



# 2024 Impact Report

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**Prepared by**

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Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom Coordinator



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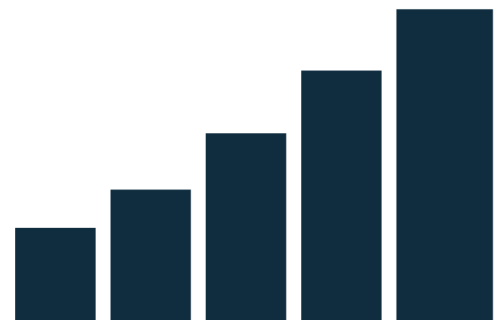
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# About Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom

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

Since the inception of Wisconsin's 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 12 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.



## **MADISYN HENDERSON**

### 2024 AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM INTERN

Madisyn Henderson grew up on her family's farm in Racine County and graduated from Union Grove High School, where she was activity involved in FFA and Yorkville 4-H Club. She served as the 2022-2023 Racine County Agriculture Ambassador and created an Agriculture Literacy Program that included weekly hands-on lessons at elementary schools. Henderson is currently a freshman at Iowa State University studying Agricultural Business. She is involved in Block and Bridle, the Agricultural Business Club, and the Sigma Alpha Professional Agriculture Sorority.





# Vision And Mission

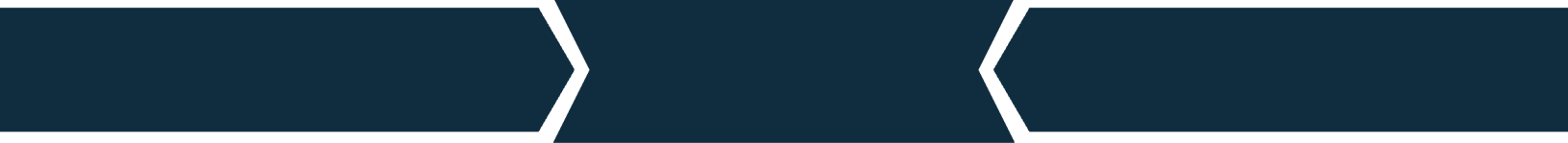


## **Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom Mission:**

*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.



# Educator Impact

Agriculture in the Classroom programming is continuing to build educator-facing relationship to build awareness of the quality resources and credibility of AITC. Educator outreach included workshops and tradeshow participation at major education forums including Wisconsin Association of Environmental Educators, Wisconsin Council for Social Studies, Wisconsin State Reading Association and Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers. Additional outreach included:



- Agriculture Literacy Educator engagement led by Agriculture in the Classroom staff, reached **526 K-12 educators**, reaching an estimated **13,150 students**.
- **7** Wisconsin Educators attended the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- **2** educators were honored with national scholarships - including **Lalitha Murales**, Glenwood Hills School District and **Sheila Kroseberg**, Waupaca School District.



**2024-2025 Educator Ambassador Team**

The Educator Ambassador program utilizes top-agricultural literacy educators to provide training and advise on AITC resources and professional development. Inaugural team members include:

- **Emily Kamps, Fennimore Elementary School**
- **Joshua Gonzalez, River Trail School for Agricultural Sciences - Milwaukee**
- **Mary Cooper, St. Mary's School - Richland Center**
- **Travis Sprague, Sun Prairie West High School and Prairie View Middle School**

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Educator Ambassador Team will present workshops, share lesson ideas and experiences and meet quarterly to review and guide AITC programming.



# Student Impact

in 2024, Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom staff, partners, and volunteer led agricultural literacy programming impacted over **132,319** students - over double the 2023 impact. These programs, including grants, resources and outreach activities afforded educators a variety of resources to help engage students with agriculture context in core curriculum.

## “Ag in ALL Classroom” Grant Program

**20** grants totalling \$10,000 were awarded to agricultural literacy projects impacting over **4,113** 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 **31,151** students.

## Accurate Agricultural Literacy Resources

Online educational materials requests and county supported Book of the Year program orders reached **68** counties and over **24,443** students.

## Agriculture Essay Contest

**1,334** 4th and 5th grade essay contest entries were submitted for the 2024 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 2024 essay prompt was, “Wisconsin Agriculture is Fruitful.”



Eleanor Soto-Jones  
2024 4th Grade State Winner



Bree Stalsberg  
2024 5th Grade State Winner



# Volunteer Impact

Wisconsin Farm Bureau County programs have been integral in serving as "boots on the ground" for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Volunteers build local connections with schools, educators, and community partners.



## Volunteer Impact

- **61** county Agriculture in the Classroom programs had approximately **116** individuals volunteer over **10,714 hours** to engage in student agricultural literacy lessons and programs.
- Volunteers helped to support county-level agriculture literacy programs and lessons reaching **44,709 students**.



## Book of the Year Program

**58** Wisconsin County Farm Bureau Agriculture in the Classroom volunteers purchased and distributed books, educators and specialty crop ag magazines in support the annual essay contest. Wisconsin AITC staff organized and distributed the orders to provide bulk pricing on resources. The retail value of the distributed resources totalled over **\$24,000**.





# Digital Impact

The Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom program has begun its third year of “Making You a Little Smarter” Agricultural Literacy partnership program with Midwest Family Broadcasting. Over **150,000** listeners state-wide learned agricultural stats and impact data through the campaign.

The Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom website and digital outreach reached new audiences and experienced growth in 2024. The Facebook and Instagram pages garnered a reach of over **49,000** views, a 29.8% increase from 2023. The content planning and hard work of our intern increased not only the viewers - but interactions with digital content. Over **3,500** viewers interacted with digital content - an increase of 24.8% from 2023. The launch of a new website in September garnered over **800** visitors in the first month and has been the driving factor of all digital and social media communications.

## New Website

Same URL. New Experience.



# Financial Statements



Fiscal Year October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024

## WI Farm Bureau Expenditures

Staffing	118,701
Office expense	9,969
Travel expense	25,375
	<hr/>
	<b>154,045</b>

## WI Farm Bureau Foundation Expenditures

Educational Resources printing & distribution	38,323
Other promotional and educational materials distributed	15,382
Grants for local projects, Teacher grants and scholarships	12,346
Teacher & Volunteer Training	19,356
Elementary Agricultural Essay Contest	9,523
Teacher's conventions & other trade shows	2,822
Postage	201
Printing	0
	<hr/>
	<b>97,953</b>

## Other In-Kind Expenditures

\*indicates estimated value

Value of County AITC Members Volunteer time (61 counties, 10,714 hours) *	204,637
County AITC program expenditures (61 counties avg spend 1045)	63,800
	<hr/>
	<b>268,437</b>

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES 520,435**

## Other Contributors

Ag Country Farm Credit	10,000.00
Compeer	20,000.00
Ocean Spray	1,000.00
DATCP SCBG Grant	23,000.00
National Ag in the Classroom	4,000.00
Wisconsin Soybean	13,080.00
Milwaukee County Farm Bureau	1,000.00
Rens Family	1,500.00
Greenstone Farm Credit Services	5,000.00
Wisconsin Corn Growers	3,470.00

**TOTAL OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS 82,050**



# Grant Projects

The Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom program is fortunate to have outstanding support from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation as well as many supporting partners - including Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom was the recipient a professional development grant from the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization. The grant supported a new professional development training - "Seeds of Knowledge - Teacher-Led Agricultural Literacy Workshop." SAGES School in Fox Lake hosted the event, and twenty-six teachers attended tours at Alsum Produce, participated in a school forest hands-on tour, and presented and participated in twelve teacher-led workshops. 100% of survey participants indicated they planned to use AITC resources in the upcoming school year.

Wisconsin AITC was the recipient of a CHS NextGen Grant that supported over 100 Agricultural Literacy Kits that were developed and distributed by the Wisconsin Association of Agriculture Educators to support the new Wisconsin Agriculture, Food and Natural Resource Academic Standards in Agricultural Literacy, Research and Leadership.



# 2024 Year Review



2024 was a year for new initiatives, new partnerships, and new ideas. Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom educator and volunteer feedback, as well as partnering organizations provided valuable insight for new programs and new program deployment strategies.

## 2024 Program Highlights:

### Wisconsin Science Festival Partnership

Professional development for educators involved tours of fruit growing facilities and fruit-themed lesson kits, held both in-person and virtually. This initiative successfully engaged teachers and volunteer educators.



### New Website Experience

In September, the AITC website moved to the National AITC servers allowing resource integrations and significant cost savings for the program. The new website is designed for teachers who are seeking resources, grants and community, and features a streamlined user experience. Feedback from users is driving site content and based on grant applications, more teachers are finding our site through search engine inquiry and social media.

### Growing Community

The AITC Educator Ambassador Team has been working hard to promote and share the AITC resources with their peers, as well as providing valuable insights to current program resources. A key finding from this group is the need for educator professional development groups and community networking for teachers who are passionate about agricultural literacy. A “Teacher Feature” blog was developed from these insights.



# 2024 Year Review Cont'd



## The Seedling Montly E-Newsletter

The Seedling Monthly e-Newsletter was transitioned to Campaign Monitor for consistent format and performance metrics, resulting in improved open rate (46%-52%) and click-through rate (10%). This change provides insights into teacher engagement and preferred content.

## Alice in Dairyland Partnership

WI AITC partnered with the DATCP and Alice in Dairyland for an interactive classroom presentation aligning with social studies standards. The SCBG-funded project impacted **2,691** students during the 2023-24 school year. The grant project will end in Fall 2025.



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## UW-Madison AAE Capstone Partnership

AITC partnered with two UW-Madison AAE Capstone students to develop the new learning resource - Agriculture Across Wisconsin Map. The students fleshed out the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture data to develop a visualization of the top agricultural commodities by sales in every Wisconsin county. **1,000** copies of the map have been distributed and utilized by teachers and educators.

Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom celebrates its achievements in 2024! 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.



**334,836**

**Total number of Wisconsinites impacted in 2024 by Agriculture in the Classroom**



# Contact Us



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