Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Announces Grants to Counties

BLOOMINGTON----The Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program is proud to announce DuPage County Ag in the Classroom has received funding for the 2017-2018 School Year. Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom based these grants to counties off the 2016-2017 year-end reports.

In 2016-2017, the Illinois AITC program reached 661,797 students with a message about agriculture.  Additionally, 40,634 teachers and 1,144 pre-service teachers learned how to incorporate agriculture into their existing curriculum while meeting state learning standards.

Kevin Daugherty, Education Director for the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program said, “County level programs are the biggest strength of our IAITC efforts. Illinois has the benefit of local contacts that provide content knowledge and easy strategies for teachers to utilize.  The county programs work to integrate agriculture into existing classroom curriculum.”

DuPage County Farm Bureau Ag Literacy Coordinator, Melanie Krawczyk said, “There is a huge need to educate suburban and urban students about agriculture and where their food comes from. Last year, we saw 13,575 students. We are so thankful to the IAA Foundation for helping us reach as many as we can.”

 County Coalition Grants are made possible through funding from the IAA Foundation, the charitable arm of the Illinois Farm Bureau.  The IAA Foundation raises funds for the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program each year, and in addition to county grants, provides funding for Ag Mags, teacher grants, Summer Ag Institutes and more.

“Thanks to the work of local ag literacy coordinators, backed by the generosity of our individual and industry contributors, the IAA Foundation is able to award an all-time high of $625,500 in grants to 77 coalitions across the state,” said Susan Moore, Director of the IAA Foundation. “These funds will boost local ag literacy efforts in both rural and urban communities throughout Illinois,” she continued.

Partner organizations of the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program include Illinois Farm Bureau, Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE), University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Beef Association, Illinois Corn Growers, Illinois Pork Producers, Illinois Soybean Association, Midwest Dairy Association, Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.  In addition, annual donors include many agribusiness partners and event participants with an interest in supporting the future of agriculture. More information on the IAA Foundation can be found at www.iaafoundation.org

For more information on Agriculture in the Classroom in your county, contact Melanie Krawczyk at 630-668-8161, or dupageaitc@dcfb.org.