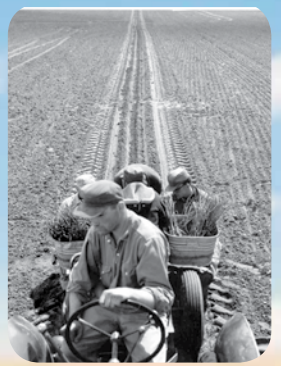
Agriculture in the Classroom



Agriculture
in the Classroom

Connecting Kids and Agriculture

Projects Overview

VISION

Agriculture in the Classroom strives to increase student awareness and understanding of the complexities and importance of agriculture through partnerships with educators, agribusiness, and agriculture organizations. Our educational leadership complements the education system in developing an understanding of the significance, diversity, and complexity of agriculture, now and into the future by connecting kids and agriculture through innovative, curriculum-based programs and resources.

Agriculture in the Classroom

It is my pleasure to report on the many programs and advancements of agriculture education AITC has achieved this year. While a classroom teacher, I experienced first-hand the "oh!" and "ah!" and "wow!" students express as they learn about food and agriculture.

The increasing need for agriculture education continues to show itself in the gaps our society and children face regarding their food sources and Saskatchewan industry. During the First Saskatchewan Food Summit, I had the pleasure of hearing key-note speakers, such as Dr. Mary Buhr, repeatedly call upon education as a means to re-connect children to all that is vital to our lives, environment, and economy. Looking around the conference room, I realized AITC is truly leading the way in response to this societal need in Saskatchewan and across Canada! It is only through the financial and in-kind support of our forward-thinking investors and dedicated volunteers that we can advance this cause and promote agriculture here in Saskatchewan.

Many thanks to our caring investors and committed volunteers for allowing us to advance agriculture education!

James Perkins B.A., B.Ed.
Interim Executive Director

Little Green Thumbs - Classroom Gardens

School gardens are an effective tool to engage students in inquiry-based learning and develop life-long values of stewardship. Since 2007, Agriculture in the Classroom (Sask) Inc. has reached almost 4000 youth through our Little Green Thumbs indoor garden program. Little Green Thumbs helps young people value the health of themselves, the environment, and their community through active participation in classroom gardening. Indoor gardens are living laboratories that make learning concepts such as nutrition, environmental stewardship, sustainable food systems, and global interdependence fun and relevant. Little Green Thumbs is currently active in 48 rural, urban, and First Nations Schools across the province.

" Some of my students didn't know that carrots and potatoes grow in the ground!"
Teacher

"We love Little Green Thumbs. The program has made my students more aware of where food comes from, healthy eating, the expense involved in shipping foods in from elsewhere, conservation of food, recources, and recycling. They are also excited about learning and are engaged and curious about anything I bring for them to try or learn. It is an excellent program. Students who are not interested at first, certainly are by the time we're done. There are more plants and smiles in the world because of LGT."
Teacher,
Little Green Thumbs

100% of the teachers indicated Little Green Thumbs helped their students gain a greater understanding of how food is produced.

Greenscapades - Schoolyard Gardens

Schoolyard gardening engages students in critical thinking and problem-solving while building strong connections to the food they eat and the land that sustains us. Building on the incredible success of the Little Green Thumbs indoor gardening, we decided to answer the demands of teachers and introduce the Greenscapades Outdoor Learning Garden Project. AITC is working in partnership with the community and schools to build schoolyard learning gardens in five inner-city community schools in Saskatoon over the next two years. Through active involvement in their outdoor learning gardens, young people will connect with food, agriculture, environmental stewardship, and become agents of change in their communities.

EXPERIENCE

AG EXperience

At AG EXperience, we organize live milking trials, sheep shearing demonstrations, hands-on activities and interactive presentations on bees, beef, eggs, pigs, chickens, bison, elk, grains, farm safety, crop protection, and farm animal care! With the help of many volunteers from the agriculture sector, AITC and Prairieland Park provide an exceptional interactive educational event for Grade 4 students in Saskatoon and surrounding areas. When asked, 100% of the teachers would bring their students back next year!

"This is an essential part of learning. We live in a province where many city people know nothing about agriculture, and this is an important industry"

Teacher, AG EXperience

Gardenscape School Program

AITC teamed up with the Prairieland Park Corporation to manage the Gardenscape School Tours Program for 717 Grade 3 students. Thanks to the amazing support from volunteers in the horticulture industry, students were able to take part in hands-on sessions related to bugs, seeds, plants, and composting.

"Grading Canola was my favourite thing at the Ag.Ex. I liked it because it was fun."

Student

Agricultural Shows Outreach

Agricultural shows allow us to bring agricultural programming to local students and their parents. Almost 1500 students from the Yorkton, Prince Albert, and surrounding areas joined us at their local farm progress shows to crush canola, grind wheat, and learn about agricultural by-products. In 2011, the AITC program manager will join the organizing committee of the PA Agri-Ed Showcase to provide guidance and support.

9436 students participated in AITC outreach programs in 2010 alone. About 2/3 of these students were urban and 1/3 rural.

Agribition

The Agriculture in the Classroom team are active members of the Agribition education committee, providing support to commodity organizations to ensure their displays meet curriculum outcomes. Students (and parents) who visit our Grains of Saskatchewan display see live plants, touch grain samples, discover grain by-products, and learn interesting facts about the Saskatchewan crop industry. In the AGmazing Challenge, Grade 7 & 8 students interact with agriculture industry professionals as they complete the challenges and answer questions. This event teaches students about the agriculture industry while enhancing their problem solving and navigation skills.

About 4000 students and 1000 teachers & parents take part in the Agri-Ed Showcase each year!

Biotechnology Outreach Day

Connecting future employees to agribusiness! AITC in cooperation with the Biotech Outreach Committee and the College of Agriculture & Bioresources co-host the Biotechnology Outreach Day for high school students. Through participation in this event, students are exposed to many career opportunities in the field of agricultural science and technology. In previous years, students who were primarily from rural schools explored animal diseases, food biotechnology, crop genomics, PCR technology, and plant growth in sessions, facilitated by volunteers from the agriculture industry.

Weaving agricultural understanding across curricula.
At AITC our aim is to intertwine agriculture into multiple subjects and grades, creating those teachable moments that reach every student throughout their education. Working with AITC, teachers can nurture students to value our Saskatchewan heritage and clearly understand the dynamic face of agriculture today while preparing them to shape their own future.

Cooking Up Saskatchewan

Integrating agriculture across the curriculum is critical to our mandate. In May, AITC hosted the inaugural Cooking Up Saskatchewan competition in Wynyard with chicken as the feature product. Student teams from four rural schools presented on chicken production in Saskatchewan as well as the health benefits of eating chicken. The students then utilized their culinary skills to prepare a healthy meal for the judges. The event was such a success, we hosted a second competition in November. Once again the students impressed the judges with their presentations on the Saskatchewan Chicken Industry and amazing meals.

"I learned that chickens are well cared for and looked after in Saskatchewan."
Student,
Cooking up Saskatchewan

In 2010, AITC presented to 627 students in classrooms across the province from Assiniboia to Prince Albert to Lloydminister!

Classroom Presentations

AITC presentations range from food biotechnology to misconceptions about agriculture and beyond. Presentations are hands-on, meet curriculum outcomes, are age appropriate, and always contain accurate, balanced, and current information. Students love our Making Bannock activity! They see stalks of wheat, grind kernels into flour, and make delicious bannock that they eat in their classroom. Even in our bannock activity, wheat is not our only focus; we also discuss the diversity and importance of Saskatchewan-made products including canola oil and Saskatoon berry jam.

"I learned that you can use pig fat to make so many things. Ex, toothpaste, gum, lipstick."
Student

LEADERSHIP

There are over 12 000 school teachers in Saskatchewan, many of whom do not have the benefit of a farm upbringing. How can *you* enrich the breadth of their agriculture education?

Resources

The AITC resource library contains over 250 print and on-line resources, videos, and a photo gallery. Our most popular learning kits are:

- Saskatchewan Seed Kit which contains 14 different types of Saskatchewan seed, photos, and activities.
- Manure Milkshake a fun activity that reinforces how important healthy soil is to food production.
- By-Products Game that features commodity cards and matching everyday products.

AITC is launching a comprehensive new Grade 4 Resource Agriculture – the Heart of Saskatchewan's Past, Present, and Future. At over 250 pages, it contains 21 lesson plans that directly support the renewed Grade 4 Social Studies Curriculum and promote the study of Saskatchewan agriculture. A supplementary informational resource Foundations of Saskatchewan Agriculture containing information on Saskatchewan agriculture commodities will also be available online.

In 2010 we distributed 4566 resources - help us share more.

Teacher Conventions & Workshops

We place factual, current and engaging agriculture and biotechnology lesson resources in the hands of teachers. In 2010, AITC staff reached out to teachers: we attended seven teacher conventions, hosted three teacher workshops and facilitated sessions at the College of Education, U of S.

"[After the Roadshow] Agriculture became much more appealing. Everyone was so positive it makes me excited to teach others."

Teacher
Agriculture Roadshow

Agriculture Roadshow for Teachers

Reaching out to emerging teachers and providing them positive agricultural learning resources prepares them to integrate Saskatchewan agricultural education into their professional teaching practices. AITC organizes a hands-on, experiential tour for Education Students who attend the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina. Agriculture Roadshow participants may visit farms, grain elevators, Hutterite colonies, canola crushing facilities and much more.

A tremendous thank-you to our key sponsors and project partners who strongly support agriculture education in Saskatchewan

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Investment Levels

AITC proudly recognizes our corporate and individual sponsors in a number of ways, including recognition on our website, in our annual report, other publications, and AITC hosted events. Please contact us to cater recognition to suit your organization's needs.

Hero	$15,000+
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Special thanks to the many volunteers that contribute their expertise, time, and commitment to assist in the success of our programs.
We value your support!

Core program funding and project development for Little Green Thumbs has been provided by Heifer International, an international organization with a mission to end hunger and bring about prosperous communities.

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