

# 2019 Teacher Agriculture Expedition

## SPONSOR REPORT



(L to R): Kneeling: Twyla McNeil (Warman), Mavis Mulder (Kindersley), Melissa Galay (AITC-C), Sara Shymko (AITC-SK), Debbie Bailey (FCC), Zach Fellows (AITC-SK), Nic Freeden (Kenaston). Standing front row: Krista Bula (Martensville), Richanda Fisher (Regina), Amy Korver (Delisle), Denille Martineau (Hanley), Sabrina McCubbing (Hanley), Michelle Lafayette (Humboldt), Melissa Koroll (Hanley), Erika & Cyle Stewart (Pine Ranch). Standing Back Row: Jeremy Mewis (Prince Albert), Roseanne Carter (Saskatoon), Reanne Lajeunesse (Saskatoon), Peter Cowan (North Battleford), Susan Jorgensen (AITC-SK), Belle Watson (Whitewood), Bailie Shindle (Kelliher), Sherry Nadeau (Osler).

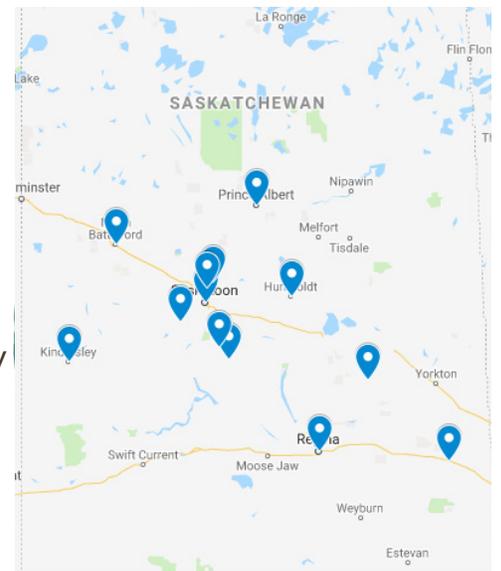
**Agriculture**   
in the **Classroom**



## 2019 Teacher Agriculture Expedition Building Teacher Champions!

At Agriculture in the Classroom-SK we connect students and agriculture. In August our Agriculture Expedition took another approach to connect TEACHERS and agriculture over a three-day, 750 kilometer expedition throughout west-central Saskatchewan. We wanted teachers to experience first-hand the sights, smells and sounds of a farm and to learn about ingredients grown and raised in our province and more importantly about the people who produce these products. Our hope was to provide the teachers with a better understanding and appreciation of agriculture, but the results were far more inspiring!

We kicked off the tour with a welcome at the AITC-SK headquarters in Saskatoon that included introductions of the crew of twenty strangers we were to spend the next three days with. We had teacher representation from many schools across Saskatchewan including 14 different communities such as Osler, Delisle, Kelliher, Regina, Whitewood, Prince Albert, Kindersley, Humboldt, Saskatoon and more. And the teachers were from a variety of grade levels and subjects, even including an adult educator.



**DAY 1: Star Egg (Saskatoon, SK), Rayner Dairy Research & Teaching Facility (Saskatoon, SK), Sun River Honey Inc. (Grandora, SK), Spring Creek Garden (Outlook, SK), and Wolf Willow Winery & Campground (Broderick, SK).**

These stops brought ample knowledge and perspective to the teachers about the diversity of agriculture in our province. From managing hives of honeybees to tracking and monitoring dairy cattle feed to harvesting all sorts of vegetables, there were many different perspectives and uses of technology for the teachers to observe and gain knowledge about. The teachers learned about the time commitment and effort put in by producers each day to ensure they are raising healthy animals and providing quality products. And understanding how the farmer's livelihood depended on the well-being of



their animals (even their bees!). It was clear the passion and pride these producers had for farming and growing food in Saskatchewan. We ended the day sampling local fruit wine and experiencing the beauty of the South Saskatchewan River at Wolf Willow Winery and Campground.

**“This trip taught me that there is so much more to agriculture than I thought. The care that all these producers show to their animals is unmatched. I am excited to be able to take this back to my small farming community and feel confident in my helping students choose a career in agriculture.”** Bailie Shindle, Kelliher School.



**DAY 2: G-Mac’s AgTeam (Milden, SK), Gardiner Dam, Pine Ranch Ltd (Morse, SK), and Mainstay Inn (Riverhurst, SK).**

Our hosts at G-Mac’s shared their knowledge and expertise on what an agronomist does when working with farmers to insure the health of their soil and crops. This stop generated some of the best discussion between our teachers and hosts as they covered topics such as pesticides and herbicides as well as why we use GMOs. This stop included visiting some of the fields and an actual grain farm that the agronomists work with to see what sorts of pests and problems the crops are up against. From there we made a quick pit stop at the Gardiner Dam to get a preview of the irrigation we’d be learning about the next day and then enjoyed a real Saskatchewan ferry ride in Riverhurst. Our last stop of the day was at Pine Ranch, a cow/calf operation with Erika Stewart, provincial coordinator for the Verified Beef Plus program. We heard from Erika and her family about their passion for their animals, their land, and the ag industry. They hosted our entire crew for a delicious meal of their beef.

**“Farmers are environmentalists. They care about their animals. They do everything they can to protect their environment because their livelihood depends on it.”** – Sherry Nadeau, Osler School.



**DAY 3: West Bridgeford Meats Ltd. (Tugaske, SK), Canada-Saskatchewan Irrigation Diversification Centre (Outlook, SK), and Ballek Farms Ltd. (Broderick, SK).**

We started the morning by heading to Tugaske to visit a slaughterhouse and meat processing facility. It was a powerful experience to learn about the next steps following our visit to the ranch, but to also hear about how much care and regulation goes into making sure that slaughter is done humanely and safely. Following that we drove north back to Outlook to visit the CSIDC and learn about some of the important research that goes on there as well as how the dam and irrigation play such important roles for the nearby areas. Many teachers also learned about fertigation for the first time! From there we went to the Ballek Farm where we enjoyed a delicious home cooked meal featuring local ingredients and many of our sponsors' commodities. Jade Ballek, a school principal and previous Agriculture Expedition attendee, spoke to us about her family's farm. She shared many impactful stories of the realities of the farming lifestyle and challenges their family has faced through the years being producers in the agriculture industry. Jade then brought us to their nearby canal which supplies the water to irrigate their crops.

Our trip ended with a tour and photo opportunity at a Saskatchewan skyscraper, the Broderick grain elevator. As we ventured back to Saskatoon, it was inspiring to hear the incredible conversations being had as teachers processed the conversations they had with producers, discussed information they had gained, and reflected on the overall experience.

**“The teacher agriculture expedition was amazing! We met so many local farmers and people in agri-business who opened their doors to us and were excited to share their passion for the industry. I have a much deeper understanding of Sask Agriculture and I am excited to share this learning with my students.”** Melissa Koroll, Hanley School.



## The Impact

One of the great things that happened throughout the tour was that a lot of our hosts were educators as well, from substitute teachers all the way to school principals. It was great to see the connection between agriculture and education, but even better for them to connect meaningfully with the teachers who attended our tour. Teachers are consumers too and through the expedition they were able to experience the passion producers in Saskatchewan have for growing safe and healthy food, and to hear their stories to understand that this is not just a money maker, it's their livelihood. When we asked the teachers what the best part of the expedition was, over half stated the direct interaction with the farmers and producers.

A week after the expedition we heard most of the teachers had already taken the next steps to share their experience and learnings with colleagues. This included posting on social media, presenting their experience and information about AITC-SK during professional development days, sharing resources with staff members, reaching out to local farmers to come into the classroom. We have seen an increase in engagement on social media from these teachers, they are helping us reach and connect with more teachers. Through this Agriculture Expedition experience, we have truly built meaningful connections and ultimately teacher champions.

**“The Ag Expedition is hands down the best PD I have received. Our tour guides and producer/presenters were extremely knowledgeable, passionate, and well-spoken about the broad areas of agriculture involved in this tour. I will be sharing this expedition with colleagues so that more teachers can learn from the experience and very excited to enrich my students learning.” Peter Cowan, Connaught Elementary, North Battleford.**



Agriculture is a vital part of Saskatchewan and we have always been proud of our industry. The Agriculture Expedition allowed us to connect our proud industry members with the educators in our province who are influencing the minds of our young people. The teachers could discuss their concerns about food and how it is produced directly from the people who are growing it. **The teacher's trust in the agriculture industry with respect to animal welfare and pesticide use showed the greatest improvement from 6.9 and 6.7 respectively out of 10 prior to the expedition to 9 and 8.8 respectively out of 10 following the expedition.** All areas saw improvement in trust including antibiotic and vaccine use, GMOs, soil health management and fertilizer use on farms.

*"This experience was good for my soul. I gained so much more knowledge on a wide range of ag experiences to share with students, but it has also impacted me as a person & the choices I will make in my everyday food story." Krista Bula, Venture Heights Elementary School, Martensville.*



During the Agriculture Expedition we shared our journey and learnings on our social media accounts. Our posts alone gained over 29,000 impressions and over 3,400 engagements in just three days. In addition, teachers were sharing about their experiences on their personal accounts reaching an even vaster amount of people we may not otherwise have the opportunity to share Saskatchewan's incredible food story with.

We are incredibly thankful for your support which allowed us to provide this memorable and meaningful experience for teachers. We can already see this experience has had a lasting impact on the teachers which will be passed on to students for years to come.



Thank you once again for your generous support!



