

## OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM

Queen Anne's County

*Please describe a County program in depth that you feel is unique to your county.*

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### **Agriculture Awareness Day Overview**

The purpose of this science based agricultural education program was to educate all 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Queen Anne's County. In a day long structured program held at the Queen Anne's County 4-H Park the following agricultural topics were taught: technology, equipment, crops, aquaculture, nursery, produce, greenhouses, forestry, farm animals, and numerous agriculture myths were dispelled. 7<sup>th</sup> graders are getting ready for high school and beginning to think about career paths. Students were educated at each station about the many agricultural related careers.

The day was made possible through collaborations with University of Maryland Extension, Queen Anne's Soil Conservation District, Queen Anne's County Farm Bureau, Queen Anne's County Board of Education, Queen Anne's County Government, Queen Anne's County High School FFA, University of Maryland Wye Research and Education Center, Maryland Grain Producers, Oyster Recovery Partnership, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, USDA Farm Service Agency, Young Farmers, Upper Shore Regional Council, QACTV and many other volunteers in our community. The two-day program included over 70 volunteers teaching 700 seventh graders, chaperones and teachers. Results from the pre and post testing showed an increase in agricultural knowledge and dispelled several myths. A press release was prepared and sent to all county media sources. The YouTube video of the event can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAVVujkCIIM>

### **Summary**

Agriculture is an industry that is misunderstood by many residents. In 2016 a coalition of educators, researchers, agencies, and grassroots organizations was formed to educate students in Queen Anne's County. The importance of agriculture and its 235 career options will be introduced to all students.

The partners created "Agriculture Awareness Day" for all 7<sup>th</sup> graders across the county. The Board of Education and school principals have been informed and are interested for their students to be educated about the importance of agriculture and the many career opportunities.

In a day long structured program we will cover the following aspects of agriculture; technology, equipment, crops, aquaculture, nursery, produce, greenhouses, forestry, farm animals, bees, and numerous agriculture myths. There are four middle schools in Queen Anne's County with 700 students, making this a two-day event.

The partners believe that 7<sup>th</sup> graders are the perfect age to learn about Maryland's number one industry and the numerous career options. The 7<sup>th</sup> graders will be excited to be out of the classroom and complete hands-on structured lessons, while allowing the students to understand

agriculture's importance in feeding the world and the truths of our industry. Lastly, the students will be educated about the 235 careers related to agriculture, which will open their eyes to the agriculture career pathway before high school. The awareness day may open the door for the students to join 4-H and FFA, which will encourage them to join other agriculture organizations after graduation.

As our county is transforming to a more urban population, our goal is to provide a venue to develop agriculture literate citizens. Each of our partners has their own diverse expertise and by joining together we can accomplish this goal. With the accomplishment of Agriculture Awareness Day in 2017 this will be an annual event.

These diverse careers need to be shared not only with students who enroll in agriculture classes but for all students before deciding on career pathways. With an Agriculture Awareness Day, this exposure will be made possible.

Not only will this experience educate students about careers in agriculture to fulfill jobs. It will also educate our chaperones and teachers on the importance of agriculture. "Occasionally in life you will need a doctor, lawyer, and preacher but three times a day, every day you need a farmer." These students will gain an understanding of where their food comes from and so much more. They will learn about technology the farmers use on his or her farm as well as the technology used in producing their crops and animals. The students will become aware of the essential needs for farm animals and the value of bees and food production. Next, the students will understand how farmers help the bay and the importance of aquaculture. Lastly, the importance of greenhouses, nurseries, landscaping, floriculture, produce and forestry will be taught.

Each student will participate in a 25-minute station about the three main grains grown in Queen Anne's County; corn, wheat, and soybeans. They will be able to touch and feel the grains, fill a grain jar and see the products and by-products they produce. The station will introduce them to career options such as, agronomy, laboratory technician, custom harvester, soil conservationist, plant pathologist, crop consultant, soil scientist, and food scientist.

### **Goals and measurable objectives**

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The main goal is to educate our future leaders about Maryland's number one industry. We will complete this through five main stations, each having their own objectives and school standards. To make the objectives measurable we will have a pre-test and post-test completed by all students.

### **Procedure to achieve objectives**

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1. Send pre-test to teachers, collect completed tests from teachers.
2. Centreville Middle School and Sudlersville Middle School attend the 1<sup>st</sup> day.
3. Stevensville Middle School and Matapeake Middle School attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> day.
4. Agriculture Awareness Day will be held at Queen Anne's County 4-H Park, bus transportation needs to be provided.

5. Media outlets will be asked to attend throughout the day to take pictures, and record the success of the event.
6. Students will be asked to bring a bagged lunch.
7. Students will be divided into 5 groups and rotate to all structured stations throughout the day.
8. The students will depart Agriculture Awareness Day to return to school and teachers will be able to administer a post-test to the students to determine what they learned.
9. Students will receive passports (books) to complete during the day, fill grain jars and a plant a plant.
10. Educators, agriculture employees, farmers, 4-Her's, FFA members and Farm Bureau members across the county will be asked to volunteer their time and share their knowledge.
11. Water will be available for all students throughout the day at each station.
12. May 29th will be a set-up and practice day for all the educators to run through their demonstrations. This will allow us to adjust any possible conflicts accordingly.
13. A detailed lesson plan with standards and objectives will be completed by all educators.

### **Schedule of Proposed Project**

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With 600 students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 40 chaperones, 24 teachers and 60 volunteers, we will be able to host this event rain or shine. There are enough buildings to hold all stations under a roof if it is raining. If it is not raining, we can have stations outside so the students can move around and enjoy the spring weather. We have a detailed schedule for stations, rotations and for lunch.

### **Overview of other projects**

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These ideas include a structured curriculum, teaching all aspects of agriculture, agriculture career awareness and a focus on one specific grade. The first year was such a success effectively educates students, teachers and chaperones. We would like Agriculture Awareness Day to become an annual educational field trip, with the possibility to be adopted by numerous other counties.

### **Evaluation**

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To see the effectiveness of agriculture awareness day, a pre-test and post-test will be completed by all students. Each presenter will provide questions from their stations including the main myth they dispelled about their topic. We are also asking for chaperones and teachers to attend stations and interact by helping and asking questions to keep the students actively involved.