



# 2025 Impact Report

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**Prepared by**

Beth Schaefer

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom Coordinator



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# About Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom

Agriculture in the Classroom is a program coordinated nationally by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help students K-12 understand the importance of agriculture. In Wisconsin, the program is coordinated by Wisconsin Farm Bureau with funding from other agricultural groups and a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Since the inception of Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) in 1984, the program has received staffing and funding support from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation and, since 1994, from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation. Since that time, various individual AITC projects have been funded through corporate, government support and foundation grants, with additional support for special projects from partnering agricultural organizations.

With approval of grant funding created by the 2001 Wisconsin Act 16, the program has grown significantly in scope, visibility and in the level of resources and services offered to educators and others who promote agricultural literacy.





# Our Team



**BETH SCHAEFER**  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Schaefer holds a BS Agriculture Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and MS Agriculture Education with Biology Certification, University of Wisconsin - River Falls. She spent five years as an Agriculture Educator and Biology teacher in both rural and urban high schools and for the past 14 years, has worked in informal education outreach. Her professional experiences cut across all forms of education - writing curriculum, developing academic presentations and lessons, creating and executing media campaigns and managing student and school wellness programs across Wisconsin. Beth joined the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation in March 2022.



**BROOKE WITTROCK**  
2025 AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM INTERN

Brooke Wittrock grew up in Bloomer, Wisconsin and graduated from Bloomer High School in 2023. After high school, Wittrock continued her involvement with FFA, serving as the 2023-2024 Wisconsin FFA State Sentinel. She is currently pursuing a degree in Agricultural Education at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls with hopes of becoming an agriculture educator after graduation. She is an active member in Collegiate Farm Bureau and serves as the Vice President of Agricultural Education Society.







# Vision And Mission




## Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom Mission:

*Increasing agricultural literacy across grades PreK-12 through collaboration with educators, industry experts and volunteers.*

## Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom Vision:

*Be THE authority for agricultural literacy resources, agriculture career readiness and agricultural sustainability education to ensure that Agriculture is Valued by All.*



The Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom program objectives have been honed to direct the program work to best meet the curricular and career readiness needs of Wisconsin K-12 students by working to unite all Wisconsin Agricultural Literacy efforts by:

- Creating/curating great curriculum that supports core academic standards.
- Engaging educators and volunteers where they are at figuratively, digitally, and geographically.
- Collaborating with like-minded organizations to unify Agricultural Literacy education outreach.
- Applying data-driven decision-making to new programs, resources, and outreach to continually increase program relevance with teachers, volunteers, and students.

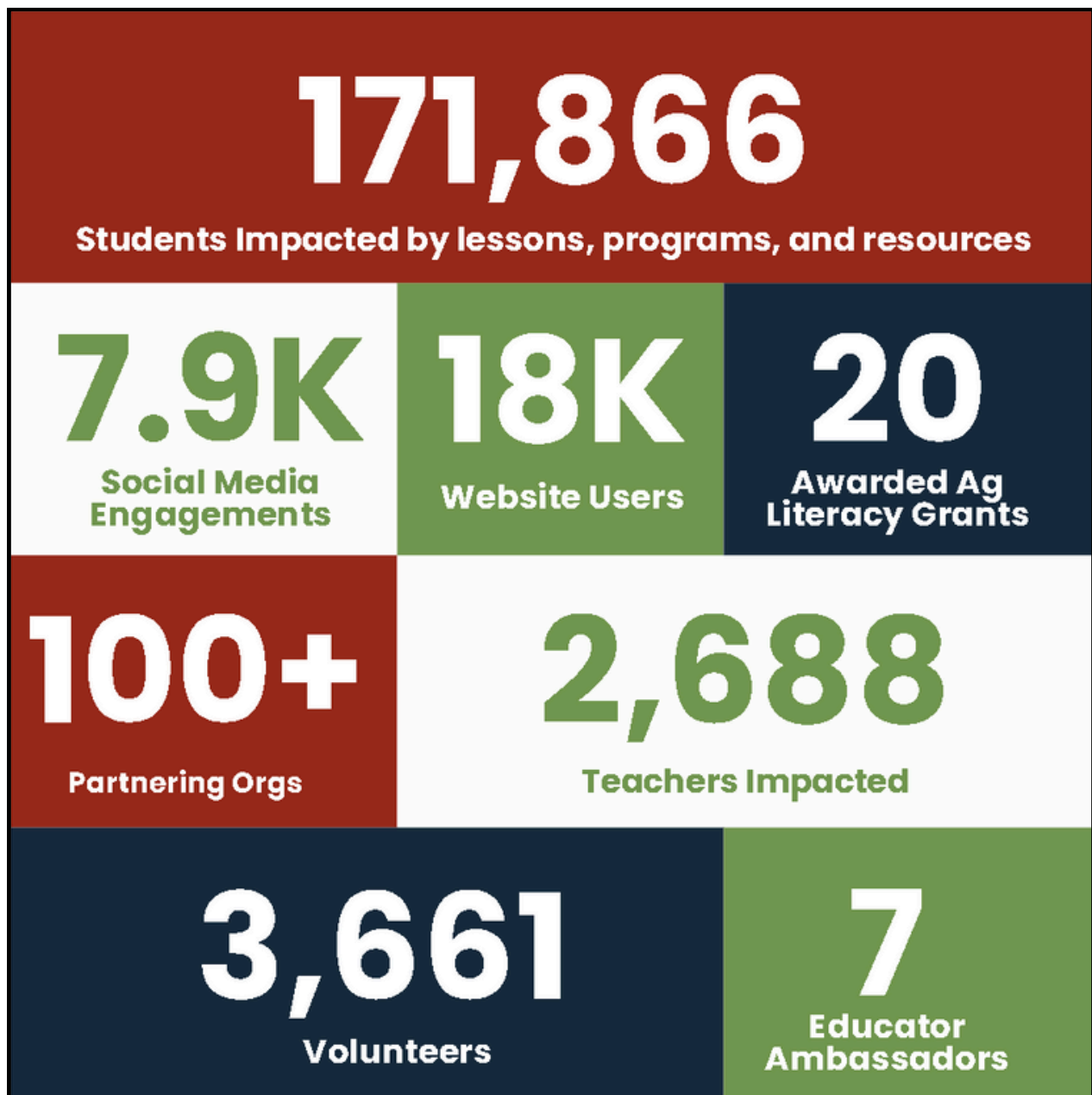
These directives focus programming areas that are “gaps” for both educators and industry in current agricultural literacy programming.





# Impact Summary

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom celebrates its achievements in 2025. The program continues to enhance student awareness of agriculture's daily impact and has plans to engage more students, educators and volunteers, working toward the vision of Agriculture Valued by All.



# Educator Impact

Agriculture Literacy Educator engagement led by Agriculture in the Classroom staff, volunteers, and partners reached an estimated **2,688** PK-12 educators. Wisconsin AITC hosted several statewide trainings including:

- **Seeds of Knowledge Ag Literacy Conference** hosted at Merrimac Community School offered teacher-led workshops, school forest and prairie restoration tours.
- The **Summer Book Tour** featured a day in Kewaunee County hosted by author and dairy farmer, Chase Pagel. Participants toured the farms and met the people who inspired Chase's book, "Big Farms, Little Farms."
- **Recipe for an Essay and Contest Virtual Kick-Off** offered teachers and volunteers an immersive look into the 2024 AITC Essay Contest resources, rubrics, and tips from veteran teachers. The workshop was viewed more than 280+ times.



## National Agriculture in the Classroom Opportunities

**26** Wisconsin educators participated in the **2025 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference** held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Scholarship winners, workshop presenters and award recipients represented Wisconsin throughout the three day professional development event.



## Outstanding Teacher Award

*"I teach in an urban school district, and while some people may think agriculture is only for rural communities, we all eat and thus relate to agriculture."*

*-Mr. Josh Gonzalez, 2024 Wisconsin AITC Outstanding Teacher Award Winner*

Josh Gonzalez was named as the 2024 Outstanding Teacher Award recipient. Mr. Gonzalez works to teach students and fellow educators how agriculture can drive academic success, support sustainability and strengthen communities.

## 2024 OUTSTANDING TEACHER

*Josh Gonzalez*

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher  
River Trail School of Agricultural Science  
Milwaukee Public Schools





# 2025-2026 Educator Ambassador Team

The Educator Ambassador program utilizes top-agricultural literacy educators to provide training and advise on AITC resources and professional development. During the 2024-2025 school year, the Educator Ambassador Team presented workshops at major education forums including Wisconsin Council for Social Studies, Green and Healthy School Milwaukee, Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers, DPI Cultivating Connections, and Family and Consumer Science conferences.



**Brooke Wittrock**  
Pre-Service Teacher  
UW-River Falls



**Travis Sprague**  
Agriculture Educator  
Medford High School



**Mary Cooper**  
7th Grade Science Educator  
St. Mary School - Richland Center



**Kevin Podeweltz**  
Fourth Grade Educator  
Riverside Elementary - DC Everest



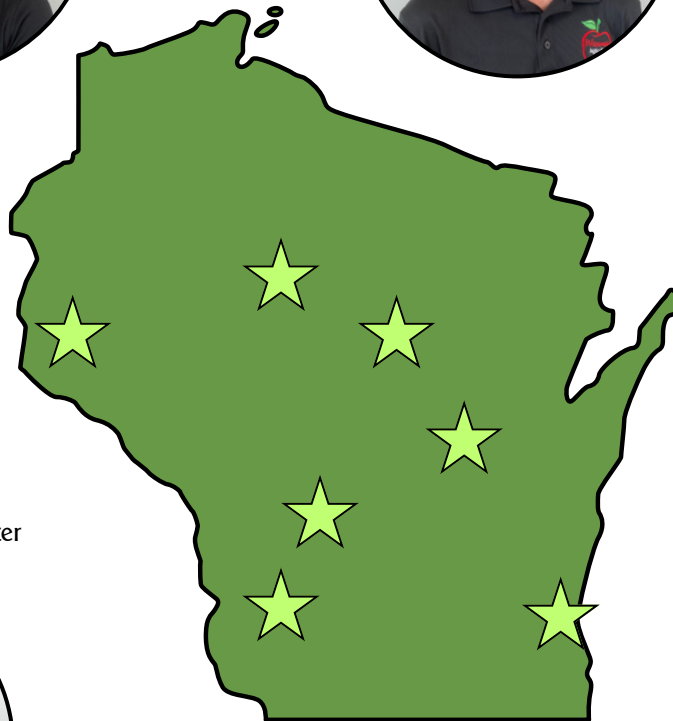
**Emily Kamps**  
Third Grade Educator  
Fennimore Elementary



**Joshua Gonzalez**  
Second Grade Educator  
River Trail School of  
Agriculture Sciences  
Milwaukee Public Schools



**Sheila Kroseberg**  
Family & Consumer Science  
Waupaca High School



# Student Impact

in 2025, Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom staff, partner, and volunteer led agricultural literacy programming impacted over **171,866**. Programs, including grant projects, resources and presentations engaged students with agricultural lessons and experiences.

## Ag in ALL Classroom™ Grant Program

**20** grants totalling \$10,000 were awarded to agricultural literacy projects impacting over **3,476** students.

## “FFA Food for America” Program Support

**10** Wisconsin FFA Chapters were awarded \$500 grants to support student-led agricultural literacy programs. Additional resource and lesson support of Food for America programs impacted a combined total of **54,336** students.

## Accurate Agricultural Literacy Resources

Online educational materials requests and county-supported Book of the Year program orders reached **68** counties and over **47,911** students.



## 2025 Elementary Essay Contest

**1,511** 4th and 5th-grade essay contest entries were submitted for the 2025 Agriculture in the Classroom Essay Contest. Top essays were awarded in separate grade categories - allowing for grade-specific academic standards to be addressed in the contest. The 2025 essay prompt was “A Wisconsin Tree and Me: How Trees Grow Food and Fiber.”

## Expedition Wisconsin Agriculture with Alice in Dairyland

**3,012** elementary students participated in the Expedition Agriculture program, presented by Alice in Dairyland. The project was part of a three year Specialty Crop Block Grant. The program features sixteen Wisconsin agricultural commodities and provides information on where foods are grown and how foods are processed.





# Volunteer & Program Partners

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom is supported by dedicated program partners and volunteers who build strong local connections with schools, educators and community organizations. Wisconsin County Farm Bureau Agriculture in the Classroom programs, FFA chapter Food for America agricultural literacy initiatives and partner outreach efforts significantly expand the reach and scope of AITC. County Farm Bureau programs, in particular, serve as the program's "boots on the ground," playing an integral role in delivering agricultural literacy at the local level.



## Wisconsin Farm Bureau Volunteer Impact

- **61** county Agriculture in the Classroom programs had approximately **66** individuals volunteer over **10,714 hours** to engage in student agricultural literacy lessons and programs.

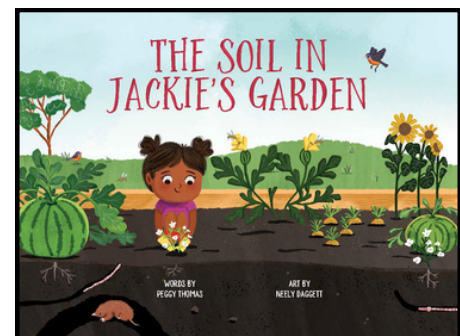


## Wisconsin FFA Member Impact

- Over **3,081** FFA members and volunteers planned and delivered lessons and programming that engaged **54,336** PK-12th grade students through the Wisconsin FFA Food for America Program.
- **33** FFA Chapter participated in the first Wisconsin AITC FFA Food for America Ag Literacy workshop in January 2025.

## Book of the Year Program

**51** Wisconsin County Farm Bureau Agriculture in the Classroom programs purchased and distributed **869** copies of the 2024 Book of the Year, "The Soil in Jackie's Garden." The book inspired the 2025 essay contest theme, "Dig Into Wisconsin Soil." The retail value of these resources is **\$16,502**.





# Digital Impact

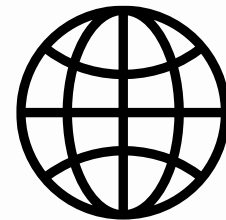
The digital growth and reach of the AITC program in 2025 surpassed our growth of previous years combined. The digital communication plan was aligned across all channels and focused heavily on building community, sharing high-quality lessons and resources, and consistently sharing agricultural facts and data.

Increased support from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation communications team allowed for the creation of more engaging content and trending topics, which has led to an increase in views, engagements and followers across all Wisconsin AITC social and digital platforms.



The Seedling E-Newsletter

4,939	46.5%	52%
Recipients	Open Rate	CTR



wisagclassroom.com

18,600 viewers
45.7% Engagement



Making You A Little Smarter  
Radio Spots

150,000
Listeners



@wiaginthe classroom

128,707	7,963	26.5%
Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks
↗ 2.6%	↗ 51.9%	↗ 369%

# FY25 Financial Statements

Fiscal Year October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025

## WI Farm Bureau Expenditures

Staffing	123,861
Office expense	11,446
Travel expense	23,411
	<b>158,717</b>

## WI Farm Bureau Foundation Expenditures

Educational Resources printing & distribution	27,398
Other promotional and educational materials distributed	17,391
Grants for local projects, Teacher grants and scholarships	1,319
Teacher & Volunteer Training	29,252
Elementary Agricultural Essay Contest	3,183
Teacher's conventions & other trade shows	4,123
Postage	1,396
Printing	13
	<b>84,074</b>

## Other In-Kind Expenditures

\*indicates estimated value

Value of County AITC Members Volunteer time (61 counties, 7374 hours) *	143,940
County AITC program expenditures (61 counties avg spend 1045)	63,800
	<b>207,740</b>

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES 450,531**

## Other Contributors

Ag Country Farm Credit	10,000.00
Compeer	20,000.00
Ocean Spray	1,000.00
CHS Next Gen	10,000.00
Wisconsin Soybean	20,000.00
The Waterways Journal	90.00
WE Energies	1,000.00
Federated Youth Foundation	2,500.00
Rens Family	1,500.00
Green Bay Packers Foundation	3,500.00
Milwaukee County Farm Bureau	1,500.00

**TOTAL OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS 71,090**

FY25 Audited Financials were prepared by Caroline O'Brien, General Accountant, Wisconsin Farm Bureau.



# 2025 New Initiatives

In fiscal year 2025, Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) continued to strengthen agricultural literacy by connecting students and educators with accurate, engaging and relevant agricultural education. Through partnerships, educator leadership and volunteer support, AITC reached classrooms across Wisconsin—building understanding of agriculture’s role in daily life.

## 2025 Program Initiatives:

### Expanding Ag Literacy through STEAM and Literacy

Funded through a CHS Next Gen grant, the **Read and STEAM** initiative expanded classroom resources by pairing accurate, agriculture-focused books with inquiry-based activities and designed challenges aligned to state standards. These lessons support cross-curricular learning while encouraging student curiosity and problem-solving. Available at no cost on the Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom website, Read and STEAM lessons provide teachers and volunteers with a complete 45-minute lesson and hands-on activity designed to build students’ knowledge of Wisconsin agriculture.



### Growing Educator Community Leaders

AITC expanded its **Educator Ambassador Team**, strengthening a statewide network of teachers who champion agricultural literacy. Ambassadors supported professional development, shared classroom-tested strategies and helped fellow educators confidently integrate agriculture into their curriculum. The team established clear goals focused on increasing the relevance of agriculture as a teaching context, strengthening local county volunteer connections and delivering at least one agricultural literacy workshop to fellow educators.





# 2025 New Initiatives Cont'd



## FFA Food for America Program Recognition and Collaboration

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom partnered with Wisconsin FFA to elevate the *Food for America Award* program, promoting idea sharing and recognizing all efforts that advance agricultural literacy. Supported by a CHS Next Gen grant, AITC hosted an FFA-focused conference in Stevens Point, providing members with hands-on training in outreach, resource use and classroom presentations. All participating chapters received an agricultural literacy resource kit to support ongoing student engagement and program growth. Updates to the award program highlighted all projects that successfully met established criteria, expanding recognition beyond the “Top Ten” chapter projects.

Forty-one Wisconsin FFA chapters were recognized at the 2025 Wisconsin State FFA Convention for their outstanding participation in the program.



## Expedition Wisconsin Agriculture Partnership

AITC successfully completed a three-year partnership with Alice in Dairyland, delivering an interactive classroom program aligned with social studies standards. In its final year, the project featured classroom presentations, volunteer training, and the creation of a magnetic presentation board—tools designed to enhance student engagement and learning. The grant-funded project concluded in Fall 2025, but the resources and training will continue to be used and updated, ensuring lasting impact in classrooms across Wisconsin.



The new and expanded initiatives in fiscal 2025 allowed the Wisconsin AITC program to grow and begin to build a blueprint for future resources, trainings, and partnerships.

# Contact Us



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[www.wisagclassroom.org](http://www.wisagclassroom.org)

