



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TAMPA STEM ELEMENTARY TEACHER WINS NATIONAL
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING ABOUT AGRICULTURE AWARD**

GAINESVILLE – Christine Danger, a STEM coordinator at a K-8 school in Tampa, has won the National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award for 2015 from the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Danger, Florida Agriculture in the Classroom (FAITC)'s Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture overall award winner for 2015, is one of six teachers from around the country to win the award, which is sponsored by the Farm Credit Council. She joins five other teacher winners from Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Utah and Virginia. They will be honored at NAITCO's National Conference "Unbridled Possibilities" at The Galt House Hotel in Louisville, KY June 17-19.

"We are so proud that our teacher winner, Christine Danger, has won the national award, but we're not surprised," Ken Barton, chairman of FAITC and executive vice president of the Florida Peanut Producers Association. "She and our three other Florida teacher winners strive to use agricultural concepts in their classrooms to teach core subjects, particularly as these subjects relate to science, technology, engineering and math or STEM."

Danger emphasizes to her students at Turner Bartels K-8 School that scientists and engineers are the real superheroes who can save the world from disease, energy shortages, ecological catastrophes, famine and more. Her students in kindergarten through fifth grade apply agricultural STEM concepts in their classrooms by building terrariums, greenhouses, irrigation systems and vertical growing systems.

She joins three other Florida teachers to win FAITC's 2015 Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Awards. They include middle school winner Thomas Lynch of Montford Middle School in Tallahassee in Leon County, middle school agri-science winner Michele Hanson of Wilkinson Junior/Senior High School in Middleburg in Clay County and high school winner Elissa Berman of Palm Beach Gardens High School in Palm Beach County.

Danger developed engineering design lesson plans with a team of teachers at her school to help her K-5 students grow and irrigate plants by designing, building and maintaining systems to do so. In

fact, the lesson plans she and her colleagues developed are now part of the curriculum map for the Hillsborough County School District.

“Students have real concerns about the future of their planet,” Danger wrote in her application. “I believe using STEM concepts to identify problems (science), design solutions (technology), solve problems (engineering) and calculate solutions (mathematics) gives them the tools needed to feed the world’s growing population and become the problem solving superheroes we know they can be.”

Lynch, a personal, career and school development skills teacher at Montford Middle School in Tallahassee, uses raised bed school gardens, an embryology project and a greenhouse to reinforce his students’ math, reading, research and analytical thinking skills.

Hansen, an 11-year teaching veteran and agri-science teacher at Wilkinson Junior/Senior High School in Middleburg, uses a land laboratory to grow food and flowers and rear chickens, pigs and cows to teach her students the source of these commodities and the many careers available in agriculture.

Berman, who has been teaching for 10 years, is the culinary instructor at Palm Beach Gardens High School in Palm Beach. As part of her culinary instruction, she and her students maintain a ‘chef’s garden’ at school that supplements the recipes they make in class. “It is not only miraculous to show students the wonder of a burgeoning bean,” Berman wrote in her application. “It also establishes the cycle between the farm and the kitchen.”

FAITC gives its four teacher winners cash honorariums and all expenses paid trips to the NAITCO National Conference in Louisville in late June as part of their winnings.

FAITC is a non-profit organization based in Gainesville that is charged with educating K-12th grade teachers and students about the source of their food, fiber and fuel. It does so by providing curricula, materials, grant money, teacher workshops and programs like Florida Agriculture Literacy Day, all of which are funded by sales of the specialty license plate known as the ‘Ag Tag.’

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