

**Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture  
National Award Program**

**Submission deadline: January 20, 2017**

Sponsored by

United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture—  
Agriculture in the Classroom

&

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization

## Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture A National Award Program

### National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO)

- I. Our Mission: Increasing Agricultural Literacy through K-12 Education
- II. Our Vision: Agriculture is Valued by ALL
- III. What is the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization’s Definition of Agricultural Literacy?  
*An agriculturally literate person understands and can communicate the source and value of agriculture as it affects quality of life.*
- IV. What is the Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award?
  - A. Six teaching awards— elementary and secondary—will be given to educators currently engaged in classroom instruction at the pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade levels. “Elementary” is designated for teachers instructing grades pre-K–5; “secondary” is designated for teachers instructing grades 7–12. Teachers instructing grade 6 may apply for either elementary or secondary. These awards will recognize teachers for their integrated efforts to teach students about the importance of agriculture. *Note: The Awards and Recognition Committee reserves the right to divide the awards between elementary and secondary teachers, based on a ratio of applications received.*
  - B. Award winners will be required to present their programs during the National Conference. The conference host, upon notification to the winners, will provide the format and other logistics. In addition, winners will be expected to help judge future applications.
  - C. **Based on the availability of funds**, teachers selected will receive \$500 each and have up to \$1,500 of their related expenses paid to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference. *Note: Funds may only be used for allowable travel expenses incurred by recipient. They are not to be used to cover the costs of recipients’ guests to the conference.* Furthermore, it is at the discretion of the Conference Host as to how the funds will be disbursed.
- V. Who is Eligible?

District certified teachers currently engaged in integrating agricultural concepts into non-vocational agriculture classroom settings at the pre-K to 12th grade levels are eligible. This may be an individual teacher or a team of teachers (with a designated team leader). *Please note: Only one award and cash prize totaling \$2,000 will be made per team.*

*Note: Teachers of high school agricultural education, or career and technical education are not eligible for this award.*
- VI. How are Nominees Selected?

Each Agriculture in the Classroom State Contact may nominate one outstanding teacher or one team of teachers to receive an award. A letter prepared by the Agriculture in the Classroom State

Contact should convey a strong sense of the teacher’s efforts to integrate formal, standards-driven agricultural literacy lessons in the classroom. This should include reference to classroom teaching and learning activities.

## VII. What are the Criteria for Selection?

Teachers must integrate/utilize agricultural information within their classroom curriculum in an effort to assist students in learning the importance of agriculture. Instruction may include, but is not limited to: understanding the importance and value of agriculture in students’ daily lives; understanding the relationships among agriculture, food and fiber production, animals, health, energy systems, technology, economics, and the environment; identifying and understanding the connections between academic content areas and agricultural careers including, but not limited to, STEM careers; understanding the overall connectedness between STEM and agriculture. Innovative, integrated, and interdisciplinary programs are encouraged.

## VIII. Resubmissions

Unsuccessful nominees from previous years may be resubmitted. Please refer to the summary reviewer comments given to state contacts following the selection process; these may aid in strengthening the nomination. Prior winners of this award are ineligible for future awards under this program.

## IX. Nomination Guidelines

- A. Complete the application form included in this document. Applications should contain all requested information and appropriate signatures.
- B. Complete the teacher application components (Section X).
- C. Request a letter of recommendation from the Agriculture in the Classroom State Contact.
- D. Read the entire application thoroughly, and ask questions well before the submission deadline.

## X. Components of the Teacher Application:

*See formatting instructions in section XIII. Please read section XII—Evaluation Criteria—prior to completing the application.*

*Note: Choose one or more of the national agricultural literacy themes identified in the educator narrative below. **The one lesson plan you submit should correspond with your narrative.***

- A. **Educator narrative (four-page limit):** Share your method of integrating and instructing one or more of the following national agricultural literacy themes in your classroom. How did you use the theme (or themes) to increase agricultural literacy? Please note on the first line of your narrative which theme(s) you are addressing:
  1. Agriculture and the Environment
  2. Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber & Energy
  3. Food, Health, and Lifestyle
  4. Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
  5. Culture, Society, Economy & Geography

- B. Exemplary lesson plan (four-page limit):** *Note: Any lessons submitted may be added to the National Curriculum Matrix regardless of the applicant's award status.* Submit one lesson plan which illustrates your agricultural literacy teaching method as described in the narrative. (Be sure to give credit to the appropriate sources, if applicable.) Evaluation criteria include use of standards-based, formal education practices for teaching agricultural literacy which are integrated into academic content areas rather than used as a stand-alone lesson. Evaluation also includes critical thinking aspects, ones which encourage problem-solving by learners for a deeper understanding of agricultural issues. Please include the following content, according to the order below, in your lesson plan:
1. Applicant's name and state
  2. Title of the lesson
  3. Brief purpose of the lesson
  4. Grade level(s) addressed
  5. Time length of lesson
  6. Objective of the lesson
  7. Standards addressed (limit your state's addressed standards list to no more than one-half page)
  8. National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (NALOs) addressed: See pp. 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 of the "National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes" booklet at this link: [http://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/submit\\_lesson.cfm](http://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix/submit_lesson.cfm)
  9. Materials list
  10. Vocabulary or keywords
  11. Instructor procedure
  12. Additional resources which enhance the lesson
  13. Assessment (list five essential questions that students should understand and be able to answer after having been taught the lesson)
- C. Documentation and photos (headshot & PowerPoint template):** All applicants must submit a "head shot" high-resolution photo that can be used by the NAITCO Public Relations Committee. Applicants are encouraged to share photos and other documentation of instruction on agricultural literacy. A PowerPoint template has been provided for submitting this segment of the application. Please use quality images and add a brief caption at the bottom of each photo to describe the activity. Save this file as a PowerPoint or PDF. The maximum file size that can be uploaded is 10MB. If your file size exceeds 10MB, consider zipping the file, saving as a PDF, condensing the PDF, or compressing pictures in PowerPoint to reduce the file size.
- D. Statement of Release:** Complete the provided statement of release for the use of photographs, lesson plans, and other materials by National Agriculture in the Classroom for media publications. (Appendix A)

## XI. How are Nominees Evaluated?

All nominations will be evaluated by a panel of judges familiar with agriculture, education, and Agriculture in the Classroom. *AITC State Contacts who submit nominations may not serve as judges.*

**XII. Evaluation Criteria:**

The application’s required criteria are noted below. Please read the expanded rubric including detailed criteria and accompanying points in Appendix B.

Criteria	Points
<b>Educator Narrative:</b> The degree to which an educator exemplifies leading instruction on accurate agriculture knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and demonstrates teaching excellence in gaining student understanding of selected agricultural literacy theme(s). Grants, community extensions, professional development relating to the narrative topic for other educators, and awards for teaching about narrative content will also be considered. (4-page limit)	<b>25</b>
<b>Lesson Plan:</b> The degree to which accurate agricultural concepts have been integrated into a standards-based education plan, which includes a critical thinking element and demonstrates for the learner a deeper understanding of the relationships between agricultural systems, individuals, and the world. (4-page limit)	<b>25</b>
<b>Formal Education:</b> The degree to which the educator utilizes formal education practices for an integrated, standards-based lesson plan with demonstrated understanding of accurate agricultural literacy.	<b>25</b>
<b>Documentation and photos:</b> The degree to which photos and other documentation exhibit excellence in agricultural literacy methods used by the applicant, to include but not limited to: news articles, bulletin board examples relating to agricultural literacy, community outreach, school newsletters, grant award letters, etc. (2-page limit)	<b>20</b>
<b>Formatting of application:</b> The degree to which the applicant has completed the application in accordance to the instructions.	<b>5</b>

**XIII. Formatting the Application for Submission**

- A. Use a 12-point font, double-spaced on the narrative and single-spaced on the lesson plan (double spacing may be used on the lesson plan where it is appropriate). Use one-inch margins. Each applicant should clearly label the parts of their application and submit them with the following format for each electronic file (PDF, Word document, or PowerPoint): Name, state abbreviation, document title.

Example:

- Jane Doe NY Letter of Support by State Contact
- Jane Doe NY Application Form
- Jane Doe NY Narrative
- Jane Doe NY Lesson Plan
- Jane Doe NY Documentation and Photos
- Jane Doe NY Statement of Release

*NOTE: Do not submit video or CD-ROM presentations.*

- B. Electronic submissions are used exclusively for submission of applicant’s files. All files should be properly named as described in Section XIII.A above.

#### XIV. Deadline for Submitting Application

The application must be received by 11:59 p.m. on January 20, 2017.

#### XV. Where to Submit:

State contacts must submit this application online at <http://agclassroom.org/teacher/award.htm> (log in required).

State Contacts are asked to collect the materials noted above from their applicants as separate documents in preparation for submission. Additionally, state contacts will be asked to enter or copy/paste some information from the application forms into the collection system to streamline judging and recognition of selected applicants.

Collection Form Overview:

- State and State Contact Information
- Teacher Information
- File uploads (allowable maximum file size limit for each document is 10MB)
  - o Application Form
  - o Letter of Support by State Contact
  - o Educator Narrative
  - o Lesson Plan
  - o Documentation & Photos using the provided PowerPoint template
  - o Applicant Headshot Photo
  - o Signed statement of materials & photos release by applicant

Questions can be directed to: Katie Bigness (NAITCO Awards & Recognition Co-Chair)  
[kse45@cornell.edu](mailto:kse45@cornell.edu)

Winning state contacts will be notified by February 17, 2017.

#### XVI. Communication of Award Winners:

Once selection of the teacher award winners has been made the chairperson of the NAITCO Awards and Recognition Committee will email the NAITCO president who will make the announcement to the USDA. The NAITCO president will then notify the chairperson of the Awards and Recognition Committee to email state contacts who submitted applications notifying them of whether or not their teachers won. Consequently, the NAITCO president will email all state contacts announcing the teacher winners and thanking all state contacts who submitted applications.

Following the announcements, the NAITCO Public Relations Committee will issue a press release with detailed information about the teacher winners, their respective states and schools, and descriptions of their agriculture-related classroom projects. The press release will be distributed through the NAITCO and USDA/NIFA network, other educational organizations such as NSTA, and posted to the NAITCO website.

## Application Form

Name:

Home Address:

Phone:

City:

State:

Zip:

School Name:

School Address:

Phone:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email address:

Grade level:

Elementary

Secondary

Subjects taught:

Number of years teaching experience:

Number of years at current school:

### Education:

Institution

Year

Degree/Certification

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### Professional Experience:

Position

School/Organization

Dates

Avg. # of students taught per year

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### Awards and Honors Related to Teaching:

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**Other Recognition or Honors:**

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**Membership in Professional Organizations:**

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**One-paragraph Biographical Sketch:**

**\*Signature of State Contact:**

**Date:**

**Applicant's Name:**

**\*Signature of Applicant:**

**Date:**

**Phone:**

**Cell Phone:**

\*Insert signatures as images here. Upon completion, save this file as a PDF or Word document and upload to <http://agclassroom.org/teacher/award.htm>

XVII. Checklist:

**Make sure files are named as directed in Section XIII.A. AITC State Contacts must submit the application segments as a PDF, Word document or PowerPoint as applicable at <http://agclassroom.org/teacher/award.htm> (log in required).**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Support by State Contact (1-page limit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Application Form (2-page limit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Narrative (4-page limit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Plan (4-page limit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Documentation and Photos (using the PowerPoint template provided online)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant Headshot Photo
- \_\_\_\_\_ Statement of Release (for the general use of the lesson plan and/or any photos submitted for use on the NAITCO website or in NAITCO publications)

Applications should not exceed the page limited noted above; additional pages will not be considered.

On behalf of the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization, many thanks for your dedication to teaching about agricultural literacy.

## **Appendix A**

### **Materials & Photo Release**

*To accompany the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization  
“Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture” Application*

*FOR ALL APPLICANTS*

I, the undersigned, release all components of this application—including photographs and lesson plans—to The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) for use on the NAITCO website; to be shared with sponsors; and for use in brochures, media releases, and publicity promoting future recognition of the organization. Photos will also be taken of the award winners at the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference. Any lesson plans submitted for the national application may be added online to NAITCO’s National Curriculum Matrix, with appropriate credit given to the authors.

Applicant’s Name (printed):

State:

Applicant’s Signature:

Date:

## Appendix A Rubric: Evaluation Criteria

*To accompany the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization  
“Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture” Application*

Section X.A: Narrative	Exceptional: 21-25 pts.	Skilled: 16-20 pts.	Proficient: 11-15 pts.	Developing: 6-10 pts.	Inadequate: 1-5 pts.
<p>The degree to which an educator exemplifies leading instruction on accurate agriculture knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and demonstrates teaching excellence in gaining student understanding of selected agricultural literacy themes(s). Grants, community extensions, professional development relating to the narrative topic for other educators, and awards for teaching about narrative content will also be considered. (4-page limit)</p>	<p>Educator puts forth a compelling, well-organized claim demonstrating how they meet all points asked for in the educator narrative criteria, including demonstration of integrating agricultural literacy into academic content areas consistently during the school year. Narrative meets one or more of the criteria in section X.A of the application.</p>	<p>Educator puts forth a strong claim demonstrating how they meet all points asked for in the educator narrative criteria, including demonstration of integrating agricultural literacy into academic content areas consistently during the school year. Narrative meets one or more of the criteria in section X.A of the application.</p>	<p>Educator meets most of the points asked for in the educator narrative criteria, including demonstration of integrating agricultural literacy into academic content areas consistently during the school year. Narrative meets one or more of the criteria in section X.A of the application.</p>	<p>Educator meets a few of the points asked for in the educator narrative criteria; however, the narrative is unclear as to whether agricultural literacy is consistently instructed in academic content areas during the school year. Narrative meets one or more of the criteria in section X.A of the application.</p>	<p>Educator narrative does not really reflect the subject to be addressed in the narrative criteria, and there is no connection to integrating agricultural literacy into academic content areas consistently during the school year. Applicant appears to have taught agricultural literacy as a “one and done” event.</p>
Section X.B: Lesson	Exceptional: 21-25 pts.	Skilled: 16-20 pts.	Proficient: 11-15 pts.	Developing: 6-10 pts.	Inadequate: 1-5 pts.
<p>The degree to which accurate agricultural concepts have been integrated into a standards-based education plan, which includes a critical thinking element and demonstrates for the learner a deeper understanding of the relationships between agricultural</p>	<p>Lesson plan clearly and convincingly illustrates educator’s agricultural literacy teaching method as described in the narrative. Lesson plan is clearly driven by standards-based formal education practices. Agricultural literacy is clearly integrated into academic content areas rather than used</p>	<p>Lesson plan sufficiently illustrates educator’s agricultural literacy teaching method as described in the narrative. Lesson plan is mostly driven by standards-based formal education practices. Agricultural literacy is integrated into academic content areas rather than used as a stand-alone lesson.</p>	<p>Lesson plan somewhat illustrates educator’s agricultural literacy teaching method as described in the narrative. Lesson plan has some links to standards-based formal education practices. Agricultural literacy is integrated into academic content areas rather than used as a stand-alone lesson.</p>	<p>Lesson plan somewhat illustrates educator’s agricultural literacy teaching method as described in the narrative. Lesson plan links to standards-based formal education practices, and agricultural literacy is integrated into academic content areas rather than used as a stand-alone lesson, but</p>	<p>Lesson plan has little or nothing to do with the narrative and lacks in critical thinking and integration into academic content areas. Lesson plan may not contain the elements required in Section X.B.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued...</i></p>

systems, individuals, and the world. (4-page limit)	as a stand-alone lesson. Lesson plan includes critical thinking aspects--ones which encourage problem solving by learners for a deeper understanding of agricultural issues, agricultural systems, individuals, and the world. All of the required content for the lesson plan (Section X.B) are contained in lesson plan (order of required content is up to applicant).	Lesson plan includes a critical thinking aspect--one which encourages problem solving by learners for a deeper understanding of agricultural issues, agricultural systems, individuals, and the world. All of the required content for the lesson plan (Section X.B) are contained in lesson plan (order of required content is up to applicant).	Lesson plan includes a critical thinking aspect--one which encourages problem solving by learners for a deeper understanding of agriculture issues, agricultural systems, individuals, and the world. Some of the required content for the lesson plan (Section X.B) is contained in lesson plan (order of required content is up to applicant).	the lesson is difficult to distinguish. Lesson plan does not include a critical thinking aspect. Some of the required content for the lesson plan (Section X.B) is contained in lesson plan (order of required content is up to applicant).	
<b>Section X.A.B: Educ.</b>	<b>Exceptional: 21-25 pts.</b>	<b>Skilled: 16-20 pts.</b>	<b>Proficient: 11-15 pts.</b>	<b>Developing: 6-10 pts.</b>	<b>Inadequate: 1-5 pts.</b>
The degree to which the educator utilizes formal education practices for an integrated, standards-based lesson plan with demonstrated understanding of accurate agricultural literacy. (2-page limit)	Educator demonstrates exemplary formal education practices in integrating agricultural literacy into standing subjects of math, science, social studies, art, reading, writing, speech, nutrition, etc. Educator clearly demonstrates understanding of accurate agricultural literacy and seizes opportunities to bring the information to the classroom.	Educator demonstrates sufficient formal education practices in integrating agricultural literacy into standing subjects of math, science, social studies, art, reading, writing, speech, nutrition, etc. Educator clearly demonstrates understanding of accurate agricultural literacy and seizes opportunities to bring the information to the classroom.	Educator demonstrates general knowledge of formal education practices in integrating agricultural literacy into standing subjects of math, science, social studies, art, reading, writing, speech, nutrition, etc., but misses opportunities or does not use all resources easily available on agricultural subjects to teach the lesson. Educator somewhat demonstrates understanding of accurate agricultural literacy and uses opportunities to bring the information to the classroom.	Educator demonstrates little knowledge of formal education practices in integrating agricultural literacy into standing subjects of math, science, social studies, art, reading, writing, speech, nutrition, etc. and misses opportunities or does not use all resources easily available on agricultural subjects to teach the lesson. Educator misses demonstrating understanding of accurate agricultural literacy and uses opportunities to bring the information to the classroom.	Educator has introduced skeletal example of the agricultural literacy subject matter in teaching the lesson. The lesson could have been integrated into more subjects.
<b>Section X.C: Photos</b>	<b>Exceptional: 17-20 pts.</b>	<b>Skilled: 13-16 pts.</b>	<b>Proficient: 9-12 pts.</b>	<b>Developing: 5-8 pts.</b>	<b>Inadequate: 1-4 pts.</b>
The degree to which photos and other documentation exhibit excellence in agricultural	Documentation and photos clearly and concisely exhibit excellence in agricultural literacy teaching methods and	Documentation and photos sufficiently exhibit excellence in agricultural literacy teaching methods and	Documentation and photos are geared toward excellence in agricultural literacy teaching methods, but lack	Documentation and photos are geared toward showing one classroom event in agricultural literacy.	Documentation and photos are geared toward the teacher's general classroom but do not

<p>literacy methods used by the applicant, to include but not limited to: news articles, bulletin board examples relating to agricultural literacy, community outreach, school newsletters, grant award letters, etc.</p>	<p>dedication of the educator to ongoing agricultural literacy integrations throughout the year. Documentation is well organized and concisely demonstrates links between this and the narrative, lesson plan, and educator's program. Educator demonstrates community involvement to extend agricultural literacy to community.</p>	<p>dedication of the educator to ongoing agricultural literacy integrations throughout the year. Documentation is generally well-organized and demonstrates most links between this and the narrative, lesson plan, and educator's program. Educator demonstrates community involvement to extend agricultural literacy to community.</p>	<p>showing dedication of the educator to ongoing agricultural literacy integrations throughout the year. Documentation is generally well-organized and demonstrates a few links between this and the narrative, lesson plan, and educator's program. Educator demonstrates little community involvement to extend agricultural literacy to community.</p>	<p>Documentation is somewhat organized and labeled, and demonstrates one to two links between this and the narrative, lesson plan, and educator's program. Educator demonstrates little community involvement to extend agricultural literacy to community.</p>	<p>indicate a clear link with the narrative or lesson plan. Evidence for community extensions with agricultural literacy are missing.</p>
<p><b>Section XIII: Format</b></p>	<p><b>Exceptional: 5</b></p>	<p><b>Skilled: 4</b></p>	<p><b>Proficient: 3</b></p>	<p><b>Developing: 2</b></p>	<p><b>Inadequate: 1</b></p>
<p>The degree to which the applicant has completed the application in accordance to the instructions.</p>	<p>Each part of the application was included and correctly labeled. Application was perfectly formatted per specifications (Section XIII.A). Punctuation and spelling errors were non-existent. All parts were clearly labeled, cohesive, and engaging.</p>	<p>Each part of the application was included and correctly labeled. Application was formatted per specifications (Section XIII.A). Punctuation and spelling errors were non-existent. All parts were clearly labeled, but cohesiveness could have been improved.</p>	<p>Each part of the application was included and correctly labeled. Application was formatted per specifications (Section XIII.A) in most areas. Cohesiveness lacking.</p>	<p>All sections were correctly labeled, but the documents were sloppy and contained numerous spelling and grammar errors. Little cohesiveness.</p>	<p>The application was missing a section(s) and generally lacked any cohesiveness.</p>