Reinvest ASA ... Grow With It!

ASA members, along with staff, collaborated on a unique Reinvest ASA project addressing the concern of meeting the future agronomic workforce needs along with ASA’s strategic goals of bringing the practice and profession of agronomy to the K-12 audience. The result? Agronomy—Grow with It!

The ASA K-12 Web Content and Book Development project envisioned a high quality, graphic-rich science of agronomy book (written at the 6–8th grade level) and grade-appropriate content for a website specific to teachers and students.

The project had three objectives:
1. Teach students that agronomy is an integrated, holistic, and practical science;
2. Demonstrate that agronomic careers are science rich and diverse, tapping into the idealism of this age group and introducing an option that many students may never have considered; and
3. Through examples of problems and solutions, build appreciation for the role of agronomy in our lives, as consumers and how it is essential to ensuring a secure and sustainable agricultural system for generations to come.

The book and associated web content was to be written in a way that excites and motivates students by telling the story of agronomy—what it is; key concepts; how it relates to other disciplines; why it is important to the reader (food, human health, feed, environment, fuel, and fiber), both for themselves and their families; and why it is important for the world; key messages; and career opportunities.

Agronomy—Grow with It!, a 100-page book, is ASA’s first step in reaching the K-12 audience (both teachers and students) and integrates agronomy (and agronomists) with chapters on crops, pests, livestock, water, soil, climate change, and careers. The book followed a process similar to current book publication with the exception that members served as the content experts with the support of a professional science writer. The book also supports Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), an important measure for teachers and districts endorsed by the National Science Teachers Association.

“Teachers can engage students in making connections between basic science and real-life issues,” says Comfort Ateh, an ASA member and one of the book’s authors. “Schools that want to enhance students’ science literacy are going to be interested in this book.”

www.agronomy4me.org

The project also included a new website that debuted at the 2016 Annual Meeting in Phoenix. The www.agronomy4me.org presents content

Thanks to the Authors

Thank you to the dedication of our authors in bringing this project to fruition:

Comfort Ateh (top left), Associate Professor of Education, Providence College, and chair of the ASA/CSSA K-12 Committee.

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Judy Mannes (bottom right), Science Writer (writer of three ASA, CSSA, and SSSA K-12 books)