



Agriculture
in the **classroom**

2007
ANNUAL REPORT



Agriculture in the Classroom—Manitoba Inc.

Cultivating an Interest in Agriculture

www.aitc.mb.ca

Agriculture in the Classroom - Manitoba Inc.

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Greetings from the PRESIDENT & CHAIR **Scott Van Alstyne**

In my last report I spoke about putting our Members to work to help us formulate a plan to lead this organization forward. The process gave the AITC-M Board an opportunity to hear directly from our sponsors and their wishes as to how they see the organization progressing. We have now had a year with our strategic plan in place and the future of AITC-M is looking bright indeed. It is an exciting time in agriculture and we will strive to be the respected voice of agriculture awareness in Manitoba.



On behalf of the Board I would like to say a big THANK YOU to the hundreds of volunteers from our industry for making AITC-M events and programs a great success. Our volunteers are special in that not only do they give freely of their time but they are also passionate about our industry. That passion is passed on to the students, teachers and parents that we interact with. You are great role models for our industry and hopefully your dedication and hard work will pay off in having some of the students we interacted with entering this great profession. I would also like to thank all our members. Your continued financial support will enable us to continue to grow and bring our message of *Accurate, Balanced and Current* agriculture information.

A big THANK YOU also to our staff, Johanne, Leanne and Diane. Your dedication and hard work is appreciated by all who cross your paths and your love of agriculture is evident in everything you do. I would also like to THANK Wendy Bulloch who was a Project Coordinator for our organization. We wish

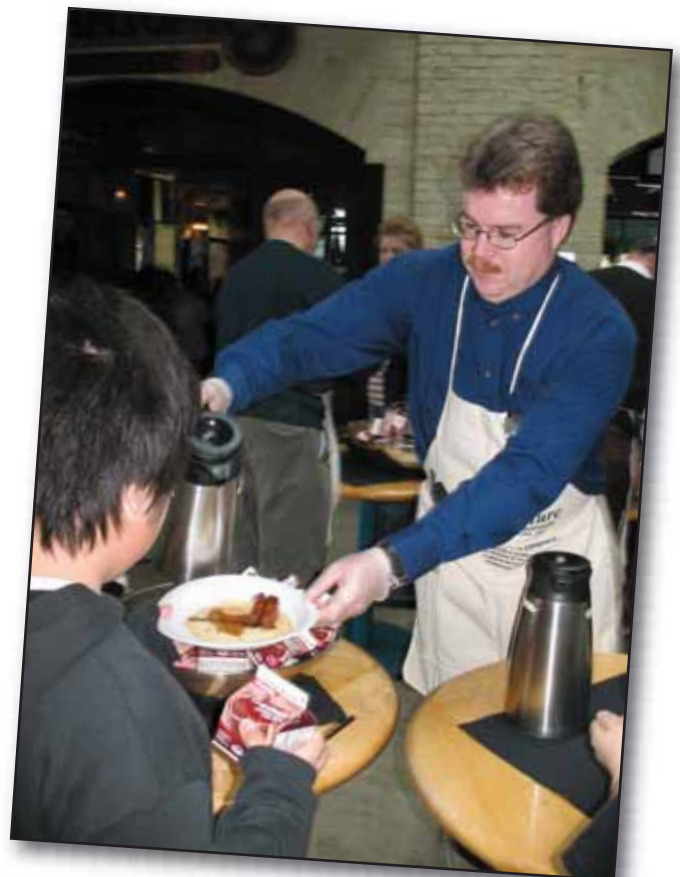
you every success in your future endeavors.

Finally I would like to thank our past and present Directors. In 2007, Jim Berry and Bill Ridgeway stepped off the board. Thank you Bill and Jim for all your commitment to agriculture awareness and education. At the same time, we welcomed Brian Hellegards and Raymond Mangin to our Board of Directors.

It has been a pleasure working towards agriculture awareness in Manitoba and we look forward to a great 2008.

Scott Van Alstyne

President & Chair of the Board



AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM – MANITOBA INC.

Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba Inc. provided over 16,000 students in Manitoba with a variety of agriculture hands-on learning opportunities in 2007.

Manitoba Ag Days Tours:

Since 1998, Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba Inc., in partnership with Manitoba Ag Days, has hosted a fun and interactive school tour program for Grade 7 and 8 students in Manitoba. In January 2007, over 300 Grade 7 and 8 students and their teachers attended the first ever Amazing Agriculture Race! The morning was spent taking part in an agriculture learning experience linked to the Grade 7 and 8 science program of ecosystems and water. Students were then given the opportunity to take part in an Amazing Race which found them interacting with the various booths at Ag Days. AITC-M is grateful for the financial support received from Manitoba Ag Days Inc. for this worthwhile program. Comments from teachers included: **“Well organized, educational and fun!”**

Made in Manitoba Breakfasts:

Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba continues to facilitate the famous Made in Manitoba Breakfasts. These breakfasts are a major hit with students, teachers, and our producer volunteers who come to help.

During the 2007 year, Made in Manitoba Breakfasts (MIMB's) were hosted at the following schools: Arborg, Deloraine, Forrest, St. Lazare in rural Manitoba and Joseph Teres and Inkster schools in Winnipeg.

Over 1500 students experienced a Made in Manitoba Breakfast, gleaned information on agriculture in Manitoba, and were able to thank a Manitoba producer for his/her role in producing the food they were able to eat and enjoy!



The audio visual presentation continues to enhance the learning for the students participating. As always the students thoroughly enjoyed the local food on their plates with a new understanding and appreciation for all the efforts made by our industry to bring it there!

Special recognition goes to our many MIMB sponsors including: Countryside Farms, The Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, The Manitoba Canola Growers Association, The Manitoba Pork Council, Pizzey's Milling and Baking, Farm Credit Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Amazing Agriculture Adventure:

AITC-M continued with these two flagship events in June in Brandon in partnership with the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba and in September in Winnipeg with the Red River Exhibition Association.

Each event offers 18 interactive learning stations for Grade 4 and 5 students, teachers, volunteers and parent volunteers to gather information on agriculture in Manitoba.

These 18 interactive stations would not be possible without the extraordinary support of our volunteers, commodity groups, non-profit organizations, government, industry and businesses that support us! Numbers reached close to 2000 as students, plus their teachers, volunteers and parent volunteers participated in the two Amazing Agriculture Adventures in 2007.





Some comments from teachers include:

- ***“Interactive stations were the best!”***
- ***“Very well run event.”***
- ***“Overall, I thought this was a great hands-on learning experience for all students to be apart of!”***
- ***“Both student guides and station leaders were friendly and spoke at an appropriate level and vocabulary”***
- ***“Excellent adventure!”***

This event continues to be rated one of the best field trips ever. Each year, as new schools leave in amazement and appreciation for the role of agriculture in their everyday lives!

Teacher Learning Adventure:

August 2007 saw the exciting return of this important program for educators in Manitoba. Eleven teachers committed to five days of experiential learning with many excursions, adventures and workshops within Manitoba’s agricultural industry. Under the theme of *Addressing Misconceptions in Agriculture*, participants visited a canola crushing plant, took part in an early morning milking session, experienced a land conservation project, went down in a potash mine, met with many producers, heard their stories, asked them questions and garnered a whole new understanding of agriculture. Acting in a role of media, the teachers also developed the first “School Zone” newspaper which has been distributed all over MB to other educators and partners. The TLA helps teachers understand how they can integrate agriculture into their existing curriculum and why they should! A truly life changing experience for all participants. Some comments from the teacher evaluations:

- ***“Their passion is contagious and puts agriculture on the front burner....AITC-M has definitely opened my eyes to the broader issues and opportunities in agriculture. This has definitely affected me as a person and as a teacher.”***
- ***“I have also learned or been reminded – don’t take anything for granted when teaching a group of kids about agriculture!”***
- ***“The passion farmers have for the land they till and the animals they work with. The strength of the family farm, the wonderful reception we received over and over again. Kids don’t necessarily know where their food comes from. Kids are the TARGET to change the future about attitudes to agriculture. I’m on board. What a wonderful learning experience – you have put so much energy and creativity into planning this amazing experience. Thank you!!!”***

Other activities:

In addition to the main programs AITC-M offers, we responded to various requests to provide agriculture awareness/ education through other venues and groups.

Royal Manitoba Winter Fair: March 2007

Agriculture in the Classroom, in partnership with the Provincial Exhibition, provided agriculture awareness opportunities for children attending the Manitoba Royal Winter Fair at the end of March. Thousands of adults and young people visited our display to take part in hands-on activities.

University of Manitoba Agricultural and Food Sciences: Spring 2007

AITC-M sees great importance in working with post secondary institutions such as the U of M to develop new initiatives to engage senior students in agriculture. AITC-M met with the faculty to discuss present activities and look at new ways to partner.

Celebrate Agriculture in the City: March 2007

AITC-M played a significant role in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s awareness event held at

the Forks Market in Winnipeg. Not only did AITC-M participate with a hands-on display over the three days, we also facilitated a Made in Manitoba Breakfast right in the Market as a kick off to the event. Over a hundred students from an inner city school enjoyed the breakfast and took part in the activities on site.



AITC US Meeting: Lincoln, Nebraska: March 2007

Johanne Ross was asked to attend the Central US AITC Consortium meeting as part of a delegation from Canada. This was an excellent opportunity to report on AITC activities in Manitoba while learning from our American AITC partners. A very productive meeting which also proved to develop a new network of communication on agriculture awareness and education resources and ideas.



attendance at the Red River Exhibition. Teachers and students attended to experience this interesting interactive exhibit on renewable resources producing non-food products within a real kitchen.

US AITC National Conference: June 2007

Executive Director Johanne Ross was invited to attend and speak on behalf of AITC in Canada at this national conference in New Orleans LA, with representatives from 49 states attending.

This not only was an exceptional opportunity to showcase AITC-M, but also an incredible opportunity to bring back hundreds of resources and program ideas to Manitoba.

AITC-M Website/Logo: April 2007

Staff worked with BCG Communications to develop a new look and website for AITC-M. The user friendly website has exhibited record numbers of hits since its launch in April. Many new areas in the site serve as a great resource for members, media, educators and students. The new profile for AITC-M included a cheery new logo and an accurate tag line: "Cultivating an Interest in Agriculture".

Western Region Initiative: October 2007

The WRI committee of AITC-M disbanded in 2007. Each of the members continues to play an important role within AITC-M as a valued volunteer. Thank you to: Linda Carter, Des Czerkowski, Carma Levandoski, Carla Beaudry, Patsy Michiels, Marvin Elder, Clayton Robins, Jim Bambridge, Ted Eastley, David Day and Wes Williamson for all of their work on WRI.

Agriculture Awareness Committee Spring – Winter 2007

Executive Director, Johanne Ross, continued to participate in this provincial steering committee initiated by the MB Rural Adaptation Council, to work collaboratively with partners from across the province. A new project entitled, The Faces of Agriculture, was developed and proposed to the Council for funding. AITC-M was the applicant for the project on behalf of the committee and will facilitate its functions if approved. The project would have champions from all across the industry working together to put a positive "face to agriculture" to all Manitobans.

Producer Pen Pals: Fall 2007

Due to ongoing requests from teachers for names of producers for students to correspond with, AITC-M staff initiated a producer pen pal database. This project is a great way for students to ask producers specific questions and make those important connections from the farm back to the food on their plate and to the importance of agriculture in their everyday lives.

Manitoba School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program: April 2007 to present

Johanne Ross sat as a stakeholder on this provincial government committee. AITC-M is viewed as a valuable partner to be involved as Manitoba Health investigates the opportunity to provide a healthy snack program to Manitoba schools. This is an ongoing activity that AITC-M will remain involved in.

Summary

Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba has experienced another very positive year in 2007

providing, accurate balanced and current agriculture awareness messages. The messages have been delivered through AITC-M's various activities and excellent resources to thousands of



students and teachers, in addition to hundreds of other individuals who exhibited a keen interest in agriculture awareness of children and agriculture.

These activities are not possible without the excellent support of volunteers from the various government departments, agriculture industry, business and non-profit sector partners. AITC-M extends a sincere thank you to all of you for your support as we *cultivate an interest in agriculture!*

Brandon 125 Celebration: May 2007

AITC-M staff took part with an agricultural heritage station at Brandon's 125th birthday. Hundreds of students from schools in and around Brandon took part in grinding wheat activities and making butter. "The evolution of agriculture" was the theme used to tie today's modern agriculture to the days where it all began.

The Green Kitchen: June 2007

AITC-M staff assisted the Green Kitchen project in its

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *Johanne Ross*

***“When you're through changing,
you're through.”***

Bruce Barton



As many of you know, I like to explore quotes in my life, both professional and personal. As I was reflecting on writing this final note for the 2007 AITC-M report, I couldn't help but be drawn to how much the organization has grown and changed

over the past years. This quote has been one I have kept in mind as we look at new ways of doing our important work; new initiatives, new ideas. It is not always easy to accept change in our world, especially when things seem to be working the way we have been doing it in the past. However, in noticing the ways in which we have been able to reach students and teachers with accurate, balanced and current information on agriculture, we have had to change with the times. AITC-M staff has had to keep the finger on the pulse of what appeals to young people. How do they like to learn? What excites them? What do they care about? How can AITC-M involve itself in today's changing world of technology to stay savvy with our delivery of positive, engaging, agricultural messages? As an organization, we must strive to keep abreast of and to embrace change. Without it, we will not continue to grow.

I continue to be proud and passionate as I work on AITC-M's members' behalf to cultivate an interest in agriculture. The work being done is professional, accurate, balanced and current. AITC-M is not set in its ways and will always be open to new systems of delivering agriculture awareness/ education messages within the ever-changing and innovative agriculture industry. Acceptance of change and new ways of doing things is a part of why AITC-M is so successful. If you have a thought, an idea or a concern, we would love to hear from you. Help us to take agriculture awareness and education to the next level in Manitoba. I look forward to continued work and commitment alongside you, the member, as we continue to ensure a bright future for agriculture.

Lastly, my sincere recognition and admiration to an inspiring Board and staff who stay so committed to AITC-M and who have brought it through change and growth to where it stands today!



The 2007 year was another year of terrific reward and success! I am pleased to report that AITC-M:

- Reached more students, over 16,000!,
- Increased demand for its programs,
- Was asked to be involved in many different inspiring committees,
- Received great media coverage; TV, radio, print and even the internet,
- Was recognized as having something to share and learn from by being asked to speak at local and international meetings and conferences,
- Was supported by many new members and partners,
- Enhanced it's staff elements and empowered them to try new ideas and to learn and experience along with Manitoba students and teachers.



*Special thanks to the core members
of Agriculture in the Classroom –
Manitoba Inc.*



JAMES RICHARDSON INTERNATIONAL



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Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba Inc. is grateful for the support of its partners, members and volunteers. We could not deliver our programs without you! AITC-M is a not-for-profit independent organization dedicated to enhancing society's awareness of agriculture by educating our children.

***Contact us to find out how you can get involved.
For a full list of our friends, please check our website***

www.aitc.mb.ca

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