



**FLORIDA**  
**Agriculture**  
**IN THE CLASSROOM**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FLORIDA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM SELECTS  
FOUR AWARD WINNERS FOR 2020**

**GAINESVILLE** – Florida Agriculture in the Classroom (FAITC) is excited to announce that four deserving teachers were awarded Florida’s 2020 Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture Award. Each year FAITC, a Gainesville based, non-profit organization, selects teachers based on their inventive ways they use agriculture in the classrooms to teach the Florida State Standards.

“This group of teachers change lives every day and we are honored to recognize and thank them for their hard work in teaching students where their food comes from.” said Mike Rogalsky, Chairman of the FAITC Board of Directors and a representative of the Florida State Fair.

Mary Lynn Hess, the 2020 overall teacher winner, is the K-5 STEM resource teacher at Goldsboro Elementary Magnet School in Seminole County. Mary Lynn incorporates food, health and lifestyle into almost every STEM lesson she teaches. Her students utilize the 750 square foot school garden to learn about their senses, make observations, differentiate between nonliving and living things, understand soil components, design and build hydroponics, understand healthy lifestyles and grasp concepts such as biomimicry. In addition to her STEM lessons she is considered a “wellness warrior” and has inspired students to enter fun runs and Ironkids triathlons. Mary Lynn believes that healthy children are imperative for academic success and she will continue to provide the tools needed for students and families to stay fit and eat more nutritionally. She will go on to compete for the National Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture Award for 2021.

Susan Hahn, a K-5 Science teacher at Pine Jog Elementary School in Palm Beach County, is a teacher who loves to take students outside or bring the outside in to make learning fun and hands-on. When she became the Science Lab teacher her goal was to get the entire school outside and into the garden and that is just what she did! Susan’s school has a 1,500-pot hydroponic garden as well as a traditional garden and last year they harvested over 1,678 pounds of produce. Every class at Pine Jog Elementary now comes to the garden where students learn standards such as plant parts, plant life cycles, photosynthesis, food chains and pollination. This year Susan was able to get 12 new teachers at her school involved in the garden. All these reasons and more are why Susan was chosen as one of FAITC’s teacher winners.

Cheryl Pahl, the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade gifted science teacher at Hunter's Green Elementary in Hillsborough County, has taken her school garden project from nothing in 2001 to now having 40 raised beds. Cheryl uses a STEM approach to gardening and each of her students has their own 4x4 section of the garden to plan, plant and maintain. Students experiment with their seeds, make observations, take measurements, record weather data and problem solve when needed. Cheryl's students are able to take their produce home to experiment with in their own meals! She will continue gardening for as long as she is teaching because she feels it is one of the best learning experiences she can give her students. Cheryl has gone above and beyond in her classroom and that is why she was also chosen as one of FAITC's teacher winners.

Carley Dyal, an agriscience teacher at Keystone Heights Jr/Sr High School in Clay County, is FAITC's middle school agriscience teacher winner. In the three years Carley has been teaching she has incorporated many concepts into her classroom. Her students leave her classroom with an understanding of how important agriculture is to themselves, Florida and the world. Carley's students not only learn how to raise plants and animals but they learn how animals' bodies convert feed to muscle and how plants convert sunlight to food. Her students utilize technology through their greenhouse and irrigation and practice math skills through calculating animal feeds, daily weight gain and fertilizer application rates. Agriculture has played an important role in Carley's life and she is passionate about sharing her knowledge with her students.

All winners receive a free trip to the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference where they are recognized and an honorarium. The 2020 National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference 'Agriculture Elevated' is June 24-26, 2020 in Salt Lake City, UT.

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 PreK-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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