

Fall 2009



Greetings from South Dakota Ag In The Classroom. Our Fall issue of Ag Literacy "On the Grow" is intended to keep our sponsors, industry partners and members up to date on what AITC is doing to promote agriculture literacy in South Dakota.
"To have the Harvest, we must first Sow the Seed."

Inside this issue:

Summer Symposium

Distance Education

Science & Art Of SD Soil

Can You Have An Agless Day?

Volunteers Needed!

2009 Summer Symposium Making Connections with SD Teachers

The 2009 Summer Symposium was June 8-11 in Sioux Falls. The week-long symposium was presented by the Sioux Falls School District for all teachers in their district as well as any teacher across the state. AITC presented 4 sessions that were 90 minutes in length. Carla Clark, Aberdeen 5th grade teacher and past teacher of the years assisted with the presentations.

"The Science and Art of South Dakota Soils" is an 80/20 ratio of soil science to art concepts. We introduced the important role that soil plays in our everyday lives, as well as basic art concepts & techniques. The session culminates in the opportunity to paint with South

Dakota soils. This session had **25 teachers**.

Hands On Minds On is a workshop that highlights our food & fiber system and engages students through our nation's **Food, Land & People**.

This hands-on workshop inspires integration of agriculture into reading, math, science and social studies standards through a variety of learning styles. **47 teachers** packed into a room set up for 25!

Fuel Up and Get Fit featured AITC's new lessons: "The Framer Grows a Rainbow", that enhance MyPyramid education. The workshop includes lessons AND a physical activities that are

integrated with core subjects that are grade specific for PreK- grade 5. We had **22 attend** this session.

The *Very Hungry SD Caterpillar* was a full session with **25 teachers**. Teachers experienced what Eric Carle's caterpillar eats as he visits our state! As the caterpillar transitions to a beautiful butterfly, he eats his way through the days of the week and the top agricultural commodities of SD. Teachers left with their very own Very Hungry Caterpillar book!

SDAITC also had an informational booth in the vendor area. 700+ teachers attended the 2009 Symposium.

Special points of interest:

- Approximately 1600 youth across South Dakota studied the Science & Art of SD Soil this summer
- Distance Education partnership with other informal educators continues to grow
- Are you looking for a rewarding opportunity to share your story of agriculture? Become a Dakota Connections mentor!

What?? You might be wondering what all of these letter mean. It all boils down to technology! AITC has embraced the technology that is available to South Dakota teachers.

EE for 3-5 is a collaborative effort offering a 2 credit graduate course for elementary teachers over the Dakota Digi-

tal Network.

Working with The Outdoor Campus, Project WILD, Project WET and Project Learning Tree, the course will be presented to 35 teachers at 10 sites across the state. The great thing was that no one has to travel more than 10 minutes to participate in the class. The DDN broadcasts

to schools statewide. Technology enabled us to interact with teachers via webcams, document cams and the internet! What a great opportunity to share the important role of agriculture in our society. A second course will offered in January. And plans for Middle School(6th-8th grade) are in the works for 2010.

EE For 3rd-5th on the DDN

Soil Science at Farmers Union Camps

A great educational opportunity to teach kids about soils took place this summer. Julie Bartling, Burke, SD Senator representing Gregory, Mellette, Todd, and Tripp Counties and Executive Director of the SD Farmers Union Foundation, and SDACD Executive Director Angela Ehlers collaborated to emphasize natural resources education at the 65 Farmers Union county camps across the state. An estimated 1,600 kids learned about soil

science using *"The Science and Art of South Dakota Soils"* materials from the teacher trainings

First, kids learned about the chemical and physical properties of soils, (sand, silt, or clay particles) and elements that give soil its color. They also learned about SD's State Soil *Houdek*. They learned that there are over 650 different soils in our state and it takes over 500 years to make an inch of topsoil.

The Farmer's Union had four

summer interns who conducted the camps.

Lisa Dorschner, Ag in the Classroom, Pierre, and Colette Kessler, NRCS, provided training with tips and techniques.

Many local conservation districts are sponsoring "Soil Color Sample Sets" from the SD Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS). The sample set features samples of soils from across SD in five unique colors.

"As we spoke about South Dakota soils and conservation needs, we found that many of the fourth through sixth graders were versed on some of the materials. Thanks for all of the info. It's a really great addition to our program."

—Julie Bartling
SD Farmers Union Foundation

Dakota Connections Takes Root

"Dakota Connections" is a cultural exchange program that links urban classrooms, rural classrooms, and the people who provide our food and fiber. Volunteer mentors include agricultural producers and members of allied industry, cooperative extension, conservation districts and government staff. The goal is to build a bridge of understanding, teach students about our very different ways of life and address the question *"Is There Any Way to Have and AG-less Day?"*.

The program matches urban and rural classrooms with men-

tors. The classrooms are "adopted" by the mentor for the entire school year. Information will be shared through videos, letters, photos, the internet and classroom presentations. The mentor will be trained to utilize classroom materials that are aligned to core curriculum and state education standards.

The program was piloted in May in Arlington and Aberdeen with 8 mentors visiting 4th & 5th grade classrooms. The topic was PIZZA...something the students could easily relate to. The volunteers spent time with the students, helping them understand the origins of all of the ingredi-

ents in a pizza, and that many of them are grown right here in South Dakota!

Students were assessed to see what they knew about pizza. The pre test scores averaged 77%. After the lesson, the post test showed an average score of 93%. To celebrate their success, the students were treated to pizza and ice cream!

AITC is looking for volunteers for this exciting program.

Training and materials are available for mentors through an AITC ACE grant. To learn more, visit our website

www.sdagclassroom.org
"What's New".

Making the Connection Literacy Project

Does Dakota Connections seem like a big step to take? Start with a baby step by volunteering for AITC's **Making the Connection Literacy Project!**

This program needs volunteers to participate in a classroom reading program during National Ag Week 2010. Volunteers will be visiting classrooms statewide to share

the story of agriculture by reading a selected book and sharing a hands-on activity with the class. Volunteers will be provided with training and all of the materials needed to Make the Connection!

Books for this project have been generously provided by the SD Soybean Research & Promotion Council—the

books are *"Soybeans in the Story of Agriculture"* and *"Soybeans and A-Z Book"*. Funding for the materials are possible through grants from Monsanto and the SD Community Foundation.

To learn more or sign up to volunteer, contact the office at 1-800-573-2482 or email lisa@sdagclassroom.org.

Together we can make a difference!

