

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation

2014-2015 Annual Report

29th Annual Report



**Celebrating Our 30th Year
Of Agricultural Literacy**

Letter from our Board Chair

State of the Foundation: 30 Years of Learning

Dear Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation supporters, stakeholders, and friends:

We embark past our 30th year of teaching and learning about agriculture in the classroom. Standing on the shoulders of giants, we have built what was originally an idea from a corner of the Minnesota State Capitol into a blossoming public-private partnership that can encompass all facets of Minnesota agriculture.

It is amazing to think we now have board members who are younger than the organization itself. Three decades ago, when agricultural literacy was much higher than it is now, our organization's founders knew it was time to begin connecting people back to the food they eat.

For the next 30 years, and beyond, we will need help continuing to learn and grow. Our experiment with our Teacher Champions Program showed us the benefits of the project, while simultaneously hinting at what kind of resources it would require to make this type of next-level program.

Meanwhile, our state-financed staff members continue to spread awareness of the programming our Foundation helps to fund. Al Withers and Sue Knott are well respected throughout the country and within our state. As a co-controller of our Facebook account, it's never a surprise to find out the team has recently completed a workshop, as our state's future teachers are soon asking how to get more information about our free resources.

Finally, our board members and Executive Director, Joel Mathiowetz, are second to none. In my short tenure on the board, we have quickly moved from an organization trying to re-invent itself from its early beginnings, to one that has figured out funding great programming is our main priority. We will continue to change and adapt, hopefully growing the organization to a day that every teacher in Minnesota knows we exist, every student interacts with our resources, and we truly turn the page in agricultural literacy.

Thank you for all you do for the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.

Best wishes,

Lucas Sjostrom

Chair, Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation

MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM (MAITC)



Vision: Agriculture is valued by ALL.

Mission: Increasing Agriculture Literacy through K-12 Education.

Your financial contributions will support the following MAITC program initiatives:

- **Minnesota AgMag series:** Our flagship publication sends out three unique issues per school year to 500 schools, reaching 40,000 4-6th grade students with content tying into core academic studies.
- **AgMag Jr.:** Geared towards 1st grade students, this publication is growing in popularity and is used by more than 20,000 students.
- **Summer Teacher Tour:** A summer tour that allows K-12 educators to get a first-hand look into the world of agriculture. The tour involves traveling to agricultural research and development sites, farms, processing facilities and distribution centers.
- **Supplemental Resources:** There are a variety of additional resources aimed toward supplementing agricultural learning in the classroom including Minnesota Commodity Cards, themed placemats, bookmarks, DVDs, an updated "Condensed History of Minnesota Agriculture", and the Minnesota Garden Guide, and more!
- **Food for Thought Geography Curriculum:** This 15 year geography-based curriculum was developed in partnership with the Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education and is directly aligned with Minnesota social studies academic standards.
- **Ag Literacy Grant Program:** Teachers can apply for and receive grants for up to \$400 for a special project.

New Initiatives for 2015-2016:

- **Champion Teacher Training & Implementation:** MAITC will work with school districts to identify Teacher Champions who will serve as advocates for agricultural integration into all grade levels and curricula at their school. A farm family will also be paired with each school to assist in connecting to agriculture, food and natural resources. With a series of incentives and rewards, these MAITC Teacher Champions will be encouraged to continue their involvement as well as inspire their teaching colleagues to apply authentic agricultural examples to teacher important concepts in science, social studies, language arts, math and nutrition.
- **AgMag Website:** MAITC is utilizing a new design, content and technology team to develop a highly interactive website that connects the AgMag Magazine content to lessons, activities, on-line educational games and current events. Students and educators will utilize this website as an outstanding technology tool that they can access on a variety of devices such as laptops, ipads, and smartphones.
- **New Children's Literature Book Bundles:** MAITC is developing two new book bundles that feature a variety of agricultural focused fiction and non-fiction books. Each bundle will be target at a specific grade range – K-2 or 3-5 and offer a companion educator guide to stimulate discussion and extend learning beyond the books.
- **Specialty Crop Resources:** MAITC is developing resources designed to increase awareness and knowledge of USDA identified specialty crops that are grown in Minnesota. Educator focused lesson and activities, student focused resources, farm-to-table videos and an educator tour are all

A Valued Public/Private Partnership



For three decades, the public and private sectors have pooled human and financial resources to advance agricultural literacy among K-12 students and educators through the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) Program. This unique public/private partnership model, provides program consistency and credibility in Minnesota's agricultural and educational communities and is known for effectively leveraging resources from both sectors.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is the lead for Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom program development and implementation, while the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation secures and manages private funds to support the overall program. Funds committed to the program from both sectors are leveraged many times over. It has also allowed MAITC to offer educational materials FREE since program inception in 1985.



Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Organizational Structure

- **Foundation began in 2007 to support the MAITC program**
- **Funders are vital to providing free educational resources, grants and outreach to the state's K-12 education community**
- **Led by a 15 member volunteer Board of Directors**
- **Board members represent agriculture and education communities**
- **Joel Mathiowetz, foundation executive director, leads fund development**
- **State Staff include Al Withers – Program Director and Sue Knott – Education Specialist**

Teacher Professional Development and Outreach

Having an Education Specialist has allowed MAITC to provide much needed and valued teacher professional development and outreach. Program staff have worked diligently to make inroads with colleges of education and with the various professional teacher organizations. This work is critical if we want today's educator, many of them multiple generations displaced from agriculture, to effectively grasp the immense content opportunities the subject of agriculture brings to the classroom, as well as to effectively imbued these concepts/content into their K-12 curriculum.



Key Professional Development Events (2014-2015 school year)

- Provided training to 385 Pre-Service Teachers from 24 different College's
- Provided training to 300+ In-Service Teachers at various teacher workshops and trade shows
- Presentations and Trainings to 350+volunteers and association members
- We leverage our networks and train the trainers

MAITC FOUNDATION 2014-2015 DONORS

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American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers
Carver County Farm Bureau
Chicken and Egg Association of Minnesota
Christensen Farms
CHS Foundation
Crow Wing County Farm Bureau
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Delmonte Foods Inc
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Minnesota Ag Aircraft Association
Minnesota Ag Education Leadership Council
Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
Minnesota Agri-Women
Minnesota Area II Potato Research & Promotion Council
Minnesota Assn of Agricultural Educators
Minnesota Beef Research & Promotion Council
Minnesota Buffalo Association
Minnesota CattleWomen
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers
Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council
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Minnesota FFA
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
Minnesota Honey Producers Association
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Minnesota Milk Producers Association
Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association
Minnesota Pork Board
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Mower County Farm Bureau
New Vision Consulting LLC

Northarvest Bean Growers Association
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Petersen Farms Inc
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Redwood County Farm Bureau
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Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative
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