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2011 Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award Winners Announced

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. – Students in this year’s 2011 Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award winners’ classrooms will never look at dinner in quite the same way.

Not after a year spent seeing firsthand the amount of time, energy and hard work that goes into growing a plate of food.

Students spent their year growing and maintaining gardens, raising money to donate farm animals to needy families and spending a week as a helper on a ranch.

The teachers who provided their students with these unique experiences will be recognized at the **2011 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference “Discover Education’s Hidden Treasure: Agriculture”** June 22-25 at the Marriot Harbor Beach Resort & Spa in Fort Lauderdale. The Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Agriculture in the Classroom Consortium.

The six 2011 National Teacher Winners, who come from Arkansas, California, Colorado, Kansas and Maine, will be recognized with a special awards dinner.

The teachers being honored are as follows:

- **Sherrie Taylor Vann**, Williams, California
 - Working in a rural community where many of her students are children of farm workers and who did not grow up speaking English, Vann has created a dynamic classroom where she uses field trips, guest speakers and hands-on learning to engage her students and give them a new appreciation for agriculture.
- **Mark Leachman**, Lakewood, Colorado
 - Taking his students from their familiar urban surroundings to live and work on a ranch, Leachman has brought his students a new appreciation for the food they eat and the amount of work needed to grow that food.
- **Annette Caldwell and Gretchen Kimball**, Buckfield, Maine

- Working as team, Caldwell and Kimball have given their students the opportunity to create a 1.2 acre garden area complete with gourd caves, nature trails, water distribution systems, bird houses, bat houses, and butterfly and moth tents.
- **Theresa Farris**, Oswego, Kansas
 - Kindergarten students in Farris' classroom spend the entire year on an agriculture adventure, with a scavenger hunt and other activities like a chicken house, a classroom garden, a greenhouse and a butterfly way station that shows the students all aspects of agriculture.
- **Sarah Glenn**, Huntsville, Arkansas
 - By showing her students firsthand the scarcity of food and then giving her students the chance to raise money to donate animals to needy families, Glenn has shown her students the value of agriculture and the challenges that others in the world face when it comes to the basics of providing, food, clothing and shelter.

The USDA and the NAITC Consortium gave the national winners an all-expenses paid trip to the 2011 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference for their commitment to educating students about agriculture.

Tami Kerr, president-elect of the National Agriculture in the Classroom Consortium, said that the teachers deserve to be recognized for their innovative approaches to teaching.

“These teachers went above and beyond to provide their students with experiences that won't soon be forgotten,” she said.

For more information on any of the teacher winners, contact Florida Agriculture in the Classroom Marketing Program Manager Rachael Ryals at (352) 846-1391/(352) 339-0853 or ryalsr@ufl.edu.

For more information on the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference, visit: www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/aitc/index.html