

Minnesota's AgEd Advocate



MAELC

Fall 2015

Kari Schwab, Editor

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Legislature Invests in Agricultural Education

During the 2015 Legislative Special Session, the legislature awarded \$2,000,000 per year (\$4,000,000/biennium) in additional funding to MAELC. This funding is meant to "enhance agricultural education with priority given to Farm Business Management challenge grants." Further language allows this funding to be used for "farm business management, mentoring programs, graduate debt forgiveness, and high school programs." With this new funding, MAELC will focus spending in four areas: Farm Business Management - Challenge Grants, Farm Business Management - Additional Instructors, Mentoring Programs, and Evaluation of Grants.

Farm Business Management - Challenge Grants

The MnSCU Farm Business Management (FBM) program is extremely important to the state's farm economy. As the agricultural economy fluctuates, there is an increased demand for FBM education. At the same time, the number of FBM instructors has decreased from 87 in 2004 to 57 in 2015, leading to a shortage of instructors available to students. Also exacerbating the problem are funding challenges at the MnSCU colleges, which have put increased pressure on the programs. Instructors are expected to recover program costs, which is leading to significantly increased student tuition.

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Upcoming Events

Graduate Scholarship
Application -
Due November 2, 2015

Strategic Initiative &
Common Fund Grant
Applications -
Due November 16, 2015

Undergraduate
Scholarship Applications -
Due February 1, 2016

Sarah Dornink
Executive Director

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College of Food, Agricultural and
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Minnesota State Colleges
and Universities (MnSCU)

Jeanne Poppe
State Representative

Zach Rada
President, MAAE

Matthew Wolle
Governor's Appointment

**Community Program
Assistant**
Kari Schwab

146 Ruttan Hall
1994 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: (612) 624-6256
Fax: (612) 625-2798
www.mn.gov/maelc



From the Desk of Sarah Dornink MAELC Executive Director

What were you doing in 1984? I'm sure most of you cannot recall exactly what you were up to and for others, you may not have been born yet. Here in Minnesota, a new organization was starting that has educated thousands of Minnesotans about agriculture through the years.

Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC) is celebrating 30-years of successfully increasing agricultural literacy for K-12 education. This unique public/private partnership is truly a foundation for agricultural education in this state. Although many people and events have led to its current status, here are a few historical highlights:

1984 – Dr. Rollin Dennistoun, Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Deputy of Agriculture, leads large Minnesota stakeholder task force to determine scope and location for state Agriculture in the Classroom program.

1985 – Al Withers hired by MDA to serve as first MAITC Program Director.

1986 – First Minnesota AgMag published and marketed to schools statewide.

2002-2003 – MAITC program is challenged during large state budget deficit. The program's public/private partnership concept is championed by many stakeholders and program stays on as part of the MDA agency budget.

2007 – MAITC Foundation established to provide the philanthropic arm for program funding.

2011 – Sue Knott hired as MAITC Education Specialist after strong legislative support for new funds to MDA for the position.

2013 – MAITC hosts National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference in Minneapolis which draws 550 attendees from 41 states and 3 continents.

2015 – Interest and value for agricultural literacy continues to rise. MAITC impacts 135,000 students, 4,500 teachers and 715 schools during the 2014-15 school year.

Although it may seem odd to use my MAELC space to celebrate another organization's accomplishment, I believe early agricultural literacy is the catalyst for career exploration of the agriculture, food and natural resource pathways. This important first experience for students launches them into further agricultural education opportunities through the secondary and post-secondary levels and into their eventual career choice. At the same time, agricultural literacy activities assist us in reaching new and underserved populations, as it can be embedded into any academic context. If we truly want all Minnesotans to understand and appreciate agriculture, investing in agricultural literacy activities is imperative to reaching this goal. Even the smallest investment into agricultural literacy has and will continue to provide tremendous returns.

MAELC has been a long-time supporter of MAITC and we wish them best of luck for the next 30 years!



Legislature Invests in Agricultural Education (continued)

To address these challenges, FBM Challenge Grants were made available to MnSCU FBM programs. These programs may apply for funding to cover 25.78% of their direct expenses. Funds will be awarded to applicants who maintain and increase the number of instructors and students in their local FBM program and meet program improvement parameters.

Farm Business Management - Additional Instructor Grants

These grants will provide additional dollars for those MnSCU FBM programs increasing their faculty, with the goal of having five additional instructors hired by June of 2017. The newly-hired faculty must fill new positions, not replace instructors that have retired or left the organization. Applications are due January 1, 2016.

Agricultural Education Mentoring Programs

Recognizing how important mentoring programs can be to the success of agricultural educators, four programs will receive funding for their activities:

- Teacher Induction Program (TIP) - For first-year secondary agricultural instructors
- Resources for Professional Learning (RPL) - Intended for mid-career secondary agricultural instructors (7-15 years of experience)
- Post-Secondary Instructor Mentoring (PIM) - For new/early career post-secondary agricultural instructors
- Professional Excellence Program (PEP) - Intended for Farm Business Management instructors with four or less years of experience; also provides additional dollars for instructor transition programs

Additional Agricultural Education Investments

Beyond funding for Farm Business Management and Agricultural Education mentor programs, the legislature made large investments in several other programs that support and promote agricultural education:

Agriculture

- Funding to establish a veterans-to-agriculture pilot program - \$175,000

Education

- Implementation of a Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness program (shall not exceed \$1,000/year or the cumulative balance of the applicant's qualified education loans for up to five consecutive school years)
- Reciprocity language for teachers licensed out of state
- A \$35,000 increase in annual funding for FFA and Postsecondary Agricultural Students Organization (PAS) through the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO)

Farm Business Management

- One time appropriation for FBM online agriculture curriculum development - \$50,000
- Language to exempt FBM from senior credit fees

MAELC

- Continued funding to MAELC for operating and special projects budgets

Southwest Minnesota State University

- One time appropriation for SMSU - \$225,000

*Note - these amounts are for one year of the biennium (i.e. the funding will continue to Fiscal Year 2017 at the same level)

Agricultural Education Immersion Camp



Twelve high school students attended the Agricultural Education Immersion Camp August 11-13, 2015. The students had a great time learning what it is like to be an agriculture teacher and touring the Sibley East and Glencoe-Silver Lake Agricultural Education programs.

The camp was sponsored by MAELC, AgCentric, and the Southern Minnesota Center of Agriculture.

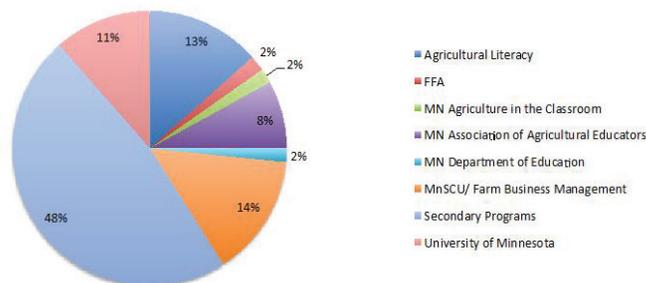


MAELC Evaluates Grant Impacts

To gather a better understanding of the impact and trends of MAELC's grant programs over the past 18 years, The Exchange Loop (TEL) was hired to evaluate the impact of \$3.2 million in grant awards to organizations seeking to improve agricultural education across Minnesota.

TEL analyzed MAELC's existing final report data and surveyed past grant recipients to determine some of the long-term impacts of grants.

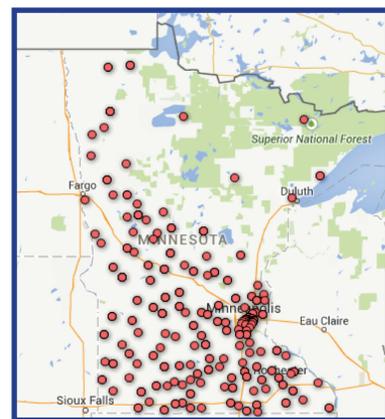
Percent Amount Awarded by Program Type



Overview of amount of funds allocated to various organizations

Several overall themes were discovered from the review of qualitative responses to the final-report questions regarding positive impacts/outcomes, objectives reached, and unexpected results. These themes included sustainability, collaborations and connections, engagement and awareness, competency-building, and standards and rigor.

The evaluation and development of themes confirmed that MAELC's grant programs create meaningful and lasting impacts at both the local program and state-wide level. It also led to the development of new reporting materials to better gather relevant data going forward. All grant applications and final reports will now be submitted through an online form, allowing for better access to information for future data evaluation.



This map represents locations of awarded grants

Strategic Initiatives and a second round of Common Fund grants will be due November 16, 2015.

Grant applications and final reports can be found online at www.mn.gov/maelc/grants.html

MAELC Board Members Thank You & Welcome

Thank You

We would like to express our gratitude to Mary Hoffmann and Charlie Poster for their years of service on the MAELC board. Their input and thoughtfulness about the future of agricultural education in Minnesota is greatly appreciated by all.

Welcome



Brian Boomgaarden is an agriculture teacher at Pipestone Area High School. He is currently serving as the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) President-Elect.

New to Minnesota Agricultural Education



Dr. Kristin Kovar is the new faculty member at Southwest Minnesota State University's (SMSU) Agricultural Education department.

Dr. Kovar grew up on the Panhandle of Florida in Fort Walton Beach. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Animal Science from Berry College, in Rome, Georgia and her Master of Agricultural Leadership from the University of Georgia. Kristin taught high school agriculture outside of metro Atlanta for five years before returning to school to pursue her PhD. She successfully graduated with her doctorate in Agricultural Education and Leadership from the University of Missouri.

After a year as a middle school agriculture teacher, Kristin began her current position as an Assistant Professor in Agricultural Education at SMSU. She is proud to assist in the preparation of future agriculture teachers for the state of Minnesota.



Grant Will is the new Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Outreach for Agricultural Programs at Southwest Minnesota State University.

Grant grew up on a dairy farm near Underwood, MN. He is an SMSU alumnus with Bachelor's Degrees in Sociology and Speech Communication. Most recently Grant was the Lyon County 4-H Program Coordinator. Prior to that he was a Social Studies teacher and coach at Lakeview Schools in Cottonwood, MN. He is eager to combine his passion for agriculture and education in his new role attracting students to the SMSU School of Agriculture!

Grant Spotlight - Summer Academy



This past July, Inver Hills Community College hosted the "Academy for Environmental, Food & Agriculture Sciences." Seventeen 10th – 12th graders from across the Twin Cities had the opportunity to spend one week exploring career opportunities in the environmental, food and agricultural sciences.

Certified teachers, including several of Minnesota's agricultural instructors, and content experts led sessions with topics ranging from soils, to veterinary science and animal food products, to forestry. During the week, students also toured the University of Minnesota's

St. Paul campus and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

On the last day, students practiced career and interview skills, heard from a career panel, and attended a workshop on "Preventing Unmanageable Post-Secondary Debt." Students presented a showcase of what they learned throughout the academy to parents and sponsors as their capstone project. The projects were also displayed at the Dakota County Fair in the 4-H exhibit.

The Academy is a collaborative effort with Inver Hills Community College and Dakota County 4-H/University of Minnesota Extension. Funding for the academy was provided by CHS and MAELC.



National Teach Ag Day 2015

On September 24, 2015 locations across the country once again celebrated "National Teach Ag Day." Locally, Governor Mark Dayton proclaimed the day as "Teach Ag Day" in Minnesota.

MAELC worked to coordinate activities and media for the National Teach Ag Day celebrations, and Zach Rada, MAE President, sent an email on the day to thank all teachers for their service.

The University of Minnesota sent 'Thank You' cards to all College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences faculty, and sent a letter with a small token of appreciation to all secondary agriculture teachers. They also hosted a live-stream viewing party for all Agricultural Education students.

MAELC focused on communications such as month-long social media posts, a state-wide press release and story pitches, and emailing all agriculture teachers reminding them about the day with a link to Teach Ag resources to celebrate at the local level.

MAELC also sent all Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resource programs a 'Thank You' letter and Teach Ag poster for their classroom.

A special thanks to Forest Lake for providing a tour of their program to University of Minnesota-Agricultural Education and Applied Economics Department Head, Dr. Frances Homans.



MAELC Scholarships Offered to Recruit Future Teachers

With a severe shortage of high school agriculture teachers, there is a tremendous need in Minnesota and nationally for professionals trained in Agricultural Education. To help recruit future agriculture teachers, MAELC is once again offering scholarship programs for students studying Agricultural Education.



Both the Freshman Agricultural Education and Continuing Undergraduate Agricultural Education scholarships are due by February 1, 2016.

MAELC will also continue the Masters of Education-Initial and Additional Licensure scholarship. Applications are due November 2, 2015.

New this year, the applications are available online at www.mn.gov/maelc/scholarships.html

Congratulations to MAELC Board members, Senator Dan Sparks and Representative Rod Hamilton for receiving the 2015 Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators-Bell Ringer Award!



Program Spotlight - University of Minnesota Agricultural Education

Starting this Fall, the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Education program now offers two majors: Agricultural Education-Teacher Licensure and Agricultural Communications and Marketing (ACM).

Agricultural Education

The Agricultural Education major will remain the same as it has been, with the only change related to the varying "tracks" offered within the major. Previously, students could either be on the Teacher Licensure track or the Leadership and Communications track. Now the Agricultural Education major is solely for students who want to become licensed agriculture teachers.

This major is designed to prepare students for Agricultural Education careers. Students study a broad spectrum of coursework, including plant science, animal science, natural resources, soils, economics and agribusiness, agricultural mechanization, food science, foundations of education, foundations of agricultural education, and two semesters of field experience.

Graduates leave the University of Minnesota prepared to teach agricultural education in Minnesota.

Agricultural Communications and Marketing

Agricultural Communication & Marketing (ACM) is a unique program that helps students combine interest in and passion for food, agricultural and natural resource sciences with fundamental real-world skills in communication, education, and leadership.

This major prepares students for careers in agricultural communication, journalism, marketing, sales, training, management, leadership, business, and extension. Agribusinesses, as well as state, federal, and marketing agencies, need individuals who have a broad education in the scientific (and technical) aspects of agriculture, effective work and communication skills, and quantitative and qualitative skills to solve business problems.

The new major consolidates the former Leadership and Communications track and the Agricultural Industries and Marketing (AIM) major. Students can choose from three specializations, including *Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, Crops and Soils, and Food Industries*.

If you would like to learn more about either major, can visit www.ag-ed.cfans.umn.edu or contact Sarah Lindholm, Recruiter and Academic Advisor at sarahl@umn.edu or (612) 624-6242.



“Is ag ed teaching in your future?”

Article written by Janet Kubat Willette, Agri News



MINNETONKA — Minnesota launched an Agricultural Education Summer Internship this year to nurture and ignite an interest in teaching agricultural education. Three students participated in the inaugural internship: Michaela Gallup, Traci Block and Jack Roessler.

Amazing opportunity

Michaela Gallup was a Dassel-Cokato FFA member. In high school, she realized her agricultural education teacher had a big influence on her and she gained many new skills through FFA. Her adviser sent her to the Change Lives, Teach Ag workshop. The workshop is held during the state FFA convention and agricultural education teachers select students they think would make great teachers to attend.

Gallup was unable to attend because she was competing at the time, but she read the letter of recommendation her adviser, Eric Sawatzke, wrote. The letter was the final push she needed to major in agricultural education.

Gallup is an incoming junior at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She spent the past two summers working at jobs unconnected to agriculture. There aren't many opportunities for teaching internships during the summer, she said.

Gallup was paired with Becky Haddad, agricultural education teacher at Glencoe-Silver Lake. She spent the summer visiting students to learn about their supervised agricultural experiences, working with FFA'ers in the pork booth at the Carver County Fair and on an FFA barnyard project at the McLeod County Fair. She attended the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators summer conference and Curriculum for Agricultural and Science Education training.

“This opportunity has been amazing,” Gallup said.

Not only was the 10-week internship paid with funding from AgriBank, it introduced her to the supportive network of ag education teachers and gave her a taste of what it will be like to be in the classroom. “You don't know if you want to teach until you interact with kids,” Gallup said.

She also participated in the immersion camp and found that beneficial. The more potential teachers interact with others in the profession, the better off they'll be, she said. Gallup said not only will she be able to call Haddad when she has her own classroom but also any of the other teachers she's met through the internship.

Switching gears

Traci Block grew up on the edge of town in central Wisconsin and came to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities to major in pre-dental.

In her sophomore year, she realized a dental career might not suit her. She reflected on how she enjoyed her high school agricultural education program and changed her major to agricultural education. Ag education at the U of M has two tracts: Leadership and communications and teacher licensure. Block is doing both. She will earn her bachelor's degree in leadership and communications and will stay an extra year to earn her master's degree in teaching.

She needed an internship to graduate in May 2016 and found a great one in the Agricultural Education Summer Internship.

Block was placed with Tim Uhlenkamp at Sibley East High School. “I loved it there,” she said.

The main portion of her internship was working with the two acres of community-supported agriculture the FFA operates. Seven kids are on the payroll throughout the summer, Block said. She was in the teacher role, learning how to run a school garden and CSA while mentoring students. She helped at the county fair, attended the MAAE conference and the Ag Immersion Camp.

“I'm leaning a lot more toward teaching now,” Block said.

(continued on back page)



Traci Block, Jack Roessler, and Michaela Gallup interned with agricultural education teachers in Minnesota this summer. The three University of Minnesota students plan to be agricultural education teachers upon their graduation.

“Is ag ed teaching in your future?” (continued)

Transition

Jack Roessler was paired with Mary Hoffmann at Sleepy Eye. He was immersed in all their summer activities, from community service projects to the county fair. He visited FFA members working on supervised agricultural experience projects and went on a Region 6 Summer Ag Tour to St. Louis. He took a class for teachers on shed construction, which could be incorporated into a hands-on curriculum.

Roessler, a state FFA officer last year, was pretty sure he was going to be an agricultural education teacher, but the internship cemented his goal. The internship was an awesome opportunity to transition from member to mentor, he said. It was a good fit, providing real world experience for the incoming U of M sophomore.

Hoffmann said Roessler fit in well with the Sleepy Eye FFA chapter. “He became one of us in the short time he was here,” she said, and he has an open invitation to come back whenever he wants. It was nice for her students to have a male role model and nice for her to have help with activities during the busy summer season.

Hoffmann, who is also past president of the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators, said 10 schools applied for interns, so there is interest from teachers in having an intern. She hopes there is funding to continue the program and that more college students apply next year.

This year, there were seven or eight applicants, said Kari Schwab, Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council community program assistant. Five were offered internships, but two were unable to accept because of other opportunities.

Next year, they hope to generate more interest from students not only in Minnesota but also from Iowa, Wisconsin and North and South Dakota.

The internships are a great opportunity for college students to see what agricultural education programs do during the summer months, Hoffmann said.

The internship is part of a State Teach Ag Results program initiative, which is coordinated by the MAELC in Minnesota.



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Minnesota Agricultural Education
Leadership Council
1994 Buford Ave., Room 146
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Ag Ed Advocate

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University of Minnesota