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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEVEN TEACHERS SELECTED FOR THE 2016 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING ABOUT AGRICULTURE AWARD

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Farm Credit announced that seven general education teachers from around the country have been selected as winners of the National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award for 2016.

These kindergarten-through-12th grade teachers won the award for the innovative ways they use agricultural concepts to teach core subject areas of reading, writing, math, science, social studies and more.

“The winners of this award exemplify how effective the use of agricultural concepts can be to teach reading, writing, science, math and more,” said Dr. Victoria LeBeaux, the National Agriculture in the Classroom Program Leader for USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which provides federal leadership and annual funding for NAITCO.

“We’re proud of these teacher winners and the way they’ve embraced agriculture in their classroom instruction,” said Lorri Brenneman, president of NAITCO. “We celebrate their enthusiasm for agriculture, and hope other teachers will adopt their successful teaching strategies.”

The seven teachers selected for the National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award 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 Shiple 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.

They will be honored by at the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference “Agriculture Blooming in the Desert,” to be held June 20-24 at the Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, AZ. NAITCO is a non-profit organization representing the 50 state Agriculture in the Classroom programs around the country. Its mission is to educate K-12 teachers and students about the importance of agriculture by providing them with web-based materials, workshops and awards programs that demonstrate how agriculture can be used to effectively teach core subject areas.

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