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KFAC's Teacher of Year Experiences National Ag in the Classroom Conference

For Carol Budde, this summer provided an opportunity for her to continue incorporating agriculture into her classroom. As Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's (KFAC) 2010 Janet Sims Memorial Teacher of the Year, Budde traveled to the annual National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference held June 24-26 at the Marriott Renaissance Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore, Md. She was recognized for her agricultural education efforts during the conference. She was joined by her husband Tracy and KFAC executive director Cathy Musick.

At the conference Budde, a fifth grade teacher moving from Walton Rural Life Center to the newly configured Santa Fe 516 Center in Harvey County, was able to network with teachers from across the country and learn new ways to teach her students. The workshop sessions were her favorite part of the conference. She attended many sessions on school gardens, and she plans to start the school year by having her students plant fall vegetables in container gardens. She also attended workshop sessions about music and animals. She is looking forward to using session information and activities in her classroom.

She enjoyed meeting people from across the country. "There are so many people in [our country] who love agriculture. It is comforting to see how vested other professionals are in spreading the knowledge of agriculture," said Budde.

Budde's experiences at the conference have helped her prepare for the new school year and for her move to a new school. "I plan to focus student learning around agriculture in science and how it impacts everything we have," she added.

In addition to the conference, Budde had the opportunity to experience the entertainment and atmosphere Baltimore had to offer. She also participated in the post-conference tour to Annapolis, where she toured the state capitol and visited the Naval Academy, and took a day trip to Washington, D.C.

Budde's national conference experience was sponsored by High Plains Journal, Inc. "This was a very memorable experience, one that I will fondly remember. The information I gained will impact my students in the years to come. I genuinely appreciate [High Plains Journal's] generosity."

Budde was awarded the trip when she was selected as KFAC's Teacher of the Year. She was recognized for her efforts to incorporate agriculture concepts into her curriculum at the State Ag Day ceremony in March.

She has advice for teachers considering applying for this accolade in the future. "Go for it! If you have a passion for agriculture and you are sharing that passion with your students, you are definitely the person for this award."

Applications for the 2011 Janet Sims Memorial Teacher of the Year and more information about the award are available on the KFAC website www.ksagclassroom.org. Any district certified Kansas teacher currently engaged in integrating agricultural concepts into a non-vocational classroom setting at the K-12 level is eligible to apply. Applications must be postmarked by December 3, 2010.

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Carol Budde, right, KFAC's Teacher of the Year, was joined by KFAC executive director Cathy Musick at the 2010 National Agriculture in the Classroom in Baltimore, Md.

Courtesy photo.