



Courtesy Oregon Ag in the Classroom

Oregon Ag in the Classroom makes agriculture come alive through activities, special lessons and visits from volunteers who talk about farming and ranching.

# Ag in the Classroom brings its story to show

By MITCH LIES  
For the Capital Press

Oregon Ag in the Classroom brought volunteers into 900 Oregon classrooms across 30 Oregon counties as part of its 2015 spring literacy project, and it expects to do more of the same in 2016.

Also, in what Executive Director Jessica Jansen describes as an exciting area of growth, the program has expanded its reach into Portland in recent years.

Ag in the Classroom this year also will be participating in the Northwest Agricultural Show.

On Family Day, Wednesday, Jan. 27, Ag in the Classroom, with the help of the Oregon FFA Foundation, will provide hands-on activities for youngsters. The activities are an excellent way to show youngsters the importance of agriculture in their lives, Jansen said.

Oregon Ag in the Classroom continues to reach more students every year, Jansen said. The program has teachers and resources in all 36 counties, she said, but tends to focus on

reaching students in urban areas.

“We are more (Willamette) Valley centric, knowing that that is where our target audience is,” Jansen said. “The students that have the least connection with agriculture are in the Willamette Valley region.”

Jansen said the Salem-Keizer School District is the biggest participator in the program, but the Portland School District is catching up.

“That’s been a big area of growth for our program, and one that we are excited about continuing,” she said.

Still, the program continues to reach out to students in rural counties.

“That is something that we take a lot of pride in,” Jansen said. “Students that live in rural Oregon and are surrounded by agriculture don’t necessarily have a full understanding of the depth of impact that agriculture has on their daily lives.

“Maybe they are familiar with one aspect of the industry,” Jansen said, “but don’t have the full picture of how everything in their life can be traced back to a farm or ranch.”



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