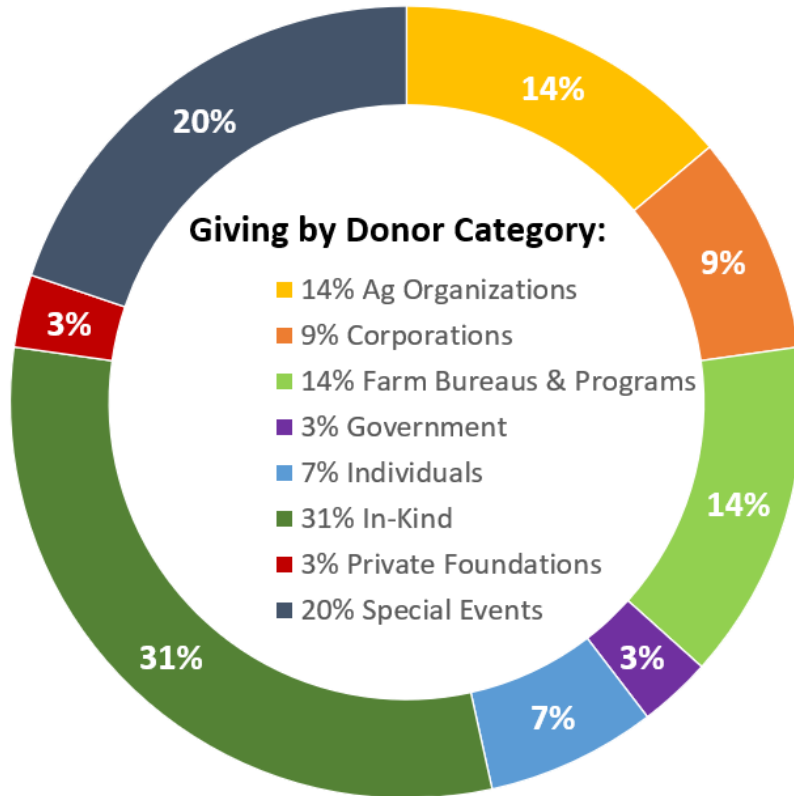
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In memory of Ivan Taylor
In memory of Edgar Vaughn, Jr.
In memory of James Yankey

2019-2020 Financial Success



Direct Revenue:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Contributions & Grants | \$324,616 |
| Gross Profit from Sales | \$2,663 |
| Investment Income | \$20,853 |

Total: \$348,132

Direct Expenses:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Professional Educator Programs & Resources | \$228,051 |
| Classroom Grants | \$27,424 |
| Student & Community Initiatives | \$20,601 |
| Direct Development | \$50,646 |

Total: \$326,722

In-Kind:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Virginia Farm Bureau Federation | \$145,275 |
| Other In-Kind Gifts | \$4,755 |

Total: \$150,030

In Kind Donors

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Regional Outreach Coordinator Pilot Program



As teachers and the general population become further removed from personal farm knowledge, we need to go further than training teachers to share our programs. We must put agriculturalists directly into classrooms! In a new Southwest Virginia pilot project, we contracted with a regional outreach coordinator who connected with local schools and events to better serve the region by bringing new enthusiasm for connecting children to agriculture there. In just 6 months, Alison Jones, former Pulaski agriculture teacher, connected 1,824 educators and 9,249 students, in addition to adding valuable insight and programming when we went virtual in March.



Expanding this program to Northern, Southeast and Southside Virginia in the future will dramatically expand our ability to improve agricultural experiences and meet the specific needs of the localities.



6 Months



**1,824
Educators**



**9,249
Students**

Fundraising Events

MANY Thanks to Sponsors and Participants

The 5K Fun Run at Wood Ridge Farm Brewery

Our first 5K fun run in 5 years took on the sloping terrain of Nelson county and captured the healthy hearts of 45 participants raising \$4,800 in September.



Clay Shooting in the Valley and Southwest

Participants at The Flying Rabbit in Mt. Crawford rotated through 20 stations while enjoying the great outdoors, and in Bristol at the Kettlefoot Rod and Gun Club, Trap and Skeet took center stage. The shooting events raised \$25,250 thanks to support from Cargill, title sponsor and so many others.



Virtual Golf Due to Pandemic Provided Connection

Finys President & CEO, Kurt Diederich, provided the title sponsorship for the golf event despite having to move to a virtual platform. Thanks to Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance Sales Department, the event raised \$29,360 and opened the door to future online events that could be held with participants from many locations.

"We knew the AITC golf tournament was the biggest fundraiser each year and our insurance staff wanted to support the programs, so we helped create a virtual golf event that was fun for all!"

~Ray Leonard, VFB Insurance Sales Vice President

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Women's Golf Cart Raffle

Sponsored by the Virginia Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee raised \$38,000!

Supporting Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) whether it be as a volunteer, farm owner, business associate or consumer, is vital to keeping the agriculture industry alive. Without donor support, who will teach the next generation about agriculture? The golf cart raffle fundraiser was a great example of philanthropy within the state of Virginia. With the support from all these groups, either in a sponsorship role or as a ticket purchaser, raising \$38,000 for AITC far exceeded my expectations."

~Faye Hundley, Chair, VFBF Women's Leadership Committee



Volunteer Programs Expand Outreach

Since it started 10 years ago, half a million children benefited from the Agriculture Literacy Week project thanks to over 10,000 volunteers giving their time and sharing their passion for agriculture.



FarmLife 360 & YouTube Virtual Farm Tour Resources



Search for FarmLife 360 on YouTube

Or, visit us on YouTube and Facebook
by searching for
Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom



Contact Us

P.O. Box 27552, Richmond, VA 23261

12580 West Creek Parkway, Richmond, VA 23238

804.290.1034

aitc@vafb.com

AgInTheClass.org



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