


2024

Teacher Agriculture Expedition



Agriculture 
in the Classroom
Connecting Kids and Agriculture

SPONSOR REPORT



Overview

The annual AITC Teacher Expedition was a three-day action-packed, hands-on tour that took place on August 20-22 in the North Battleford area. This year, we had the opportunity to host fifteen teachers from across the province. Primary, middle years, and high school teachers had the opportunity to personally interact with farmers and industry members at their farms and agri-businesses where they engaged in discussion and demonstrated their role in producing safe, healthy, and affordable food for our province and the world. Teachers learned about how science, research, and technology have helped improve the sustainability of food production and how they play a key role in keeping Saskatchewan agriculture competitive in the global market. Each of the tour stops helped motivate teachers while providing them with the tools and knowledge to incorporate agriculture education into their classrooms.

Prior to attending the Expedition, teachers were surveyed on their general knowledge regarding the agricultural industry. Teacher responses indicated their knowledge was diverse. Several teachers had little to no knowledge about the industry, while some teachers had farming backgrounds. There were no teachers who indicated they were active farmers present on this trip. Teachers also had the opportunity to indicate if they had any questions or concerns about agriculture. Some questions included:

- How can the next generation understand agriculture and get involved when family farms are declining?
- How can we encourage appreciation for the mutual relationship between agriculture and the environment, promoting the adoption of sustainable practices that benefit both?
- How do all the different roles in the industry impact each other?
- What kind of different career opportunities is there in agriculture?

- What developments are happening to help farmers supply the world's growing population?
- How diverse is the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan?
- What steps does it take to get produce, meat, eggs and dairy from the farm to the grocery store?





Day 1

Star Egg (Saskatoon), Prairie Swine Virtual Tour at Biggar Bites (Biggar), Bar Over N7 (Biggar), Kihiw Restaurant (North Battleford).

The first day of the tour started on August 20. Teachers from Saskatoon, Swift Current, Regina, Maidstone, Sturgis, Lashburn, and Balcarres all met in Saskatoon. On their first day, teachers had the opportunity to see how diverse agriculture is by touring operations involved in processing, barn operations, and raising animals.

The first stop at Star Egg allowed teachers to get an inside look at how eggs are transported from farms to processors to store. They got a tour of the plant where they saw the loading docks and machines that are responsible for moving millions of eggs every day! They were introduced to each machine involved in the processing and packaging of the eggs. They also got a deeper understanding of the marketing that goes into eggs and how to read the labels in the store.



While enjoying a delicious Pork Power Bowl at Biggar Bites, teachers had the opportunity to learn about the Prairie Swine Centre with a presentation put on by Sask Pork. The virtual tour was hosted by Manager of Information Services, Ken Engele and Sask Pork's Community Relations/Education Coordinator, Jessica Podhordeski.

On this informational and engaging virtual tour, teachers learned more about aspects of pork production in Saskatchewan. They were virtually led through the Prairie Swine barns by Ken to learn more about the people, pigs, and process that leads to products we see on our tables.



The next stop was to Bar Over N7 where teachers had the opportunity to get up close and personal with Craig's herd of bison in his pasture as well as engage in insightful conversations about raising bison. Discussion included the way of life for a bison rancher, breeding, processing and marketing. In addition, teachers discovered the importance of bison in creating healthy ecosystems and promoting sustainability.



To conclude our first day, the tour made a trip to North Battleford where we ate supper at the Kihiw Restaurant and were served their signature Bannock Bison Burgers. After supper we stayed at the North Battleford Holiday Inn Express and Suites for some rest before the next busy day.



Day 2

WARC (Scott), West Central Pelleting (Wilkie), T. Scherman Farms (Wilkie), Simplot (Hamlin), Blend Restaurant + Bar (North Battleford).

After an evening of socializing and getting to know one another, the group's first stop was to Western Applied Research Corporation (WARC) near Scott. There the teachers got to ride on a trailer set up with benches and speakers to transport them to all the different test plots on the property. These included oats, pulses, canola, and wheat trials and demonstrations. The knowledgeable agronomists leading the tour explained the importance of their work and how their work maximizes farmers yields, which in turn leads to more sustainable practices.



The second stop of the day was at West Central Pelleting where the group learned about marketing and gained an understanding of why producers use pellets for their animal feed. Everyone got to see samples of cattle, pig, bison, sheep, and rabbit pellets and the benefits of using pellets over other types of feed. This stop concluded with a tour of the processing plant where the pellets are made and shipped.



Next stop was to Trevor Scherman's farm near Wilkie where they learned about wheat and canola production. Trevor and his father are farmers foremost, but they are also inventors, engineers, and businessmen. Trevor talked to the teachers about what sustainability means to him and other farmers and how that led to his invention of their combine loss analysis device – to help farmers get back what they put in.



Simplot Grower's Solution in Hamlin was the fourth stop of the day. Here teachers got to tour the fertilizer plant and learn how fertilizer is mixed, processed, and shipped to farmers and different companies. Simplot's agronomist talked about the four R's (right place, right time, right type, right amount) and how to make the fertilizer application process more sustainable for both the farmers and the planet.



For supper the group headed back to North Battleford and ate Blend Restaurant + Bar where they had a proper meal of prime rib steak, potatoes, and beans with a cheesecake dessert. Everyone was well fed going into the night where they stayed at Jackfish Lodge in Battlefords Provincial Park.



Day 3

CMT Farms (Cochin), Largo Community Farm (Jackfish Lake), Western Development Museum (North Battleford), Sunnyside Creamery (Martensville).

Teachers started off the last day with some delicious baked goods from a local bakery in North Battleford before heading to a pasture where they met with a local rancher from the area. Chad Tuck and his son had rounded up their herd of purebred Black Angus cattle to demonstrate how cattle are raised, discuss marketing, and field questions from teachers. Some teachers even got to feed the cattle right out of their hands!



The next stop was to Largo Community Farm located right along Jackfish Lake. This farm is ran completely off solar energy and is focused on sustainable practices. The Largo family gave an immersive tour showing their multiple extensive gardens as well as the cows, pigs, chickens, and sheep that they raise. The teachers got to learn about the trials and tribulations of traditional methods of growing and raising food for others to enjoy year-round.



While enjoying a catered meal at the Western Development Museum in North Battleford, teachers had the opportunity to partake in a lunch and learn presented by Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan. During this presentation, teachers watched a virtual barn tour led by Chicken Farmers of Saskatchewan Vice Chair, Tiffany Martinka, which featured plenty of valuable information including their own family's chicken operation. Next, teachers had the opportunity to engage in an in-person Q and A, which was led by Communications and Producer Programs Manager, Frank Cuevas and local chicken farmer, Brad Beaver.



To finish off the tour, the last trip was to Sunnyside Creamery near Martensville, where teachers got to learn about small-scale dairy farming, get up close to some of the Holstein milking cows, and have a Q and A session with Martha who runs the farm with her husband Bas. Everyone got to try some freshly pasteurized 5% milk and homemade ice cream which was a wonderful way to conclude the tour before heading back home!





The Food

Throughout the tour, teachers had the opportunity to enjoy a number of authentically Saskatchewan snacks and meals. All of the snacks and meals highlighted products produced right here in our province. Chicken, oats, eggs, beef, canola, pork, pulses, wheat, dairy, and bison were all featured ingredients in our delicious meals and snacks throughout the three days.



and gaining unique learning experiences focused on our province’s innovative, sustainable, and globally recognized agricultural sector. Teachers consistently praised the valuable insights they gained at each stop, the enthusiasm of the tour guides, and the diversity of the agricultural operations and businesses we visited.



It was inspiring to see the excitement teachers brought back from the Expedition. Many educators are eager to integrate their new knowledge into their classrooms, collaborating with colleagues to develop new resources, utilizing agriculture-related educational materials, and sharing their experiences during professional development sessions and on social media. Additionally, several teachers plan to connect with local agricultural communities to arrange future field trips or invite guest speakers. It’s clear that teachers have a crucial role in shaping the future of the agricultural industry.

The Impact

Every year, the goal of AITC’s Teacher Expedition is to offer educators from across the province a deeper insight into and appreciation for agriculture by engaging with industry professionals. Over the course of three days, and nearly 700 kilometers, teachers had the chance to interact with a variety of industry experts, participating in conversations



By participating in professional development opportunities like this, they are well-equipped to motivate their students about the significance of agriculture in our province and beyond.





The Outcome

After surveying the teachers who attended we found that overall the teachers rated the Expedition as excellent. They provided several testimonials that speak directly to the impact the tour had on them as individuals and educators. Each teacher indicated how grateful they were to have been provided a unique, experiential, and engaging professional development opportunity. Within the survey, teachers also expressed how their understanding of agriculture in our province has increased as a result of attending the Expedition. The knowledge that teachers obtained from each tour enables them to transfer their learnings back into their classrooms.



The AITC Teacher Expedition is a unique learning opportunity that will impact teachers, students, families, schools, and communities in our province for generations.

The following are just some of the testimonies from the teachers who attended the Expedition

“This has been a wonderful experience. I have enjoyed meeting some of our Saskatchewan farmers and producers that feed the world! Farming is so much more than seeding and harvesting or ‘simply’ raising livestock. An eye-opening trip that gave me a glimpse into the multifaceted ag sector of Saskatchewan. Great job, AITC!”

–Lorelei Kotylak, Balcarres

“This AITC Teacher Ag Tour is one of the best PDs I’ve ever attended. We were very well taken care of and the amount of info I learned was tremendous! Each tour, meal and memento was carefully thought out and very informative. I will be encouraging my colleagues to attend in 2025.”

–Carmen Kingsbury, Saskatoon



“Thank you for allowing a girl who grew up with a mining background to learn about farming. I teach a large variety of subjects where I can use farming knowledge but without a base I am not confident to teach students who know about farming already, but getting a variety of contacts and hands on experiences gives me so much passion to start in September.”

–Laura Dawson, Maidstone





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“The Teacher Expedition opened my eyes to the world of agricultural industry in our community. I will look forward to sharing local stories with our students to develop their understanding of plants, animals, and farming in Sask.”

–Diana Jensen, Regina



“AITC teacher expedition was the highlight of my summer it was a whirlwind three days where I was able to learn SO MUCH, connect with other educators across the province and learn about a wealth of resources!”

– Kayleigh, Regina



“This experience has been FANTASTIC! Our AITC leaders were so fun and knowledgeable. They helped to answer questions and went above and beyond! The snacks and meals were so so so so good! Never went hungry and the prime rib at Blend

was spectacular, Thanks! I was so happy I got accepted on this trip! It broadened my views of other forms of agriculture that I am not as familiar with.”

– Renee Wiebe, Saskatoon

The annual AITC Teacher Expedition was another great success. The impact this unique professional development opportunity has on teachers personally and professionally will be evident for years to come. We want to sincerely thank our various sponsors for contributing to these valuable learning experiences for educators across our province. Thank you!



The Teacher Agriculture Expedition would not be possible without you.

THANK YOU SPONSORS!

— GOLD —

