



### *What to do on*

## **Alaska Agriculture Day** **First Tuesday in May each year**

There are many suggestions for Alaska Ag Day on the Alaska Ag in the Classroom website. The Alaska Ag in the Classroom Lesson Plan CD also has lesson plans and activities for all grade levels. Most are available on line at [www.agclassroom.org/ak](http://www.agclassroom.org/ak).

There's no need to stray from teaching to standards when your students are learning about agriculture. Simply use agricultural references instead of others to help illustrate your points and teach students the information they need to know.

Here are some quick and easy ways of marking Alaska Ag Day:

### **Elementary Classes**

- Read a book that depicts American agriculture. Avoid books that have stereotypes about farming. If you chose a book about farming in the past centuries, be sure to explain how farmers use technology today.
- Play the Alaska Agriculture Game (junior version; available on the Alaska AITC website).
- Using pieces of rope 4 to 10 feet long, have students, in groups, make letters of the alphabet by holding the rope above the ground, working together to form the letter shapes. Ropes are important tools for ranches.

### **Elementary and Middle School Classes**

- Discuss agriculture in your area
  - Are there farms around your community? What is grown there?
  - If there are no farms around your community, why not?
  - Are there gardens? Do your students have gardens?
  - Do students gather berries with their families in the fall?
- Talk about what grows in Alaska
  - Quiz students about what is raised in Alaska and what isn't. Discuss why some foods cannot be grown here.
- Solve an Alaska AITC puzzle
- What's on the school's menu for Alaska Ag Day? Have students figure out where the ingredients for those foods may have been grown.
- Go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) and find lesson plans about nutrition and connect that to the source of those foods.

### **Middle and High School Classes**

- General — Play the Alaska Agriculture Game (available on the Alaska AITC website)
- Math — Use acres of crops in math problems — there are 43,560 square feet in an acre.
- Science — Agriculture has connections to many of the sciences. Tie the unit you are teaching to one of the many ag-related sciences.
- Art — Try painting with dirt. For instructions, see Alaska’s Awesome Soils, Page 10, which can be downloaded at <http://www.alaskaswcds.org/-Edprograms.html>. Some of the world’s most famous pieces of art are agrarian in subject. Discuss some of the works, and their inspiration.
- Social studies — Agriculture is directly tied to the movement of populations throughout history. Geography and agriculture are integrally related. On a state, national or world level, look at social studies with agriculture as a theme.
- Technology — New technology has drastically changed the face of agriculture: from remote sensing to GPS locating to robotic farm equipment. Discuss what may be next.
- Literature — From Little House on the Prairie to Grapes of Wrath to modern books, authors have portrayed the gritty reality of farming. Poems like those by Robert Frost are also great introductions to discussions of literary realism regarding agriculture.
- Languages — What are the names of crops and livestock in the language(s) your students are studying? Do ESL students understand words that apply to agriculture and food production?
- Economics — Farmers operate on a small profit margin in a high-risk business. How much does a farmer get for a bushel of corn compared to the cost for a box of Kellogg’s Corn Flakes?
- Government — Many of America’s founding fathers were farmers. How may have these agrarian roots have influenced their stand on issues?
- Life Sciences — Fit Alaska’s food production into the New Food Pyramid ([www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)). Look at a Big Mac meal: how does it stack up for nutrition; where do the foods in it come from; how much does it cost and how much goes back to the farmer; how does it compare to serving size recommendations; what if you super size it?
- Career Exploration — Agriculture is a fast-changing science with many careers available to students in a wide variety of specialties. Students can research options.

*Thanks for promoting agricultural literacy.*

Need more help? Contact Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom: Victoria Naegele, [akaitc@alaskafb.org](mailto:akaitc@alaskafb.org) 746-2172.

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