



The Report Card



The Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc.
Newsletter

www.agtag.org

Summer/Fall 2003

FAITC, Inc.

The Report Card is a biannual newsletter published by Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc., a non-profit organization funded solely through proceeds from the Florida Ag Tag.

For more information, please visit www.agtag.org

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Florida Teacher Wins USDA National Award

Dressed in black spandex, yellow stripes and detachable wings, Janet Gray plays the part of a bumblebee in her workshop at Florida Ag in the Classroom's State Teacher Conference.

Her enthusiasm for teaching agriculture is apparent.

Her main goal in teaching agriculture is to get her fifth grade students at Orange City Elementary School excited about what they're learning.

"Children can only be as excited as their teacher," she said.

By making lessons exciting she is not only facilitating learning, but also indirectly increasing attendance, test scores and good behavior.

Her enthusiasm for teaching is

one reason she was selected as the 2003 Florida Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture



Janet Gray dresses as a bumblebee while she facilitates a session at the annual State Teacher Conference.

Award winner and a clear choice to be the Southern region recipient of the 2003 U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture award.

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Annual Teacher Conference a Great Success

Teachers and volunteers in Florida will be better prepared to teach students and the public about agriculture following the Statewide Teacher and Volunteer Conference held in Gainesville on June 18-20, 2003.

More than 160 teachers and volunteers participated in this year's conference, which was held at the Holiday Inn West on Newberry Road.

This year's teacher and volunteer conferences were held concurrently to introduce teachers to county volunteers.

Volunteers participated in workshops on hydroponics, agriculture in space, contacting the media and nutrition.

Stephen Stock, a journalist with WESH Channel 2 in Orlando, gave volunteers a perspective on

Cont. on page 3

FAITC Board of Directors

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Thanks for your support!

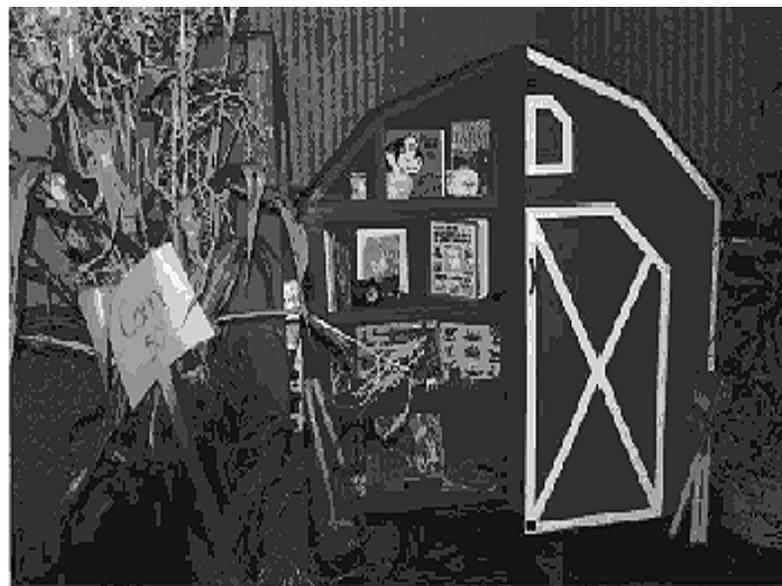
We hope that you will continue to support FAITC by renewing your Ag Tag and telling your family, friends, coworkers and neighbors about the FAITC program!!



Ag Learning Barns Debut at State Conference

Teachers and volunteers across the state have a new way to teach students about agriculture now that Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc.'s Ag Learning Barns are here.

The Ag Learning Barns are portable structures filled with teaching items designed to enhance learning for elementary and pre-school children (Pre-K through



FAITC Ag Learning Barns debuted at the State Teacher Conference and State Volunteer Workshop in Gainesville.

fifth grade). They will be used as lending libraries that travel to schools within each designated county. Items in the barns include videos, computer games, reading books, activity books, posters, puppets, puzzles and toys.

With 26 counties currently signed up to participate in the Learning Barn program, an estimated 130,000

students will be educated about agriculture.

The Learning Barns will be projects managed and maintained by a county contact. The contact will arrange for the barn to be stationed in his or her area schools. The barn will then travel to a minimum of five schools in the county each year.

Teachers may check out materials in the learning barn for use in their classrooms while the barn is stationed at their school.

Once constructed, the barns are reusable with minimum replacement of materials. ●

Workshops, cont. from page 1

how to get media coverage for events in their area.

They also saw the debut of the Ag Learning Barn, a portable structure filled with educational resources on agriculture that will travel from school to school within counties.



Teachers work together during a curriculum session at the State Teacher Conference in Gainesville.

Teachers learned about the Florida Ag in the Classroom curricula, Keeping Florida Green and Project Food, Land and People, and how to use them in their classrooms.

Industry tours were held on the second day of the conference. Teachers went to Ocala, Williston or Chiefland to visit agricultural businesses including the Levy County Dairy, Golden Flake potato chip factory, Thomas Cattle Company and Seminole Stores.

Teachers Janet Gray, Kay Duke, Sandra Bush and Susan Roberts, who won

the Florida Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Awards, were recognized at the banquet dinner.

Janet Gray was also recognized for being the nominee from Florida and Southern Region recipient of the 2003 U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award. ●

Here's what Florida teachers had to say about the 2003 State Conference...

“Very educational and enjoyable! It was a memorable and fun learning experience. I will definitely take what I have learned here back to my classroom and prepare for a new generation of future farmers!”

“It was a valuable experience!”

“I have so many new ideas now about how to incorporate agriculture in my classroom. Thank you!”

“Excellent! I hope all our teachers attend in the future.”

“Thoroughly enjoyed -- hope to come back!”

How Can I Become an FAITC Volunteer?

County support is key to the success of agriculture education in Florida. Through county involvement in support projects, teachers understand that not only are the resources available for teaching agricultural issues at the state level, but that there are many willing and knowledgeable people closer to home as well.



Ag in the Classroom, Inc.

How can I become involved?

√ Florida Ag in the Classroom sponsors county workshops around the state. Volunteer to assist by providing refreshments for a workshop. To find out about how to become part of your county's facilitator team, contact the FAITC office at 352/846-1391.

√ Sometimes teachers like their students to experience first-hand what they have learned in class. When studying farm units, teachers may appreciate an offer to host a farm tour. Contact schools in your area to let them know you are interested in hosting farm tours for students.

- √ Teachers often appreciate having a visiting "expert in the field" when teaching units on agriculture or farming. Volunteer to be a classroom resource by reading ag-related stories to students, bringing "show and tell" tools from your farm or simply being available to answer questions that arise from agriculture lessons.
- √ Buy an Ag Tag for your vehicle! All proceeds benefit Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc.

If you have your own ideas on how to help support ag education, contact local schools or the FAITC office at 352/846-1391.

Help us Advertise!!



FAITC has decals available FREE to anyone wishing to promote the purchase of an Ag Tag! Decals can be applied to trucks, trailers, heavy equipment and any other 2 X 3 foot surface! For your FREE decals, contact FAITC today!
352/846-1391



What's growing on in your area?

Share your FAITC stories, comments and suggestions with us!

*For information, please contact FAITC at
FAITC@mail.ifas.ufl.edu*

More Than \$50,000 Awarded in Volunteer Grants

Florida Ag in the Classroom Inc. (FAITC) awarded agricultural volunteers more than \$50,000 in grants to implement agriculturally focused education programs in Florida communities.

The grant monies awarded are being used to develop programs that promote the importance of Florida agriculture and its significance to the state's economy and environment.



Some of the 17 funded programs include teaching ethics in youth livestock projects, creating elementary school gardens, exploring the impact of agriculture on daily life and increasing awareness of agriculture industries in Florida.

Learning Through Growing/I Can Grow Inc., one of the projects funded this year, focuses on providing agricultural education and employment opportunities for developmentally disabled youth in Jackson County.

Submitted grant proposals were judged based on student impact, innovation, creativity and the ability to increase student knowledge and awareness of agriculture.

Need information on how to get press coverage for your event?

Check out the

FAITC Media Handbook

This **FREE** media handbook will teach you what makes news, how to think like a journalist and how to develop an effective message for your audience.

Please contact 352/846-1391 for more information on this **FREE** resource!!

What Does your Ag Tag Purchase Do?

Over the past year, your Ag Tag purchase has allowed Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc. to....

* Reach over 11,750 educators across Florida, who will teach over 352,000 students each year

* Award over \$69,000 in grant money for programs like AgVentures, Farm Tours for Students and Student Agricultural Gardens

* Sponsor more than 20 county teacher workshops

* Send 4 teachers and their administrators to the National Ag in the Classroom conference as winners of the Florida Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture Award

FAITC Staff:

Lisa Gaskalla, Executive Director

Sarah Joe Cannon, Educational Programs Coordinator

Shaun Fulford, Student Assistant

Kelly Russ, Editor/Intern

Elizabeth Raburn, Intern

Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc. Polo Shirt Order Form

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Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

FAITC Polo Shirt

Forest Green with Khaki Stitching:	Size:	Quantity:	Price:	Total:
S	\$13.00			
M				
L				
XL				
XXL	\$15.00			
Khaki with Forest Green Stitching:	Size:	Quantity:	Price:	Total:
S	\$13.00			
M				
L				
XL				
XXL	\$15.00			
Subtotal:				
Shipping:		\$2.00		
Total:				

**Tax included in price

**Please make checks payable to Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc.

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 Gainesville, FL 32611
 Phone: 352-846-1391
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**We are excited about
 our new polo shirts!
 Don't delay, order
 yours today!**

Upcoming Events

National Winner, cont. from page 1

"I'm very, very excited to have won this award," Gray said. "As teachers, we don't make a lot of money. But when you get things like this, it's a great bonus. And to be able to bring that prestige to your school and your classroom is just great."

Gray began her career in education as a volunteer for her son's kindergarten class. She said she had a bad experience in school and didn't want the same thing for her son, so she became involved as a volunteer.



Janet Gray receives her award from Sarah Joe Cannon at the annual FAITC State Teacher Conference.

Gray earned her high school diploma at age 35. She then went on to get her associate in arts degree from Daytona Beach Community College and a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She has been teaching elementary school for 15 years.

Growing up on a farm, Gray developed a passion for agriculture. She brings this passion to her teaching by using curriculum with an agricultural focus to aid in developing essential skills in her students.

Math and reading skills are vital due to the increase of standardized testing, so

Gray uses agricultural lessons to build these skills.

Using her school's garden, students were able to develop mathematics skills through recording and graphing growth of vegetables and plants. Students increased reading comprehension through reading non-fiction passages about agriculture.

Since agriculture is a very science-oriented field, Gray said she anticipates her students will be well prepared for the addition of a science component to the FCAT.

In addition to academic skills, Gray said teaching her students about agriculture also increases their ability to work cooperatively. Most of the lessons are partnerships, so students must learn to work together, she said.

Gray admits she does face challenges in the classroom.

"Discipline is always a big challenge," she said. "Our hands are tied as to what we can do in disciplining students. Somewhere along the line respect for teachers has been lost."

Gray said she likes that students stand up for themselves and speak their minds, but often they don't know where to draw the line.

Despite the challenges in the classroom, Gray said she still maintains a positive attitude. She recommends other teachers try and stay positive as well. She also advises teachers to be risk-takers, look for the creative side of their students and keep an open policy in their classrooms. She said parents and family should always feel welcome in their child's class.

September:

National Chicken Month

National Honey Month

19 Food, Land and People Workshop Okeechobee

20 Food, Land and People Workshop Sarasota County

October:

National Pork Month
National Apple Month

17 Food, Land and People Workshop Indian River

November:

Peanut Butter Lovers' Month

21-27 Farm City Week

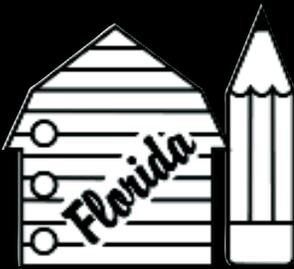
27 Thanksgiving Day

December:

Live Christmas Tree Month

25 Christmas Day





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Look what YOU helped us achieve!!

Since the last newsletter, here's what FAITC has been able to accomplish with the support of Ag Tag proceeds, thanks to Ag Tag buyers like YOU!

√ **Since April 2003, FAITC has reached 252 teachers and volunteers in the state of Florida with the message of agriculture!**

√ **Through our annual State Teacher Workshop and State Volunteer Conference, we worked with teachers and volunteers from Pensacola to Miami, serving more than 37 Florida counties!**

√ **With the start of the Ag Learning Barn program in at least 26 counties, there is the potential to reach 130,000 students.**

THANK YOU!!!