

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Susan Moore
Director IAA Foundation
(309) 557-2230

COUNTRY Financial Donates Grant Funds To Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Program

Bloomington—COUNTRY Financial recently donated \$100,000 to the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (IAITC) program, helping ensure that Illinois students will continue learning about the importance of agriculture in our economy and society.

About \$65,000 of the funds will be used for County Coalition Grants for agricultural literacy programs. Remaining funds will be used by the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA) Foundation for general programs.

County grant funds are raised each year by the IAA Foundation. IAITC helps teach Illinois children about agriculture's importance and the vital role it plays in their lives and society. County Agricultural Literacy Coordinators serve as frontline educators who provide teacher training, classroom presentations and program coordination throughout Illinois.

“We are pleased to provide funds for IAITC efforts. We share their passion for agricultural education. We are proud to be the No. 1 insurer of Illinois farms,” said John Blackburn, COUNTRY chief executive officer. “Ag in the Classroom programs help students become more aware of how our farmers feed them and the world.”

IAITC leaders believe that children who are educated about the importance and diversity of agriculture will not only make more informed and healthier food and lifestyle choices but also more clearly understand national food policy.

“Because of the financial boost from COUNTRY, we were able to increase the average county grant by \$1,000 and counties received their grant dollars earlier than expected,” said Susan Moore, director of the IAA Foundation, which is responsible for raising funds for the IAITC program. “Overall, the county coalition grant program increased by 10 percent this year to the tune of \$440,000.”

“Coordinators represent IAITC with great dedication, expertise, and enthusiasm,” said Kevin Daugherty, education director for the Illinois Farm Bureau, which implements the statewide program, “I was thrilled to learn that we would be able to provide our coordinators with the funds they need to continue doing great outreach in the counties.”

COUNTRY Financial (<http://www.countryfinancial.com>) serves about one million households and businesses throughout the United States. Founded in 1925, COUNTRY has nearly 2,000 financial representatives in 14 Midwestern and Western states who help families build a financially secure future, no matter where they're starting from. COUNTRY offers a full range of financial products and services from auto, home and life insurance to retirement planning services, investment management and annuities.

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom is a program of the IAA Foundation. The mission of the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable foundation, is to fund education, research, and charitable activities that benefit Illinois farm families and agriculture. Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom is the top funding priority of the Foundation. Learn more about the IAA Foundation and Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom online at www.iaafoundation.org

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