



MCDONOUGH COUNTY AG IN THE CLASSROOM

Back to School Edition August-September 2011

Celebrate Agriculture

August

National Catfish Month
National Peach month

September

National Chicken Month
National Food Safety
Month
National Honey Month
(www.honey.com/kids)
National Mushroom Month
National Rice Month
September 16-22
National Farm Safety and
Health Week
(www.fs4jk.org) or
(www.nsc.org)

*Did you know
McDonough County
has 761 farms.
This is according
to the 2007 Census
of Agriculture.*



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WOW! Another school year started and my second year of Ag in the Classroom! Working with all of you and meeting your students was the highlight of my year. I look forward to seeing lots of familiar faces and many new faces as well. I'm delighted that two, maybe three new schools are inviting me in to share agriculture-related activities with their students.

Project Learning Tree

One thing about being the ag literacy coordinator is that I am able to go to a variety of workshops that will enhance the ag program. This summer I went to three environmental workshops: Project Learning Tree at Sugar Grove Nature Center, and Growing Up Wild and Project Learning Tree for Early Childhood in Carlinville. All three of these workshops were sponsored by the Environmental Education Association of Illinois. It is hoped that we will be getting some of these trainings in our area soon. If you went through Project Learning Tree in "the good 'ol days" like I did, you may want to get re-trained. Lots of new ideas! I'll keep you informed.

Summer Ag Institute

I also helped with the Adams County/Quincy University Summer Ag Institute in June. There were three local teachers that made the trip to Quincy each day to focus on renewable energy and environmental issues. The highlight was our trip to Adams Electric to explore a wind turbine, the Siemen plant in Fort Madison, Iowa that makes blades for wind turbines, and an ethanol plant in West Burlington, Iowa. Each site was very interesting and we learned an incredible amount of information about renewable energy. If you see Pam Burnham, Damaris Blansfield, or Sherial McKinney, ask them about their Summer Ag Institute experience. We are planning to bring Summer Ag Institute back to McDonough County in 2012! If renewable energy is in your curriculum, let me know. I am presently writing a grant to buy wind turbines for classroom use.

Grant Opportunities

Last week I attended an area coordinator's meeting in Springfield. Three grant opportunities for teachers were discussed. Two of them focus on agriculture related books. The grants are entitled: "Feeding a Hungry Planet" and "Beef and Books." The grants are to purchase books that AITC have bundled for the topics. The grant application is simple and open-ended. These are due October 1. The other grant is for \$250 and will fund non-consumable materials for a specific project you may have in mind. Again, the grant application is easy to use. Many teachers from the same building can apply for this grant. Last year, \$18,000 from the grant funds was NOT used! This is very easy money to obtain! If you need help filling out the forms, please let me know. Good luck!

Workshops

I am offering three workshops again this school year. Dates are Thursday, Sept. 29; Thursday, Feb. 9; and Thursday, April 19. Each workshop will feature a special presentation, at least two make and take activities, and a kit "tour." CPDUs will be given. Of course, treats from the Old Dairy will be served!!! Please mark your calendar for these dates.

I look forward to visiting your classrooms!

Margaret Harn
AITC coordinator