

CAREE Comments

By Shannon Murphy

(Conservation, Agricultural Resources and Environmental Education)

Madison County CAREE sponsored a family science night for fifty Highland 3rd grade students and their parents. The family science night is a wonderful opportunity for students along with their parents to, learn more about agriculture. This year's theme was "Crops Around Illinois". Students had the chance to go to five different stations where they learned more about an Illinois crop and then were able to do an activity. Illinois has good rich soils and this is one reason why our #1 industry in Illinois is agriculture. Students learned about the different layers of soil and then made their own edible soil profile. Pumpkins are a very valuable specialty crop to Illinois because we are the #1 producer of these large orange fruit. Students made a pumpkin charm which allows them to remember the growing cycle of a pumpkin by using different symbols for each part of the cycle. Corn is Illinois #1 crop and many products are made from corn. One of those products is corn starch. Students got to make corn putty, which is made from corn starch and water.



They also got to play with corn peanuts which are biodegradable and made from corn starch. Soybeans being our #2 crops in Illinois are also a very important crop that is used in several food products and used to make other products such as ink. Students had the chance to make their own soybean ink and then see how well this ink worked.



Wheat is another valuable crop to Illinois and is used to make several different products. Students used wheat flour to make edible glue. They also experimented to see if wheat flour or white flour worked the best in making the glue.

With the help of the Highland FFA students and Highland Elementary staff, CAREE was able to make the family science night a successful event for both 3rd grade students and their parents. CAREE would like to thank the Highland 3rd grade teachers for allowing them to sponsor this event and to talk to their students about the different agriculture crops that are very important to Illinois. CAREE would also like to thank Highland FFA students for helping at the event.