



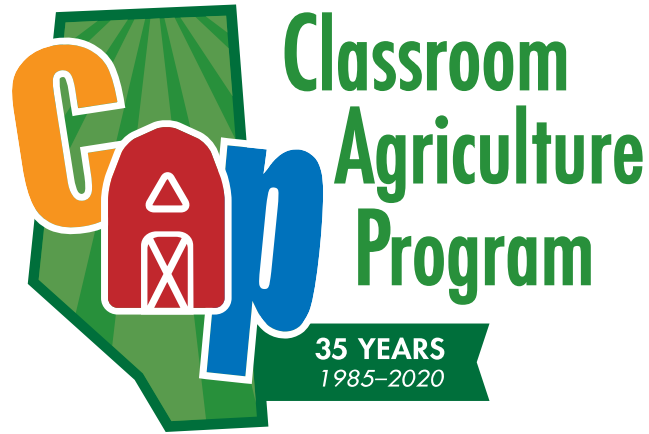
ALBERTA'S CLASSROOM AGRICULTURE PROGRAM TURNS 35!

The year 2020 marks the 35th anniversary of the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP) in Alberta! CAP was created to enhance urban students' understanding of agriculture and where their food comes from, as well as to foster a greater respect for the agriculture industry and the people who make Alberta-based food production a reality.

The backbone of CAP is the volunteers who come from all aspects of the agriculture industry and bring a strong, positive message about Alberta agriculture to the urban classroom. Through its 35-year history, more than 600,000 students from across Alberta have participated in CAP. The program's objectives continue to create a positive perception receptive to the:

- immediate value of agriculture to the economy;
- immediate value of agriculture in providing employment in both primary and secondary sectors;
- immediate value of agriculture to the Canadian lifestyle;
- immediate appreciation of Alberta food production and processing;
- need to protect and preserve the land base which supports the production of food for Canadians;
- importance of soil conservation; and
- career opportunities throughout the entire spectrum of agriculture including support industries.

The Classroom Agriculture Program was conceptualized by Vickie King, a member of the Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture. In 1985, she was successful in garnering funds from the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) to jumpstart the program. The other funding partners joining



ACC were AgAware, Alberta Women in Support of Agriculture, the Beef Education Association and the Beef Information Centre. Alberta Agriculture also offered financial assistance by hosting volunteer workshops throughout Alberta.

The first CAP presentations were made to 395 schools. That year, 1,126 presentations were made to 29,739 Grade 4, 5 and 6 students. Thirty-five years later, 260 CAP volunteers provided presentations to 21,745 Grade 4 students in 942 classes from 496 schools across Alberta. Feedback from teachers continues to be highly positive about the program and they look forward to hosting CAP volunteers each year.

CAP has received awards over the years including the Alberta Foundation for Animal Care's Communications Award of Distinction in 2004, and CAP volunteers received the Growing Alberta Leadership Award.

Fast forward to 2019, CAP funding partners include the Alberta Beef Producers, Alberta Canola

Producers Commission, Alberta Chicken Producers, Alberta Institute of Agrologists, Alberta Irrigation Projects Association, Alberta Milk, Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (which joined in 1994), Alberta Turkey Producers, Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, Alberta Wheat Commission, Eastern Irrigation District, and Egg Farmers of Alberta.

The program not only has an impact on schoolchildren, but also on its volunteers.

"Although I've been the General Manager for five years, I've been a volunteer with CAP for 32 of its 35 years," said Don George. "During that time, it has been my privilege to help kids understand the importance of agriculture. Not only students, but often I find teachers asking me questions. I still give presentations every year. I really enjoy talking about agriculture and CAP gives me the chance to do that."

Congratulations Classroom Agriculture Program on 35 years of sharing our agriculture story with schoolchildren all over Alberta!