

Agriculture in the Classroom^{NL}



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM NL

AITC-NL delivers agriculture education in an interactive, hands-on, virtual, and inquiry-based learning manner and strives to connect youth to agriculture through education.

The AITC-NL program continues expanding to reach our goal of connecting agriculture to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Our program is only as strong as the dedication and passion of the members of the AITC Steering Committee, farmers, and volunteers. We extend our appreciation to everyone that believes in our organization and donates their time and efforts.

AITC-NL would like to thank our partners, including the NLFA, and the federal and provincial governments through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. We also thank the community partners and business/commodities that support our program and the teachers and administrators from all schools across the province that open their classrooms to us.

In 2025, AITC-NL created over 75,000 student experiences through activities, initiatives, and events including: in-class and virtual presentations and resource downloads. Here are some of the initiatives throughout the year:



Canada's Ag Day

Canada's Agriculture Day, held on February 11, is a time to showcase all the amazing things happening in our industry and create a closer connection with the public about where their food comes from and the people who produce it.

AITC-NL hosted an agriculture trade show at St. Bernard's Elementary in Witless Bay on February 13 (delayed due to weather) with over 300 students, teachers and special guests. Volunteers from various commodity groups and agriculture professionals shared their knowledge and offered students an interactive and hands-on learning experience, with exciting giveaways provided by the School Milk Foundation of NL, Egg Farmers of NL, and AITC- NL.

After the trade show, students, teachers, volunteers, and guests were treated to a live performance from the JUNO Award-winning band, The Swinging Belles, who wrote and produced AITC-NL's theme song, "I'm a Little Green Sprout" for the Little Green Sprouts indoor gardening program.

All Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers throughout the province had the opportunity to participate in a social media contest showing us how their classes celebrate Canada's Agriculture Day by adding the hashtag #CdnAgDay and tagging @AITCNL in their social media posts. We encouraged all teachers to show us how they celebrate the food we grow here in Newfoundland and Labrador.



MS. BISHOP'S CLASS AT COWAN HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY DURING CALM.

Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month (CALM)

CALM is a national initiative hosted by Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C) in the month of March. CALM is a hands-on program that encourages children to learn about and celebrate agriculture in various ways, including reading books about agriculture and watching virtual farm tours and agriculture videos. An important element of this event is the connection between students, local farmers, and agriculture industry representatives and how AITC-NL strives to continue to make that connection.

AITC-NL provided over 4,800 student experiences through this program to Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms. AITC-NL shared the stories of farmers and agriculture professionals with online presentations, virtual farm tours, and other resources.

This year, AITC-NL launched a new resource for Grades 2 to 4 called "Follow the Food". Food is wasted and lost every day around the world, but do we understand the impact of that on food security, the economy, and the environment?

Follow the Food – Exploring Food Loss and Food Waste is a hands-on, inquiry-based resource to help students gain a better appreciation for the value of food, the resources that go into making it, how the agriculture and agri-food industry in Newfoundland and Labrador reduces food loss and waste, and the role schools and students can play in reducing food waste.

Bee Creative Literacy Contest March 2025

In March of 2025, AITC-NL partnered with the Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association (NLBKA) and Egg Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador (EFNL) again to host the Bee Creative Literacy Contest for kindergarten to grade 6 classes. Winning classes received an empty beehive to decorate, and the hive was returned to the beekeeper to become home to a new colony of honeybees. Congrats to the Bee Creative Literacy Contest winners for 2025: Ms. Mercer, Juniper Ridge Intermediate, Torbay; Ms. Carter, Ecole CC Loughlin, Corner Brook; Ms. Green, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Corner Brook.



FARMER BRAD, EXPLOITS MEADOW FARM

Great Canadian Farm Tour

The Great Canadian Farm Tour (GCFT) virtually connects students with real farmers across the country to inspire interest in learning about the important role agriculture plays in their lives.

AITC-C and its 10 provincial members hosted season five of the GCFT in the fall of 2025. Tours included virtual visits to 11 farms focusing on the diversity of commodities across the country.

Students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 had the opportunity to learn about Canada's agriculture and food story, connect and interact virtually with farmers on their own farms, and experience real farm environments. Some farm tours included a dulce farm, goat farm, deer farm, bakery, ostrich farm and more!

AITC-NL co-hosted a stop at Exploits Meadow Farms on November 25. Farmer Brad Smith, showed students around the farm, focusing on their sheep and lamb production side of the farm. Students got to learn about sheep, sheep health, lambing processes, and products produced using the sheep's wool and the lamb's meat. Brad got to interact and answer questions with students from all over Canada. The Great Canadian Farm Tours give students the opportunity to learn about agriculture from all over Canada.

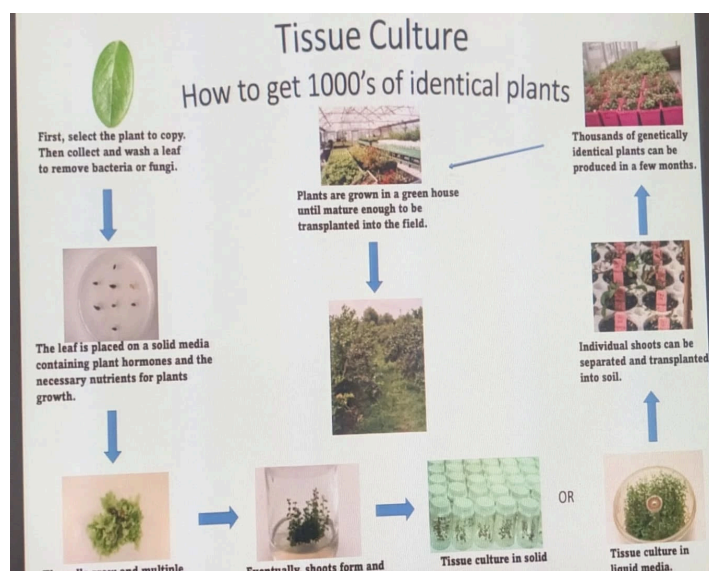
The Newfoundland and Labrador stop for AITC-NL has over 500 views on AITC-C's YouTube channel. AITC-C reported that there were over 260,000 student experiences in November and December, 2025.

Grade 7 to 12 Initiatives

AITC-NL attended EcoSchool Canada's Green Careers fair on March 12, where the AITC-NL coordinator presented on AITC-NL and Careers in Agriculture with the commodity matching game. Over 100 Grade 9 to 12 students came to learn more about green careers. This event allowed students the opportunity to learn from leaders in a variety of fields connected to sustainability. at Corner Brook Regional High School with over 500 students.

AITC-NL also participated in the Women's Resource Development Corporation's (WRDC) Career Connections in Agriculture virtual event with NL Young Farmer's (NLYF) representative Heather Zurel on March 13. WRDC partnered with industry, education, and community stakeholders to coordinate and deliver regional employment information sessions. Sessions served as an information hub where women can be linked to existing resources and services as well as local employment opportunities, and network with other women and stakeholders in their region.

Other high school initiatives include classroom visits from farmers, agriculture professionals, and researchers. AITC-NL continues to work with AITC-C on national initiatives including Mission Explorium, thinkAG website and events, Kareero app, and Career Case game.





CRANBERRY EXHIBIT AT THE AGRICULTURE EXPO AMAZING AGRICULTURE ADVENTURE

Amazing Agriculture Adventure

In-person Amazing Agriculture Adventures (AAA) were held during the recent Agriculture Expos in Corner Brook and Grand Falls-Windsor. Over 500 students and teachers went from booth to booth visiting farmers and agriculture representatives to learn about the province's agriculture industry. Students were excited to participate in hands-on activities, including making nutrient bracelets and living necklaces, commodity matching, animal farm, beekeeping displays, and more!

AITC-NL hosted an exciting Virtual Amazing Agriculture Adventure for Grades 4, 5, and 6 classes from November 24 to December 12, 2025. Teachers received a package that included video links to several farm tours and agriculture related videos, and the classes answered a series of questions based on whichever four videos they chose. Topics included in the farm tour videos are Food Safety, Chicken Farming, Berry Farming, Lester's Farm Market tour, Mark's Market tour, Dairy Farm, Egg Processing, Plant Adaptations, Cranberry Farming, and more!

Little Green Thumbs

The Little Green Thumbs (LGT) program is an indoor gardening program, currently in its 14th year, focusing on Grades 3 to 6. It gives the students and teachers the opportunity to become food producers right in their own classroom.

Little Green Sprouts (LGS) is a junior Little Green Thumbs gardening program for Kindergarten to Grade 2 that includes a smaller system for micro-greens (lettuce, herbs, etc.). It enables our younger students to care for their own garden. LGT/LGS gardens are in 120 elementary/primary schools across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Overview LGTs and LGSs Gardens

January 2025 – June 2025 (School Year 2024-2025)

- 180 LGT gardens
- 174 LGS gardens
- Upgraded 33 old lighting system to LED

September 2025 – December 2025 (School Year 2025-2026)

- 194 LGT gardens including 14 new and refurbished
- Upgraded 37 old lighting system to LED – approximately 90 percent of our lighting systems are now upgraded
- 182 LGS gardens includes 8 new gardens

The gardens have inspired conversations about nutrition, healthy eating, cooking, and planting.

Children who grow their own food are much more willing to try new foods. The Little Green Thumbs and Sprouts gardens have become the focal point of the classroom. Many outdoor school community gardens have grown from the LGT classroom gardens. Students have their families participating in growing at home and have developed home and community gardens with the skills they have acquired through the LGT program.

Ongoing support has been provided for all teachers throughout the entire school year by the Little Green Thumbs coordinator, volunteer mentors, LGT National office, and other teachers. There is a national website littlegreenthumbs.org.



ST. MATTHEWS HARVEST CELEBRATION

LGT Virtual Teachers' Training Session

The LGT Virtual Teachers' Training session was held on October 10, 2025. In attendance were 14 new and current teachers and National LGT Director - Will Brooks. Teachers were presented with an overview of the AITC-NL Program, the LGT Mentorship program, AITC-C national dashboard, national LGT resources, and more!

Teachers were provided with details on how it all starts, journals, seeds, germination, transplanting, vermicomposting, and of course, recipes, and eating.

Benefits of the program to teachers and students were discussed, such as: curriculum links; gardens' contribution to improving social and emotional well-being; creating meaningful connections between gardens and agriculture; building environmental stewardship; sharing knowledge of local food and farmers; building responsibility and classroom inclusiveness; planting the seeds of healthy eating; transforming wonder into knowledge; and creating pride in knowing they can grow something themselves.

Teachers also got to hear from long-term LGT teachers about their experiences with their gardens. Some teachers have had their gardens for 14 years since the beginning of the program.



MUN'S PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS REVIEWING AITC-NL'S RESOURCES

MUN Partnership

AITC-NL has partnered with the Faculty of Education at Memorial University to introduce AITC-NL programming to pre-service teachers that will be teaching Kindergarten to Grade 12 science. AITC-NL has given them a Little Green Thumbs garden to learn about the program with a hands-on approach. The pre-service teachers were introduced to the Teacher Dashboard where they access hundreds of free agriculture curriculum-linked resources. We're excited to continue this partnership into 2026.

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada (AITC-C) is a national organization that creates programs and resources to support our member organizations in each of the 10 provinces. Provincial partners, like Agriculture in the Classroom NL (AITC-NL), are the boots on the ground, delivering programs and resources to help teachers get agriculture education into classrooms across Canada. AITC-C's mission is to cultivate a meaningful connection to agriculture and food for students and educators.

Each year, the AITC-C collective across Canada creates more than two million student experiences through programs and resources, making valuable connections to agriculture and agri-food. In addition to developing hands-on programs, our Canadian resource library offers educators hundreds of resources in French and English that are linked to provincial curriculum outcomes.

Together, the AITC-C collective has the power to make a difference by helping to change behaviours and practices through education and awareness beginning in the classroom. To learn more about AITC across Canada, visit www.aitc-canada.ca

Agriculture in the Classroom NL is funded by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP). The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the competitiveness, innovation and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5-billion commitment that is cost-shared 60% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories. The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership provides \$330,000 annually to support Agriculture in the Classroom activities to connect youth to agriculture and increase awareness of how food is grown in Newfoundland and Labrador.



**Sustainable Canadian
Agricultural Partnership**

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