



# EXTENSION

# Nebraska Ag Literacy Festivals

## More than 6,070 students educated in 2023

REPORTED BY: Cole Meador, Extension Educator

**IMPACT SUMMARY STATEMENT:** *In 2023, 20 Nebraska Extension Ag Literacy Festivals reported educating more than 6,070 second, third, fourth and fifth grade students. These festivals strive to increase youth’s knowledge of the food system and to develop a better understanding, confident attitudes and interests regarding the food system. Students from 153 schools attended a Nebraska Extension Ag Literacy Festival in March, April, May, October and September of 2023. Based on teachers completing the evaluation, **91% indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their students learned more about agriculture and the food system as a result of attending a Nebraska Extension Ag Literacy Festival.***

Upon attending the Ag Literacy Festivals, teachers were guided to provide evaluation. Teacher feedback was collected by utilizing an online evaluation tool (Qualtrics). More than 117 (N=117) teacher responses were received and assessed.

### TOWNS/CITIES and SCHOOLS ATTENDING

- Ackerman Elementary, Anchor Pointe
- Archbishop Bergan, Arlington Elementary, Ashbury Elem
- Banner County, Bayard Elementary, Betz Elementary, Blumfield Elementary, Bridgeport Public Schools, Bruning-Davenport
- Centennial, Chadron Primary, Christ Lutheran School, Crawford Elementary, Creek Valley Elementary, Crete Intermediate School, Cross County
- DC West Elementary, Dorchester Public School
- Emerson Elementary, Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran
- Fairview Elem., Faith Lutheran, Fillmore Central, Fullerton Elementary
- G Stanley Hall, Garden County, Gordon Elementary
- Hay Springs, Heartland, Hemingford
- Hillside, Howard Elementary, Howells-Dodge Consolidated
- Jackson Elem.
- Leonard Lawrence, Lifegate Christian School, Lincoln Christian School, Linden Elementary, Lindsay Holy Family, Logan View Elementary.
- Malcolm , Mary Lynch Elementary, Meadows Elementary, Messiah Lutheran School, Milford Elementary, Milliken Park Elementary, Mitchell Elementary, Mockingbird Elementary, Morrill
- North Bend Central
- Pine Creek Elementary, Platte Center Elementary, Potter-Dix
- Roosevelt Elementary, Rushville Elementary
- Seward Elementary, Shelby-Rising City, Shell Creek, Shickley, South Platte, Springfield Elementary
- St Wenceslaus Wahoo, St. Anthony, St. Bonaventure, St. James School, St. John Lutheran School, St. Joseph Catholic School, St. Peter Catholic School (Lincoln), St. Stephen the Martyr, St. Thomas More, St. Wenceslaus
- Superior, Sutton
- Tekamah-Herman , Thayer Central, Trinity Lutheran School – Fremont, Two Springs
- Wahoo Elementary, Washington Elementary, West Park Elementary, Westfall Elementary – Malcolm, Wilber-Clatonia, Wildewood Elementary
- York Elementary, Yutan Elementary

\*Towns/Cities listed include those teachers responding to the evaluation tool - not all are listed.

Utilizing a Likert scale of 1 = “Strongly Disagree”; 2 = “Disagree”; 3 = “Agree”; 4 = “Strongly Agree”, teachers were asked to observe their students and indicate how much they agreed or disagreed that their students learned during each session as a result of attending a Nebraska Extension Ag Literacy Festival. Responses from the teachers are indicated below	Agree	Strongly Agree
Youth are able to explain the progression of agriculture technology and how it affects corn and soybean production.	53%	36%
Youth are able to identify the importance of technology in agriculture to help farmers feed the world.	56%	45%
Youth are able to determine what products they use in their lives are from corn and soybeans.	53%	48%
Youth are able to explain how corn and soybeans are used for different purposes (human/animal/energy).	48%	50%
Youth are able to recognize the corn and soybean production cycles.	54%	29%
Youth are able to identify the science behind the Plant Life Cycle.	54%	29%
Youth are able to apply math utilizing corn and soybean production statistics.	60%	21%
Youth can summarize the beef production cycle.	57%	34%
Youth can recognize beef products and by-products.	49%	49%
Youth can describe how pig farmers care for their pigs.	56%	42%
Youth can express how pig farmers care for the environment.	57%	32%
Youth can identify dairy products.	32%	68%
Youth can tell others about the milk production cycle and how dairy farmers care for their dairy animals.	48%	52%

One section of the evaluation required teachers to poll their students and report how many of the students indicated “Yes” or “No” to five statements addressing the impact the festival made on them. **On average, 96% of the students indicated “Yes” to the following statements:**

I learned something new.	98%
I can make healthy decisions about my food choices.	94%
I know farmers make good choices to keep our food safe.	98%
I better understand where our food comes from.	97%
I will share with others about Agriculture.	92%



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture. The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United State Department of Agriculture.



Teachers used a Likert scale of 1 = “very dissatisfied” to 5 = “very satisfied” to evaluate the following aspects of the festivals. **On average, 92% of the teachers indicated the festivals provided quality educational content, was age appropriate, engaging and relevant to classroom content.**

**98% of teachers completing the post-festival survey indicated that given the opportunity, they would participate in the program again.**

**Teachers were asked to indicate how many years they have you been bringing students to the Ag Literacy Festival. Responses ranged from 1-20 years with a total average of four years.**

Total # Males:	54%
Total # Females:	46%
Kindergarten:	0%
1st Grade:	0%
2nd Grade:	7%
3rd Grade:	39%
4th Grade:	51%
5th Grade:	3%



**Funding:** Major funding for the 2023 Nebraska Extension Ag Literacy Festivals was acquired by a Nebraska Corn Board grant. The NCB funds covered student transportation as well as other miscellaneous program costs. Funding from Midwest Dairy Association provides support for dairy producers to present and bring cattle to festivals along with providing food samples. Additional funding support was attained by local Extension faculty and staff and included funders such as local farm bureaus, state and local commodity boards and agribusinesses.

Event organizers secure several in-kind supporters. Support for the festivals included presenters, teacher and student packet materials, livestock, visual equipment, group leaders and general support. Supporters included AFAN, Ag in the Classroom, local and state commodity board representatives, and local fairboards, farmers, FFA chapters, implement dealers and Nebraska Extension faculty and staff.

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	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Quality of educational content	21%	77%
Presentation was age-appropriate	27%	70%
Presentation was engaging	31%	66%
Presentation was relevant to classroom content	30%	66%

By providing hands-on agriculture education the event organizers’ goals are to increase youths’ positive attitudes about agricultural products as healthy, nutritious, safe, convenient, versatile, consumer-friendly and environmentally friendly, and provide a strong, positive image of agribusiness professionals, agriculture producers and agriculture production.

When asked, **“How do you think your students will apply what they learned to their everyday lives?”** a few of the teacher replies included;

- *Our students were excited to make connections to their lives and share the information they learned with their friends and family. Following the Ag Literacy Festival, students often point out relationships between things they see and hear at school to what they learned during their field trip. It is clear that they have deepened their knowledge of the topic.*
- *They will understand the importance of agriculture to our state and be better able to identify different parts of agriculture and its impact for our state and beyond.*
- *Students are able to know that everything comes from or starts at the farm. Different uses for corn and soybean and that there are several options available for food, products that come from farms. Also, that there are many jobs that you don't really associate with agriculture.*
- *Students will be able to look at their surroundings and identify ways that we are using our resources and apply it to our learning.*
- *Students will be more aware of how farming and agriculture is a part of their everyday lives and can share this knowledge with their families.*
- *Students have been able to come back and discuss what they have learned and have a better understanding of where certain products come from.*
- *Parents have told us that the kids are transferring all their learning and sharing it with them at home as well!*
- *I think they will be more aware of where things come from or what they are made of. They will also know the importance of farming and ranching*
- *things they learned and saw today will help with their awareness of the things they see every day around them. They have a better understanding of where our food comes from before going to the store.*



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