



# STAR Spotlight on Teaching Agriculture

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## Jerry Hamilton, Indianola



“Mr. Hamilton has cultivated a culture of success both outside and inside the classroom. Mr. Hamilton incorporates technology every day in his classroom. He utilizes laptops, tablets and a smart board to keep his students engaged in lessons. He always ensures students are engaged and are learning skills that are applicable to their chosen career pathway. Mr. Hamilton has combined traditional and innovative lessons to provide his students with the best education possible. His students create and publish a monthly newsletter while also reading to the elementary students and hosting a poster contest titled, “What does Ag mean to you?” Over the past 23 years, Mr. Hamilton has seen a multitude of students achieve success and scholarships to pursue agricultural careers due to his leadership.”

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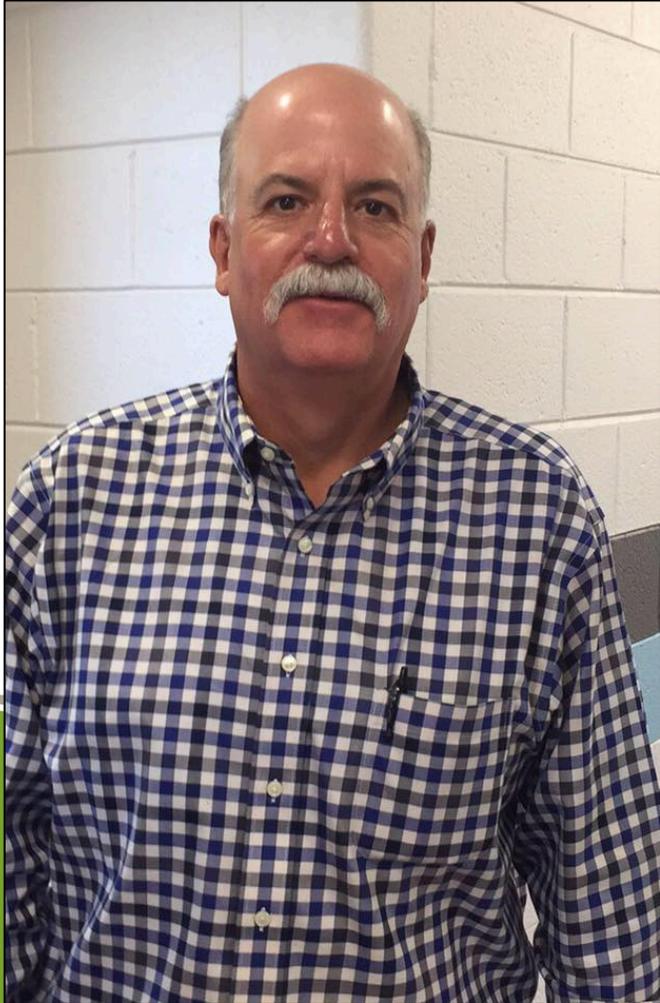
## Craig Thompson, Byng



“Mr. Thompson brings a fresh perspective to project-based learning with his hands-on learning approach through teaching horticulture. Byng FFA owns two greenhouses, where Thompson instructs students how to purchase seeds, plant cuttings, fertilize, water, and finish vegetables and bedding plants. His students desire to be in his class, primarily due to the rapport he has built with the community. Thompson often enlists the help of students to provide fresh roses for a unique graduation ceremony tradition every May. Outside of class, Thompson’s students visit the Francis Cemetery to clean up brush, maintain gravesite landscape, and set out headstone flower arrangements.”

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## Bruce Farquhar, Altus



“Bruce continues to exemplify effective instruction in Altus, Oklahoma he is noted as a grant writing machine for innovative instruction. His grants include NRA, Hydroponics, and innovative shop grants. The instruction Bruce gives his students in Ag Mechanics, Animal Science, and other Agriculture related courses is superb. He enhances instruction by integrating lessons learned by industry tours during the summer. The Altus community is blessed to have Mr. Farquhar as a leader in many civic organizations, such as a Mason, WOSC planning committee member, and State Treasurer of the OAETA Board. Bruce Farquhar is dedicated to student success in many pathways.”

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## Derek Pearson, El Reno



“Derek is very passionate about teaching agriculture, and he is even more passionate about encouraging students to reach their full potential. He is utilizing new resources, such as google classroom, to teach these new students. He has created CDE workshops, where they are introduced to the many opportunities that FFA has to offer. These students have worked hard and have seen success in Opening/Closing Ceremonies, meat judging, and speech contests to name just a few. Pearson has recently started a Masters of Arts in Education Leadership at SNU, with the personal goal of utilizing this degree to better serve his students. As an ag teacher, he is always there to offer advice to new Ag teachers and old. He truly embodies what a well rounded and motivated Ag teacher is and should be.”

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## Bailey Kliwer, Stillwater



“Ms. Kliwer sets out to engage her students through innovative, unique projects such as her Agriscience II leather working project. Through this unit, students are able to craft custom-made leather items during class. As an Animal Science instructor, Ms. Kliwer has worked hard to move students out of the classroom and into the real-world setting at the livestock barn. Under the close supervision of their instructor, students have clipped sheep, weighed animals to determine average daily gain, and prepared and administered medication to sick livestock. In her plant courses, Ms. Kliwer works with students to manage a teaching greenhouse that includes over 10,000 ornamental plugs that are transplanted and later sold at an annual plant sale.”

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## Jeremy Schmidt, Edmond



“Jeremy Schmidt is continually looking to find each individual student’s passion and inspire them to succeed. He focuses on individualized learning and is a pioneer in the Agriscience Fair competition because he saw it as a way to connect core classroom concepts with individualized hands on education while preparing students for advanced studies and careers.

Each time I interact with a young professional that taught under him I learn more about his strength within the classroom. They speak of a teacher that balances classroom management with an unmatched ability to motivate young people. They talk about his ability to connect the classes he teaches to the real world and local community.”

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## Rashele Blakley, Bristow



“In the classroom, Ms. Blakley strives to provide students with a meaningful classroom experience by making lessons fun and exciting. Some unique opportunities she has provided include taking students to Oklahoma State University to tour the agricultural facilities and even allowing students to virtually tour chicken farms through Google goggles. Community involvement has also been evidently important to Ms. Blakley as she has conducted many chapter service activities. Inside and outside the classroom, Ms. Blakley strives to create learning environments to help students gain a desire to learn more and become further involved in the agricultural industry.”

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## Jennifer Hamlin, Collinsville



“Mrs. Hamlin puts pride in each of her students and will go out of her way to help every one of her students. She does her best to ensure she is reaching all types of learners on all different levels. She often works with her school’s special education department to help those students learn about agriculture as well. This year she set up a project that allowed the SPED classes to grow vegetables in their classroom. Mrs. Hamlin utilizes a wide variety of teaching methods and ideas to ensure all students are engaged in the classwork too. Mrs. Hamlin is also an outstanding member of her community. Her chapter is currently working to restore a centennial farm in Collinsville to its original condition to allow it to be a historical learning center for the community and surrounding areas.”

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## Ashley Gaff, Timberlake



“The lessons Mrs. Gaff provides to her students are innovative and challenging, some examples include her native range boards that have placed in the top three at the state fair, and informative videos made in the agricultural communication class. With classroom instruction she has also conducted labs where students make soil profiles and perform a ribbon test to determine the soil texture and her animal science class makes 3D livestock digestive systems! Another aspect of Mrs. Gaff’s classroom, she offers students many hands-on technologies including a drone, computer lab, greenhouse and plasma cam. Her teaching methods and lessons provide students with endless opportunities.”

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## Tonya Middleton, Mulhall-Orlando



“The most important attributes Tonya possesses is her ability to get the most out of her students. I can recall on several occasions in which one or more of her students have excelled beyond their apparent ability under her leadership and guidance. Watching Tonya in action, you can see that the students admire her, respect her, and value her opinion and leadership. She understands the value of classroom instruction and implements the best teaching philosophy possible to enhance student learning.”