

# Cream of the Crop

A Harvest of Ideas for Educators

Vol. 19, No. 1

Autumn, 2005

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## Explore many sides of agriculture

### Educator conference slated for Oct. 20-22

California students are sitting at desks situated within the biggest food basket in the United States, but many of them don't recognize that agriculture impacts their lives far beyond food on a daily – if not hourly – basis.

California teachers can uncover new and creative techniques for encouraging agricultural awareness among their students by attending the Ag in the Classroom Conference October 20-22 in Sacramento.

In its 18th year, the statewide conference shares ideas and activities that can be used to teach about agriculture's multifaceted worth in today's society.

More than 35 workshops and make 'n' takes – many led by educators, who know what

works in the classroom – will run the gamut from school gardens and biotechnology to grant writing and nutrition. The variety helps educators see how agriculture can be used to meet Content Standards for California Public Schools in all grade levels.

Field trips heading out in all directions will plant teachers in the midst of orchards, fields, processing plants and other ag ex-



periences. Face-to-face contact with farmers and others helps establish a human connection to California agriculture.



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That connection will be reinforced when gifted author and peach farmer David Mas Masumoto masterfully recounts finding life's purpose and values in everyday toils in his orchards.

Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, will also share his belief that lack of exposure to the

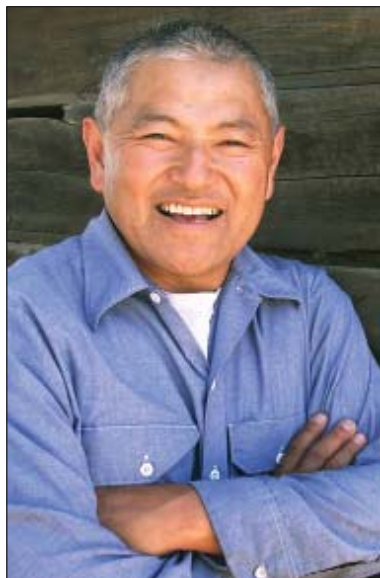
outdoors is harmful to the development of children. Gardening provides easy access to nature! "Conference is a whirlwind of activities inspiring teachers to take a new look at how they teach," says Dena Gibbons, program coordinator. "Every year, we hear from educators who go home Saturday night and open class on Monday with ideas straight from conference. That's a sign of time well-spent!"

Registration of \$200 on or before Oct. 3 secures participation in general sessions, workshops, tours and meals from Thursday night through Saturday. Registration after Oct. 3 is \$240.

A pre-conference tour of Apple Hill and the option to earn three continuing education units are available for additional fees.

For full details, explore [www.cfaitc.org](http://www.cfaitc.org) or call the Foundation at 800/700-AITC.

Face-to-face contact with farmers ... helps establish a human connection to California agriculture.



# Outstanding educator makes learning delicious; follow Tina McEnroe's recipe for student success

"Education should not be the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yeats

By Tina Hansen McEnroe

**O**n a beautiful winter morning in Santa Barbara County, numerous student "fires" were lit as an Ancient Civilizations Farmers' Market played itself out in real time. Its brilliance reflected in the children's ability and earnest excitement to stroll back in time and demonstrate the importance and effects the various ancient civilizations bestowed upon the world.

The project had become a perfect venue for teaching agricultural education to the entire class, while at the same time keeping in concert with California Content Standards in the subjects of language arts, mathematics, social science, and visual/performing arts.

The community and families of Vista

de Las Cruces School became so inspired by this successful event that a mouth-watering cookbook was born as the final culmination, and is currently being sold in several county bookstores today. Numerous articles appeared in the local press depicting the success of the project and focused on the high degree of community involvement.

**How it works.** In this interdisciplinary project, students came to understand the development of ancient civilizations around the world as they researched the history of foods indigenous to ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, China, Greece, Rome, and Mayan Yucatan.

In conjunction with studying the Ancient Civilizations curriculum in their social studies class, students chose one food

from an Internet-

**Tina Hansen McEnroe**



Tina, a K-8 teacher at Vista de Las Cruces School in Gaviota, Santa Barbara County, was named the Foundation's 2005 Outstanding Educator of the Year. Her accomplishments carried her to national competition, where she was named one of five Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture national award winners.

In addition to the farmers' market detailed here, Tina developed a cross-curricular cattle ranch project, spearheaded a school garden and community garden club, and undertook a program to teach English to Spanish speaking, agricultural working parents of the school's students.



Visitors to the Ancient Civilizations Farmers' Market enjoyed the transformation of the auditorium almost as much as the students. Food, prepared by the students and their families, represented ancient cuisine and helped guests learn a thing or two about ancient life from the young experts.

prepared list to research. Foods included barley, wheat, dates, grapes, melons, figs, rice, cabbage, corn, beans, soy beans, almonds, peaches, plums, lettuce, garlic, sesame seeds, feta cheese, onions, ginger, lamb, goose, and goat. While researching their food product, they kept a prescriptive writing journal which included reflections, plans, notes and discussions pertaining to the subject matter in language arts class.

They then searched the Internet for a recipe, or created their own with input from family members. In math, students learned how fractions are used in recipes, which they later cooked at home for the market. With parent assistance, they created an interesting bottle and label summarizing the history of their chosen food.

In art, the children drew large murals of pyramids, Greek columns, obelisks, a coliseum, warriors and chariots for the auditorium. They also designed and sent invitations to their families and the community, inviting them to the farmers' market.

Prior to the big event, the school auditorium was transformed into an authentic, giant marketplace, complete with hay bales, fresh flowers, and fruits and vegetables grown on neighboring ranches. Everyone pitched in to create this stunning scene, including the

students, their parents, other parent volunteers and school board members.

On Market Day, all boys and girls gave oral presentations, proudly showcasing their reports, bottles, and cooked recipes in taster cups for all to sample at in-

success of this project: "The best part of this project was that we had to cook the food we researched. The Farmers' Market was a very good idea and it gave us the motivation to learn."

Students' self-esteem and a high de-

*Prior to the big event, the school auditorium was transformed into an authentic, giant marketplace, complete with hay bales, fresh flowers, and fruits and vegetables grown on neighboring ranches.*

dividual booths at the Farmers' Market.

**Why it works.** State standards were met in four subject areas: English/language arts, social studies, math and visual arts. Research papers and journals were assessed using a grading rubric; in math, students were tested on converting a recipe to feed a certain number of guests.

Student evaluations reflected the real

gree of parental involvement became notable by-products of this cross-curricular, agrarian-rooted project. Students actively interpreted their own personal, creative role in the market through food preparation and presentation, costumes, booth set-ups, bottle art depicting research, and research in folder covers.

**What you need.** Some basics needed to implement this project include Internet and library access, a word processing program, a venue to hold the farmers' market, parental support for costumes and cooking, journals, glass bottles and art supplies. A field trip to a local farmers' market would be an added bonus!

**Special thanks.** Support from the community was laudable and included donations, effort, and time from local nurseries, farms and ranches, Girl Scouts, and restaurant suppliers. Numerous teachers, aides and parent volunteers also contributed to the success of the project. The market was advertised and well-attended. Among the visitors were members of the Gaviota Fire Department, the Buellton Chamber of Commerce, local CattleWomen's and Cattlemen's organizations, Farm Bureau, and even a Purdue University dean!

*Author's Note: I would like to acknowledge co-worker Bruce Robertson, who collaborated on this project with me and taught the social studies component, as well as Linda Boalen, who inspired me at the 2001 AITC Conference with her project, "The Columbian Exchange: The Native American Food Fair."*

A Sample Student Recipe  
as featured in the  
Vista de Las Cruces  
**Ancient  
Civilizations  
Farmers' Market  
Cookbook**



Date Balls o' Fire  
(Egypt, Mesopotamia)

- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup dates (chopped)
- 1/4 cup wheat germ
- 1/2 cup oatmeal
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup coconut

Combine peanut butter and honey in a pan and heat until melted. Add remaining ingredients and cook one minute while stirring. Let cool and roll into balls. Refrigerate for several hours. Enjoy!

*This student's research included that "the date is one of nature's oldest fruits and one that the Egyptians treasured. It is a king's food, meaning it was used at every meal. The date palm was used for Pharaoh's rooftops, including King Tut's."*

## Apply now for 2006 Outstanding Educator!

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom honors educators for their exemplary efforts in agricultural literacy. The honor of greatest distinction is *Outstanding Educator of the Year*.

Honorees for 2005 include:

*Outstanding Educator of the Year*

**Tina Hansen McEnroe**

Vista de las Cruces School, Gaviota  
K-8 teacher

*Excellence in  
Student & Community Impact*

**Lance Omeje**

Turner Elementary School, Fresno  
5th grade teacher

*Excellence in  
High School Instruction*

**Gary Nelson**

Pershing High School, Fresno  
9-12 grade teacher

*Service to the Foundation*

**Clarence Atwater**

San Gabriel Christian School, San Gabriel  
7th grade

*Nominate your own  
efforts or those of another  
special educator!*

Applications for 2006 are available by downloading the form from [www.cfaitc.org](http://www.cfaitc.org) or by calling 800/700-AITC.

*The deadline for nominating a colleague is October 28, 2005.*

*All applications must be submitted to the Foundation postmarked by November 25, 2005.*

## Ag opportunities abound this fall

### *The Power of Perennials*

Saturday, Sept. 24; 9 a.m. - noon  
UC Davis Plant Science Teaching Ctr.  
Discover how low-maintenance perennial herbs, trees and CA natives can be included in school landscapes or gardens for use in teaching. \$15 registration fee; enroll by Sept. 16. For information, call 530/752-7655, contact Jeri Ohmart at [jlohmart@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jlohmart@ucdavis.edu) or visit <http://childrensgarden.ucdavis.edu>

### *Where the Wild Things Are: Insects in the Garden*

Saturday, Sept. 24; 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.  
UC Davis Plant Science Teaching Ctr.  
Search out and identify insects and other garden creatures. Learn activities that demonstrate their important role in the garden ecosystem while teaching science and other subjects. \$15 registration fee; enroll by Sept. 16. See above entry for contact information.

### *Gardens for Good Nutrition*

Saturday, Oct. 8; 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
UC Davis Plant Science Teaching Ctr.  
School gardens promote good health and nutrition. Learn fun ways to connect gardens and nutrition while incorporating math, science, language arts and social studies. \$15 registration fee; enroll by Sept. 30. See first listing, above, for contact information.

### *Fall Farm to Fork Field Trips*

Tuesdays - Fridays, Sept. - Nov.  
U.C. Santa Cruz Farm  
Touring the 25-acre UC farm helps 2nd-8th graders connect farms to food on tables. Make apple cider and corn tortillas, harvest the six plant parts, and more. Pre- and post-activities on food and farm systems provided. \$125/class, plus \$2.50/vehicle parking fee. Register with Life Lab at [www.lifelab.org/tours/tours.html](http://www.lifelab.org/tours/tours.html) or call 831/459-4035.

### *Growing Classroom Workshop*

Friday & Saturday, Oct. 14-15  
9 am - 3:30 pm  
Life Lab Garden Classroom, Santa Cruz  
Hands-on activities make science come to life

in this garden-based workshop. Includes strategies for guiding students in a garden setting, applying academic standards for today's accountability requirements, and basic gardening and composting instruction. Participants receive *The Growing Classroom* activity guide, handouts, a garden wall calendar, and continental breakfast. \$300 for two days. Contact Life Lab as listed in above entry.

### *The 2005 Organic School Garden Awards*

Deadline: Postmarked Oct. 31, 2005  
This essay and poster contest is for K-12 students who feel they can improve their health and the health of the earth by gardening. Essays should be 800 words or less about the garden in which they work. The poster portion of the contest includes creating a representation of one's garden using four photographs. First place is \$1000. Detailed information is available at [www.kidsregen.org/gardens/index.shtml](http://www.kidsregen.org/gardens/index.shtml).

### *Imagine this...*

Story Writing Contest for Grades 3-8  
Application Deadline: Nov. 1, 2005  
Challenge students to explore agriculture through a competitive research and writing exercise that meets state standards. Stories must be based on original ideas and should not be more than 750 words. Six winning stories are transformed into an animated video, and prizes are awarded to winning students and teachers at the regional and state levels. For details, visit [www.cfaitc.org](http://www.cfaitc.org) or call 800/700-AITC. See page 6 for a feature on one 2005 winner.

### *Young Epidemiology Scholars Research Project Competition*

Deadline: Feb. 1, 2006, 5 p.m. ET  
Epidemiology is the science of exploring patterns of disease, illness and injury within populations, with the goal of developing methods for prevention, control and treatment of the problem. Use agriculture as a theme to shed light on a health problem. Substantial scholarships are awarded to winners. Information is available at [www.collegeboard.com/yes/fs/arp.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/yes/fs/arp.html).

### Agricultural Tidbits

## *Did you know...*

**Carrots** used to be purple, yellow and white in color. Orange ones didn't appear until about 1600. (*California Country, Jan/Feb 2005*)

Produce companies are packaging **carrot** and **celery** sticks to fit in a car cup-holder. Now that's a marketing lesson just waiting to be taught! (AP)

**Agricultural land** is developed at a rate of 1,234,560 acres per year. That breaks down to an annual farm land loss of two acres every 2.3 minutes. (*American Farmland Trust*)

**Pumpkins**, thought to have originated in Central America, were a staple of North American Indians long before Pilgrims arrived. Pumpkins also were credited with curing freckles and snake bites! ([www.pumpkinnook.com](http://www.pumpkinnook.com))



Improper food handling at the food service or consumer level is responsible for 83 percent of **foodborne illnesses** associated with fresh fruits and vegetables. (*Alliance for Food and Farming Produce Analysis*)

**Sesame Street** is teaching healthy living among the pre-school set. New segments feature personable vegetable muppets touting nutrition, exercise, hygiene and rest. This new focus arose in response to the growing crisis in child obesity.



(Photo: Richard Termine. Sesame Street® and associated characters, trademarks and design elements are owned and licensed by Sesame Workshop. © 2005 Sesame Workshop. All Rights Reserved.)

Consumers in India spend 51 percent of their **annual disposable income** on food. For Americans, it's about 10 percent. Food for thought on World Food Day! (*California Country, May/June 2005*)

# Resources support ag literacy at all levels



## The Bookshelf

■ **The Dust Bowl (4-6)** The Great Plains almost blew away in the Dust Bowl of the '30s. Understandable narrative and impactful pictures show how ag practices contributed to its cause and ultimately helped with recovery. Part of "We the People" series. 48 pages. \$22.60 hardcover. ISBN 0756508371 Ann Heinrichs, Compass Point Books, 2005.

■ **The Great Central Valley: California's Heartland (9-Adult)** Informative text and compelling photographs invite readers deep into the heart of California. Oversized coffee table edition enhances exploration. 254 pages. \$45 paperback. ISBN 0520077776 Stephen Johnson, Gerald Haslam & Robert Dawson. University of California Press, 1993.

■ **Food for Thought: The Complete Book of Concepts for Growing Minds (Pre-K - 12)** Delightful children's book spans the ages with humorous depictions of animals, shapes, colors, numbers, letters and opposites all created from foods. Helps youngsters grasp above concepts and older students explore creativity. \$14.95 hardcover. ISBN 0439110181 Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers, Arthur A. Levine Books, 2005.



■ **Exploring Science Series (4-7)** Four of many books in the series feature natural resources of value to agriculture. Soil: Digging into Earth's Vital Resource; Natural Resources: Using and Protecting Earth's Supplies; Erosion: How Land Forms, How it Changes; and Minerals: From Apatite to Zinc. \$25.27 each hardcover. ISBNs: 0756508576, 0756508568; 0756508541, 075650855X. Darlene R. Stille, Compass Point Books, 2005.



■ **Milk: From Cow to Carton (K-3)** How does milk end up in a carton on the grocer's shelf? From cow to farmer to dairy to container – milk travels a long way to reach your glass. \$5.99 paperback ISBN 0064451119. Alikei, Harper/Collins, 1992.

■ **John Deere American Farmer (4-12)** Create and manage your own farm in this computer game rated E for everyone! Decide everything from which crops to plant to which employees to hire. Plagues, weather, market trends, and much more will affect the ultimate success of your farm. By Jack of All Games. \$19.99, through local or online computer game retailers.



■ **Guns, Germs, and Steel: A National Geographic Presentation (8-Adult)** Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, this three-part TV series peels back layers of history, exposing forces (including agriculture) that have shaped human history the last 10,000 years. The associated Web site includes an educator section with lessons. Check your local PBS station for broadcast schedule and/or purchase the DVD for \$39.95 + s/h from [www.pbs.org/gunsgermssteel](http://www.pbs.org/gunsgermssteel)

■ **Maize and Popcorn (3-8)** Two curricula help students understand what ag is and why it is important. Activities explore the diversity of local and national food production, introduce components of farming, and demonstrate ecological concepts related to sustainability. \$19.95 each + s/h, tax. Life Lab Science Program, 1156 High St., Santa Cruz, CA 95064 831/459-2001 Fax 831/459-3483 [lifelab@lifelab.org](mailto:lifelab@lifelab.org) [www.lifelab.org](http://www.lifelab.org)

■ **Kids Cook Farm-Fresh Food (K-7)** This 219-page activity guide introduces students and teachers to working with fresh produce. The guide links food and nutrition to the concept of sustainable agriculture and to academic content standards. \$15 + s/h; order #001547. CDE, CDE Press, Sales Unit, 1430 N Street, Suite 3207, Sacramento, CA 95814 800/995-4099 [www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc/ap/pubdisplay.aspx](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc/ap/pubdisplay.aspx)



■ **Gobble It Up (4-6)** Learn about Thanksgiving and the history and popularity of the turkey. This unit is aligned to CA Content Standards. Web site includes virtual reality tours of turkey farms and hatcheries. Free. CA Poultry Federation, 3117-A McHenry Ave., Modesto, CA 95350 209/576-6355 FAX 209/576-6119 [califpoultry@cs.com](mailto:califpoultry@cs.com) [www.cpif.org](http://www.cpif.org)

## Web sites worth exploring

- Ag Statistics: [www.farmlandinfo.org/agricultural\\_statistics](http://www.farmlandinfo.org/agricultural_statistics)
- Biotechnology: [Ceprap.ucdavis.edu](http://Ceprap.ucdavis.edu)
- Food Facts: [www.hungrymonster.com/Foodfacts/Food\\_Facts.cfm](http://www.hungrymonster.com/Foodfacts/Food_Facts.cfm)
- Food Clipart: [www.maryannart.com/cgi-bin/ImageFolio31/imageFolio.cgi?search=food&cat=&bool=and](http://www.maryannart.com/cgi-bin/ImageFolio31/imageFolio.cgi?search=food&cat=&bool=and)
- Food Pyramid: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)
- Food Statistics: [www.food-stats.com](http://www.food-stats.com)
- Let's Talk Insects: [www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/insects](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/insects)
- Old Farmers' Almanac: [almanac.com](http://almanac.com)
- Plant Database: [plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov)
- Popcorn: [www.popcorn.org](http://www.popcorn.org)
- Pumpkins: [www.education-world.com/a\\_lesson/lesson028.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson028.shtml)



## New! From CFAITC

■ **Asparagus Fact Sheet** The newest addition to CFAITC's bundle of 25 Fact/Activity Sheets is now available! All sheets are updated annually with current facts and figures. All are available online.

■ **2005 Instructional Materials CD** Free, brand new CD contains all of CFAITC's current lesson plans, teacher guides and fact/activity sheets that help educators use ag as a vehicle to teach reading, writing, math, science and history. Lesson plans are aligned to the Content Standards for CA Public Schools. 500 CDs available. One complimentary CD per person.

■ **Free Pencils** CFAITC is looking for new resources! The best recommendations come from teachers who share their favorites. Get a free class set of pencils by sending to [pemery@cfbf.com](mailto:pemery@cfbf.com) an e-mail describing a worthwhile ag-related resource not currently listed in the *Teacher Resource Guide*. Enter "Potential Resource" in the subject line of the e-mail.

To order the above resources, contact CFAITC at 2300 River Plaza Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833-3293 800/700-AITC Fax: 916/561-5697 e-mail: [cfaitec@cfbf.com](mailto:cfaitec@cfbf.com) [www.cfaitec.org](http://www.cfaitec.org)

## Writing contest spans grades 3-8

**T**welve-year-old Tyler Sweet is using his life on the farm to teach other kids about what's near and dear to his own heart: farming.

Tyler is not unlike other kids on a ranch. He comes home from school, grabs a snack and heads out to do farm chores. You wouldn't think these everyday activities would provide prize-winning material on paper, but that's exactly what happened with a class assignment using the Foundation's *Imagine this...* story writing contest.

"The topic for their assignment had to be something that pertained to agriculture. (Tyler) chose the topic of pigs and embedded all of the good science on pigs and how humans use them," Debbi Hoy, Tyler's teacher, explained.

His entry, "Pig Pride," about a boy who becomes a pig, became one of six state-wide winners in the contest. As a result, it was turned into an animated video and became a lesson in agriculture for a group of high schoolers four hours away.

Students at Sheldon High in Sacramento spent over 500 hours bringing "Pig Pride" to life. To create a believable cartoon, these kids did their homework. "Research is huge when it comes to making a film, especially

for *Imagine this...*, because it's educational and you don't want to present the wrong facts," Sean Taylor, student director of "Pig Pride," said.



Tyler's lesson on how pigs provide so much more than a hearty meal brought a lot of pride to tiny Grenada Elementary in Siskiyou County.

If Tyler has his way, he will continue to ranch and write. It's a talent he knows can teach other

kids about how much agriculture means to California. "Most kids in the city don't know where their food comes from and I just want them to understand that they can't live without agriculture," Tyler said.

The *Imagine this...* story writing contest is open to California students in grades 3-8. Stories must be original, portray agriculture positively, and may not exceed 750 words. Entries are submitted regionally, from which two stories per grade advance to statewide competition. Statewide winners will be announced in January, 2006.

For details, contact the Foundation at 800/700-AITC or explore [www.cfaitc.org](http://www.cfaitc.org).

*Story excerpted from California Country magazine. Read the complete story in the September/October 2005 issue, or watch for coverage on California Country TV. Check [www.cacountry.tv](http://www.cacountry.tv) for program information and broadcast schedules.*

## Calendar

### National Honey Month

September, 2005

Honey is a fabulous bonus from the hard work of these agricultural pollinators!

### Grandma Moses Day

September 7, 2005

Celebrate the art of a woman who *started* painting in her late 70s and whose work depicts scenes from her agricultural heritage.

### National School Lunch Week

October 9-15, 2005

Link up early with your school's food service and plan the week's menu to feature commodities produced in your region. Have students decorate the cafeteria with posters highlighting the featured commodities.

### World Food Day

October 16, 2005

Explore world-wide problems of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. How does American agriculture affect such issues at home and abroad? [www.worldfooddayusa.org](http://www.worldfooddayusa.org)

### Ag in the Classroom Conference

October 20-22, 2005 Sacramento, CA

For K-12 educators and ag literacy volunteers. Register now! See story, page 1.

### Children's Book Week

November 14-20 2005

Just one ag story a day, that's all we ask!

### National Farm-City Week

November 18-25, 2005

Rural and urban: so different, yet so dependent upon each other! Contact National Farm-City Council at for ideas on how to celebrate the week. [www.farmcity.org](http://www.farmcity.org)

## 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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