

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH AGRICULTURE
Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board
Grant Proposal No. 2016068

FINAL REPORT 2016
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SUMMATION OF ACTIVITIES

The Close Encounters with Agriculture (CEWA) program promotes and increases the understanding of agriculture. This program demonstrates the inter-relationships and positive aspects of production agriculture, nutrition and the environment. A total of 3,642 fourth-grade students, and 597 teachers and chaperones participated in the program in October 2016. Direct program costs averaged \$2.70 per student, a decrease over last year's costs.

This program is evaluated through pre and post-tests for the students, and by teacher evaluations. Evaluations were redesigned this year in attempt to better capture changes in student knowledge. Students scored an average of 28% correct on the pre-test. After participating in the program, students test scores rose to 83% correct on the post-test in 2016, on some questions it was noted to demonstrate an even greater improvement. A copy of the pre/post test is included in this packet. Overall teacher evaluation scores averaged 4.91 with 5.00 being the highest score. Ninety-eight per cent of participating teachers rated the program a four or five on a scale of 1 to 5. Teachers responded overwhelmingly (92.5%) that their children had a much better understanding of agriculture after participating in this program.

Close Encounters with Agriculture is a nationally recognized University of Maryland program. The program has won awards from the American Farm Bureau, the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, the Joint Council of Extension Professionals, and Epsilon Sigma Phi the national Extension honorary fraternity.

MEETING PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- 1) To promote and increase the visibility of agricultural science and related fields.
- 2) To demonstrate the interrelationship of agriculture, the environment and nutrition.
- 3) To involve volunteers in promoting agriculture and related fields.

- 4) To increase the understanding of agriculture with youth and their families.
- 5) No indirect costs are included in this program.

Close Encounters with Agriculture increases agricultural visibility by exposing students from elementary schools in Montgomery County to education concerning the importance of agriculture in their everyday lives. Production agriculture, sound nutrition and farmers' contributions to a healthy environment are emphasized throughout the activity. Over 150 volunteers participate in the program delivery each year. Volunteers assist with teaching in a variety of areas and with other aspects of the program. Farmers donate time, livestock and agricultural products that are essential to the success of the program. Pre/post test scores indicate the students have gained a significant amount of knowledge by participating in Close Encounters with Agriculture.

MGPUB Recognition

MGPUB is listed as a provider of financial support in a handout included in the teacher's packet. MGPUB is also listed as the provider of biodegradable bags made from corn and used for goody bags with the students. Classes typically write thank you notes by choosing one of the donors, in-kind contributors or agencies listed in the packet. MGPUB has probably received thank you letters from participants this year and from past programs.