

# Connecting to Agriculture

Fall 2023

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## \$250-\$300 Grants Available

Have a project you've been wanting to do or need some new resources for your classroom? Don't miss your chance to apply for the annual Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Book and Project Grants.

K-12 educators in Illinois can apply for \$250 in ag-accurate books or \$300 to fund a new ag literacy-focused project. This is one of the easiest grant applications you'll ever find. Grant applications are due October 20. Learn more on their website [ajintheclassroom.org](http://ajintheclassroom.org).



## Southwestern's Project Grants

Holly Campbell shared, "This year IAITC granted our requests to the mini-grant program offered for the 2022-2023 school year. At Brighton North Primary, K-2 students participated in building benches and a raised garden bed for our Monarch Migratory space. This is a project that is in its beginning stages of development but will continue to grow from year to year. This space is being incorporated throughout all three elementary buildings in the Southwestern school district. Students at Shipman Elementary and Medora Intermediate will foster the growth of a larger raised garden space outside of the



## Educator Adventure Institute

Ten educators from Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Greene, and Randolph counties explored more about agriculture during the Summer Agricultural Institute conducted by the Macoupin County Agricultural Literacy Program June 20-21. During the institute, educators toured several sites and tried hands-on activities as they learned more about the agriculture industry. Educators earned 14 professional development hours.

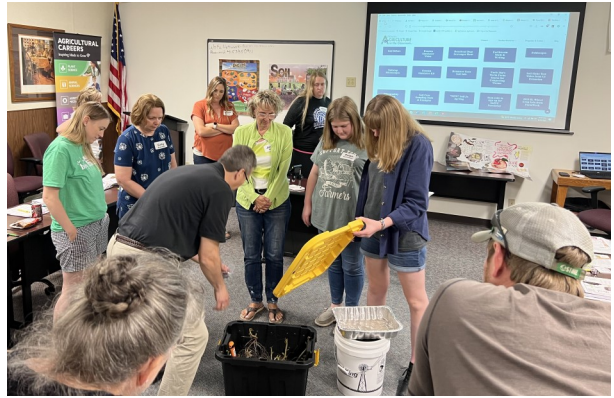


While touring the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Mike Simpson pictured at right explains the germination tests he performs to certify seed with Summer Agriculture Institute teachers.

Traveling workshops included DICKEY-john, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Macoupin Veterinary Services, Sloan Implement Company, and Springfield Plastics.

Teachers completed many hands-on activities, learned more about agriculture and career opportunities, and received resources to use in their classrooms from different presenters. Presenters included Kevin Daugherty from Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom; Lydia Oker from Illinois Pork Producers; and Connie Niemann from Macoupin County Agricultural Literacy Program

On their evaluation one teacher commented: "I would encourage all educators to attend a summer ag institute." Another said, "It is awesome. I love the field trips-you learn so much more when you actually see and experience it." One teacher shared: "It's hands-on and engaging." When asked how



Kevin Daugherty (at center) from Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom shows Summer Agricultural Institute participants his worm bin as they learn about hands-on soil activities for their classrooms.

they plan to use what they've learned, one teacher said: "help my class understand how agriculture is a part of everyone's life." Another teacher shared: "inform kids of area products and careers around them."

This program and all the resources are made possible by local sponsors. We appreciate the support of our sponsors, our traveling workshop sites and presenters that helped make this institute a success.



During the Summer Agricultural Institute, teachers learned more about agriculture through traveling workshops which included Sloan Implement Company. Pictured left to right: Maureen Tepen - St. Mary School - Brussels; Chad Brodbeck - Brussels School District; Rachel Wilschetz-Hartman, Becky Lorts, & Karen Kinder - St. Mary School - Brussels; Jennie Satterlee, Cathy Schaeffer - St. Mary - Taylorville; Janice Meyer - Greenfield School District; Paige Horstmeyer - Staunton HS Ag Education; Amanda Niemann - Litchfield HS Ag Education; Breanna Winkelman - Trinity Lutheran School; Nicole Emery - Greenfield School District; and Sloan Implement Store Manager Greg McCallum.

# Southwestern's Project Grants continued

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playground area and near the side entrance of the building. It is our goal to create a space that students and our 'outside friends (insects)' can thrive from.

Students learn about the life cycle of the butterfly and other insects in and out of the

classroom. Students learn about plants that thrive in our region and for our butterflies. Students in grades K-6 have an opportunity to tag the Monarchs to be a part of the Monarch Migratory watch program this upcoming fall. We are very thankful for the generosity of this program!"



## New Learning Resources Available

Dozens of *Facts for Little Readers* have been added to Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom website. These K-1 grade level activity sheets are a great way to connect agriculture to your classroom. These resources are easy to print at school and sure to grab students' attention.

New *Junior Ag Mags* added for your 2nd - 4th grade classrooms. *Soil*, *Apple*, and *Pumpkin* are all currently available online and ready to print easily at school. These resources and more available at [agintheclassroom.org](http://agintheclassroom.org)

**Facts for LITTLE READERS** **Field Corn**

- Ears of corn grow on a stalk.
- One ear of corn has about 800 kernels.

- Field corn is used in over 4,000 products.
- Field corn is in cereals, peanut butter, and snack foods.
- Cattle and other animals eat field corn.

**Facts for LITTLE READERS** **Soybeans**

- More soybeans are grown in the U.S. than anywhere else in the world.
- Illinois is the #1 producer of soybeans in the U.S.

- Soybeans are used to make cooking oils.
- Soybeans are used to make animal feed.
- Soybeans are used to make ink.
- Soybeans can be used in crayons.

**Facts for LITTLE READERS** **Livestock**

- Farm animals are also known as livestock.
- Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and chickens are all livestock.
- All livestock eat grain.

- Pigs are the most popular livestock in Illinois.
- 96% of farms in Illinois are family owned.

**Junior Ag Reader**

**Why Does Soil Matter?**

Soil matters because it's made of matter. Read on to learn more about the amazing soil under your feet!

**Soil**

The soil under our feet is as important as the air we breathe and the water we drink. There are 100 billion soil particles in every teaspoon of soil. Soil is made of tiny particles of rocks, minerals, water, air, and many other things. Farmers use soil to grow crops. Soil is also used to make things like bricks and paper.

**Layers of Soil**

Soil is made of many different layers. Most of the food we eat is produced from the top layer. Farmers in the western area of the field have to be water, wind, and ice. Farmers try to prevent erosion on the top layer of soil. There are many ways to grow healthy food for us year after year.

**Critters in the Soil**

Soil is full of the life we take for granted. There are many critters in the soil. Some of these critters we can see. Others we can't see. They help the soil to be healthy.

**Illinois Soil**

Illinois has some of the best soil in the world. Most of our state's land is used to produce food. The main crop grown in Illinois are corn and soybeans.

## Apple & Pumpkin Poster Available

Illinois Apples and Pumpkins double sided posters (36"x24") full of facts available by contacting Connie at [cniemann@illinois.edu](mailto:cniemann@illinois.edu) or 217-854-9604.

Did you know? Since every apple seed is made of its own unique genetic material, you can plant 10 seeds from a single apple and get 10 entirely different kinds of apples.

Pumpkins, squash, and gourds are all part of the Cucurbitaceae family, which contains over 100 genera and 700 species.

**ILLINOIS APPLES**

**TOP VARIETIES GROWN IN ILLINOIS ORCHARDS**

- Zestar
- McIntosh
- Rome
- Arkansas Black
- Red Delicious
- Winesap
- Fuji
- Golden Delicious
- Jonathan
- Cortland
- Cherry Smith
- EverCrisp
- Goldrush
- Honeycrisp
- Erabean

**APPLE FACTS**

- Americans eat an average of 1 pound of apples per year.
- Since every apple seed is made of its own unique genetic material, you can plant 10 seeds from a single apple and get 10 entirely different kinds of apples.
- The only apple native to North America is the eschscholzia.
- The Illinois State Fruit is the Golden Delicious apple.
- Illinois has over 200 farms that grow apples on nearly 2,000 acres.
- Apples contain fat, sodium, or cholesterol and are a good source of fiber.

**ILLINOIS PUMPKINS**

**TYPES OF PUMPKINS**

- PIE
- JACK-O-LANTERN
- PROCESSING
- MINIATURE
- GIANT
- SPECIALTY

**PUMPKIN FACTS**

- Pumpkins, squash, and gourds are all part of the Cucurbitaceae family, which contains over 100 genera and 700 species. Plants in this family have been producing humans with food and other products for thousands of years.
- All pumpkins are technically squash, but not all squash are considered pumpkins.

**PUMPKIN STATS**

- About 85% of the world's canned pumpkin is produced in Illinois.
- The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 2,722 lbs.
- The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 2,722 lbs.
- In 2022, farmers in Illinois harvested more than 250,000 pumpkins, which is more than any other year in the state's history.
- About 85% of the pumpkins grown in Illinois are used for pie filling and other processing.

## Hands-on mAGic Lessons Online

Check out the updated hands-on lessons at <https://www.ilaged.org/AITC>

These mAGic lessons are designed to bring agriculture to life in your classroom. They address the Illinois Learning Standards in math, science, English language arts and social studies.

There are 100 lessons covering a variety of Illinois agriculture topics, plants, insects, soils, dairy, poultry and machines are available. Most of the lessons cover multiple disciplines designed for 4th-8th grades.



While all these lessons are available online, we do still have these hands-on learning kits available on a free loan basis. The kits contain additional resources and supplies to complete the activities with your students.

## Agriculture is Everyday

The new classroom calendar you received features agricultural photos, facts, and recommended readings. Ways educators have used the calendar:

- Read fact as a part of daily routine.
- Use for writing or journaling ideas.
- Display in areas that students line up or visit daily so they can read it.
- Share along with daily school announcements.
- Use on school menus for fun facts.
- Use for bulletin boards
- Learn some new terminology each month.
- Utilize monthly topics to spur further exploration and activities.

## Websites to Check Out

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom  
[agintheclassroom.org](http://agintheclassroom.org)

Illinois Farm Families [watchusgrow.org](http://watchusgrow.org)

National Agriculture in the Classroom  
[agclassroom.org](http://agclassroom.org)

My American Farm [myamericanfarm.org](http://myamericanfarm.org)

## Thank you Program Sponsors!

### Platinum Level (\$1,500 and up)

University of IL Extension - Macoupin County  
Macoupin County Farm Bureau  
Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom  
M & M Service Company  
Macoupin County Fair  
Corteva Agriscience

### Gold Level (\$500 - \$1,499)

Macoupin Co. Soil & Water Conservation Dist.  
Brandt Consolidated, Inc.  
Sievers Equipment Company  
Tina Olroyd-COUNTRY Financial® Representative

### Silver Level (\$250 - \$499)

CNB Bank & Trust  
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.  
United Community Bank  
Area Diesel Service, Inc.  
Bank & Trust Company  
Bank of Springfield  
Dan Metz-COUNTRY Financial® Representative  
Farm Credit Illinois - Jerseyville  
First National Bank of Litchfield  
First National Bank of Raymond  
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Smoky Jennings Chevrolet, Inc.  
Soil-Right Consulting Services, Inc.  
Warren Boynton State Bank  
Worksaver, Inc.

### Bronze Level (\$100 - \$249)

Macoupin County Pork Producers  
Duda Ace Hardware  
Mennel Milling Company of Illinois  
Steven O'Dell-COUNTRY Financial® Representative  
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Animal Doctors LLP  
Backwoods Berry Farm  
Bank of Hillsboro  
Bill's IGA  
Carlinville Rotary Club  
CHS - Shipman  
Holzwarth Flying Service  
Linda Worlow, State Farm Insurance Agent  
Macoupin Veterinary Services  
McKay NAPA Auto Parts  
Prairie State Bank & Trust  
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