

Cream *of the* Crop

A Harvest of Ideas for Educators

Vol. 18, No. 1

Autumn, 2004

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Conference explores Great Valley



Tulare County, which honors its rural heritage with public murals depicting agricultural scenes, will play host to this year's Ag in the Classroom Conference, Oct. 21-23. See story, page 2. Photo by Christine Souza

www.kids.cfaitc.org

Solve a mystery, learn about ag!

A new Web site launched this summer is teaching students a thing or two about California agriculture. *Kids' Corner*, located at www.kids.cfaitc.org, is

geared toward third through fifth graders and is an offshoot of the Foundation's own teacher-oriented Web site.

The cornerstone of the new site is a commodity mystery game

featuring 10 different stories. Players become a detective called to the scene of an accident where a product of a California commodity has been ruined. The detective tracks down which commodity is used to make the product and which counties produce it. Then the detective re-

sponds to questions about the commodity using knowledge uncovered while solving the mystery. The game was developed by Renee Hyatt, Foundation Web site coordinator, with assistance from educators and students. Funding was provided by an SBC Excelsior Grant.

The Foundation plans to expand upon the game by developing a teacher's guide to enhance classroom use and by adding more mysteries. Future growth of *Kids' Corner* will include more interactive games. Current ones include a memory match, word search and coloring activity.

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Certificates await students who complete each of the ten commodity mysteries.

Fall conference explores agriculture in California's Great Central Valley

Tulare County sits in the middle of California's Great Central Valley, annually producing over \$3.2 billion in ag products. With that kind of gold star affixed to its name, Tulare County is a shining example of a premier location for Agriculture in the Classroom's annual conference.

"Cultivating a New Crop of Students Every Year" is the theme of the three-day event Oct. 21-23 at the Radisson Hotel and Convention Center in Visalia. The conference begins Oct. 22, with a pre-conference excursion planned for Oct. 21.

"Tulare County has so many enriching experiences to offer that show how agriculture is a huge part of our lives," says Dena Gibbons, conference coordinator. "Educators will have no trouble making the connection between agriculture and their students in a way which is of great value to classroom learning."

The conference theme will be explored through workshops and general sessions which emphasize that:

- Agriculture enriches curricula;
- Academic content standards can be met while teaching about agriculture;
- Nutrition education and food safety go

hand in hand with agricultural literacy; and

- Traditional and non-traditional learners alike thrive on agricultural education.

Many of the 40+ workshops will be led by teachers eager to share ideas and resources they have found, over time, to be effective and enjoyed by students.

Invited general session speakers include **Maria Shriver**, California's First Lady, who heartily supports hands-on experiences like

gardening in the educational environment; **Ann M. Veneman**, USDA secretary, who has addressed prior conferences; **Jack T.**



Murals in the small community of Exeter show how important agriculture is to daily life. Photo by Christine Souza.

cludes a tour of Squaw Valley Herb Gardens. The pre-conference event is limited to the first 60 registrants.

"This conference points teachers in the direction of ag literacy

by providing them with the low-cost tools and ideas

they need to achieve it."

O'Connell, state superintendent of public instruction; **A.G. Kawamura**, secretary, CA Department of Food and Agriculture; and **Dr. Carl Winter**, director, Food Safe Program, known incognito as the "Elvis of *E. coli*".

Field trips are integral to the conference. This year is no exception! Destinations include a milking parlor and cheese facility; public murals showcasing agriculture's heritage; orange groves and packing facilities; Naturally Nuts and Bassett's Cricket Ranch; science and technology's impact on modern ag; and the past, present and future of cotton production.

An optional pre-conference excursion Oct. 21 will visit Grant Grove in Sequoia National Park, followed by a workshop on the California Curriculum Guidelines for Agricultural Literacy Awareness, which present specific ways to meet academic standards agriculturally. The return trip in-

"There isn't one student out there who doesn't benefit from agriculture all day long," says Dena. "The problem is, most don't recognize it. For ag to continue providing for us all, young people need to understand how much they are affected by it and comprehend just where they'd be without it. This conference points teachers in the direction of ag literacy by providing them with the low-cost tools and ideas they need to achieve it."

CSU, Chico offers two units of 800-level credit for the conference and one unit for the pre-conference for \$55 per unit.

For registration information, contact the Foundation at 800/700-AITC. Full registration is \$200 by Oct. 1, or \$240 after. Secure registration, along with conference information, is available online at www.cfaitc.org. Hotel reservations, with the Ag in the Classroom rate of \$90 per night plus room tax, also are due Oct. 1. 🌿

Program-at-a-Glance

Thursday, Oct. 21

- 🌿 Pre-conference session: Grant Grove and Squaw Valley Herb Gardens
- 🌿 Conference Opening Reception

Friday, Oct. 22

- 🌿 General Session
- 🌿 Workshops and Make 'n' Takes
- 🌿 Tours of Tulare County Agriculture
- 🌿 "Taste of California" Social and Dinner at Heritage Complex, World Ag Expo

Saturday, Oct. 23

- 🌿 Exhibits and Continental Breakfast
- 🌿 Workshops and Make 'n' Takes
- 🌿 Awards Luncheon
- 🌿 Cheese Tasting Closing

Students enjoy writing for a purpose, say teachers; *Imagine this...* story writing contest fits that bill

Students are looking for more than just ordinary writing assignments, say many educators. That's one reason Vickie Zertuche, a 7th grade teacher at San Gabriel Christian School, was drawn to the *Imagine this...* story writing contest coordinated by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

Vickie's seventh grade student, Annalie Riordan, was one of six third through eighth grade state winners in the 2003-2004 contest. Annalie, her family and Vickie – plus five other winners, their families and teachers – all gathered in Sacramento during National Agriculture Week last March to participate in the annual festivities honoring the talented young authors.

The annual celebration is the formal culmination of the contest. Every year, a new group of talented students receives major kudos that day. That group includes the authors, plus some very capable high school art and drama students who have taken the contest to the next level – a student-produced

video featuring animated versions of each of the six winning stories.

Those 80 or so students – the production team – get involved after the six stories have been selected from thousands of entries. The team is made up of artists,

actors and animators from six Sacramento area schools. Its task is to illustrate, animate and create voiceovers that, when mixed together, give life to the stories in the animated video.

It's an electric moment when, after all the hard work has wrapped up, the authors, artists, animators and actors together view the finished product of months and months of concentrated effort. The video's debut during the Ag Week celebra-

tion brings solid, tangible meaning to what started out as a simple writing assignment.

The contest seems to excite students about writing, especially after they've seen a copy of the video. It "... encourages them, where a traditional classroom assignment may not, because there is this carrot at the end," says Shannon Vierra, mother of 5th grade winner Kendall Vierra and a third grade teacher as well. "I think that helps them to try a little harder."

This also "...gives students an opportunity to feel like their writing has meaning



to it," says Vickie Zertuche. "I'm always looking for an opportunity to validate my students and to give them an opportunity to succeed in writing. This does that for them, making them feel that they're not just writing for grades, but they're writing for an important (goal)."

"The Foundation really has done a good job of rewarding students, making them feel important," says Elna Coley, Los Osos Middle School eighth grade teacher of William Chesnut, an '03-'04 author. "This animation is very special. To see your work done that way, well, that's a little extra."

Interviews with the authors, their teachers, and several of the high school student production team add even greater depth to the animated video.

Debbie George, art teacher at Woodland High School (one of six participating high schools), calls the *Imagine this...* process wonderful because "...it involves

students in every aspect of the process. That is unique!"

One of the students concurs. "It just sort of made me feel independent, at my age, being able to do a

project like this," says Brett Kelly, a Sheldon High student involved in the animation process.

His classmate, Sean Taylor, has worked two years on the production team. "Last year, I went up to the little kid who wrote the story I did. He said, 'You're the greatest guy on earth. You took my story and made it into a cartoon.' Every little kid loves cartoons. Being able to make someone feel that way is just awesome."

Imagine this... has been generously underwritten by State Compensation Insurance Fund since 1993.

The 2004-2005 contest is currently underway! Contact the Foundation at www.cfaitc.org or 800/700-AITC to receive a details and specific contest rules. Stories must be postmarked by Nov. 1, 2004, to be eligible for this year's story writing contest. 🌱



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Imagine this...

story writing contest.

Agricultural Facts

Did you know...

Carrots, harvested all year long in California, are a staple of school lunches. If all the carrots eaten by Americans every day were laid end-to-end, they would stretch 5,681 miles. FYI... The driving distance from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. is only 2,824 miles!



California leads the nation in the production of apricots. Five percent of what's grown here is used as an ingredient in the sweet and sour sauce McDonalds serves with its Chicken McNuggets®.



Tomatoes are big in California! Besides the ripe beauties in the store this time of year, some growers produce processing tomatoes specifically for tomato sauces, salsas, soups, etc. The leftovers after processing – peels, cores, seeds and trimmings – don't go to waste. They're known as pomace; are a good source of protein, fiber and vitamin E; and are added to feed for cattle, dairy cows and chickens. Now that's a by-product!



Disneyland Park last year hosted 12.7 million guests with Matterhorn-size appetites. Those guests consumed 4 million hamburgers, 1.6 million hot dogs, 3.4 million orders of fries, and 1.5 million servings of popcorn. They couldn't have done that without agriculture!



The full moon closest to the autumnal equinox is called the harvest moon. That's because, historically, farmers could continue harvesting into the night by the light of the moon. This year's harvest moon falls on Sept. 28.



Facts retrieved from *Farm Bureau's Farm Facts, Summer 2004* and *Chase's Calendar of Events 2004*.

Help students learn to make wise nutritional choices



Susan Zieleniewicz, the Bay Area Region 5 a Day–Power Play! coordinator, recently caught the attention of students on the ballfield of Garfield Elementary School in downtown Oakland. She pitched the value of knowing the nutritional content of foods – especially the kinds of foods kids love to eat and drink.

By all accounts, it looks like Susan made a home run with each presentation she made. Hundreds of students learned how to select foods using nutritional labels as a basis for comparison.

Susan participated in the Foundation's June 2 Farm Day for the school's 800+ students. Her booth, parked right down the third base line of Garfield's grassy ballfield, had students hopping – literally – as she focused on the link between nutrition, exercise and good health.

Among her presentations was one showing students they have to be on their toes when making good food choices. The lesson, below, was taken from the University of California Cooperative Extension's "Reading Up the Food Guide Pyramid."

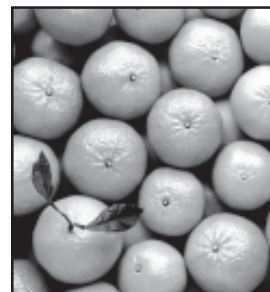
Fruit Juice versus Fruit Drinks

Supplies Needed

- One orange
- Knife, to cut orange
- Hand juicer
- Measuring cups –
1/2 cup
1/4 cup
- Measuring spoon –
1 tablespoon
- Sugar
- Water
- Two transparent drinking glasses
- Orange food coloring (optional)
- Nutritional labels from:
A fruit juice
A fruit juice with calcium added
A fruit juice with pulp
A fruit drink

Directions

1. Juice an orange in class. Explain that this juice is made from only the fruit. It is called "fruit juice."
2. Demonstrate how fruit juice is different from a fruit drink:
 - Mix 1/2 cup water with 1/4 cup sugar.
 - Add one tablespoon of the real orange juice.
3. Ask the students to discuss the differences and decide which drink is healthier. Point out that the healthier drink makes the better nutritional choice.
4. Brainstorm why fruit juices are healthier than fruit drinks. Provide two specific reasons. Compare nutrition labels for answers. Look at labels from a fruit drink, fruit juice with pulp, fruit juice without pulp, and one with calcium added. How do fiber contents compare? Why is fiber important? Why might calcium be of value to non-dairy consumers?
5. Ask the students how their parents know which drinks are healthier. Encourage students to show their parents the nutritional labels. Those for fruit drinks must say that sugar is added. Show examples of fruit juice and drink labels. Point out the ingredients and any other labeling that indicates if the product is 100% juice or if sugar has been added.



Adapted from Lesson Four: Fabulous Fruits, from *Reading Up the Food Guide Pyramid*, by the University of California Cooperative Extension.

Resources inspire explorations into agriculture

The Bookshelf



■ **History of Invention: Food and Clothing** (3-8) Part of the "Facts on File Science Library," this volume outlines the development of what people eat and wear, from primitive hunting and gathering to genetically engineered food, and from animal skins to spandex. 96 pages. \$35 hardcover. ISBN 081605441X Daniel Gilpin, Facts on File, Inc., 2004.

■ **Tomatoes** (K-2) Examines the history, cultivation and uses of tomatoes at a primary level. Includes a section on finding out more about tomatoes and a glossary of important words. Bright graphics and photos add color. Part of "A True Book" series. \$6.95 softcover. ISBN 051626773-6 Elaine Landau, Children's Press, 1999.



■ **What's Cooking? The History of American Food** (7-12) Straightforward approach helps students explore how American food has changed since the 1600s, in large part due to impacts like technology, economic hardship, historical events, and mass marketing. Part of "People's History" series. \$25 hardcover. ISBN 0822517329 Sylvia Whitman, Lerner Publications Co., 2001.

■ **Aliens from Earth** (1-4) Intriguing introduction to the serious and ongoing environmental problems caused by invasive plant and animal species. Appealing graphics and text show how these foreign intrusions have disturbed the delicate balance of local ecosystems. 32 pages. \$15.95 hardbound. ISBN 156145236X Mary Batten, Peachtree Publishers, 2003.



■ **Paper and Wood** (K-3) In the "First Facts Materials" series, young readers learn where paper products and wood materials come from, how they are processed and manufactured, and how they are used to make many things students use every day. 24 pages each book. School editions: \$15.95 each hardcover. ISBN 0736825134 (Paper) and 0736825150 (Wood). Sara Louise Kras, Capstone Press, 2004.

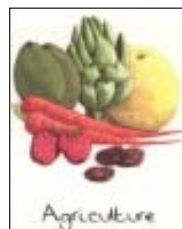
■ **School Garden Wizard** (Adults) Invaluable resource for educators and volunteers planning a school garden from the ground up. Web site dissects the planning and building of gardens into five stages; each is downloadable separately for a total of 58 pages. Developed by the U.S. and Chicago Botanical Gardens. Available online only. www.schoolgardenwizard.org



■ **Cal-EPA/Integrated Waste Management Board Classroom Curriculum** (K-12) Free curriculum (previously available only in workshops) offers current waste management information encouraging a "reduce, reuse and recycle" approach. Includes information on composting. CIWMB, P.O. Box 4025, Sacramento, CA 95812-4025 916/341-6000 www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Schools/Curriculum

■ **Acorn Naturalists Resources for the Trail and Classroom** (K-12) 204-page catalog features wide array of natural history science supplies, curricula, field equipment, optical equipment, identification guides and children's literature. Free. Acorn Naturalists, 155 El Camino Real, Tustin, CA 92780 800/422-8886 www.acornnaturalists.com

■ **California Bingo** (PreK-6) Eureka! It's time to play Bingo California-style. Six boards sport a variety of California-specific drawings, including several featuring agriculture and related topics. \$13.95 + \$3.50 s/h Lucy Hammett Games, P.O. Box 905, Mineola, TX 75773 888/420-7585 www.lucybingogames.com



■ **California Country** (K-Adult) Weekly TV program highlights the people, places and things that make the Golden State the envy of the world. The 30-minute tours of the state's ag industry start on farms and ranches and extend all the way to restaurants and food companies. Broadcast schedule at www.cacountry.tv/cctvlist.asp.

■ **The Garden Game** (K-4) In this garden board game, players feed the soil, plant seeds, nurture plants, have harvest festivals, and help each other through natural disasters. Children learn how seasons affect gardens, which insects are helpers, and more. \$28.95 plus s/h. National Gardening Association, www.kidsgardening.com.

■ **Web sites worth exploring!** (Grades K-Adult) Explore these sites for info on:

Apples: www.usapple.org

California Farm Facts: www.cfbf.com/info

Food Safety: <http://foodsafety.ucdavis.edu>

Hydroponics: www.thelazygardeners.com

Insects: www.insectlore.com

Nutrition: www.nutritionexplorations.org

Olive Nutritional Information:

<http://calolive.org>

Online Gardening Courses:

www.garden.org/courses/lghome.asp

Popcorn: www.popcorn.org

Pumpkins: www.pumpkincircle.com

Seed Biotechnology Center: <http://sbc.ucdavis.edu>

Walnuts: www.walnuts.org



New! From the Foundation

■ **What's Growin' On?** This year's popular Newspapers in Education supplement focuses on the many ways agriculture touches students' lives every day. Available beginning this fall through selected NIE programs and from the Foundation. Free.

■ **Kids Page** Explore the brand-new Web site that uses games to teach students about agriculture. Just unveiled, the site targets third-fifth graders and was funded by a grant from SBC. www.kids.cfaitc.org

■ **Alfalfa Fact Sheet** Brand new fact sheet reveals the value, history and uses of alfalfa with ideas for activities. Comes alone or in a set exploring 24 ag commodities and natural resources. Free.

■ **2004 Teacher Resource Guide** This year's issue is available in both book and CD formats. Take your pick! Includes over 100 new resources and Web sites, plus many book titles new to the guide. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Free.

■ **Ag in the Classroom E-newsletter** Receive monthly notices of activities, events and resources focusing on ag literacy! To start your free subscription, send an e-mail, with "Request to subscribe to e-newsletter" in subject line to cfaitc@cfbf.com.

To order above resources, contact CFAITC, 2300 River Plaza Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833-3293 800/700-AITC Fax: 916/561-5697 e-mail: cfaitc@cfbf.com www.cfaitc.org

Apply now for top educator honor

Application deadline is Nov. 30, 2004

Fourth grade teacher Cathey Anderson has changed the course of elementary education in her community of Valley Center in San Diego County.

Eleven years ago – just one year into teaching – she began to graft ag literacy techniques onto her emerging teaching style. What has blossomed over the years has impacted thousands of students, their parents, and even the bottom line for funding some of the basics in her district. (Read more about Cathey's projects at www.cfaitc.org.)

"Agriculture has a way of motivating and captivating all who are involved," says Cathey. (It) helps students "connect, grow and feel successful."

Cathey's unique agricultural endeavors earned her the title of Outstanding Edu-

cator 2004 for the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

Now is the time for educators who incorporate ag into their classrooms to apply for the 2005 honors. Applications are due by Nov. 30.

The Outstanding Educator program each year recognizes dedicated educators who creatively infuse agricultural knowledge into their instruction. A benefit for all teachers is that those honored share with others the best and brightest of their ideas.

According to Cathey, "Almost everything I've incorporated into my pro-

gram came as a result of what others were doing." As she hears or reads about others' successes, she says, "I find myself saying, 'Yes! I can do that!'" With a little tweaking, Cathey modifies the idea

to fit her own program, and the students find themselves learning about agriculture in an entirely new way.

Apply now for 2005! Applications and details are available at www.cfaitc.org under Educator of the Year or by calling 800/700-AITC.



Bill Pauli, Foundation board chairman, presents Cathey Anderson with the Outstanding Educator 2004 plaque.



Agriculture Literacy in Action

Meet State Standards
Increase Test Scores
Help Students Succeed
with

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AGRICULTURAL LITERACY AWARENESS
Training Seminars for K-6 Educators

For information on free in-services, call 800/700-AITC.

Cream of the Crop



Cream of the Crop is published twice a year by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, a 501(c)(3) organization. The goal of the Foundation is to increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among California's educators and students. Material in this publication is for classroom use and may be reproduced in educational newsletters. Please send a copy of reprinted material to CFAITC. For a free subscription, contact:

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Printed on recycled paper with recyclable ink.



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Calendar

National 5-A-Day Month

September: Encourage students to increase the number of fruits and vegetables they eat to five or more servings a day. The result is better health and a reduced risk of chronic diseases! Check out www.5aday.com.

Fall 2004 Workshops

Sept. and Oct.: Five workshops enhance school garden projects and help to integrate them into curriculum. Contact Carol Hillhouse at jchillhouse@ucdavis.edu or call 530/752-7655. Info also at www.childrengarden.ucdavis.edu. Pre-registration requested.

Ancestor Appreciation Day

Sept. 27: Sounds like the perfect research project... How far up the family tree does it take for each student to find a branch with agricultural roots?

California AITC Conference 2004

Oct. 21-23, Visalia: Save the date! See story, p. 2.

National Newspaper Week

Oct. 3-9: Peruse local newspapers to determine what coverage agriculture receives. Analyze the reporter's angle. What are the different sides to the story? Ask your paper to distribute Newspapers in Education's "What's Growin' On?" supplement. Call Pam at 800/700-AITC for details.

National Forest Products Week

Oct. 17-23: You'd be amazed at the products that get their start in the forest! Contact CA Forest Products Commission at 877/737-5268 or www.calforests.org for resources.

Imagine this... story writing contest

Nov. '1: Entries must be postmarked no later than this date. See story, p. 3, for details.

Aviation History Month

November: Brainstorm the ways in which pilots are an integral part of agriculture – transportation, aerial applications, monitoring, fire control... Many careers fall under the ag umbrella!

National Farm-City Week

Nov. 19-25: Honor the interdependence of rural and urban lives in America. Ideas for participating in the commemoration are available from www.farmcity.org.