

**Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture
A National Award Program
Deadline: January 17, 2012**

Sponsored by

United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture—
Agriculture in the Classroom

and

The National Consortium of State Coordinators of
Agriculture in the Classroom

Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture

A National Award Program

What is Agriculture in the Classroom?

Agriculture is an important part of life. Clothing, food, fuel, housing, medicine, and more are rooted in agriculture. Agricultural issues can support the teaching of many academic disciplines. Recognizing this, educators across the country are effectively integrating agriculture into the classroom curriculum.

What is an Outstanding Teacher Award?

Five teaching awards will be made to educators currently engaged in classroom instruction at the pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade levels. These awards will recognize teachers for their creative efforts to teach students about the importance of agriculture.

Award winners will be required to present their programs during the National Conference. The conference host, upon notification to the winners, will provide the format and other logistics.

Based on the availability of funds, teachers selected will receive \$500 each and have up to \$1,500 of their related expenses paid to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference. **Note: Funds may only be used for allowable travel expenses incurred by recipient. They are not to be used to cover the costs of recipients' guests to the conference.** Furthermore, it is at the discretion of the Conference Host as to how the funds will be disbursed.

Who is Eligible?

District certified teachers currently engaged in integrating agricultural concepts into non-vocational agriculture classroom settings at the pre-K-12 grade levels are eligible. This may be an individual teacher or a team of teachers (with a designated team leader). Please note: Only one award and cash prize totaling \$2,000 will be made per team.

How are Nominations Submitted?

Agriculture in the Classroom State Contacts may nominate one outstanding teacher or one team of teachers to receive an award. A letter prepared by the Agriculture in the Classroom State Contact should convey a strong sense of the teacher's efforts to introduce agricultural information into the classroom. This should include reference to actual situations and learning activities.

Resubmissions

Unsuccessful nominees from previous years may be resubmitted. Please refer to the summary reviewer comments; these may aid in strengthening the nomination. **Prior winners of this award are ineligible for future awards under this program.**

What are the Criteria for Selection?

Teachers must utilize agricultural information and/or materials within their classroom curriculum in an effort to assist students in learning the importance of agriculture. Learning activities may include, but are not limited to, an understanding of its impact on personal lives, our national heritage, the environment, national security, and the economy. Innovative and interdisciplinary programs are encouraged.

How are Nominations Evaluated?

All nominations will be evaluated by a panel of judges familiar with agriculture, education, and Agriculture in the Classroom. The National AITC Consortium Executive Committee and/or USDA may recommend panel members.

Note: AITC State Contacts who submit nominations may not serve as panelists.

Entries will be judged in the following categories:

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>	<u>Weight</u>
A. Creativity and Utilization of Agricultural Information -- The degree to which sound agricultural concepts have been infused into the classroom curriculum. Reference should be made to the creative methods utilized in advancing student learning.	25 points
B. Interdisciplinary Approach -- The degree to which agricultural concepts have been included in a variety of subjects and disciplines. Value will be placed on the approach which teaches agriculture across the curriculum.	25 points
C. Advancement of Educational Standards -- The degree to which the nominee aligns agricultural learning activities with state and/or national or other established education standards.	25 points
D. Student Impact -- Evidence of nominee's impact on student attitudes and overall learning.	25 points

Nomination Guidelines

1. Complete the nomination outline (copy attached).
2. Prepare a summary description (no more than 250 words) of the project being submitted. If a project is selected for one of the awards, this summary will be included in the annual meeting program and will be posted on the AITC web page.
3. Provide a narrative response to the following three items (A, B, & C) listed below. **When writing the narrative, please consider the evaluation criteria.**

NOTE: The narrative portion is limited to two (2) pages for each item.

Each response must be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than **12-point**, and **double-spaced**. All margins must be at least one inch. All pages must be paginated. It should be noted that reviewers will not be required to read beyond the **six pages** of the narrative to evaluate the nomination. Each page (maximum of 2 per item) should be labeled with appropriate heading, as noted below:

- A. Describe the unique and innovative approaches to advancing agricultural literacy in the classroom.
 - B. Identify the teaching methods employed (i.e. experiential, case study, etc.). Specify agricultural concepts taught and which academic areas of study were utilized. What was the depth and duration of the activity? Explain how these learning experiences helped advance state and/or national education standards.
 - C. Explain how these activities helped students better understand the impact American agriculture has had on personal lives, our national heritage, the environment, the national security, and the economy.
4. The following supporting documentation must be included:

Endorsement by an Administrator -- The degree to which a letter (signed and dated) by a school administrator substantiates the nominee's excellence in and dedication to the teaching role.

Endorsement by a Co-worker -- The degree to which a letter (signed and dated) by a co-worker substantiates the nominee's excellence in and dedication to the teaching role.

5. Supplemental Information:

- A. Any additional information deemed essential for the nomination, such as additional letters of support, additional awards/ recognition, etc., may be included in an appendix. The appendix **should not** be used to expand the two-page limitation of the narrative sections.
- B. Color photographs or other graphics that demonstrate nominee's agriculture in the classroom activities may be included in an appendix.

NOTE: Do not submit video or CD-ROM presentations.

Please provide a statement of release for the use of photographs and other materials by USDA and other AITC programs in public forums, Internet dissemination, publications, etc.

Nomination Outline

Name _____

Home Address _____ Phone (____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School Name _____

School Address _____ Phone (____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____

Grade level _____ Subjects taught _____

Number of years teaching experience _____ Number of years at current school _____

Education

Institution	Year	Degree/Certification

Professional Experience

Position	School/Organization	Dates

Awards and Honors Related to Teaching

Other Recognition or Honors

Membership in Professional Organizations

Signature of Nominee: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Nominator: _____ **Date:** _____

What to Submit

If mailing **hard copies** of the nomination package, please submit an **ORIGINAL** and **FIVE** copies of all materials, including supplemental information (you may wish to request a sixth copy from the nominee for your records).

Nominations should contain all requested information and appropriate signatures. All copies of the nomination must be submitted in one package. Each copy of the nomination must be stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner (**DO NOT BIND or USE NOTEBOOKS**).

Electronic submissions are also being accepted. If using this method, submit all materials, properly formatted as described in the guidelines, using electronic signatures as required for the nominee, state contact, and other endorsers (documents of original signatures may be scanned if electronic signatures are not available). This also applies to photographs, graphics, and other supporting materials.

NOTE: Facsimiles (Faxes) will not be accepted.

When and Where to Submit

Application Deadline: The application needs to be received on or before COB on January 17, 2012.

Submission Options:

1. **Electronic Submission:** It is recommended that you submit the application electronically as PDF file. The file may be no larger than 5 MB. If your application has large images, consider reducing the image size in the file to make your overall file smaller. If this is not possible you may submit more than one file. Be sure to label the pdf files so that it is easy for the USDA-AITC staff to put your files together. Use your state name in the file, e.g. UT_TeacherAward.pdf or UT_TeacherAwardPart1.pdf and UT_TeacherAwardPart2.pdf. Please send your application to aitc@nifa.usda.gov.
2. **Mail:** The USDA can only accept FEDEX mail delivered to this address:
USDA-AITC
Attention: Amy McCune
800 9th St. SW
Room 4313 Washington, DC 20024