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2007 KFAC Teacher of the Year Recognized

Riley, Kan. --Cathy Musick, Executive Director of Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC) is proud to announce Joyce Troyer as the 2007 KFAC Teacher of the Year. "We are honored to award teachers who go the extra mile to create a passion for learning in their students," Musick said. Troyer, a sixth grade teacher at Riley County Grade School, will be presented with the award on May 4 at the school's award ceremony.

As part of the recognition, KFAC will pay Troyer's expenses to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom conference in New Orleans, La. In addition, earlier in the week, Hank Ernest, from the Kansas Water Office, will be presenting Troyer with a map of Riley County's watershed to use as a teaching tool in her classroom. Troyer was nominated by fellow teacher Jennifer Bullock in recognition of her extraordinary commitment to science education.

Troyer attended the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's Summer Course in 1993. Through her experiences in that class, she learned to take pride in her agricultural background and incorporating agriculture and natural resources has enhanced her classroom curriculum. Troyer integrates agricultural concepts into her lessons using interactive videos, hands-on experiments and farm family pen pals.

"Teaching agriculture in the classroom is more important now than ever because today's students have little to no involvement in the process of producing food," Troyer said.

Only three out of 51 students surveyed in the rural setting of Riley County Grade School, identified themselves as part of a farm family. Production agriculture is a key industry in Riley County, yet many students do not understand the connections between the food products we eat and the systems that provide them, Troyer said.

Agriculture and natural resources are abundant in Kansas and can offer many teaching opportunities. Troyer uses those opportunities to teach students about the tall grass prairie, soil conservation and water quality. She has her students hatch and raise chicks so they can study the life cycle. History is also covered in Troyer's class as she and her students study and discuss the Dust Bowl days to learn why soil conserving agricultural practices are in place today.

For more information about KFAC's Teacher of the Year Award or other programs contact the KFAC office at (785) 532-7946 or ksfac@ksu.edu.