

Making a difference

Living Ag Classroom: Whole Farm Cycle

The Situation

With youth becoming so far removed from agriculture, the separation gap is growing as youth are wanting to understand how their food is grown and how livestock provide many essential parts to the food cycle. Along with the increased interest in home horticulture and utilizing locally grown food that is nutritious and safe, more families are looking into growing some of their own food.

Extension Response

A short presentation was developed to provide learning about the composting cycle that plants utilize for food. Students were able to take a step back and move through the life cycle as they got a “hands-on” experience of the composting cycle! During this course, students learned about the whole farm cycle, what nutrients are needed in compost, what the composting cycle entails, and how compost is used in an agriculture setting. During this demonstration, students were able to see and feel the nutrients that are needed to make compost and shake a “mystery bucket” during the presentation. All students were surprised to find out they were in the process of making compost during this demonstration by shaking the “mystery bucket”. This opportunity connected the students to the rural agriculture environment that they had not had the opportunity to learn before.

Impacts

A total of 2266 fourth graders from Cass County and the surrounding area had the opportunity to participate in this activity. Of

the completed surveys returned, the following impacts were noted:

- 73% of the students increased their understanding of the whole farm nutrient cycle.
- 73% of the students are more aware that manure compost can be used as plant food.
- 95% increased their knowledge of making compost.

Feedback

“Thanks for the great presentation! We loved the mystery pail.”-Elementary Teacher

“Now I know almost anything can be made into compost and it can help grow any plant grow better than ordinary soil or dirt.” – Participant

“My favorite part of the booth was shaking the mystery bucket and learning how manure, straw, and dirt can be combined to make compost.”-Participant

Contact

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