



Agricultural Literacy Programs

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Purpose of Study

- Investigate the impact of Agricultural Literacy programs on perceptions of Illinois elementary and junior high school teachers.
- Attempted to determine significant affects of Ag Literacy Programs on teachers' perceptions.
- Intended to indicate a relationship between the existence of an Ag Literacy Program and perceptions of teachers toward the agricultural industry.



Objectives

- Determine nature & scope of Agricultural Literacy programs throughout the state of Illinois.
- Identify significant impacts that Ag Literacy programs have on perceptions of Illinois elementary and junior high teachers about the importance of agriculture.
- Determine extent that Ag Literacy programs impact those perceptions.
- Explore future issues and changes in Illinois Agricultural Literacy programs.



Procedures

1. Agricultural Literacy coordinators contacted via electronic mail.
2. Phone contacts made to participating coordinators.
3. A survey was developed as the research instrument.
4. Surveys distributed to 8 counties, using 6 coordinators. 2405 surveys sent, 452 returned.
5. Surveys collected and analyzed.
6. Final report written.



Participating Counties

County	# Sent	# Returned
Champaign	1100	67
DeKalb	630 *	149
Kendall	20	20
Marshall/Putnam	20	10
Sangamon/Menard	135 *	36
Vermilion	500 *	170
TOTAL	2405	452




Levels of Contact

Response	Number	%
No contact	234	52
1 Time	63	14
3 or More times	109	24
Did Not Respond	46	10
Total	452	100




“I feel that teaching Agriculture to my students is important.”

Response	# Responses	%
Strongly Agree	163	36
Agree	141	31
Neutral	111	24
Slightly Disagree	24	6
Disagree	8	2
Did Not Respond	4	4



“The Agricultural Literacy Program or AITC Has Helped Me Include Agriculture Into My Current Curriculum.”

Response	# Responses	%
Strongly Agree	122	27
Agree	81	18
Neutral	72	16
Slightly Disagree	42	9
Disagree	68	15
Did Not Respond	67	15




“Agriculture Is Easy to Integrate Into Existing Programs.”

Response	# Responses	%
Strongly Agree	85	19
Agree	135	30
Neutral	128	28
Slightly Disagree	65	14
Disagree	25	6
Did Not Respond	14	4




“Knowledge of Agriculture is beneficial to society.”

Response	# Responses	%
Strongly Agree	275	61
Agree	139	31
Neutral	30	7
Slightly Disagree	5	1
Disagree	2	.2
Did Not Respond	1	.4




“All students should have a basic knowledge of agriculture.”

Response	# Responses	%
Strongly Agree	250	55
Agree	128	28
Neutral	50	11
Slightly Disagree	14	3
Disagree	7	2
Did Not Respond	3	1



Topics Considered Most Important in Teaching Agriculture.

Topic	#	%	topic	#	%
Environ.	422	93	forestry	236	58
Conserv.	404	89	dairy	141	31
Plants/seeds	353	78	corn	79	17
Crops	263	58	soybean	69	15
Insects	254	56	wheat	35	8



Topics taught most in classroom.

Topic	#	%	Topic	#	%
Apples	212	47	Chickens	91	20
Butterflies	198	44	Cows	88	19
Pumpkins	183	40	Pigs	75	17
Dairy	129	29	Beef	50	11
Ladybugs	118	26	Horses	47	10
Ants	112	25	Turkeys	47	10
Worms	101	22	Sheep	42	9
Sunflowers	95	21			



Conclusions

- Majority (67%) believe teaching agriculture to their students is important.
- Those with prior experiences with agricultural literacy programs had more favorable responses to teaching ag.
- Appears that ag literacy programs have been successful helping teachers include ag in their programs.
- Improvements needed to help teachers better integrate agriculture in existing programs.



Conclusions continued-

- Traditional production agriculture topics seems to be less popular or Majority report teaching agriculture through conservation or environmental topics.
- useful to teach agriculture than others.
- Further research should be done to access impacts.



What Now?

- **Get the word out there!!!!** Only 52% of those surveyed had utilized an Agricultural Literacy Program.
- **Make connections!!** Correlate agriculture production topics with conservation and environmental issues.
- **Give lots of stuff!!!** Offer materials and resources for teachers to use.
- **Educate the educators!!!** Host more workshops, seminars, open houses.