

## After 50 Years – Agricultural Education is Back in Indee

January 31, 2013 (*Independence, IA*) – After a 50 year absence, Agricultural Education will now be back in Independence Community School District classrooms. “As a rural farming community, it is imperative to recognize the importance of agriculture in our daily lives and to educate future generations,” said Superintendent Jean Peterson. “For this reason and many others, the Independence Community School District Board of Education recently approved curriculum for an Agricultural Education Program.”

ICSD has not had an Agricultural Education (previously known as Vocational Agriculture) program and FFA Chapter since 1963. When the instructor at the time passed away, a replacement instructor was not hired despite the District’s strong ties to agriculture. The new program will officially begin this fall during the 2013-2014 academic year and the district is actively searching for a program instructor.

The District owns 92 acres of land on the western edge of Independence. Approximately 40 acres is being developed for the new JR / SR High School campus. The Agricultural Education Program fields will be located on the East side of the new building providing easy access from the classroom to the field and adjacent greenhouse.

The Agricultural Education Program will be somewhat unique in how it is funded. “It is our goal to make this a self-funded program, which means the District would be provided funds for operations,” said Scott Frye, program volunteer. Program supporters have built relationships with area farmers and agriculture product suppliers who have already pledged to donate seed, fertilizer, equipment and labor to plant and harvest the crops. Indee Agricultural Education, Inc., a non-profit corporation, will farm the District’s remaining 50 acres of land. All revenues will be deposited and held by the Mustang Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) entity that supports District initiatives. These revenues will be given to the District to help pay for the program.

The District leased the farm land in 2012 to get a one-year jump start on funding. Supporters donated the 2012 year rent, the inputs and the labor. All profits from the 2012 crop’s harvest have been rolled over to 2013 to pay for the 2013 rent. When the program starts this fall, the Mustang Foundation, Inc. plans to advance funds to the District to cover the expenses of the program, such as the instructor and supplies.

The District is now searching for an instructor for this new program, and is looking forward to filling this position in the near future. “This is a great opportunity for anyone interested in building the program from the ground up in a brand new facility”, said Board President Brian Eddy. “We have a phenomenal facility set to open in August 2013, and our community has shown the past year the vast support that exists for Agricultural Education at the Independence Community School District”.



Indee Agricultural Education, Inc. volunteers donated equipment, fuel, and manpower to harvest the 2012 crops and provide initial funding for the new program.

If you have questions regarding the Independence Community School District Agricultural Education Program, please contact Superintendent Jean Peterson at [jpeterson@independence.k12.ia.us](mailto:jpeterson@independence.k12.ia.us) or (319) 334-7400 or follow Indee Ag Ed on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/IndeeAgEd](http://www.facebook.com/IndeeAgEd).

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