

# **Agriculture in The Classroom Consortium**

## **Strategic Plan** (approved 6/24/2009)

### **2009 - 2014**

#### **Mission**

To foster collaborative relationships among USDA Agriculture in the Classroom State Contacts and the Consortium Partners to create a professional community that recognizes the diversity of perspectives, experiences and resources that we bring to one another as we advance agricultural literacy across the nation.

#### **Goal 1: To assume and maintain an active national role in promoting agricultural literacy programs.**

- A. Maintain and expand e-Resource (agclassroom.org) as the gateway to the national AITC Program.
  - 1. Offer website promotional materials for distribution by state contacts.
  - 2. Purchase advertising space in teacher publications as budget allows.
  - 3. Ensure an ongoing review and update of materials.
  - 4. Evaluate the use of blogs, message boards, etc. to enhance communication between state contacts and Consortium leadership and to enhance networking.
  - 5. Create a national educator e-newsletter.
- B. Encourage all eligible states to submit applications for the *Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture* award.
  - 1. Provide workshops at Regional meetings to encourage states to participate.
  - 2. Strengthen the role of the Consortium in expanding the Excellence Award beyond teachers.
  - 3. Establish a committee to work with USDA.
  - 4. Pursue funding to establish an Ag Advocate Award (i.e.: informal educators, volunteers).
- C. Provide more media exposure for Excellence Award winners.
  - 1. Work with traditional agriculture and education media to showcase winners.
  - 2. Require winners to give at least two presentations in the following twelve month period to help publicize the award opportunity.
- D. Expand AITC publicity efforts.
  - 1. Appoint a Publicity Committee which will consist of a representative from each region.
  - 2. Address ways to promote AITC teachers, Consortium, and students via print media and e-Resource.
  - 3. Issue periodic press releases to national agricultural and educational media.
  - 4. Have a presence at selected national teacher conferences.
- E. Appoint an Outreach Committee to educate Congressional representatives on Consortium activities and programs.
  - 1. Encourage Congressional visits by state contacts and the AITC Executive Committee.

- F. Increase awareness of AITC by the US Department of Education.
  1. Initiate Executive Committee meetings with Department of Education staff.
  2. Encourage state contacts to work with state Boards of Education and report their work to the Executive Committee and National Program Leader.
- G. Capitalize on the current emphasis in education concerning STEM, nutrition, physical activity, and real-world learning experiences.
  1. Encourage development of programs/lessons at the secondary level.
- H. Work with textbook publishers on agriculture sections in all texts.
  1. Establish contact with publishers and offer assistance and expertise of the state contacts.

**Goal 2: To provide leadership and support to the USDA-AITC National Program.**

- A. Continue the positive working relationship with the USDA-AITC National Program.
  1. Offer input into the selection process of the AITC National Program Leader at USDA.
  2. Foster communication between USDA and Consortium leadership.
  3. Encourage communication between USDA and Consortium member states.
  4. Continue Consortium Executive Committee biannual meetings with National Program Leader in person, and via scheduled conference calls.
- B. Ensure AITC implement's programs that compliment USDA priority issues.
  1. Offer input and assistance in developing programs for use nationwide.

**Goal 3: To provide leadership and a professional network for AITC State Contacts.**

- A. We support development and distribution of new resources for all states.
  1. Work with USDA departments to develop resources for state use. (i.e., Forest Service, ARS, ERS, NASS, NRCS)
  2. Highlight and promote outstanding state programs.
- B. Provide additional professional assistance to strengthen state programs.
  1. Develop a "Consortium 101" packet for new state contacts.
  2. Encourage Consortium President and President-elect, as well as USDA National Program Leader, to attend all regional meetings.
  3. Encourage cooperation and collaboration among states.
- C. Continue the AITC State Reports for use at national and state levels.
  1. Develop a one page state report that can be distributed with national information on one side and state specific information on the reverse.
- D. Continue regional AITC meetings.
  1. Offer incentives, including funding, for participation in regional meetings.
  2. Encourage regions to move meetings throughout the region.
  3. Establish dates 6-9 months in advance to encourage maximum participation.
- E. Continue support for the national conference.
  1. Offer opportunities for regional participation for teachers/AITC presenters/volunteers within the national conference.
  2. Promote the national conference at Educator conferences and via e-Resources.
  3. Pursue the possibility of coordinating an AITC Summit in conjunction with the national conference with participation from agriculture and education leaders as well as the media.

**Goal 4: To insure continuity of the AITC Consortium.**

- A. Secure ongoing funding for the Consortium Executive Director.
  - 1. Ensure that major responsibilities include media exposure, public relations, fund development and grant writing, e-Newsletter and financial oversight/obligations for the AITC Consortium.
- B. Encourage states to evaluate their AITC program and projects.
  - 1. Share a variety of sample evaluation and assessment techniques.
  - 2. Highlight state program impacts at regional meetings.

**Goal 5: To pursue funding sources for agricultural literacy programs that would meet Consortium objectives.**

- A. Work to grow USDA-AITC budget to \$2 million.
  - 1. Encourage Consortium leadership to visit Congressional leaders associated with AITC.
  - 2. Provide Congressional leaders with AITC success stories.
  - 3. Involve Partners, as appropriate, to share the AITC story.
- B. Increase state AITC program grants.
  - 1. Highlight ACE grants winners at National Conference.
  - 2. Encourage states to apply for ACE grants.
  - 3. Increase grant funds.
  - 4. Require that the ACE grant recipients provide detailed reports, along with deliverables if applicable, to all Consortium members via the web.
- C. Pursue additional funding opportunities for grants.
  - 1. Pursue grants from the public and private sector.
  - 2. Encourage states to write proposals that develop programs/lessons that can be replicated in other states.
  - 3. Leverage the purchasing power of the Consortium by negotiating bulk purchases of books or other items.

**Goal 6: To work in cooperation with other organizations and agricultural literacy programs to achieve common goals and objectives.**

- A. Increase partnerships to expand impact using existing programs and nationally recognized events.
  - 1. Collaborate with USDA-AITC Program Leader to facilitate a presence at appropriate national conferences.
  - 2. Highlight Partners via press releases to agricultural and educational media.
- B. Expand AITC within the area of environmental education.
  - 1. Encourage states to partner with EE community at the local level.