

## ***Ideas for Agricultural Education Activities***

Warren County teachers had the opportunity to attend a Teacher In-Service session during the summers of 2006 and 2008. Listed below are specific examples from teachers who are incorporating agriculture into their classroom lessons. These Teacher In-Service sessions were sponsored by the Warren County Future of Agriculture Task Force, the Warren County Conservation District, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Penn Soil RC&D. The Warren County Conservation District and Penn State Cooperative Extension are also available to help if you have a specific idea you would like to incorporate into your classroom. We would also like your input for future Teacher In-Service sessions. The Warren County Conservation District can be reached at (814) 726-1441 or by email at [hwilcox@wconconservation.net](mailto:hwilcox@wconconservation.net) and the Penn State Cooperative Extension can be reached at (814) 563-9388.

### **A Physical Education Teacher:**

I hope to use the GPS information with my Phys. Ed. Classes this spring and I try to add information about buying local foods available during the nutrition unit in Health 9. At this time I do not have any specific lesson plans designated strictly for this information.

### **A Second Grade Social Studies and Science Teacher:**

I have used several of the things I learned during this in-service in my classroom.

In Unit 5 of our Social Studies curriculum, Our Country Long Ago, I teach about the Native Americans in our country as well as our own area. I was able to use some of what we learned on our nature walk to enhance my curriculum. In Unit 1, Where We Live, we discuss and compare urban, suburban, and rural areas. I present to the students the characteristics of the rural area and discuss the different farms and agricultural businesses we visited. i.e. Sanford Tree Farm, Meldick Farms, Hyma/Devore Lumber. Unit 2, Our Earth, also lends itself to further to discussion of the many natural resources in our area. Much time is spent discussing our landforms, crops, and what we produce in our area. I teach about farmers such as Jared Lindell and Scott Wenzel.

I am also able to use or connect some of what we learned to my science curriculum. I teach a unit about soils which ties directly to all of the farms we visited, especially Pine-Ton Farms.

### **A Physical Education and Health Teacher:**

First of all thank you for this opportunity to be a part of the Agriculture in-service.

We can use what we learned in conjunction with careers reinforcement. You brought to our attention those agricultural careers/areas of interest from the 4 year degree to the high school diploma.

In physical education we can use the GPS devices for orienteering and outdoor education. Students would need to be in-serviced in how to use them which would use spelling, graphing, writing and of course movement exploration.

In the health areas, we could apply nutrition, recycling (taking care of the earth, environment) and healthy foods exploration.

As of now we have not developed a specific lesson plan but hope to do so with the GPS when they are available

### **An Elementary School Teacher:**

As I was taught more and more environmental friendly ideas through our training I became excited about applying this to my classroom and school. This is the project we undertook.

Sugar Grove Elementary school children have found a new way to give back to others while being little environmentalists. When school began this year, we purchased a piglet that lived at the VanOrd Farm. Each day some helpful young men took the slop buckets filled with leftovers from the cafeteria and the school lunches to Mrs. VanOrd's truck where it went to help feed the pigs. This cuts the amount of garbage going into the landfill and makes the children aware of the amount of waste from their lunches.

On each teachers desk was a little piggy bank that change was collected in to help supplement the cost of the pig feed. When the pig was ready to leave the farm the AMVETS of Sugar Grove agreed to sponsor the raffle tickets. A family in the area won the pig. The proceeds were sent to Heifer Project International an organization that works with families and communities in the United States and places all around the globe to end hunger and poverty while caring for the earth. Sugar Grove Elementary was able to purchase a pig, a flock of chicks, a flock of ducks and three rabbits to help those in need.

Thus, the children are learning a valuable lesson about how giving in little ways can impact others in many large ways.

We are planning to continue this project next year. Money for a piglet was saved from the proceeds.

### **A Second Grade Teacher:**

Much of what we learned at the teacher-in-service last summer can and has been applied in the classroom. Some examples of how this has already been accomplished are listed below.

Rotation of Crops and Rotational Grazing: At our visit to Meldick Farms there was information shared and evidence of rotational grazing of the beef cattle and of the chicken enclosure. This idea was introduced in our reading curriculum with the story of George Washington Carver and his progressive ideas of rotating cotton with sweet potatoes and peanuts. The students were able to make the connection when I referred to fields they have observed in our area that may have corn, hay, or oats rotated year after year. We discussed how this makes for healthier crops and soil.

Native Tree Identification: A presenter from Penn State took us on a nature walk where he identified and shared how Native Americans used trees and plants in our area. Our social studies curriculum had a unit on Native Americans and the first settlers of our country. During this unit the students were taught about the plants and crops that were sowed and harvested at that time. Students also identified trees native to our area when studying plants.

Soil: We took a trip to Pine-Ton Farms where we observed the effects of soil too cold for proper germination and soil too wet for proper growth of the corn crop. We are just beginning an in-depth study of soil in our science curriculum. First we will be learning about the make-up of soil. Then we will be using information about soils to make observations, predictions, and

hypotheses about plant growth while watching our own seeds sprout and grow. We will also be observing the changes that worms make to the soil by adding live worms to individual “compost bags”.

This is an example of the ways that the knowledge gained during the teacher-in-service is being used in my classroom.

### **A High School Biology Teacher:**

It's been two years, but everything that I learned during that workshop I can apply in some way. I thinking the most important thing that was emphasized was how much diversity there is in our county. I, myself, pay more attention to consuming locally than I used to. Our farmers support a much more organic way of life which leads to healthy lifestyle.

I apply this experience in small ways in each of my classes. For example, when we talk about bacterial antibiotic resistance, we discuss how cows and pigs are fed and given antibiotics, hormones, etc. When we talk about pollutants, we discuss farming techniques. Actually, I am teaching a forestry class for the first time this year, and many of the lessons in the large binder we received have been very helpful.