



2011

Richland County Farm-City Week: 3rd-5th Grade Individual or Team Writing *Sustainable Agriculture*

Eligibility: 3rd-5th grade students in public and private schools in Richland County and 3rd-5th grade homeschooled students living in Richland County are eligible to participate.

Overview: “Sustainable Agriculture” is farming in a way that protects the soil, water, air, plants, wildlife, and people. Sustainable farming practices include:

- Reducing soil erosion
- Composting and mulching
- Using optimal fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides
- Using efficient irrigation techniques
- Rotating crops
- Planting cover crops
- Increasing crop diversity
- Selling and buying food locally
- Managing livestock manure
- Increasing free range livestock production
- Rotational grazing
- Reducing farm energy use
- Using renewable energy sources to power the farm and farm equipment
- Integrating wildlife habitat into the farm plan

Assignment: Your assignment is to investigate sustainable farming in South Carolina by participating in one or more of the following activities (or a related activity) to learn how and why farmers care for their farmland.

- Visit a local farm
- Visit a local farmers market
- Interview a farmer
- Invite a farmer to visit your school
- Visit the produce section of your local grocery store
- Interview the produce manager at your local grocery store
- Start a class composting project or other class project demonstrating a practice of sustainable agriculture
- Contact local government agencies to find out how they promote sustainable agriculture; invite representatives to visit your school! Contact us for ideas.

Students may undertake these activities as a class or individually. After completing the investigation, produce a written entry (individually or in teams of up to five students) that explains either (1) what sustainable agriculture is and why it is important, or (2) how a specific sustainable farming practice (e.g., no-till planting or vermicomposting) benefits the soil, water, air, plants, wildlife, and/or people.

Rules: Entries must be the original work of an individual student or a team of up to five students. Writing should be factual, informative, and creative. Acceptable forms include essays, stories, poems, song lyrics, letters, news articles, recipes, and dramatic scripts. Submissions should not exceed five pages and must be legible. Limit three entries per teacher.

Judging: Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- Evidence of understanding of the theme (sustainable agriculture)
- Content and technical accuracy
- Writing mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation)
- Creativity/originality

Prizes: The first place winner (individual or team) in each grade will receive a \$50 prize; second place will receive a \$30 prize; and third place will receive a \$20 prize. The teacher of the first place winner(s) in each grade will also receive a \$50 prize.

Timeline:

October 28th: All submissions must be received or postmarked by this date. Note: teachers should submit only their top three entries.

November 18th-24th: National Farm-City Week; winner notification and media opportunities for winners and participants

To enter: Complete and attach the Individual or Team Writing entry form to each submission (limit three submissions per teacher) and fax, mail, e-mail, or deliver them to the address provided.

Questions: Direct any questions to:

Chanda L. Cooper
Richland Soil & Water Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063 A
Columbia, SC 29204
(w) 803-576-2084
(f) 803-576-2088
cooperc@rcgov.us



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Entry Form (Due Oct. 28th)

Complete this form (one per submission), attach it to each submission (limit three per teacher), and return via fax, mail, e-mail, or hand-delivery to:

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School name:

Principal:

School address:

School telephone #:

Teacher name (first and last for certificate):

Teacher e-mail address:

Grade:

Title of submission:

Name(s) of author(s) (first and last for certificates):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.