

# OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

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## **Big cabbage leads to big rewards for Moore third grader**

Sawyer Hamel discovered his green thumb by growing a cabbage from a small seedling to a head large enough to feed a family. All the third graders in his class received cabbage seedlings from Bonnie Plants, an Alabama based company, to develop a love of gardening. His teacher, Shawna Hughes, has had her classes participate in the cabbage growing program for five years.

“Kids look forward to it. The program really extends learning beyond the classroom,” Hughes said and added, “It’s so important for kids to know where food comes from.”

Hamel’s faithful care for his cabbage seedling resulted in a prize winning vegetable. His name was submitted to Bonnie Plants, along with a photo of him with his 15 pound cabbage, and he was selected as the Oklahoma state winner. His school, Wayland Bonds Elementary in Moore, arranged an assembly for third and fourth graders in his honor where he received a \$1,000 scholarship from Bonnie Plants. He also received a plaque signed by Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese.

Ag in the Classroom (AITC) coordinators Cheri Long and Melody Afill attended the assembly representing the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF). They presented the book “Katie’s Cabbage” to Hughes and provided Specialty Crop Activity Books for all of her students. The AITC program is coordinated jointly by ODAFF, the State Department of Education and Oklahoma State University to promote agricultural literacy in grades pre-K through 12. More information can be found about Ag in the Classroom at [www.agclassroom.org/ok](http://www.agclassroom.org/ok).

“Ag in the Classroom lessons and activities help students and teachers participate in experiential hands-on learning about the food and fiber industry in Oklahoma,” said Afill. “Oklahoma has a diverse agriculture industry that includes commodities and specialty crop production. Bonnie Plants third grade cabbage program provides an excellent experience for students to grow their own cabbage which is a specialty crop grown in Oklahoma.”

Shawn Beam represented Bonnie Plants at the assembly and noted that more than 200 schools participate in the program designed to grow the next generation of gardeners. Beam is the station manager for the Bonnie Plants greenhouse operation in Whitesboro, Texas. His company has delivered more than 14 million cabbage plants nationwide and he encourages all Oklahoma third grade teachers to sign up for free cabbage plants at [www.bonnieplants.com](http://www.bonnieplants.com).

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Photo caption:

Third grader Sawyer Hamel received a \$1,000 scholarship from Bonnie Plants for growing a big cabbage from a small seedling. Celebrating his achievement are (l-r) Ag in the Classroom coordinators Melody Aufill and Cheri Long, teacher Shawna Hughes and Bonnie Plants station manager Shawn Beam.

