



## Annual art contest offered to Kansas students incorporates agriculture

**MANHATTAN, Kan. - Oct. 1, 2013** - From bumper stickers to postcards and now bookmarks, the annual art contest through the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC), sponsored by the Kansas State University College of Agriculture, has had several faces, but the contest has consistently been a fun way for teachers to implement agriculture into their classroom while teaching art concepts.

In 1999, the bumper sticker art contest was introduced. Several years later, the contest morphed into the postcard art contest and was a fun interactive project for elementary students to win prizes. The themes for the contest change each year, ranging from "Science in your Shopping Cart" in 2008 to 2013's theme of "Kansas Farmers Help Feed the World."

Last year's winners were from all over the state, including Reno county, Scott county, Harvey county, Ottawa county, Butler county, Jackson county and Leavenworth county. Jackson county fifth-grade students even have their own local competition prior to sending their entries in to KFAC.

"Our Conservation District in Jackson county holds a local event for 5th grade students to get them involved in the KFAC contest," Roberta Spencer, Jackson County Conservation District Manager, said. "The local contest allows us to partner with KFAC in promoting this contest. We direct students and their teachers to the theme, "Plants on the Plate" and to KFAC's valuable lesson plans. One of the Conservation District's goals is for students to know where their food comes from and how the protection of our natural resources is directly related to their food supply."

Several other grade levels in Jackson county schools also have been a part of this contest and have won the statewide contest in their grade level.

"It is rewarding to see these students who are all smiles standing around the Governor receiving recognition and it began with connecting this contest to the local classroom," Spencer said.

### **Evolving art**

For 2014, the art contest has a fresh, new spin. Applicants will be asked to create bright, colorful and creative bookmarks around the theme "Plants on the Plate".

"The annual art contest through KFAC has consistently encouraged students to learn more about art and agriculture," said Cathy Musick, KFAC executive director. "With bookmarks, we also are encouraging students to read and think about language arts concepts. Even with the changes we're seeing in technology with tablets, students are still reading books."

The 2014 theme is one of the units in the newly updated "Exploring Plants: Kansas Crops Educator's

Guide," which features food products from Kansas crops and nutrition.

"The great thing about using a unit from our new educator's guide is so teachers can use the information to teach necessary background information about Kansas agriculture," Sheridan Wimmer, KFAC program assistant said. "The better the students understand the theme, the more comfortable they'll be creating their bookmarks."

Teachers can download the unit from the Foundation's website, [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org). Other resources and lesson plans are available to download for teaching the "Plants on the Plate" concept.

"We have so many wonderful lesson plans to correlate with the theme," Musick said. "Some of them - like the apple, potato and pumpkin lesson plans - even have a fun YouTube video that complement the lesson plan."

### **Bright artwork, bright students**

The students who can compete in the KFAC bookmark art contest must be Kindergarten through sixth grade in Kansas. One winner from each grade level and one grand-prize winner will be selected and each winner will receive a cash prize. The winners, their respective teachers and parents/guardians will be invited to an awards program during the State Ag Day celebration, which is in March in Topeka, Kan., at the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

"The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) appreciates the hard work KFAC dedicates to educating our youth about agriculture," said Becky Sullivan, the State Trademark Program Coordinator at Kansas Department of Agriculture. "One of their most recognizable events is their annual art contest. KDA hosts the winning students each year during Kansas Ag week in Topeka, with a nice reception featuring the Secretary of Agriculture and Dr. Don Boggs from K-State College of Agriculture. The students also have a chance to go over to the Capital and get their picture taken with the Governor and their prize-winning artwork. This contest is a great tool for involving young minds in the important world of agriculture."

### **Start creating**

To get a local classroom involved, teachers can visit the website, [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org) and download the necessary background information, lesson plans and the official entry form. Entries must be postmarked to the following address by Feb. 3, 2014.

Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom  
1990 Kimball Avenue  
Manhattan, KS 66502

Entries will be judged on relevance to the theme, creativity, originality, use of space and color and clarity of idea and image.

### **About Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom**

The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. KFAC was founded in 1982 as part of a nationwide initiative to help students gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society, so that they may become citizens who support wise agricultural policies. For more information, visit [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org) or phone (785) 320-4350.

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