

# 2022 Teacher Agriculture Expeditions Sponsor Report



**North Tour (L to R):**

Top: Peter Cowan, Jeremy Mewis, David Olson, Brooklyn Seck, Bree Wark, Trina Schell, Jennifer Schell, Nadine Flynn, Sherry Lesser, Wanda Hodder, Kirsten Brouet, Leah Japp, Emma Tremblay, Middle: Terry Youzwa, Kathryn McNulty, Bottom: Paige Pister, Lindsey Rudd



**South Tour (L to R):**

Ashley Holmes, Bailie Shindle, Bonita Larson, Rachel Poff, Kristen Minto, Teresa Farrell, Jordyn Leib, Sheri Ritchie, Davey Desjarlais, Kathryn MacDonald, Leah Hermanson, Bonnie Baron-Williams, Leanne Schappert, Michelle Geisler, Greg Torwalt





## **2 tours, 26 teachers, 1200 kilometers, 15 tour stops.**

The Agriculture Expedition was an action-packed, multi-day, hands-on tour that brought teachers from all over the province together to experience agriculture and connect with industry members and farmers. Teachers attended either the North Tour beginning in Melfort or the South tour beginning in Regina. Both tours offered teachers the opportunity to personally interact with farmers and industry members at their farms and agri-businesses who discussed and demonstrated their role in producing safe, healthy, and affordable food for our province and the world.

The participating teachers' knowledge of agriculture varied; most teachers had some prior knowledge, a few teachers were active farmers, and a couple had never stepped foot on a farm. Teachers were surveyed before the Expedition and were asked to share any questions or concerns they had about agriculture. Some of the questions included: What will sustainable agriculture look like in the future? How is technology used on farms now and what's to come in the future? How is climate change affecting agriculture? How is increased farm size affecting the future of farming? Each tour host provided the opportunity for teachers to ask these and many other questions. They provided real answers and shared how science, research, and technology have helped improve the sustainability of food production, and how these play an important role in keeping Saskatchewan agriculture competitive in the global market.





## North Tour

**Day 1:** Star City Hutterite Colony (Star City), Burnt Out Creek Ranch (Tisdale), Premier Tech Peat Moss Bog (Carrot River), Moyen Honey Farm (Zenon Park)

The Teacher Expedition kicked off in Melfort on August 16 with 16 teachers excited to learn about agriculture. Teachers travelled from afar including from Onion Lake, Lumsden, Regina, White City, Sturgis, Carrot River, Tisdale, Quill Lake, and Saskatoon.

The first stop of the Expedition was Star City Hutterite Colony where teachers were greeted by the dairy manager and toured through the barns and milk storage facilities. Teachers learned about animal care, supply management, and learned the



importance of dairy to our economy and how innovation and technology have played a role in sustainability. The group was then off to a beef farm near Tisdale where teachers learned about water stewardship, grazing methods, and saw silage harvest up close.

Teachers were then back on the bus to tour a peat moss bog. This was an eye-opening experience for many of the teachers who were surprised to learn that peat moss is produced in Saskatchewan and is used for water filtration! Moyen Honey Farm was the last stop of Day 1. Teachers learned about bee care, pollination, the extraction process, and more. It was a pretty sweet way to end the first day!

**‘The peat moss bog was super interesting! I’ve been telling everyone about it!’**

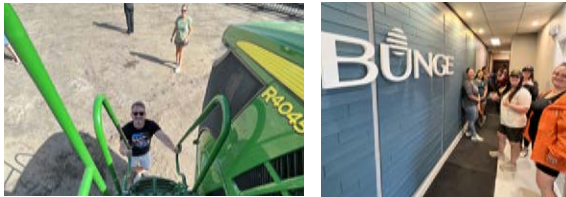
– Kirsten Brouet, South Corman Park School





## North Tour

**Day 2:** Bunge (Nipawin), Prairie Swine Center (Virtual – Saskatoon), Mabel Hill Farm Kitchen and Marketplace (Nipawin), GreenLeaf Seeds (Tisdale)



After an evening of socializing and comradery, the teachers were ready for another day of learning. Day 2 was a new adventure, and the first stop was Bunge. The teachers geared-up in safety equipment and toured the facility, witnessed the process of crushing canola to oil, and learned the impact canola has in our province. The group then had a virtual tour of the Prairie Swine Center. Teachers were toured through the research facility where they saw pigs at different life stages and learned what is needed for growth and care throughout a pig's life.

The teachers saw first-hand that all livestock producers livelihood depends on the well-being of their



animals (including bees). And to produce healthy animals they must provide a high level of care for their livestock while balancing land and water stewardship, and consumer demands.

Chef Michael Brownlee at Mabel Hill prepared a delicious meal for the group that featured many Saskatchewan commodities helping to make the connection between farms and food. After the dining experience the group was lead throughout the grounds at Mabel Hill where they got to see fruit and vegetable production up close and learn about the challenges and opportunities of a market garden. The last stop of the trip was to Greenleaf Seeds where teachers were able to see farm equipment up close and learn about the technology and sustainable practices used to produce wheat, barley, oats, canola, and peas. The variety of Expedition stops, complemented by delicious locally grown meals and snacks, helped teachers make the many connections within our food system. They also experienced first-hand the innovation, passion and dedication that farmers have.





## South Tour

**Day 1:** AGT Food and Ingredients (Regina), Jackson Cattle Company (Sedley), Lovholm Holsteins (Balgonie), Delage Farms (Indian Head)

The second tour of the Teacher Expedition kicked off on August 23 in Regina. A group of 10 teachers travelled from far and wide including Saskatoon, Cut Knife, Estevan, Neudorf, Kelliher, Balcarres, Balgonie, and Weyburn.

Teachers were toured through farms and businesses east of Regina and learned about the history and opportunity for pulse crop production in Saskatchewan, the impact of soil health on cattle herd management, the importance of genetics in milk production, and how science and innovation are making crop production more sustainable. The stops at AGT Foods and Delage Farms connected the full cycle of crop production demonstrating farm to fork including some of the processes in between.

One of the many benefits of the Expedition is the openness and transparency that lead to curiosity driven conversations. The teacher group had an interesting conversation with foreign farm employees at Delage Farms. The employees shared their experience working in agriculture, how global the industry is, and the abundance of job opportunities available. This sparked more discussion amongst the teachers, and

many were eager to take this information back to their schools and share the opportunities for careers in agriculture with their students.





Day 1 ended with a BBQ supper at Bin There Campground near Moose Jaw where teachers were fully immersed in agriculture and even slept in grain bins (albeit, beautifully renovated bins).



## South Tour

**Day 2:** Prairie Swine Center (Virtual – Saskatoon), Bar Over HC Honey and Livestock (Moose Jaw), Cargill (Moose Jaw)

The second day of the tour was in-and-around Moose Jaw. The teachers started the day with a relaxing morning that included a virtual tour of Prairie Swine Center. The

group was then back on the road to meet with the Howe family to discuss beef and honey production. Teachers were interested to learn the science behind the importance of herd genetics and how reproductive technologies are being used. Following the previous days tour, teachers were able to see the similarities and differences between beef and dairy animals and why genetics are important to each in different ways. Julie-Anne also toured us through her honey facility and beehives.

The group then headed for a picnic lunch where guest speaker, Bryan Sarauer, Head of SaskPolytechnic's Agriculture Program, provided information about the new program. There were a few high school teachers, a career counsellor, and a parent whose child was enrolled in program in the group of teachers. This discussion helped prepare teachers to counsel their students on their future career and education goals and provided more opportunities to consider.

Our last stop of the tour was Cargill in Moose Jaw where the teachers were able to witness another step in the food production system and learn about the quality controls in place that safeguard the food system for local and international markets.







## The Food!

Throughout the Expedition teachers were provided delicious and nutritious snacks and meals that highlighted many of the important Saskatchewan commodities including lentils, canola, dairy, pork, beef, wheat, flax, oats, bison, and more. When asked what the best thing about the Expedition was, Nadine Flynn, Carrot River, exclaimed:

**‘The food – excellent restaurant choices.’**





## The Impact

The goal of the Teacher Expedition was to provide an opportunity for teachers to gain a better understanding and appreciation of agriculture by engaging in and with people working in the industry. Overall, it was a huge success. Throughout the tour, teachers were amazed at the innovation, sustainable practices, and passion that farmers and industry members shared. Countless times, teachers commented on the enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment that was shared by the tour hosts. It was truly wonderful to have teachers experience the full cycle of both livestock and crop agriculture. Teachers saw first-hand how science, genetics, technology, innovation, and forward thinking makes Saskatchewan agriculture first-class, adaptable, world renown, and sustainable.

**‘Thank you for this opportunity. I can’t thank each of the team members enough for this. I have been apart of a number of PD opportunities these last few years and this by far was the most exciting, innovative, and informative in terms of providing teachers with more information about the ag industry in our province. I am so thankful for this program and all it provided teachers so they can help inspire the next generation of people within the ag industry!’**

- Jordyn Leib, Greenall High School

One of the greatest take-aways for teachers was to see how farming is most often a family business. At all the farms we visited there were multiple generations actively involved and it was clear to the teachers that the work, dedication, and passion for agriculture was shared by all the farming families.







**‘This was the most transformational excursion I have had the pleasure to go on. I loved learning about how farmers are taking active measures to ensure that our food is produced in the most environmentally friendly way. Farmers are great stewards of the land and want to ensure that the land remains viable to future generations of farmers; especially since most of the farmers have family who are going to take over the family farm. I really appreciated the connections I made with several of the participants and look forward to using some of the resources in my classroom now that I have a great awareness of what is available for my grade.’**

- Sherry Lesser, Sturgis Composite School

Throughout the Expedition teachers were noticing how different jobs that often aren't associated with agriculture are connected to the industry. Providing teachers with these opportunities and demonstrating the diversity of careers in agriculture will translate to students being exposed to more future careers opportunities.

**‘The ways that different jobs are connected to ag was eye opening to me, and in a lot of areas I hadn't previously thought of.’**

Nadine Flynn, Carrot River Elementary

Overall, the teachers witnessed that healthy and safe food begins at the farm level, and with checks and balances throughout the system, we have some of the safest, healthiest, most affordable food in the world.



Teachers also gained new connections and enjoyed bonding with other educators. The past two years throughout the pandemic have been difficult for teachers and they truly valued the high quality, educational, and inspirational professional development provided.

Kristen Minto, Balcarres School, commented the best part of the Expedition was **‘the learning, the people, the kindness, the care. I honestly felt like I was at an all inclusive resort. It was so nice to feel respected and valued and cared for as a teacher after a rough couple years.’**





All teachers evaluated the tour as Excellent. They have provided AITC-SK information to their colleagues and school community, ordered new classroom resources, and plan to reach out to the agriculture community around them.

**‘I haven’t stopped talking about it since I got back!!! I’ve been bugging the middle years teachers to trade a few classes so I can go in and teach about AG to the older kids!’**

- Leanne Schappert, St. Nicholas School

The survey indicated all teacher’s understanding of Saskatchewan agriculture increased as a result of the Expedition.

Teachers were also asked about their trust in agriculture concerning antibiotics, vaccines, animal care practices, pesticides, fertilizers, soil health, and GMO’s. Overall, teachers trust in agriculture is high. On average teachers rated their trust in the Agriculture Industry as 8.8 out of 10 and their trust in Farmers as 9.7 out of 10.

Throughout the Expeditions we shared our journey on our social media accounts. These posts alone had over 53,155 impressions and over 2,165 engagements. Teachers also shared their experiences on their personal accounts reaching even more people with Saskatchewan’s incredible food story.

**‘As teachers, we are so fortunate to have AITC as a resource in our classrooms and schools! It was great to connect with other educators and with various hosts along the tour. Communities across Saskatchewan have such diverse resources and agricultural industries, and I appreciated getting the opportunity to learn more! I look forward to applying that learning in our school!’**

- Kirsten Brouet, South Corman Park School








## 2022 Teacher Agriculture Expedition Sponsor Report

Thank you so much for your support and for seeing value in educating the educators. The impact the tours had on the teachers has been huge and will continue to impact their students and teaching community for years to come.





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Connecting Kids and Agriculture