



FLORIDA
Agriculture
IN THE CLASSROOM

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**FLORIDA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM SELECTS
THREE TEACHER AWARD WINNERS FOR 2018**

GAINESVILLE – A third grade teacher from Lake County, a high school teacher who teaches horticulture, diversified career technology, animal science and agriculture from Bradford County and a middle school agriscience teacher from Volusia County have won Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's (FAITC) Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award for 2018.

The Gainesville-based, non-profit organization, Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, selected the three educators from a field of candidates because they best exemplified teachers who use agriculture in their instruction. "We are excited that our Florida teachers will be recognized at the National Agriculture in the Classroom conference. Our grants committee selected these educators because they are passionate about Florida agriculture and share that passion with their students," said Carol Roe, chairman of the FAITC board of directors and a representative of Wm. G. Roe & Sons, Inc.

Jacqueline Holmes, a third grade teacher at Triangle Elementary in Lake County, won the award for the elementary level and is the overall Florida winner. She will compete for the National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award for 2018. Ms. Holmes joins two other teacher award winners for Florida: middle school agriscience winner Amanda Ellis of Silver Sands Middle School in DeLand in Volusia County and high school winner Kaitlin Van Heusen of Bradford Union Technical Center in Starke in Bradford County. All three winners will be recognized at the 2018 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference 'Agriculture for ME on Land and Sea' June 26-29, 2018 in Portland, ME.

Jacqueline Holmes uses a school garden to teach her students science, reading, writing, math and engineering. Her students currently have eight tower gardens they use to grow produce for the salad bar in the cafeteria. Jacqueline's school garden project was such a success last school year that Lake County Schools got a grant to start gardens at 30 other schools in the district. Her students chart the growth of plants in their journals, calculate fertilizer amounts and evaporation rate, experiment with new seeds such as loofa, recycle cafeteria waste by using milk containers to start seeds and compost leftover fruits and vegetables and much more.

Amanda Ellis's students start in 6th grade by learning the basics of agriculture and its importance in our world. She discusses daily nutritional needs for students, talks about the availability of food and why food in America is safe and cheap when compared with other countries. Ellis feels like her students leave her class with a better understanding of how much work goes into producing the food they enjoy on a daily basis.

Kaitlin Van Heusen teaches numerous subject areas that allow her to teach her students about plants, animals, careers, healthy lifestyles and more. Her students leave her class with a

better understanding about how agriculture functions and the role it plays in society. Kaitlin feels that agriculture literacy is something every student needs and makes sure she shares this with her students throughout the year.

FAITC funds programs like the Florida Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Awards with the proceeds it receives from the sales of the agriculture specialty license plate known as the Ag Tag. Its mission is to increase agricultural literacy through K-12 education and does so by providing curriculum, workshops, farm tours, award programs, grants and the elementary reading program, Florida Agriculture Literacy Day.

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