

KFB, KFAC honor five Kansas educators with Excellence in Teaching awards

Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC) are announcing the 2017 Excellence in Teaching regional award winners. This award is given to exemplary teachers who integrate agriculture into their classroom lessons and curriculum. These honorees include Angie Baker and Barb McCaffree, a fourth grade teaching team at Bluestem Elementary School in Leon; Janet Holden, a family and consumer sciences teacher at Northern Heights High School in Allen; Margret Meier, a sixth grade math and science teacher at Hays Middle School in Hays; and Andrea Birzer, a first grade teacher at Ellinwood Grade School in Ellinwood.

Baker and McCaffree, fourth grade teachers at Bluestem Elementary School in Leon, Kan., integrate agriculture into their classrooms in collaboration with their school's greenhouse and animal farm. At the beginning of each day Baker and McCaffree tie in technology, as they have students type a Daily Ag Fact into their iPads and discuss. This ag fact then ties into their lesson for the day. Baker and McCaffree also planned and created Butler County Ag Day, which has since become an annual event. The event included a field trip to a local farm, where 437 students from nine elementary schools across Butler County participated in different stations, some of which were beef cattle, crop origin, crop products, combines, soil conservation and the history of farm machinery.

Holden, a family and consumer sciences teacher at Northern Heights High School in Allen, Kan., takes her background in agriculture, growing up on a farm, and uses it to add a more personal touch to her daily lessons. Holden focuses on educating her students about the nutritional value of foods, methods in which they are raised, ethics surrounding trending practices and how to be a better consumer by understanding what we cook and eat. In Holden's career and life planning class she introduces and encourages students to explore agriculture related careers.

Meier, a sixth grade math and science teacher at Hays Middle School in Hays, Kan., focuses on student-led research through her districts one-to-one iPad initiative, as she integrates agriculture related concepts into her classroom. Meier and her students created an outdoor classroom as an end of the year project. Through the creation of the outdoor classroom and garden, Meier's students have started a garden club, which focuses on educating on agriculture and growing plants to help the environment, both locally and globally.

Birzer, a first grade teacher at Ellinwood Grade School in Ellinwood, Kan., uses her school's rural community to help her students learn how to communicate agriculture to non-rural areas. By utilizing Twitter, Birzer and her class connected with a first grade class in inner-city Chicago. Her students then have the opportunity to share about life in Kansas, agriculture and their rural community, while also learning about urban areas. Birzer also brings Kansas commodities into the classroom by teaching her students how to make wheat bread and butter in a jar from scratch.

These five teachers will receive their choice of \$600 toward attending the 2017 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Kansas City, Mo., or a \$200 check to purchase agriculture education supplies for their classroom.

About Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture

The Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture was formed in 1998. The Foundation awards scholarships and grants that fund programs and projects designed to help improve agriculture and the quality of life in Kansas. The Foundation has awarded more than \$500,000 in scholarships and grants. Visit www.kfb.org for more information about the Foundation.

About Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. KFAC was founded in 1982 as part of a nationwide initiative to help students gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society, so that they may become citizens who support wise agricultural policies. For more information, visit www.ksagclassroom.org or phone (785) 320- 4350.

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