



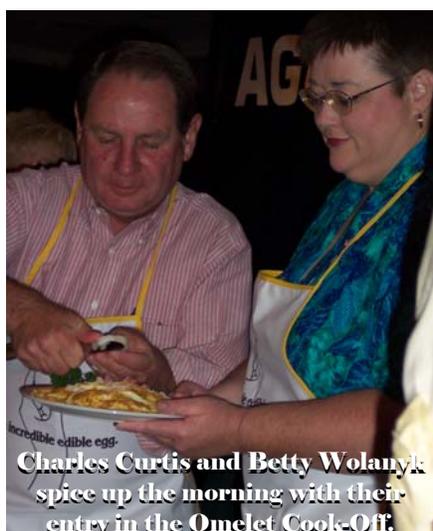
# AITC *Notes*

FALL 2003  
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## AITC National Conference Sets Record Attendance

*"It is so rewarding to see how this conference and ag literacy efforts have grown. When the Ag in the Classroom conferences first started, the attendance hovered around one hundred. To see 605 people at the conference and hear about the wonderful efforts underway in every state is watching a dream come true."*

**Betty Wolanyk, American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture**



With over 50 workshop topics, there was something for everyone to learn and take home to use in their classrooms and state programs. Current issues of agri-terrorism, conservation, renewable fuels, biotechnology, and cloning were presented in formats usable for K-12 education. Educators enjoyed hands-on lessons to incorporate agriculture into existing curriculum with topics in gardening, nutrition, weather, insects, economics, music and more. All participants gained skills with workshops in careers, online resources, classes, presentation skills and assessing the impact of agricultural education.

The Exhibit Hall showcased many of the state programs sharing their latest projects, as well as agricultural companies and organizations providing new classroom materials and resources for participants.

Tours to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the University of Tennessee Experiment Station showed participants the latest in research and technology in protecting our food and natural resources and developing new products and improved farming practices. Sightseeing tours were also offered to learn about the region.

Drawing a record crowd of over 600 participants, attendees also included from USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Colien Hefferan, Administrator, George Cooper, Deputy Administrator, Science and Education Resources Development (SERD), Jeffrey Gilmore, Director, Higher Education Programs, SERD, and Kathleen Cullinan, National Program Leader for Agriculture in the Classroom. Also addressing the group via teleconference was James Moseley, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.

*"I went to Nashville not really knowing much about AITC. I was really excited to be able to attend the conference, and I learned a lot about agricultural literacy. I learned to think about where my food is coming from and appreciate our clean, safe food. Everyone I met was very professional, but also very friendly. People were willing to share their knowledge and ideas. I made some new friends and I'm working on a presentation for the 2004 conference. There will be those who ask "Why do I have to teach agriculture?" and I will have a good background to share with teachers!"*

**Patrick Ryan, Teacher, Alaska**

True southern hospitality welcomed participants to the 21st Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee June 24-28, 2003. Bringing together teachers, Farm Bureau members, commodity groups, governmental agencies, agricultural businesses and associations, the event strives to further develop and enhance agricultural literacy.

Charles Curtis, AITC Consortium President and Conference Chair, along with his staff and the Conference Planning Committee, brought together the talents of many presenters as well as local entertainment using the theme of "Cows, Crops & Country Music".



## Teachers Honored with Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Awards

Five teachers spanning the nation were honored for their exceptional work in emphasizing agricultural concepts in the classroom at the Awards Luncheon at the National Conference. The **Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Awards** focus national attention on the critical role of teaching and honors teachers for outstanding contributions to education about American agriculture.

Colien Heferan, Administrator, USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, and Charles Curtis, President, AITC Consortium, made the presentations. Recipients of these distinguished awards received an honorarium of \$500 and up to \$1,500 toward travel to the 2003 National AITC Conference.

This is the fourth year of this joint program of the National AITC Program and AITC Consortium. For further details, visit [www.agclassroom.org](http://www.agclassroom.org).



**Janet Campbell Gray**  
Florida  
**Orange City Elementary**  
Fifth Grade

Ms. Gray earned her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education following her volunteer experience in her son's class. "Children can only be as excited as their teacher," remarked Ms. Gray. She grew up on a farm and brings that experience into her classroom.



**Norma Musel**  
Minnesota  
**State Academy for the Blind**  
Third to Twelfth Grades

Ms. Musel and her staff found that using hands-on agricultural lessons provided students tactile experiences that could be integrated into all their subjects and adapted for all learning levels. It was a very effective way to engage students in the learning process.



**Carla Diane Wright**  
California  
**Ord Terrace Elementary**  
Third Grade

Living in an agricultural region, Ms. Wright feels it is important to incorporate agriculture into her curriculum so students understand where food comes from, how much work is involved, and the economic impact it plays for the region. Speaking of this national award, she commented, "Receiving this honor validates what I enjoy doing to enrich and empower my students' lives."



**Julie King**  
Illinois  
**LeRoy Elementary**  
First Grade

Creating agricultural literacy baskets for teachers in her county was a way for Ms. King to share her enthusiasm for AITC programs. She uses many thematic units in her classroom, including the Nutcracker Ballet with a candy lesson.



**Cheryl McGinness**  
Missouri  
**Siegrist Elementary**  
First to Third Grades

In a school surrounded by farmland, Ms. McGinness, a Special Reading Teacher, noted that many students knew little of what was growing around them. She launched a successful integrated program focusing on plants and crops, and their many uses.

# Contacts Corner

## New AITC Partners

The **Ag in the Classroom Partners Committee** serves in an advisory capacity to express concerns and offer guidance as part of the AITC network. Entities involved with AITC and who promote agricultural literacy may be members of the Partners Committee.

New members welcomed in 2003 were:

Altria Corporate Services  
 Dole Food Company  
 IAA Foundation  
 Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Services  
 National Agricultural Statistics Service  
 Sigma Alpha  
 Space AITC in cooperation with NASA  
 United Soybean Board  
 USDA Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Services

Current partners recognized for their contribution to agricultural education:

Agri-Education, Inc.  
 American Agri-Women  
 American Farm Bureau Fdn. for Agric.  
 Canada Agriculture in the Classroom  
 CroPLife America  
 The Fertilizer Institute  
 Food, Land & People  
 Hunt-Tower Farms  
 Monsanto Company  
 Monterey Co. Agric. Education, Inc.  
 National 4-H Council  
 National Agricultural Aviation Assn.  
 Nat'l. Assn. of Cons. Districts Auxiliary  
 National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
 National Cottonseed Products Assn.  
 National FFA Organization  
 National Gardening Association  
 National Mining Association  
 National Pork Producers Council  
 Potash & Phosphate Institute  
 Progressive Farmer Magazine  
 Successful Farming Magazine

## *From the President . . . Kevin Daugherty*

Greetings! I hope reading about the 2003 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference brings you a slight feeling of what the actual conference was about. Charles Curtis, his staff and the entire state of Tennessee did an outstanding job of providing hospitality and a phenomenally educational event.

As the newly elected President of the AITC Consortium of State Contacts, I want to thank all who participated in the 2003 Conference, especially the outstanding support we received from the USDA CSREES Program and Leadership, as well as the USDA AITC Program. The strength of the Consortium and the National Program is due in large part to the outstanding variety of State Programs that we have. I only look for the programs to continue to grow in size and scope.

I would especially like to thank our Partners who continue to show support for the State Programs and the National Program. Through their efforts Agricultural Literacy and Agriculture in the Classroom continues to grow and thrive.

In addition, I want to recognize the outstanding leadership that has been provided for the Consortium in the past several years. Charles Curtis, TN, served as President of the Consortium for over a year and a half, and he and his staff hosted an outstanding conference. Thank you Charles! Debra Spielmaker, UT, and Diane Olson, MO, served as Past Presidents in an advisory capacity to the board. Debra and Diane, thank you for stepping back onto the Consortium Board and thank you for your continued leadership. Lynda Danos, LA, served as Southern Region Representative during the last two years. Thank you for your time and service!

I urge you to visit the [agclassroom.org](http://agclassroom.org) website often and make suggestions for the website to Debra Spielmaker. The website has served as a vital link for teachers around the nation. I also urge you to contact me or your regional representatives with questions, comments or concerns about the Consortium and how we might be able

to help you in your programs.

Before closing, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the talented state contacts that will serve as the Executive Committee for the next year. These folks are giving of their time and talents to make AITC a better program for all of us and I look forward to working closely with them this year.

### 2003-2004 AITC CONSORTIUM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Again, contact your regional representative or your Executive Committee. We are here to help!

## National Resource Directory Launched

### Harvest the Resources!

Find great educator resources for Ag in the Classroom at the new National Resource Directory. Resources from all over the country can be accessed and brought into a classroom to enhance agricultural education efforts.

All resources in the first online national agricultural directory for teachers have been reviewed for quality and accuracy. The directory includes hundreds of classroom educational materials in various formats: website links, digital media, videos, kits, books, magazines, pamphlets, maps, posters, lesson plans, and fact sheets.

The site provides an easy-to-use format where viewers can search by keywords, topics, grade level, academic subject, and agricultural content, or just browse a variety of topics and current issues.

Educational suppliers are welcome to submit new educational resources for review and listing in the directory.

**Visit the National Resource Directory today at [www.usaged.org](http://www.usaged.org) and find the latest in agricultural resources!**

## AITC Excellence Grants Awarded

One multi-state and seven state projects were awarded funding in the new AITC Excellence Grants Program conducted by the USDA's Ag in the Classroom Program and the National AITC Consortium. The program is designed to foster the development of innovative agriculture education projects.

During the National AITC Conference Tad Duncan, Treasurer of the AITC Consortium, presented \$5,000 grants to Alaska Ag in the Classroom, Louisiana Foundation for AITC, Inc., Nevada AITC Task Force, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Oregon AITC Foundation, South Carolina AITC Fund, and Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation.

A \$10,000 grant was presented to the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation for a multi-state project with the New Jersey and Pennsylvania AITC programs.

Results of these projects will be shared with state programs and during the next national conference.

For more information on the AITC Excellence Grants Program and the 2004 application information, check the AITC Consortium website or contact Tad Duncan, Texas State Contact, 254-751-3608 or email: [tduncan@txfb.org](mailto:tduncan@txfb.org).



### Mark your Calendar!

Come explore the cultures of agriculture in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the **2004 Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference**. This conference is designed for teachers and volunteers who have an interest in agricultural literacy and demonstrates how to incorporate agricultural concepts across the curriculum through interesting and engaging activities and curriculum.



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