

Agriculture in the Classroom

Annual Report

January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019



Annual Report 2019

Vision:

Our vision is to connect youth to agriculture through education.

Mission Statement:

AITC-NL will take a leadership role in developing competencies and offering educational programs and resources that promote agriculture awareness in youth. AITC-NL will deliver the message that agriculture is an important contributor to our economy, the health of our communities, and the sustainability of our food system.

Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) Steering Committee

A Steering Committee for the AITC was designated in January 2011 and is comprised of the following representatives:

1. Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture (NLFA)
2. Department of Fisheries and Land Resources
3. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
4. Department of Education
5. Stakeholder Organizations

Steering Committee Members:

Eugene Legge – NLFA
Melvin Rideout – NLFA
Michelle Lester – NLFA
Rodney Reid – NLFA
Terrilynn Robbins – NLFA
Luke Strong – NLFA
Philip Smallwood - NLFA
Crystal Anderson Baggs – Dept. of Fisheries and Land Resources
Cindy MacDonald – Dept. of Fisheries and Land Resources
Ellen Coady – Department of Education
Lesley Cowan – AAFC
Sarah Ferber – Food First NL
Zach Young – School Milk Foundation of NL

Agriculture in the Classroom Staff:

Maureen Foley – Little Green Thumbs Coordinator
Chelsea Foley – Agriculture In The Classroom NL Coordinator
Kalysa Snow – Marketing/Promotions Coordinator
Nicole Parrell – Financial/Office Manager

This annual report will give an overview of all the projects and events that AITC-NL delivered from January 1, 2019 until December 31, 2019. The main source of funding for the Agriculture in the Classroom NL is from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program.

Agriculture in the Classroom NL (AITC-NL) continues to deliver agriculture education in a fun, interactive, hands-on, and inquiry-based learning manner.

The AITC-NL program continues to expand and reach our goal of connecting students from K-12 with agriculture. Our program is only as strong as the dedication and passion from the members of the AITC-NL Steering Committee and our volunteers. AITC-NL had over 400 volunteers last year assisting us in achieving our success with all our programs and events throughout the year.

We would like to thank our major partners the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture and Canadian Agricultural Partnership program. We would like to thank the community partners, sponsors, and business/commodities that support our program. We would also like to thank the teachers and administrators from all the schools across Newfoundland and Labrador that opened up their classrooms to us.

Canada's Agriculture Day – February 12, 2019



Background of Event:

On February 12, 2019, Canadian agriculture representatives from coast to coast celebrated Canada's Agriculture Day – a time to celebrate and create a closer connection between Canadians, our food and the people who produce it. This marks the third year the industry has dedicated a day to celebrating agriculture and the people in the industry across the country.

Partners:

In Newfoundland and Labrador the following organizations have partnered to celebrate Canadian Agriculture Day 2019:

Agriculture in the Classroom NL – Lead role

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture

Agriculture in the Classroom Canada
School Milk Foundation of NL
Chicken Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador
Egg Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador
Young Farmers Forum
Dairy Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador
Food First NL
Farm Credit Canada
Department of Fisheries and Land Resources

Activities

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada's Agriculture Day 2019 was celebrated at *Anthony Paddon Elementary* in Musgravetown. In attendance were 197 students (kindergarten to Grade 6), 27 school staff and volunteers and 20 booth holders/exhibitors/special guests. Students had the opportunity to visit booths on nutrition tips and facts, local produce, chickens, vermi-composting and beekeeping as well as interacted with local farmers, industry representatives and agriculture representatives.

After students visited the booths, they were entertained by The Swinging Belles. The grade six students met with Minister Gerry Byrne to ask him questions. This question and answer session with the Minister was very important to the grade sixes as they got to inquire about various aspects of the agriculture industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Everyone was treated to lunch, which included a chicken and cheese sandwich using local chicken, cheese, and lettuce, and a strawberry, rhubarb, partridgeberry and honeycobbler and milk. All students received a Canada's Agriculture Day placemat, as well as stickers and tattoos. The lunch was prepared by a local chef, Roger Dewling and his team. The chicken was donated by *Chicken Farmers of NL* and the milk was donated by *School Milk Foundation NL*.

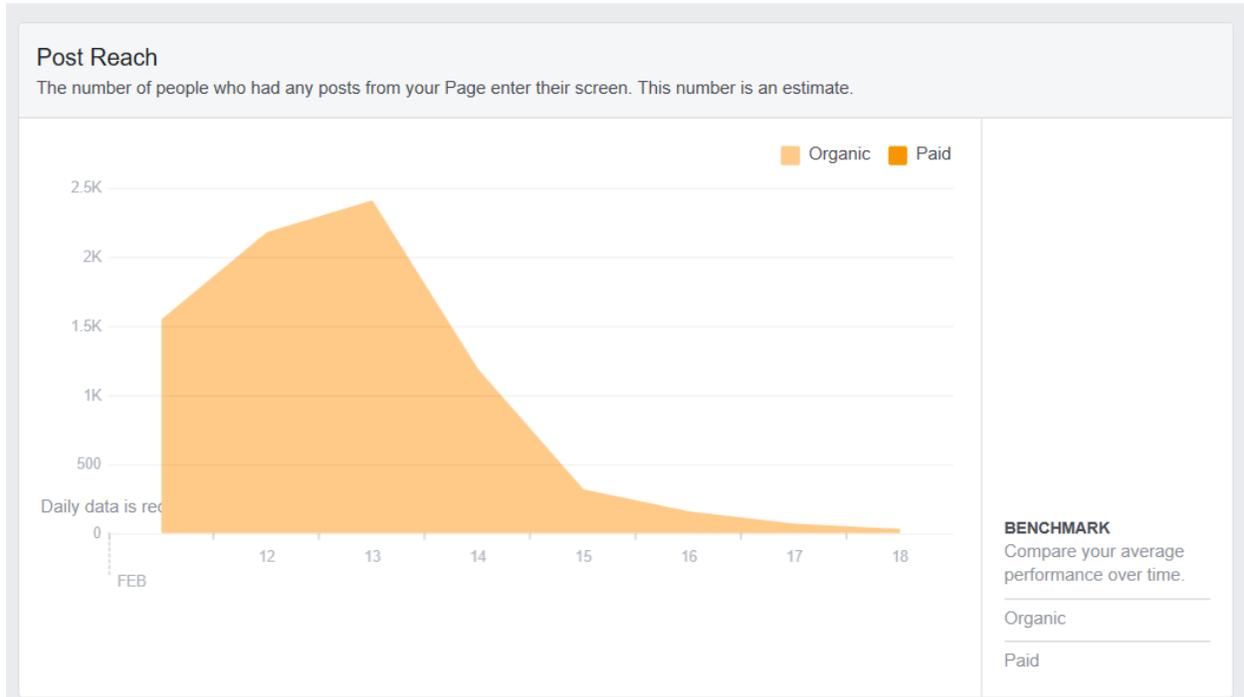
AITC-NL in collaboration with our commodity partners, hosted a social media campaign for all teachers. The campaign was launched through our platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It was a contest where teachers were encouraged to like our post, comment how they chose to celebrate Canada's Agriculture Day and tag a fellow teacher for a chance to win a prize. The prize was a AITC-NL resource kit including story books, activity books, What's In Your Lunchbox activity, stickers, tattoos, bookmarks, etc.

Social Media and coverage:

NTV covered the event, interviewing Minister Byrne and many of the students. The segment was aired that evening on the *NTV* evening news.

Social Media accounts were very active surrounding Canada's Agriculture Day.

Facebook posts:



School Milk Foundation



Eastern Health



Special Guests (MHA Neil King, MP Churence Rogers, Minister Gerry Byrne, and NLFA President Merv Wiseman).



Grade 6 Q & A



NL Beekeeping Association

Rooting for Health Events 2019

As part of the 10th Annual Rooting for Health, Children enjoyed a nutritious and delicious breakfast prepared by local chefs using local ingredients, including eggs, berries and milk on March 28, 2019.

Rooting for Health is a partnership between Kids Eat Smart Foundation Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, *Agriculture in the Classroom Program*, the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Egg Farmers of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Rooting for Health helps school aged children in our Province recognize the relationship between farming, food and their health. After breakfast, children visited local farmers who were set up in the school gymnasiums. The children asked plenty of questions about where food comes from and learned about how food makes it to their breakfast table.

The following schools participated in 2019: St. Andrew’s Elementary - St John’s, Southwest Arm Academy – Little Heart’s Ease, Helen Tulk Elementary- Bishop’s Falls , Sacred Heart Elementary – Corner Brook, and JR Smallwood Middle School - Wabush.



Volunteers at Rooting For Health



Students at Rooting For Health

Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month 2019



Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month is a national initiative hosted by AITC Canada. The event was held in Newfoundland and Labrador March 1-31, 2019.

“Our Food. Our Story” is the theme for Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month. The 2019 celebration involved unique events across Canada. Farmers, industry representatives and community volunteers visited Grade K-6 classrooms across NL to read “*Reggie’s Technology Adventure*” (NL’s newest storybook), “*Blossom’s Big Job*”, “*Alex’s First Seed*”, or “*What’s Growing Around Us?*” “*Reggie’s Technology Adventure*” is a story that introduces Reggie, a student doing a project about technology in agriculture. Students get to follow Reggie on his adventure as he learns about how technology has helped to advance the productivity of the agriculture industry. Reggie explores technology in dairy farming, drone usage, and an egg processing plant. The visitors also shared their personal agriculture experiences and stories with the students and discussed the importance of agriculture to our province.

AITC-NL partnered with Exploits Meadow Farms and Eggs NL in a “Bee Creative” Contest that ran March 1-31, 2019. Teachers sent in agricultural literary works (poems, comics, stories) from their students and classes for a chance to win one of two bee hives in their schools’ name.

During this month 95 volunteers visited 309 classes and read to 6,525 students at 62 schools, daycares and after school programs. The amount of students, classes, and volunteers that were involved in Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month 2019 has increased from previous years. Some of the topics presented by the experts were: beekeeping; soil composition; plant nutrition; vermi-composting; berry farming; plant biology and research; vegetable farming; large animal veterinarian and farm equipment.

Career Expo

In 2019, AITC-NL launched Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month into a high school in partnership with Farm Credit Canada and Canadian Agricultural Partnership. AITC-NL hosted a Career Expo at Waterford Valley High School in St. John’s. Approximately 360 students visited booths with exhibitors from AITC-Canada, beekeepers, College of the North Atlantic’s (CNA) Agricultural Technology Program, Department of Fisheries and Land Resources, Nelson Fagan Meats, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, Lester’s Farm Market, Young Farmers NL, AITC-NL and Dalhousie University.

In addition to being able to interact with all of those booths, students were treated to a smoothie sourced from local ingredients (including kale, honey, and berries) by local chef Andie Bulman. This event opened students’ eyes to different careers in agriculture that includes careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. The event provided an opportunity for students to meet with agriculture professionals, as well as, helped them make the link from farm to table and understand the importance of the food system to Newfoundland and Labrador.



Students get to meet new feathered friends and playing “What’s In Your Lunchbox?”



Tasting homemade ice cream made with local honey and NPK bracelet activity



Career Expo at Waterford Valley High School



Connecting farm to table at Career Expo. Lester's Farm Market ingredients used by a local chef to make smoothies.

Trade Shows

The AITC-NL program partners with Dairy Farmers of NL and the School Milk Foundation of NL throughout the year in attending agriculture trade shows. AITC-NL attended Humber Valley Agricultural Fall Fair in September and the Agriculture Expos in Grand Falls – Windsor and Corner Brook. AITC-NL, Moonica, and School Milk Foundation of NL combined booths to create an amazing one-stop educational children's activity center.

Humber Valley Agricultural Fall Fair was held September 20-21, 2019 in Deer Lake. AITC-NL hosted an activity booth and participated in school tours for 500 students. AITC-NL hosted sunflower planting, Tattoo booth, coloring area, and a career display. Teachers received an information bag with AITC-NL resources and giveaways at this event.

Agriculture Expos

Corner Brook's Agriculture Expo was hosted September 27-29, 2019, and Grand Falls-Windsor Agriculture Expo was hosted October 18-20, 2019. AITC-NL hosted a Children's Activity Area at each show. There was sunflower planting, The Underground Adventure, What's In Your Soil? activity, Tattoo booth, career display and a coloring area. AITC-NL also hosted Family Fun Night on the Friday night of both shows and had pumpkins for children to paint/decorate and free popcorn to give out. AITC-NL also hosted a Story Time with a farmer on the Sunday morning of each show. Terrilynn Robbins from Robbins Family Farm & Gardens and Rodney Reid from Exploits Meadow Farms read the story book Blossom's Big Job. Children at the show were able to sit and listen to the story and then ask the farmers some questions. Each child also received a story book, tattoo, activity book, and sticker to take home. AITC-NL had a booth to sell corn as a fundraiser for programs and events. The corn was sourced from local farmers: Mark's Market in Wooddale, Gough's Farm, and Lester's Farm Market in St. John's.



Story Time with a Farmer



Agriculture Expos

Amazing Agriculture Adventure

AITC-NL hosted our fifth annual Amazing Agriculture Adventure at both Agriculture Expos. 18 to 20 educational stations provided 520 Grade 3-6 students with an opportunity to learn about Newfoundland and Labrador agriculture in an interactive and hands-on setting.

The concept of the event was to allow for sessions of seven minutes for each class with each of the participating booth holders. Booth holders consisted of nutritionists, hydroponics, landscape professionals, nursery, soil specialists, cranberry, chicken, eggs, dairy, pest management, plant science, food security network, bees, science and research. The event target audience was grade 3-6, providing a cross-curricular activities through science, health and social studies. The feedback from the teachers was incredible. They felt the students learned about agriculture and gained knowledge about the industry. Teachers received a bag with ATIC-NL resources and giveaways at these events. Booth holders discovered they had the attention of the students and were able to educate and deliver key messages about their industry/commodity.

Teacher comment:

“It was a great morning indeed. Thanks so much for the invite!! Templeton academy students had a blast!!!! Thumbs up to Agriculture in the classroom and all the presenters and volunteers at the fair!! You guys rock!!!”

- Natasha Caines-Buffett (Teacher, Templeton Academy)



Amazing Agriculture Adventure



NPK Bracelet and presentation station



Little Green Thumbs Program

The Little Green Thumbs (LGT) program is an indoor gardening program for primary and elementary students. It gives the students and teachers the opportunity to become food producers right in their own classroom.

With the addition of the new gardens for the school year 2018-2019, Newfoundland and Labrador's Little Green Thumbs Program now has 164 gardens in 98 primary and elementary schools, 184 teachers, 3600 students involved, 80 vermi-composting kits, and 45 volunteer mentors.

In January 2019, the Little Green Thumbs program introduced "Little Green Sprouts" a junior gardening program for students in Kindergarten to Grade 2. It is a smaller system for micro-greens (lettuce, herbs, etc) and enables the younger students to manage the garden by themselves. We now have 62 Little Green Sprouts gardens in 12 new primary and elementary schools with 1100 students participating.

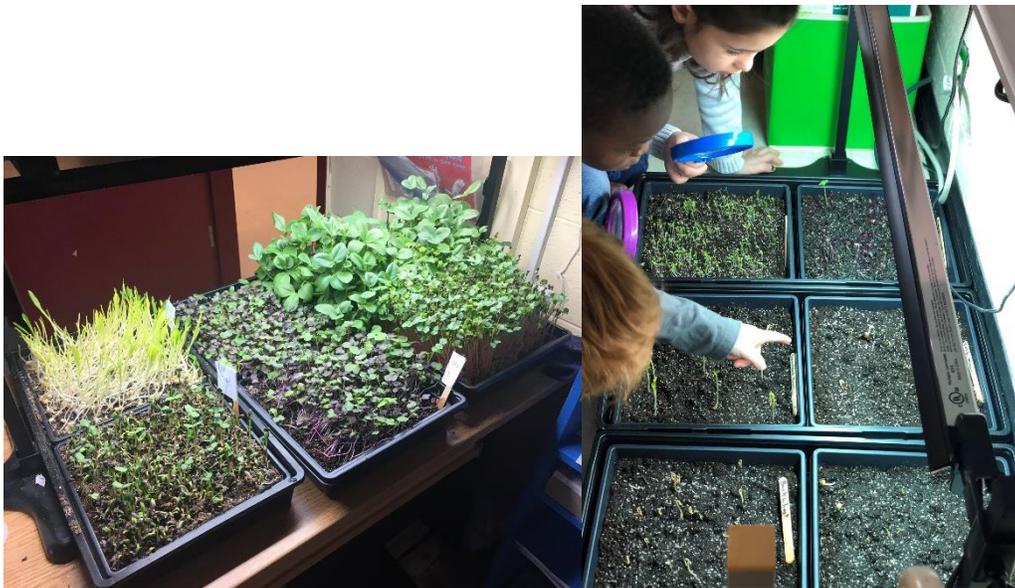
The gardens have inspired conversations about nutrition, healthy eating, cooking and planting. Children who grow their own food are much more willing to try new foods. The Little Green Thumbs garden has become the focal point of the classroom. Many outdoor school community gardens have grown from the 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's program.

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





Little Green Thumbs Gardens



Little Green Sprouts Gardens

The Pen Pal Project 2019 was a great success with 54 NL classes participating. This was a national initiative. NL classes were matched with another LGT class in another province. It gave students the opportunity to learn about other areas of Canada as well as discover the history of their own province.

Vermi-composting finished its 3rd year in June 2019 with 69 worm kits in LGT classrooms across Newfoundland and Labrador. In the fall of 2019, another 11 vermi-composting kit were distribute across the province. The in-class vermi-composting program has encouraged entire schools to develop and increase their composting programs, thereby assisting in the management of their school waste. Many students have also started composting at home.

Teachers have noticed that students are bringing in healthier snacks and lunches so they can feed healthy scraps and leftovers to their class worms. The students' dedication and thoughtfulness has been just amazing!



Vermi-composting

Culinary Sessions have made the connection between what they are growing in their classrooms and how students can use these ingredients to make easy healthy and delicious recipes. We have hosted over forty culinary sessions in classrooms. We have used recipes such as kale and basil pesto, smoothies, ice cream, bruschetta, and salsa. Little Green Thumbs teachers have also used these recipes to host their own in-class culinary sessions using ingredients from their gardens.

Culinary Demonstrations took place in the fall of 2019. AITC-NL decided it was time for our LGT's students to come out of their classrooms to show off their culinary skills to the public, on stage, at the NLFA's Agriculture Expos.

In Corner Brook at the Civic Centre on Saturday, September 28, five students from Pasadena Elementary took the stage to create kale smoothies. With their chef hats and aprons on, they created their own versions of kale smoothies adding their favourite ingredients such as strawberries, raspberries, bananas, blueberries and avocados. The students then served their delicious smoothies to the audience.

In Grand Falls-Windsor on Saturday, October 19, six students from Sprucewood Academy joined Chef Andie Bulman of St. John's on stage, for a culinary adventure to make pesto pasta. Chef Andie guided the students to create a scrumptious pesto pasta which students served to the public. The students were very excited and felt like junior chefs.

This LGT's culinary demonstration gave the students and audience a real insight into what chefs do, kitchen equipment, utensils and tools, food and nutrition language, food preparation, and food safety in a hands on learning environment. It showed the students they "CAN DO IT!" and the public that children can be involved in culinary process at home.

The culinary demonstrations at the Agriculture Expo also gave students the opportunity to use local ingredients and to interact with local farmers.

The students were exceptionally creative and professional on stage, but most importantly they enjoyed the experience!

Thanks to Farmer Mentor Terri Lynn Robbins, Chef Andie Bulman, Chef Keith King and his staff and Principal Sondra Power (Sprucewood Elementary), Carol Spicer (MC) and George Scott (MC) for all your support in making this a very successful endeavor for our LGT's students.





Culinary Demonstrations

Harvest Celebrations - LGT classes participated in harvest celebrations in May and June 2019. Students visited vegetable and dairy farms; participated in culinary sessions; hosted concerts for their parents, grandparents and special guests; had a harvest feast with their crops; attended grocery store tours to learn about nutrition and healthy eating; visited greenhouses; planted outdoor gardens; and shared the gift of their gardens with family, friends, administration and AITC-NL staff. Students have also had visits from special guests such as farmers, agriculture specialists; gardeners, chefs and beekeepers!

AITC-NL would like to extend a BIG ‘thank you’ to our dedicated teachers, school administrators and wonderful volunteers, in particular our class mentors across the Province. We wouldn’t be able to extend our reach and spread agriculture education without them!





Harvest Celebrations

St. Matthew's Robotic Team

More than 350 students representing 30 different schools in Newfoundland and Labrador assembled at the College of the North Atlantic's Prince Philip Drive campus in St. John's on Saturday, November 23 for the 17th annual Skills Canada Intermediate Challenge. The students competed in 17 different trade areas, which included public speaking, computer animation, television and video production, information technology, robotics, green energy and more.

St. Matthew's Robotics Team (past Little Green Thumbs students, grade 6s and 7s) won the Project Presentation Award for their City Shaper presentation on the revitalization of a community garden in downtown St. John's. They have partnered with Habitat for Humanity and AITC-NL/Little Green Thumbs to design and upgrade the community garden to encourage local growing and community engagement.

This project certainly demonstrates that our AITC-NL programs, events and projects are having an impact on students of NL.



Agriculture in the Classroom Canada

AITC Canada acts as the national voice and identity for AITC in Canada. It builds capacity and increases opportunities for member organizations; facilitates the sharing of best practices; identifies and manages national projects beneficial to member organizations; develops and supports approved curriculum linked resources related to agriculture; and coordinates networking and professional development opportunities for individual stakeholders. AITC Canada is making great strides in securing national funding that can be distributed to all provinces to assist with implementation of national projects. We will continue to have a NL representative on the AITC-C board. AITC-NL continues to work closely with AITC Canada.

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 Christa Wright, Operations Manager cwright@aitc-canada.ca

National Projects

GenAG

In June 2019, Agriculture in the Classroom NL launched its second genAG competition. This is a unique career exploration program for high school students across the island. The competition helped students understand the link between business and the agriculture sector, as well as raise awareness of the types of careers that are available post-graduation in the agriculture industry (both inside and outside of traditional farming).

Students submitted marketing portfolios for judging. The winning team was marketing group, “Ag-ucation” from Ascension Collegiate High School, Bay Roberts. Their idea consisted of creating an Ag studies class for a third year high school student. This class would teach students all about agriculture and the careers that are available within it. They planned to encourage students to take the course by making it a more difficult course, to count towards a first level science university credit.



Ascension Collegiate
@AscensionAstros

Congratulations to our GenAG winners for 2019:
First: Adam Smith, Tyson Lundrigan, Noah Sharpe, Lucas Janes
Second: Michael Brown, Daniel Smith, Jordan Jones
Third: Riley Lewis, Kolby Reid, Brianna McHugh, Gerard Baldwin @AITCNL #BEgenAG



Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society

Thanks to the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, we partnered with the Dutch Liberation 2020 Canadian Society to bring a national initiative to celebrate the liberation of Europe in World War II, by planting tulips in schools across Canada in the fall 2019. Along with the planting of the tulips, comes an elementary resource that links to K-5 Social Studies Outcomes. In this resource, students also have the opportunity to explore, observe and examine the growth of tulip bulbs. We are looking forward to those bulbs blooming in the spring of 2020! AITC-NL delivered 120 boxes of tulips to classrooms across Newfoundland and Labrador.



Tulip planting

Journey 2050

Journey 2050 takes students on a virtual simulation that explores world food sustainability. Using an inquiry based approach the program encourages students to make decisions and adjust them as they see their impact on society, the environment and the economy on a local and global scale. The students experience the lives of three farm families in Kenya, India, and Canada.

AITC-NL participated with schools across the province for this program. Nutrien is the sole sponsor for this program, they delivered promotional items to AITC-NL. We participated in the Journey 2050 and marketed it to teachers at trade shows.

Conclusion

AITC-NL has exceeded its objectives for the past school year. We attribute the success of the AITC and LGT programs in Newfoundland and Labrador to hands-on support provided by the AITC-NL Coordinator, LGT Coordinator, and the Marketing/Promotions Coordinator.

AITC-NL would like to extend a BIG ‘thank you’ to our dedicated teachers, school administrators and wonderful volunteers, in particular our class mentors across Newfoundland and Labrador. We would not have this success without them!