

AITC Collective Connection December 2024



NATIONAL UPDATES

A Wrap on Great Canadian Farm Tour Season 4

The Season 4 of the Great Canadian Farm Tour wrapped up on Thursday, December 5, with a look at ice cream production in Manitoba! Since October, we have made 11 stops across Canada on our inaugural fall GCFT. This season, we explored a diverse landscape of Canadian agriculture, including a sea buckthorn farm in New Brunswick, a pumpkin farm in Newfoundland, a cranberry farm in British Columbia and the most northerly community greenhouse in North America on our first-ever stop in the Northwest Territories. Thank you to everyone who joined us along the way, and Farm Credit Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for supporting the program. If you missed any stops, you can rewatch all the tours anytime on our [YouTube channel](#).

Mission Explorium Grand Prize

Registration for the next edition of Mission Explorium is now open! Beginning February 17, 2025, Grade 6-8 classes will take on the challenge to become the next National Champion. Thanks to a generous donation from our friends at [Plantaform](#), the 2025 National Champion will win an innovative [Plantaform Indoor Garden](#)! This prize brings STEM learning to life with cutting edge fog technology that grows fresh greens year-round. Grade 6 to 8 teachers can register on the [AITC Dashboard](#).



SAVE THE DATE

OUR TOWN HALL MEETING IS ON DECEMBER 12!

NATIONAL UPDATES

thinkAG in Niagara Falls

Our thinkAG Manager, Kalysha Hanrahan, recently attended the Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference held in Niagara Falls, ON. The event brought together women from all corners of the agricultural industry, providing a platform to share knowledge, build networks and inspire change. As part of her participation, Kalysha hosted an engaging breakfast session that fostered dialogue between industry stakeholders and students. She highlighted AITC's extensive suite of resources, programs and initiatives designed to ignite curiosity and build awareness about careers in agriculture. Using Mentimeter, Kalysha posed thought-provoking questions to participants, sparking a lively discussion on the future of agricultural education. Participants shared insights on current challenges, including the growing labour shortage, and brainstormed actionable strategies to address these issues. Ideas ranged from enhancing agricultural literacy in schools to creating mentorship programs and increasing diversity in the workforce. Kalysha's session emphasized the importance of collaboration in shaping a sustainable future for agriculture. By connecting stakeholders and students, she showcased the potential of shared efforts to inspire youth and bridge the talent gap in the industry.



FROM COAST TO COAST...

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



Women in AG Video Series

In partnership with the NL Young Farmers program, AITC-NL added to the Women in Agriculture video series. These videos showcase the amazing women working in agriculture and are meant to engage students in the variety of careers available in the industry. The latest videos feature Mary Lester and Susan Lester Ryan of Lester's Farm Market in St. John's and Pauline Duivenvoorden of Barn Fine Eggs and Headline Holsteins in Deer Lake. These videos are featured in this year's virtual Amazing Agriculture Adventure where students use virtual farm tours to answer a series of questions and enter to win a prize for their class. The videos can be found on [AITC-NL's YouTube channel](#).

Busy November on the Island

As usual, November was a busy month for AITC-PEI. We celebrated Career Month, launched our Egg to Chick program, attended PEI Teacher's Convention, hosted our Great Canadian Farm Tour stop, and coordinated tours with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Charlottetown Research Centre with students from across the Island.

We are excited to continue our initiative of matching PEI agriculture professionals to the Career Case career cards. This year, we highlighted a journalist, a heavy-duty mechanic, a communications manager and a farm insurance specialist.

We had a wonderful opportunity to have thinkAG as a part of the National Take Your Kids to Work Day on November 6 and this extended to all Junior High School students through our collaboration with the Employment Journey. Our thinkAG collaboration has expanded to reach all high school students at every grade level and subject area so exciting times are ahead!

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



FROM COAST TO COAST...

NOVA SCOTIA

Celebrating Canada Career Month

Nova Scotia's Career Promotions Coordinator, Lisa Patton, was very busy during Career Month attending career fairs! Some of the events Lisa attended were at Pugwash District High School, Cobequid Educational Centre, Hants East High School, Hants North High School and Bible Hill Junior High, in addition to a Skills Canada Eastern Nova Scotia Career Event. In total, Lisa connected with more than 2,000 students to discuss careers in agriculture! Jacqueline Hoyt, Provincial Agricultural Programming Coordinator, attended the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture AGM to engage participants in volunteering for CALM next spring.



NEW BRUNSWICK

Exploring Agriculture Careers

Agriculture in the Classroom New Brunswick partnered with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Living Lab to bring 43 agriculture students from Oromocto High School to the research center in Fredericton. The day highlighted numerous career opportunities at the research centre, with presentations from several team members, and gave students the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities. The research center hires summer students each year and the partnership with AAFC gives the students insight into possible careers in their neighbourhood.



FROM COAST TO COAST...

ONTARIO

Inspiring Student at thinkAG Career Competitions

In November, AgScape hosted two thinkAG Career Competitions at the Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) and Caledonia Fairgrounds, engaging nearly 1,800 students in exploring careers within Ontario's innovative agriculture and agri-food sector. The students connected with passionate industry representatives, participated in hands-on activities and discovered a range of rewarding careers.



AgScape at The Royal 2024

At the 2024 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, AgScape delivered two impactful educational programs that captivated Ontario students. thinkAG Career Competition engaged over 200 students in exploring diverse agriculture and food careers through interactive activities, while our Local Food Workshops helped students explore Ontario's local food systems. At our interactive booth, attendees discovered diverse career pathways, explored our educational resources and engaged with our knowledgeable staff members. These programs and engagement opportunities created meaningful ways for students to gain insights into the exciting world of agriculture and food.

MANITOBA

The AITC-M Impact

During Career Month, AITC-M set up a photo booth at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences to connect with students whose journey into agriculture began with an Agriculture in the Classroom - Manitoba program. The energy was incredible as we chatted with students pursuing careers in agriculture and food. Their aspirations were as diverse as their passions—future agronomists, farmers, dieticians, food developers and more. Remarkably, 30 per

cent of the students we met remembered participating in agriculture programming during their school years. This is a powerful testament to the lasting impact of early exposure to agriculture education. These conversations reaffirm the bright future of Manitoba agriculture, fuelled by inspired young leaders who were once part of our programs. Together, we're planting seeds for tomorrow's innovators and advocates in the industry! Bianca Byers, Program Coordinator with AITC-M says, "Spending the day with the U of M aggies and foodies was so inspiring! Sometimes, in this industry, you can get discouraged at the amount of disconnect that the average consumer has to their food, but spending the day with these students gave me a much more positive outlook on the future of Manitoba agriculture!"



FROM COAST TO COAST...

Fun at Agribition

AITC-SK attended the Canadian Western Agribition (CWA), working in partnership with organizations to provide students of all ages with the chance to get up close to agriculture! During the six-day event, programming included:

- Agri-Ed Program (~10,000 Elementary students plus general public) – in the CWA Family Ag Pavilion, we hosted our Grains of Saskatchewan display and the Beef Education display.
- Ag-Mazing Challenge (750+ Middle Years students) – students visited stations around the CWA grounds to explore and answer questions about our food system.
- thinkAG Career Expo (550+ High School students) – students rotated through hands-on stations hosted by industry professionals to learn about different sectors and careers in agriculture.

SASKATCHEWAN



ALBERTA

thinkAG Career Fair

In celebration of November as Career Month, Ag for Life, in collaboration with Agri-Trade, was thrilled to host this year's thinkAG Career Fair on November 13. This unique event provided students in Grades 8–12 with an exceptional opportunity to explore a wide range of career possibilities within the agriculture industry. At the event, students had the chance to connect their personal interests with real-world career opportunities in agriculture. They participated in engaging, interactive sessions, learned about how their passions could align with various career paths and heard from a diverse lineup of agriculture

professionals. The event also featured an insightful Q&A session and the opportunity to explore the Agri-Trade Equipment Expo showroom floor. The thinkAG Career Fair was designed to support key curriculum outcomes in Career and Life Management, helping students advance in their career development journey. By networking with industry leaders and gaining valuable insights into various agricultural career paths, students were able to gain a better understanding of where their interests and talents might take them within the industry.



FROM COAST TO COAST...

Inspiring Action for a Sustainable Future at the Involve Abbotsford Symposium

At the Involve Abbotsford Symposium, BCAITC's Garden Programs Coordinator, Mia Soetaert, led an inspiring workshop on "Safeguarding Our Soil: Sustainability in Agriculture." Mia's session explored into the importance of protecting BC's agricultural land for future generations, sharing valuable insights on sustainability in farming. With a focus on real-world challenges and actionable strategies, Mia inspired attendees to delve into ways to integrate sustainability into agriculture education.

BRITISH COLUMBIA



Fresh for Less Fundraiser: Growing Support for Agriculture Education!

Thanks to the incredible support from our community, BCAITC's Fresh for Less fundraiser surpassed our goal, raising a profit of \$11,000! We donated 500 lbs of produce to food insecure families in the community with the help of our partners and we sold out on the remaining 7,000 lbs through our pre-event online and Abbotsford Winter Jubilee booth sales. Over 75,000 lbs of fresh produce to local families!

The proceeds from this event directly support agricultural education in BC schools, helping to inspire the next generation of agricultural leaders. This year's fundraiser also highlighted the importance of supporting local farms, as each bundle purchased not only provided healthy food but also contributed to the sustainability of our agricultural community. We're grateful to everyone who participated, making this event a resounding success!

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 12	AITC-C Town Hall Meeting
December 24- January 1	AITC-C Office Holiday Shutdown