

2016

Annual Report

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Newly elected presidents – American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall (left) and National Agriculture in the Classroom President-Elect Chris Fleming – compare notes at the NAITC national conference.

Overview

Developing agriculturally literate citizens nationwide beginning in the classroom is the mission of the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO). The non-profit organization and its member Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) programs in 46 states and six territories strive every day to provide teachers and students in kindergarten through 12th grade with agricultural connections to their reading, writing, math, science and social studies lessons.

It contextualizes standards-based educational resources with real-life agricultural concepts and distributes these resources through its state AIRC programs and its searchable database of hundreds of K-12 lesson plans and companion resources made available through the Curriculum Matrix on its website. Check it out at Curriculum Matrix.

It encourages use of incorporating agriculture into everyday classroom instruction by requiring teachers who receive its CHS Classroom Grant funds to use lessons from the [Curriculum Matrix](#) or state Agriculture in the Classroom programs. It showcases teachers who successfully use agricultural concepts in their classrooms with its National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award and CHS Scholarship program at its national conference each year. It hosts a national conference each year that attracts hundreds of educators from around the country who are interested in using agriculture as a teaching tool.

The 2016 Annual Report highlights the organization's efforts, which are funded by a combination of membership dues, sponsorships from national agribusiness organizations and companies and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA). NAITCO owes its success to the foundation laid by USDA when it began the Agriculture in the Classroom movement in the early 1980s and appreciates the agency's ongoing support and leadership.

Thanks to the hard work of NAITCO leadership and staff and state AIRC programs, the organization is poised to reach even more K-12 teachers and students in the future.

President's Message



Educating K-12 students about the importance of agriculture across our great nation is the job of the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) and its member Agriculture in the Classroom programs in most of the 50 states and six territories.

We diligently worked to develop and distribute lessons, hold teacher workshops, provide classroom and schoolyard grant opportunities and Agriculture Literacy elementary reading programs to help K-12 teachers use agricultural concepts to connect their students with the reading, writing, math, science and social studies lessons they must learn anyway. Special programs in 2016 included:

- The regional meetings of NAITCO's state contact members in Reno, NV in the Western Region, Lincoln, NE in the Central Region, Raleigh, NC in the Southern Region and Portland, ME in the Eastern Region where they participated in professional development sessions about holding successful pre-service and in-service teacher workshops, using current research to eradicate agricultural pest and disease problems in science classes, among many other topics.

Altogether, NAITCO and its member state programs reached more than 122,000 teachers and 6.9 million students in K-12 classrooms across the country in 2016. The organization leveraged the combined state budgets of \$13 million with the funding it receives from the USDA/NIFA, Agrium, Inc., CHS Foundation, Tractor Supply Co. and other sponsors to achieve these results.

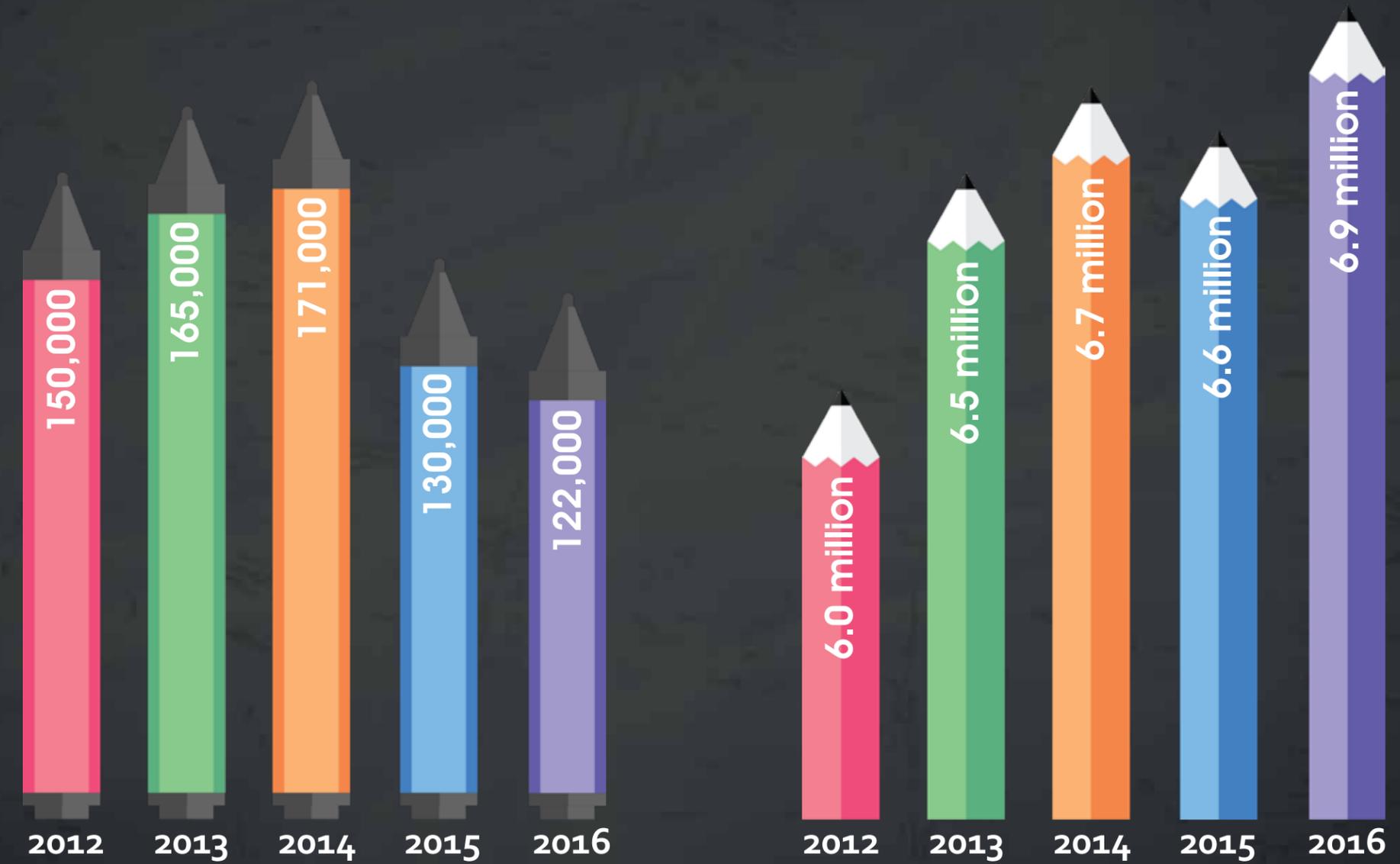
Americans' continued interest in the source of their food gives NAITCO and its member state programs a unique opportunity to reach K-12 teacher and student audiences with the message of the importance of agriculture. Together with our partners we can accomplish anything. I am honored to have served as president of such a great organization and look forward to the exciting future it and its member state programs have in front of them.

Sincerely, Lorri Brenneman

Number of Teachers Reached



Number of Students Reached



National Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference



More than 500 educators from around the country learned how to use agricultural concepts to teach reading, writing, math, science, social studies and more at the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization's (NAITCO) National Conference called 'Agriculture Blooming in the Desert' held at the Wigwam Resort June 22-24 in Litchfield Park, Arizona.

NAITCO, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Arizona Foundation for Agricultural Literacy, held three days of workshops that showed kindergarten through 12th grade teachers how to use agriculture to teach core subject areas. In addition, conference participants went on traveling workshops of nearby farms and university research facilities to learn about the fruit, vegetable and nursery production, among other stops.

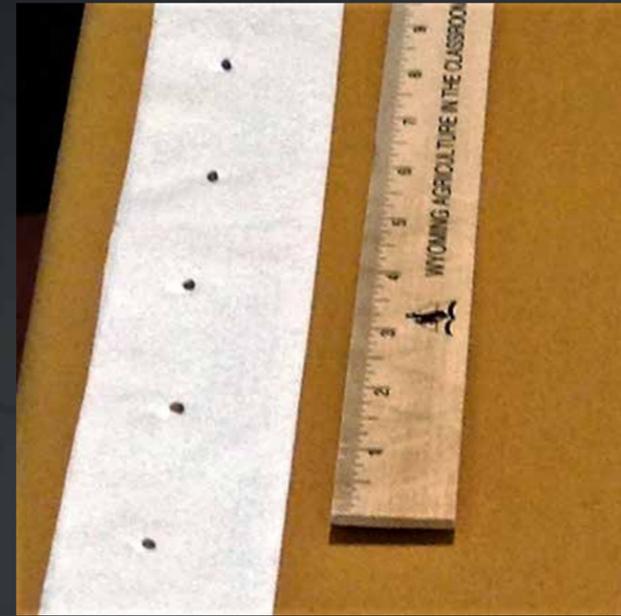
The conference also honored several national teacher winners and a national Agriculture Advocate winner for the innovative ways they use agriculture to teach students about an important industry.

"The USDA-NIFA proudly sponsors the National Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference where K-12 general education teachers from around the country can compare teaching strategies that effectively use agriculture as a teaching tool," said Dr. Victoria LeBeaux, the USDA-NIFA's National Program Leader for National Agriculture in the Classroom.

"National Agriculture in the Classroom prides itself in being the only national organization that shows general education teachers in kindergarten through 12th grade how agriculture can be used in formal classroom instruction in its conference workshops, awards presentations and tours of agricultural operations," said Lorri Brenneman, president of the NAITCO. "Bottom line: We show teachers that agriculture is a great way to teach core subjects and familiarize students with where their food, fiber and fuel come from."

In addition, NAITCO rolled out at the national conference a new unit of K-12 activities tied to video outtakes from film The Great American Wheat Harvest called 'Harvesting: Crops & Careers.' Development of the lessons was a partnership between NAITCO, US Customer Harvesters, New Holland and The Great American Wheat Harvest film company Conjo Studios.

Of the more than 500 conference participants registered, more than half were teachers from around the country, many of whom received scholarships provided by CHS Foundation, Inc. to cover the cost of their conference registrations.



Workshop participants made a seed tape as part of the 'STEMming Up Gardening for Grades' workshop.



Using plastic food containers, workshop participants develop a self-irrigating growing system.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Arlette Roberge shows workshop participants how to extend Florida storybook and commodities to states and commodities across the country.





National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award, Agriculture Advocate Award

Honoring teachers and volunteer educators who strive to use agriculture to educate students about agriculture is a big part of the National Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference. Each year the organization showcases the innovative ways these educators use agriculture in their classrooms, on their farms and on their field trips.

The National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award (EITAA) recognizes K-12 teachers who use agricultural concepts in innovative ways to teach reading, writing, math, science, social studies and more. By participating in these lessons, students learn about the importance of agriculture in providing the items they use every day. The award is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) and Farm Credit.

Also, the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture honors at the NAITC national conference teachers and volunteers who use agriculture in their classrooms and on their farm tours with the White-Reinhardt award. CHS Foundation provides scholarships for dozens of K-12 teachers to attend the NAITC national conference.

In addition, the Agriculture Advocate Award recognizes informal educators who volunteer their time to educate students in K-12 about the importance of an important industry. The National Grange sponsors the Agriculture Advocate Award each year.

The seven teachers, including a team of two teachers from Pennsylvania, who were selected for the National Excellence in

Teaching about Agriculture Award (EITAA) are:

- Georgia first grade teacher Lauren Goble who educates her students about local agriculture with 'Thank a Farmer Friday' when students eat commodities from a nearby farm they learned about in class the week before.
- Oklahoma third grade teacher Lisa Storm who teaches her students Oklahoma history using developments in agriculture as the theme, healthy eating habits using cooking activities and local agriculture by visiting activity stations at 'Land Run Day.'
- North Dakota third grade teacher Cheryl Bombenger who uses a 'TADA' strategy (Teaching Activities Done Aesthetically) using agriculture as the theme in songs, stories and gardening to connect with students.
- Pennsylvania first grade teachers Shirley Hershey and Laura Shplet James who use agricultural themes throughout the school year to educate their students about Pennsylvania farming including learning a Farm Fact every Wednesday, participating in the Mobile Ag Lab every January and participating in Farm Fest Day at the end of each school year to celebrate everything students have learned.
- Kansas K-8 teacher Ray Huff who uses agricultural projects such as building a pond on school grounds and developing a miniature tractor and a barn to teach the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects.

- New York secondary teacher Judiann Carmack-Fayyaz who developed a school garden and greenhouse program to teach food and agricultural literacy to her students in 6th through 12th grade.

Louisiana volunteer educator Denise Hymel received at the national conference the 2016 Agriculture Advocate Award. Hymel, a long-time Louisiana Farm Bureau and Agriculture in the Classroom volunteer, donated two-and-a-half acres of her sugarcane farm in 1999 to start a program called 'Fast Food Farm' where more than 75,000 students have learned about the production of vegetables and livestock first-hand over the years. In addition, she hosts annual tours for fourth graders, provides a garden lab for nearby agri-science classes and provides meeting and event space for community groups such as FFA, 4-H, AITC, the Soil and Water Conservation District, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.



The 2016 Agriculture Advocate of the Year Denise Hymel (middle) receives award from NAITCO President Lorri Brenneman (left) and Grange representative Chris Szkutak.

The seven Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award winners for 2016 are honored at the national conference.





Officers



PRESIDENT
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Montana Agriculture in the Classroom

PRESIDENT-ELECT
Chris Fleming

Tennessee Foundation for Agriculture
in the Classroom



TREASURER
Will Fett

Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation

SECRETARY
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Foundation




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- **Colorado**
Bette Blinde
- **Connecticut**
Martha Johnson
- **Florida**
Lisa Gaskalla
- **Georgia**
Donna Rocker
- **Hawaii**
Naomi Kanehiro
- **Idaho**
Rick Waitley
- **Illinois**
Kevin Daugherty
- **Indiana**
Julie Taylor
- **Kansas**
Cathy Musick
- **Kentucky**
Scott Christmas
- **Louisiana**
Lynda Danos
- **Maine**
Willie Grenier
- **Maryland**
George Mayo
- **Massachusetts**
Marjorie Cooper
- **Michigan**
Tonia Ritter
- **Minnesota**
Al Withers
- **Mississippi**
Clara Bilbo
- **Missouri**
Diane Olson
- **Nebraska**
Courtney Schardt
- **Nevada**
Amber Smyer
- **New Hampshire**
Debbi Cox
- **New Jersey**
Carolyn Taylor
- **New Mexico**
Traci Curry
- **New York**
Katie Bigness
- **North Carolina**
Michele Reedy
- **North Dakota**
Ashley Stegeman
- **Oklahoma**
Audrey Harmon
- **Oregon**
Jessica Jansen
- **South Carolina**
Vonne Knight
- **Texas**
Mona Oney
- **Utah**
Denise Stewardson
- **Virginia**
Tammy Maxey
- **Washington**
Lisa Avery
- **West Virginia**
Mary Beth Bennett
- **Wisconsin**
Teyanna Loether
- **Wyoming**
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University of Guam
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- **Virgin Islands**
Eddie William