



Doug Babbitt, agricultural educator at Perkins County Schools in Grant is one of 36 individuals nationwide who received the Teachers Turn the Key Award, given Nov. 19 at the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) annual convention in St. Louis.

The Teachers Turn the Key Award program (TTTK) is a scholarship to allow early career agricultural educators to attend the annual NAAE convention, giving them an opportunity to become involved with their professional association on a national level.

TTTK participants take part in special programming geared toward agricultural educators in the early stages of their careers.

Babbitt has been the agriculture teacher at Perkins County Schools since 2008. His program is located in the agricultural community of Grant.

Babbitt has built a program that offers a variety of courses to attract students with both agricultural and non-agricultural backgrounds.

The majority of Babbitt's FFA members possess non-agricultural backgrounds, yet join FFA for leadership, scholarship and social development opportunities.

It is his belief that his classroom activities should connect to core content as well as real-world experiences. Through this, his students are prepared for opportunities like college and employment after high school.

"It was a great experience to go to St. Louis and meet other ag teachers from all over the nation," said Babbitt. "Being around other teachers who don't have the support from their administration and community that the FFA and ag program gets in Perkins County made me the envy of several at the conference. To be able to exchange ideas with these ag teachers and discuss methods and approaches in technology and FFA activities was enlightening. Being able to represent Nebraska at this was a great honor and I would like to thank everyone for their support of FFA and our students."

Chip Kay, Babbitt's colleague at Perkins County High School, said, "All great leaders become facilitators if they create the perfect learning environment and Mr. Babbitt's classroom is an example."

Each of the TTTK winners received a plaque and a scholarship to cover convention registration, travel expenses, and housing during the NAAE convention in St. Louis. RAM Truck Brand sponsors the TTTK program as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

NAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators. The mission of NAAE is "professionals providing agricultural education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy, and service." The NAAE office is located in Lexington, Ky.

