

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom 2008-2009 Accomplishments Report

As Reported for the Program Year September 1, 2008-August 31, 2009

The IFB Member Services & Public Relations Division Education Manager is responsible for development and implementation of the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (IAITC) Program. IFB budget covers expenses including staff, office, travel, printing, postage and supplies for the program. The IAITC Program Council works in conjunction with the IAITC Education Director to develop a program of work that is approved by the IAA Foundation Trustees. The IAA Foundation funding continues to make many of the teacher and student programs as well as materials available to county Farm Bureaus, county Agriculture Literacy coordinators and others at no cost.



IAITC Success Continues

October
2009

The **2008-2009 School Year** continued with the enhanced Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Work continues to exceed expectations at the county level. Teachers and students are utilizing resources as quick as they can be printed and stocked.

488,084 students in grades preK-12 were reached with the IAITC message. **29,255 teachers** used IAITC materials throughout the school year. This marks an **3% increase** from teachers involved in 2007-2008.

\$2,275,602 was reported as county spending on the local IAITC efforts exceeding the county grants of **\$400,000** to the 64 counties that participate in the IAITC Grant Program. Thanks to the generous support of a number of IAITC donors, **\$40,000** was added to the county grant system in 2007-2008!

2,832 volunteers participated as classroom presenters, fieldtrip hosts, as well as advisory board members. The volunteers were involved in county programs the state and local level.

This number includes **84 new volunteers** to the programs in 2008-09.

County AITC Programs provided **1,523** hours of coordinated program training for CPDU hours, critical for teachers across the state to renew their teacher certification.

Continued county level coordination of the IAITC program makes for easier access at the county level for teachers to have immediate access to materials. IAITC is the one stop shop for Ag Literacy.

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New Resources in print and on-line

IAITC continues to post new classroom resources on the aginthe classroom.org website providing teachers with ready made lessons for immediate classroom use.

During the 2008-09 Program year a variety of issues were developed, including the following.

Action Science through

Agriculture continues to provide easily implemented science materials for grades 3-8.

L is for Lincoln showcases the variety of historic and agriculturally based lessons in conjunction with Lincoln's Birthday celebration.

IAITC's A Hog Ate My

Homework lesson booklet provides direct links between the chapter book "A Hog Ate My Homework" and specific agriculture connections.

Reading Strategies to Enhance Your Curriculum provides agriculture related material to link with reading classrooms. This booklet provided direct

resources for the new **ISAT's 10 Minutes a Day the IAITC Way**, that has been released for 4th and 6th grade audiences. This practical application of ISAT preparation provides materials not readily available for teachers to use throughout the school year to prepare for the ever-important **ISAT Tests**.

Volunteers Recognized



Jo Wenzel, Pearl City Elementary School, Pearl City, Stephenson County, was selected as the 2009 IAITC Teacher of the Year. A Fourth Grade teacher, Wenzel and her students engage in 'Exploration Monday' activities that frequently involve the students working with some new and unique form of agriculture. Wenzel also engages her students in unique writing and journaling activities.

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom provides teachers and students with accurate information about how Illinois agriculture impacts the world around them and their lives.



IAITC conducted 43 Pre-service workshops at 26 colleges and universities around the state for 1,911 students. Pictured above, students at Southern Illinois University participate in hands on activities related to cell structures. Programs this year focused on the integration of agriculture into standard curricular areas, as well as Illinois farmers feeding people around the world.

IAITC Programs reported **2,832 volunteers** active in IAITC programs in 2008-09.

Three of these volunteers were recognized for their efforts to the IAITC movement at the local level at the 2008 Illinois Farm Bureau

Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Awardees were **Judy and Randy Kline, Kane County, Merlin Tobias, Hancock County, and Sue Freeman, Morgan County.** Combined the winners have been involved in their county level AITC programs for over 75

years with various teacher and student education efforts including farm tours, classroom presentations and working to bring other volunteers to their county effort.

We salute all volunteers in our county programs who are critical components of the

Teachers learn about agriculture and so much more!

Teacher training remains the backbone of the IAITC program. This year **29,255** teachers across the state benefited from IAITC programs and materials. This translates to over **480,000 students** in 62% of all attendance centers across the state (a 3% increase over the previous year).

IAITC state staff worked with **5,332 teachers** at over 31 teachers workshops and conferences. An additional **841 educators** took part in 39 Summer Agricultural Institutes (SAI) across the state.

At every SAI, teachers in attendance are asked to complete a pre and post survey, gauging their knowledge of the Illinois Agriculture Industry.

The results remain the same year after year. Teachers show a sharp change in attitude when describing farmers in such areas as computer literacy (from 59% to 91%), environmentalist (from 75% to 96%), non-polluter (from 45% to 79%) and safe food providers (from 72% to 97%).

After attending the SAI teachers planning to incorporate agriculture into the curriculum jump from 29% daily or weekly pre-SAI to 69% post.

94% of teachers surveyed

also plan on teaching the various careers related to agriculture after learning more about those careers compared to 37% pre-SAI.

In addition to working with classroom teachers, IAITC state staff also work with Pre-Service teachers to help prepare them for their first year in the classroom.

1,911 Pre-Service teachers from 26 Universities at 43 presentations received training from IAITC Staff in the 2008-09 program year.

Francie Keller Schafer, Instructor, Southern Illinois University, shared after a Pre-Service Workshop. "the students not only enjoy these presentations, they receive excellent modeling of materials we discuss in class in practical hands on methods."

41 teachers, including six first year teachers, from 39 counties received IAITC grants totaling over \$9,900 to use on agriculture related curricular materials in the 2008-09 program year.

These grants (up to \$250) help teachers purchase materials that can be used for years to come incorporating agriculture into their classroom curriculum.

Jo Wenzel, Pearl City

Elementary school, Pearl City, Stephenson county was selected **IAITC Teacher of the Year.**

Wenzel, a 4th Grade teacher has participated in 2 Summer Ag Institutes and also participated in an in-depth agriculture exchange with other teachers in France. For winning, Wenzel received an all expense paid trip to the National AITC Conference in June 2009 to St. Louis, Missouri.

Lynne Jeffries, Greenbay Elementary, North Chicago, Lake County, Illinois was selected as the first runner up for the IAITC Teacher of the Year. She was awarded a complimentary registration to the 2009 National AITC Conference.

9 Illinois counties received \$500 county grants through the **AFBF White Reinhardt County Grant Program.** The following Illinois counties are part of the 2008-2009 winners list

Adams County developed materials on locally grown commodities. **Edwards County** provided Apple Learning Stations to 2 elementary schools. **Kendall County** purchased GPS equipment and related teaching resources. **Ver-million County** created barn shaped bookcases to be filled with ag themed books and rotated from school to school and **Warren-Henderson** initiated a county-wide 'Farm Days' presentations.

Summer Ag Institutes

During the summer of 2009, **841 teachers participated in 39 Summer Agricultural Institutes (SAI)** across the state of Illinois. Since 1991, over 6,000 teachers have participated.

By working with the local county farm bureau, local universities and county agriculture literacy coalitions, the IAITC Program has expanded our impact with the priority of teacher training. Most other states offer 2 or 3 Summer Ag Institutes, for 50-60 teacher each summer. This is a drain on the state staff that plans, coordinates and implements the pro-

gram.

The Illinois SAI program offers a grant to individual county groups that want to host these programs. The state staff offers assistance in programming and presentations. This local effort provides teachers with an opportunity to see what agriculture in in the home area, as well as providing materials and methods to incorporate agriculture into their daily lives.

Each year teachers are give an pre and post survey determining their use of AITC materials and their perception of agriculture. The results

are consistent year after year.

In 2009, plans to incorporate AITC into lesson plans on a daily or weekly basis jumped from 29% to 69%, and the perception of how farmers are stewards of the land and water jump from 69% to 94%.

The Summer Ag Institutes help change the perception of modern agriculture. One teacher remarked in a follow up study, "Why do we not hear more about agriculture in our everyday lives?"

The challenge of the AITC program to insure that happens still continues.

Specialized IAITC Partnerships

The IAITC Program would not exist without the generous donations of many individuals and corporate contributors.

FS Seed Division of GROWMARK renewed its annual commitment of support to the IAITC Program. This year over \$55,000 was divided between the state and county IAITC programs.

Action Science through Agriculture is supported by the **Monsanto Fund**

Go Green through Agricul-

ture is supported by **ADM**.

During the 2008-09 program year significant donations have been made by **BP America, Cargill, Caterpillar Foundation, Farm Credit, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, JP Morgan Chase, Prairie Farms Dairy, and Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE), The Illinois Corn Growers, the Illinois Beef Association, the Illinois Pork Producers and the Illinois Soybean Association.**

The **Illinois Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Grant** is funding materials developed by experts and education specialists via virtual focus groups on Sustainable Agriculture.

IAITC is continually looking for additional partners. For more information log onto www.iaafoundation.org, or contact Susan Moore, Director IAA Foundation at 309-557-2230.

What is in store for 09-10?

Plans for 2009-2010 include the following: (pending funding)

* 50 University Pre-Service Workshops.

*30 SAI, and 10 special Summer Ag Workshops.

*Updated Pizza, Illinois, Soil, Pork, Beef and new History, and Renewable Energy and Animal Production Ag Mag's .

***After School Agriculture** a new program to infuse Agriculture in to After School programs relating to Pizza and the agriculture connection. This project is funded through a grant from the **Walmart Foundation**.

*Lesson packet related to the **Illinois Livestock Industry** and the specialized care producers use with livestock.

***Urban Ag Mag** spon-

sored by **COUNTRY FINANCIAL** focusing on agriculture in Urban areas.

*Lesson packet and a new Soil Ag Mag.

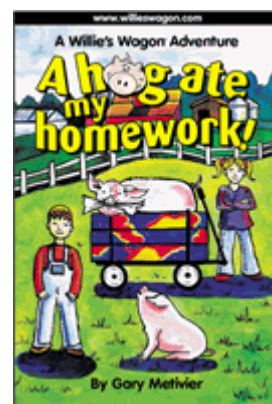
*SMART Board Lessons and activities to be hosted on our website.

*Continued support and guidance to county coalitions and AITC efforts.

*and much, much more!



During a Summer Ag Institute, teacher have the opportunity to participate in traveling workshops to learn more about production agriculture and how to translate production into consumption agriculture that their students understand. In the photo above, teachers listen as breeding practices are explained at the Kellogg Hog Farm in Yorkville, IL during the DuPage County Summer Ag Institute, "Teachers on an Agri-science Bus."



Check the shelves for authentic and agriculturally accurate chapter books for children, and you'll find "Hog Ate My Homework." Working with Illinois Author Gary Metvier, IAITC was able to provide insight into the book development and artwork, as well as develop companion lesson plans for teachers. As Gary visits schools, he helps promote agriculture to audiences that are not in the typical AITC Audience.

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Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom supports local educational and outreach efforts by providing high quality, standards based, scientifically sound agriculture information that can be easily integrated by teachers into the existing classroom curriculum. The goal is that Pre-K through High School teachers will continue to teach required subjects while infusing their existing resource materials with agriculture related topics.

Through the generous support of the IAA Foundation the following are made possible: County Ag Literacy Grants, Ag Mags, Teacher Resource Guides, Summer Ag Institutes, and Teacher Grants, Ag Related Lessons and Units, and much more! Check out www.agintheclassroom.org for more information.

St. Louis National Conference Hits a Home Run!

Illinois AITC co-hosted the **2009 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference June 24-27, 2009** in St. Louis, Missouri with the Missouri AITC program.

Hosting this conference was an honor for the program, and provided the opportunity to showcase the IAITC program to other educators and AITC programs across the nation. This conference also provided a chance to showcase the unique agriculture systems of Illinois and the Midwest.

584 participants attended the 2009 Conference from 43 states and 3 Canadian provinces. Over 250 participants were first time attendees and 211 participants came from Illinois.

Wednesday started with an optional pre-tour of Historic St.

Charles with a focus on Lewis and Clark,. That afternoon a new 'Interest Approach Fair' was held to showcase over 40 new 'make and take' ideas and hands on activities. Participants also had the opportunity to visit various roundtable break outs. The evening was capped off with a Taste of the Hill Italian Dinner, and a brief agricultural history of the World's Fair of 1904.

Thursday saw all conference participants loaded onto 11 traveling workshop busses and visiting up to 5 various agribusinesses, and agritourism sites. Special attention was given to River Transportation, Biotechnology and Agritourism. Monsanto, and the St Louis Science Center were instrumental in this effort. The evening was capped off with a private engagement at Grant's Farm.

Friday started with an special

'State Breakfast' and Keynote Speaker Dr, Jim Painter and his account of portion control and nutrition, before participants selected over 90 Workshop sessions and 90 mini-workshop session on Friday and Saturday.

Saturday finished with more mini-workshops and a closing brunch Keynote by children's author Gail Gibbons. The event finished with a post-tour to historic river town, Kimmswick, Missouri.

99% of participants rated the conference as good or excellent, and the conference provided an excellent showcase of agriculture and agriculture literacy in Illinois and the Midwest. The 2010 conference will be held in Baltimore , Maryland.

