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Twelve Schools Across the State to Receive NM Grow Project Grants

New Mexico Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and New Mexico Agriculture in the Classroom (NMAITC) are pleased to announce that twelve schools across the state have been awarded a year-round garden kit. The kits, awarded through a New Mexico Grow Project grant, contain everything needed for students to grow a garden. Each grant recipient will receive a 4X8 cedar raised bed garden that includes everything from soil, seeds, and a tool shed, to hoop house attachments and an irrigation system. The grant also includes a classroom hydroponic system that allows for unique opportunities to explore the science of growing plants without soil.

NMAITC Southern Regional Director Traci Curry says “We’re thrilled to partner with NRCS to offer this learning project grant. It is designed to help students learn about the importance of agriculture and our natural resources. With increasing global population growth, challenges facing climate and weather, and a deficit in science education, it is important now more than ever to offer educational opportunities and support such as the NM Grow Project Grant.”

“NRCS is proud to have worked alongside Agriculture in the Classroom on the New Mexico Grow Project Grants,” says Alicia Rodriguez, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships. “Agriculture is fundamental to the health and economy of our state and our nation. Each of the grant proposals demonstrated the incredible work that New Mexico schools are doing across the state to promote a learning environment that fosters creativity and innovation in agricultural science. NRCS believes that the grant awards will help promote student’s interest in agriculture with the hopes of encouraging the next generation of farmers, conservationists and scientists in helping people help the land.”

The twelve schools awarded the year-round garden kit are:

Region I:

- Jemez Valley High School, Scott Meihack, Jemez Pueblo, NM

- Mesa View Elementary, Amy Cameron, Grants, NM
- Whittier Elementary, Miguel Valdez & Javier “Mateo” Carrasco, Albuquerque, NM

Region II:

- Arroyos del Norte Elementary, Liz Gilroy, Arroyo Seco, NM
- Peñasco Elementary, Pamela Good Wind, Peñasco, NM
- Te Tsu Geh Oweenge School, Jessica Gonzales-Boe, Tesueque Pueblo, NM

Region III:

- Cliff Schools, Frances Miller, Cliff, NM
- Hillrise Elementary, Kira Claussen, Las Cruces, NM
- University Hills Elementary, Alicia Alba, Las Cruces, NM

Region IV:

- Desert Willow Elementary, Deborah Edeal, Carlsbad, NM
- Dexter Elementary, Amber Spence, Dexter, NM
- Elida Elementary, Kristi Victor, Elida, NM

Summer workshops will help train school staff, community organizations and volunteers to best utilize the resources and illustrate how easy it is to incorporate hands-on lesson with real world problem-solving skills. Lessons will span the curriculum and are aligned to the Common Core and state standards and benchmarks.

NM Grow Project Workshops are open to interested educators but are limited in capacity. Workshops will be held in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Carlsbad. Each workshop is designed to help teachers find area experts and community partners that will help their projects be more sustainable. Experts from NRCS, NM Cooperative Extension, NM Farm & Livestock Bureau county organizations, NM Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and NM FoodCorps are expected to attend. Please visit www.nmaitc.org under the “Happenings” tab for workshop information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services is an agency committed to “helping people help the land.” Their mission is to provide resources to farmers and landowners to aid them with conservation. Ensuring productive lands in harmony with a healthy environment is their priority. With operations in the United States, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam, the agency touches the lives of a diverse range of individuals.

New Mexico Agriculture in the Classroom (NMAITC) is a non-profit educational outreach program funded primarily by the membership of the New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau. The purpose of NMAITC is to educate the general public, with an emphasis on K-12 students and educators, about the importance of agriculture. Visit us at www.nmaitc.org for more information.

New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau is a 19,000-member organization comprised of farmers and ranchers, and those who are interested in private property rights and a local food

supply. NMF&LB is the state's largest, private agricultural organization and was founded in 1917. For information about joining us, please call [575-532-4703](tel:575-532-4703) or visit www.nmflb.org.