

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Teachers Invited to Summer Agriculture Institute

Planning is underway for the 2009 Summer Agriculture Institute (referred to as SAI) is a 3-credit course offered through Oregon State University (OSU) with a choice of two sessions held annually. For 2009, Session #1 will be held the week of June 21-26, on the OSU campus in Corvallis and Session #2 will be held July 12-17, at the Eastern Oregon University campus in La Grande and the Eastern Oregon Agriculture Research Center in Union. The course is a week-long, graduate level class for K-12 educators with little or no background in agriculture.

The goal of SAI is to help educators use Agriculture as a context for teaching the Academic Standards (science, math, social studies, English, etc.) Current, factual, and scientific information about agriculture is presented and participants are provided with educational materials to incorporate agriculture, into their curriculum.

SAI shows how farmers and ranchers care for the land and the water. Teachers learn procedures for ensuring consumers a safe food source. They are exposed to the complexities of agriculture marketing and economics, both of which play an important role in farming today.

Teachers are given a first-hand experience with agriculture, including tours of processing plants and field trips to farms and ranches. Places visited in the past during Session #1 include the OSU Dairy, Norpac, and local nursery & greenhouses. While, participants in Eastern Oregon may see how mint is harvested and produced into oil, visit a wheat farm and a working cattle ranch. There are lectures and hands-on labs taught by university professors and professionals from the agricultural industry. The highlight of the week is an overnight stay on a working farm or ranch where the teacher has an opportunity to meet and work with agriculturists. One past participant sums it up this way "Wow! I received quite the education this week. Prior to SAI, I viewed agriculture as something that was not relevant to our lifestyle in the city. I questioned the validity of taking precious time to teach agriculture. Now I realize that I was very misinformed. I greatly appreciate those who work in agriculture...because we need them! I have learned that agriculture is edible, recyclable, recreational, renewable, environmentally-oriented and required for existence. Thank you for providing this experience!"

The first SAI at OSU happened in 1989. In 1996, SAI was awarded the Oregon Department of Agriculture's *Progress Award for Education*. A strong agricultural sector is important to the economic viability of Oregon. It is more important today than ever to provide information about food safety, the environment, and the economic impacts for Oregon. The students reached today will become better informed consumers and voters that will ultimately support sound agricultural practices and policies in the future.

Participants pay less than half the cost of tuition alone (only \$500) to attend one of the two institutes offered. This covers only a small part of the cost for tuition, room, board, transportation, and educational materials each participant receives. Donations in support of SAI made to the Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation (OAEF), which is a recognized 501 ©(3) non-profit organization cover the remaining \$1,766 per student.

Space is available for both sessions on a first come basis, applications are available & questions may be answered by contacting one of the project coordinators: Allette Hornung SAI Project Coordinator Session #1, 559-280-3007, alletearc@msn.com or Jana Lee Dick, Project Coordinator Session #2, 541-562-5129, jana.dick@oregonstate.edu

You may also download applications at the homepage of the Oregon Farm Bureau Programs, Oregon Agriculture Education Foundation (<http://www.oregonfb.org/programs/sai.shtml>). Mail it along with the registration fee directly to Janice Reed, Director, OAEF at the Oregon Farm Bureau, 3415 Commercial Street SE, Salem OR 97302. If anyone is interested in making a donation to support the SAI contact one of the project coordinators or mail your donation to the OAEF, Salem address, you will be sent confirmation for tax purposes.

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