

Connecting Classrooms to Kansas Agriculture

Growing consumer interest and trust in agriculture is a lot like managing your crops; there are much higher yields when the inputs are applied during the growing season. This is where the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC) comes in. KFAC's core mission as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization is "connecting classrooms to Kansas agriculture."

"The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom is a tangible way to connect teachers across the state to great resources about agriculture," said Cathy Musick, Executive Director of KFAC. "We're there working hand-in-hand with Kansas teachers. We're able to provide them with materials that enhance classroom learning with ag-based curriculum that help students connect real-life scenarios to the content they learn about every day."

This past year KFAC provided agriculture literacy resources and training to 259 teachers which reach 6,600 students across the state. In their quest to increase agriculture literacy, KFAC offers three main delivery methods to Kansas teachers: A+STEM, Summer Conference and a Summer Institute. The A+STEM (Agriculture plus Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) is a half day in-service training for school districts. The one day Summer Conference allows KFAC "master teachers" to present workshops to their peers that demonstrate how they incorporate agriculture into their everyday curriculum. This year's three day Summer Institute is titled, 'Plants and Animals Have a Place in the Classroom,' and provides lesson plans that may be used to help students reach Kansas educational standards. If you, or someone you know, is interested in attending these workshops, please head to www.ksagclassroom.org.

"It's always exciting to see the light bulb go off for teachers as they realize how valuable the real-life connections are to the materials that they teach every day," said Musick. "Teachers know that when these materials spark curiosity for themselves, it's sure to do the same for their students."

Many teachers, both in Kansas and out of state, have been excited to learn about Kansas pork and dairy farms with the innovative Virtual Farm Tours offered by KFAC, in partnership with Kansas Pork and the Kansas Department of Agriculture. These programs have given hundreds of students a unique opportunity to see the inside workings of Kansas farms and ask real farmers questions about their operations all from the comfort of their classroom.

If preserving agriculture's place in Kansas classrooms is important to you, there are several ways you can help! One of the most visible can be seen on dusty backroads and city streets alike. The "Agri-tag" is a specialty license plate promoting agriculture that can be purchased from your county treasurer at the time you pay taxes. This provides a \$35 donation to KFAC. You can also become a member of the Agriculture Advocate funding team by submitting a yearly donation, participate in KFAC fundraising efforts on Giving Tuesday, November 28th, 2017, or through Grow Green Match Day, April 21st every year.

KFAC is an organization that is funded entirely from the private sector. For more information on KFAC, how to be involved, and how to donate, please head to www.ksagclassroom.org.

