

**Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom
E-Newsletter Teacher Feature
Questions**

1. Where and what level do you currently teach and why did you choose to become an educator?

I currently work for the Minnesota Ag in the Classroom Foundation as an Ag Literacy Specialist. What that means is that I reach out to schools and provide help to teachers that wish to incorporate ag focused lessons in their classrooms. I work with many different grades levels. When I was teaching full time at Blackduck Elementary School, I taught Kindergarten for 7 years and sixth grade for 7 years.

2. How has agriculture and the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Program impacted your students and instruction?

As a teacher, I used many of the materials provided by MAITC. I incorporated ag into science, math, and literature lessons. I think that using the lessons gave my students a better understanding and connection to ag. Some students were generations removed from the farm and so they learned where their food comes from. Some students that were involved in ag were engaged in the lessons because it was familiar to them and was something they were interested in.

3. Describe any agriculture based projects you have been involved in lately.

Lately, as a MAITC Regional Specialist, I have focused on helping teachers find lesson plans that they can use with students, facilitate field trips, and put teachers in contact with farmers willing to visit their classrooms. I also visit schools once a month to help teachers plan ways to incorporate agriculture into their classrooms.

4. What advice do you have for other teachers on implementing agriculture into their classroom/program?

Incorporating agriculture into the classroom does not have to be hard. You can start simple and build up to field trips and larger projects. I would also encourage teachers to relate the students' prior knowledge of gardening and growing seeds to production ag. Help students to develop hooks to relate ag to their everyday life.

5. Why do you believe it is important for our students to be agriculturally literate and aware in today's society?

A society cannot be sustainable without agriculture. We need farmers every day for everything from the food that we eat to the clothes that we wear. Students need to learn to make food and product choices based on science and facts and not sensationalized fear. By learning the facts about

modern ag, students can grow into consumers that make informed choices based on facts. Students that are agriculturally literate will make choices based on correct information.