

Making AITC Happen in your County



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Making Agriculture in the Classroom Happen in your County

Building an AITC Committee

Agriculture in the Classroom is truly a grassroots movement which requires leadership and oversight from individuals interested in helping to establish agriculture literacy efforts within a local area. A committee can take on many shapes and sizes and include many different types of community members, including but not limited to:

- Farm Bureau Members and Spouses
 - County Fair Managers
 - 4-H and FFA Advisors
 - After School Program Coordinators
 - School Nutritionists and Nurses
 - Cooperative Extension Agents
 - Local Agricultural Trade Association Members
 - Current and Retired Educators
 - Local Agri-Business Representatives
 - Volunteer Youth Advisors
 - Day Care Providers
 - County Agricultural Commissioners
 - Local School Representatives
- (i.e. Cattlemens' and Cattlewomens' groups, Cotton Wives, etc.)

This is only a partial listing of the diverse groupings of individuals who may become involved with a local AITC committee. The key is to find individuals who can generate resources and time for the program and are committed to furthering agriculture in their local community. The rest is truly a labor of love!

There are many ways in which to focus the energy of your local committee, for example a specific board member may be asked to chair the efforts for Agriculture in the Classroom. This ensures that the committee is functioning in accordance with the policies and positions of the county Farm Bureau and its members.

In many counties a board member from the Farm Bureau will be chosen to participate in directing the work of an Agriculture in the Classroom committee. This may be beneficial in helping to establish a communication link with the Farm Bureau, but is not necessary depending on how the committee is structured.

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Getting Started

Before getting started in program work it is recommended that you begin with some simple planning and a list of what goals you would like to accomplish.

Planning may be as informal or as formal as you choose to make it. Below are some suggested guidelines for helping to focus the energy of your local committee:

- ✓ Select leadership roles the committee may choose to assign, such as Chair or Co-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, etc. (This step is not always necessary, but as you become more involved it may be important to develop.)
- ✓ Discuss what resources are available and what assistance is needed in your local community and schools.
- ✓ Identify funds available for program work. Determine if any funding is available from Farm Bureau directly or from other local sources.

Goal Setting can be a fantastic way to motivate committee members to become actively involved in implementing agriculture literacy activities. On the following pages are planning ideas for how to organize your committee and how to set goals that will maximize the effectiveness of your committee.

- ⇒ Conduct a survey of activities currently being implemented or planned for the future
- ⇒ Identify your target audience
- ⇒ Assess your Resources
- ⇒ Form Partnerships
- ⇒ Using the above info...Set Goals!



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County Survey of Activities

Place a check next to activities you would like to plan or already have in your county.
(These ideas are listed in order from simple concepts to more advanced plans and activities.)

<u>Activity</u>	Current	Future Plans
Build an AITC County Committee	_____	_____
Develop an AITC budget	_____	_____
Participate in a local fair	_____	_____
Host a Farm Day	_____	_____
Offer student field trips	_____	_____
Offer teacher farm tours	_____	_____
Start an Ambassador Program	_____	_____
Sponsor teachers to AITC conference	_____	_____
Send a representative to AITC conference	_____	_____
Assign paid staff to AITC Committee	_____	_____
Develop a contact at Office of Education	_____	_____
Host a summer agriculture seminar	_____	_____
Adopt-A-Classroom/Farmer	_____	_____
Print a county newsletter for educators	_____	_____
Host classroom presentations	_____	_____
AITC resource library/center	_____	_____
Develop locally based materials	_____	_____
Print ag magazine for students	_____	_____
Summer agriculture seminar reunion	_____	_____
Ag Institute for government executives	_____	_____



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Identifying your Audience

As our population grows further away from its agrarian roots, it becomes more important to inform students, teachers and the public about the significant role agriculture plays in our society and our economy.

Individually we cannot teach every person in California. However, we can identify a prioritized list for reaching different school-aged audiences and their teachers.

Using the following grade groupings as a guide, determine what group(s) your committee is interested in better educating about agriculture.

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Audience</u>
_____	Primary Grade Students (K-3)
_____	Middle Grade Students (4-6)
_____	Junior High School Students (7-8)
_____	High School Students (9-12)
_____	Elementary Teachers (K-8)
_____	High School Teachers (9-12)
_____	General Public/Consumers

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Assessing your Resources

Assessing your human, financial, and educational resources can help your committee work more effectively to reach larger audiences and be more productive in spreading the important message of agriculture literacy.

Human Resources

1. Does the county Farm Bureau have a paid staff member who can provide some assistance to AITC efforts?

2. Does the county Farm Bureau currently have AITC volunteers?

3. Does the county Farm Bureau partner with other organizations? (i.e. California Women for Agriculture, Cattlewomen, etc.)

Financial Resources

1. What funds are available for AITC activities?

2. Has your county Farm Bureau utilized the Ag Education Assistance Funds provided by CFAITC? (NOTE: up to \$1300 annually is available for each county to enhance local program activities.)



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Assessing your Resources (cont.)

3. In what types of fundraising events could your AITC committee become involved? (i.e. a raffle at a Farm Bureau meeting)
4. Does the local committee have access to a grant writer? Can someone on the local committee solicit grant applications or attend a class on fundraising?

Educational Resources

1. What types of educational resources can your AITC committee offer to your target audiences? (Note: many lesson plans and other resources are available from CFAITC to assist your local committee efforts.)
2. What other local agencies may have resources available that you can partner with to promote agriculture?
3. What types of events can your committee attend to find out about agriculture resources? (See the appendix section for more information about CFAITC programs and resources.)

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Forming Partnerships

Every county has different agriculturally related organizations, different sized schools, and diversity in terms of rural, suburban, and urban populations. Collaborative partnerships are a useful tool in maximizing your education program while utilizing your human, financial, and educational resources more efficiently.

In the space provided, list organizations in your county who are, or could be, partners in educating students, teachers, and the public about agriculture. Be sure to include neighboring counties if resources could be shared to benefit both counties.

Brainstorming a list of partners:

(a few have been listed to get you started)

- ✓ Local grower organizations and trade associations
- ✓ Local California Women for Agriculture chapter
- ✓ Local Cattlewomen and Cattlemen organizations
- ✓ High School and Community College Agriculture Departments
- ✓ Civic organizations (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Toastmasters)
- ✓ County Agriculture Commissioner and Cooperative Extension Agents or Farm Advisors
- ✓ Local Businesses (Equipment Dealers, Banks, etc.)
- ✓ Local Media

*** NOTE:**
You may want to invite many of these partnering groups to be involved with the AITC committee in order to maximize involvement and pool resources to help promote agriculture throughout your county.

- ✓
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Defining your Mission and Setting Goals

A clear mission statement and concise, achievable goals and objectives *can be helpful* in developing and sustaining your AITC program. Teachers have goals and objectives for every lesson taught in their classroom. Your AITC Committee should also have goals for both short term and long term planning to ensure that you are utilizing your resources to meet the needs of the audience you are targeting.

What is a Mission Statement?

A mission statement is something to be accomplished; a brief document declaring what a group stands for and what it is dedicated to doing. From the mission statements comes your goals and objectives.

Points to consider in developing a Mission Statement:

- Concise
- Clear and to the point
- Identifies what the organization does
- Says what the organization is
- For whom (the beneficiaries)
- Where (if necessary)
- Focuses on outcome and results rather than methods

Questions to consider:

- 1) What opportunities or needs exist that our organization should address?
- 2) How are we uniquely positioned and able to meet these needs?
- 3) Why do we believe in the need and what will we do to address it?
- 4) What do we seek to accomplish?

A mission statement should outline what the organization is now. It focuses on today, but guides tomorrow. It should provide one guiding set of ideas that is articulated, understood and supported by the organization's board, staff, volunteers, donors and collaborators.



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Setting Goals

Your program goals—the things you hope to accomplish—grow out of your mission statement. They are the outcomes that guide your organization’s program and project plans.

In the space that follows, list two short term and two long term goals; for each goal identify objectives for completing this goal.

Goal	Objectives to accomplish the Goal
Short Term (1-3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Short Term (1-3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Long Term (3-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Long Term (3-5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

