

Advocating Environmental and Agricultural Stewardship

Through Educational Awareness

Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences Student Club
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR

Introduction

During the past two academic years the University of Arkansas (UA) Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences (CSES) Club expanded efforts to raise environmental and agricultural awareness through educational outreach in Northwest Arkansas (NWA). The UA CSES Club participated in three local events: Springdale Environmental Fair, Happy Hollow Harvest Moon Festival, and Arkansas Farm to You Program. Club members taught students about the importance of soil conservation, crops produced in Arkansas, food waste composting, the food production cycle, and the importance of health and nutrition.

To view additional photos of club activities, scan the QR code and visit the UA CSES Club Facebook™.



Objectives

1. Instill a sense of environmental stewardship among future generations through educational awareness
2. Teach the value of regional agriculture and interrelated environmental processes (Figs. 1 & 2)
3. Introduce the concept of closed loop cycles through the relationship of food production and food waste



Figure 1. Display of cereal grains at Harvest Moon Festival



Figure 2. Display of a club member's composter at Harvest Moon Festival

Happy Hollow Harvest Moon Festival

- In October of 2013 and 2014, members of the CSES club hosted a booth at the 2nd and 3rd annual Happy Hollow Harvest Moon Festival to connect the public with Arkansas agriculture (Fig. 5)
- Displayed the initial and final stages of compost (Fig. 6)
- Introduced soil textural classes: sand, silt, and clay (Fig. 7)
- Highlighted and discussed the economic importance of one of the major cash crops grown in Arkansas, soybean
- Exhibited soybean, rice, corn, cotton, rye, barley, oats, and wheat and their final products to emphasize the relevance in daily use and consumption

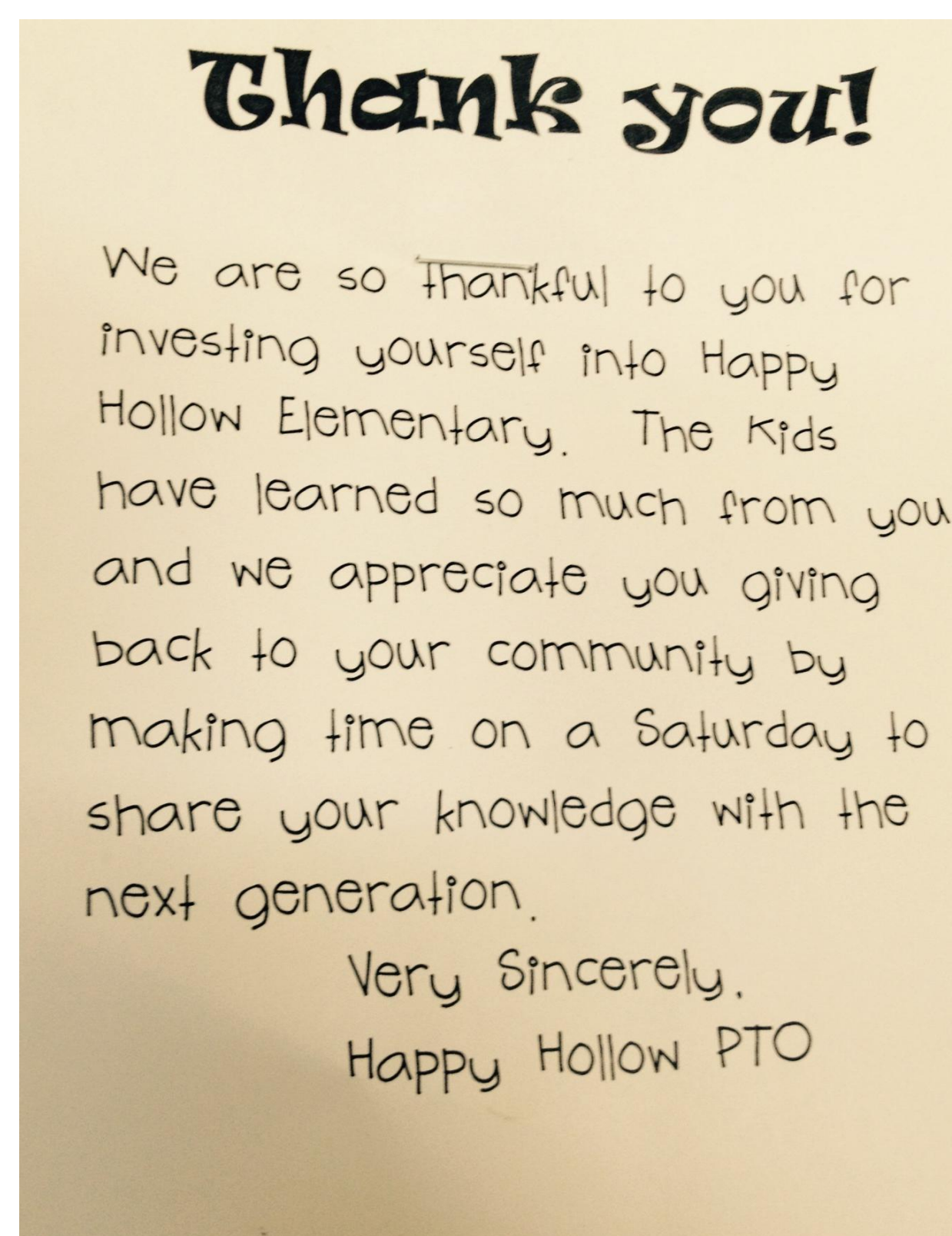


Figure 5. Thank you letter from the Happy Hollow Parent Teacher Organization

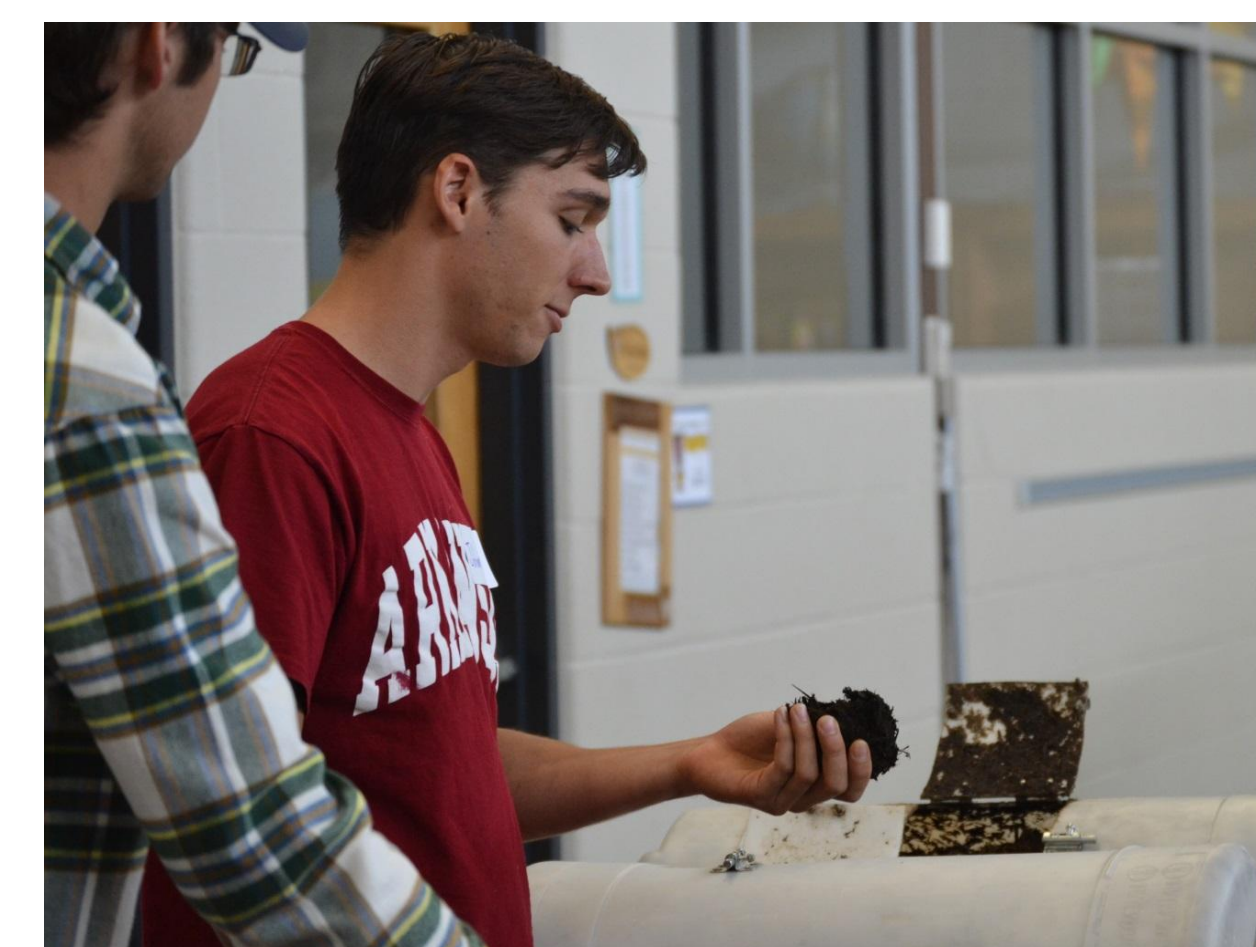


Figure 6. Discussing the importance of composting



Figure 7. Demonstrating soil texturing to students and parents

Educational Impact

- Increased awareness of Arkansas agriculture and environmental resources to 1,050 Arkansas students (Table 1)
- Introduced basic concepts of environmental science, agricultural production, and the importance of agriculture to the state and local economy
- Advocated the importance of composting food waste and the interrelatedness of food production and food waste
- Informed students of the fragile relationship between agriculture and the environment
- Stressed the importance of making healthy food choices by introducing the 5 food groups, food labels, and portion control
- Increased community involvement through collaboration with local organizations (Table 2)

Table 1. Educational impact data provided by event coordinators

Participants	Students
Springdale Environmental Fair	350
Happy Hollow Harvest Moon Festival	300
Arkansas Farm to You Program	400
Total:	1,050

Future Goals

- Establish ongoing relationships with local schools to promote the importance of environmental and agricultural stewardship
- Double the number of educational outreach events attended by the CSES Club by collaborating with additional state and local organizations
- Expand the target audience to include the collegiate student body at the University of Arkansas by hosting a departmental event aimed at educating students on the importance of environmental awareness in their lives

Table 2. The UA CSES Club wishes to acknowledge collaborators who made these events possible

Participants	Involvement
Arkansas Soybean Association	Donated soybean based products
Arkansas Agricultural Cooperative Extensive Service	Organized Happy Hollow event
Happy Hollow Elementary School	Hosted the 3 rd annual Harvest Moon Festival
Springdale High School	Hosted the Springdale Environmental Fair
UA Division of Agriculture	Provided financial support
UA Department of Crop, Soil, and Environmental Sciences	Supplied soil, seeds, and crops for demonstration purposes
Washington Elementary School	Hosted the Arkansas Farm to You Program

Springdale Environmental Fair

- CSES club members participated in a K - 12th grade Environmental Fair on May 2, 2014 (Figs. 3 & 4)
- Highlighted the club's past and present activities including, stream restoration, tree plantings, trail clean-ups, and a community garden project in Fayetteville, AR



Figure 3. Highlighting past and future club events



Figure 4. Explaining majors and minors within the UA CSES Department

- Emphasized the importance of crop, soil, and environmental sciences, focusing on the importance of food waste composting, food production, and soil conservation (Fig. 3)
- Discussed the academic majors and minors within the UA CSES department to students (Fig. 4)

Arkansas Farm to You Program

- On October 16, 2014 members of the CSES Club volunteered at the Arkansas Farm to You Program and promoted food production and the importance of a healthy lifestyle (Figs. 8 & 9)
- Discussed the food groups which included vegetables, fruits, grains, proteins, and dairy



Figure 8. Farm to You display where students learned about crops



Figure 9. Teaching children the basic food groups and portion control

- Illustrated how food travels from farm to table through visual demonstrations
- Instructed students on how to properly read food nutrition labels
- Taught students portion control and helped students depict a balanced meal (Fig. 9)