

Kansas Grain Commodity Growers Elect Commissioners

The Kansas Department of Agriculture today announced the names of grain farmers from the eastern third of the state who were elected to the state's five commodity commissions — corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers and wheat.

Ballots were cast between January 15 and March 1 and were counted at the offices of the Kansas Department of Agriculture. The newly elected commissioners take office April 1 and will serve a three year term. In District seven, 274 ballots were cast out of 465 registered voters, a 59 percent turnout. District eight had 189 ballots cast out of 399 registered voters for a 47 percent turnout. In District nine, there were 129 ballots cast out of 295 registered voters, a turnout of 44 percent.

District seven includes Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Leavenworth, Marshall, Nemaha, Pottawatomie, Riley and Wyandotte counties. District eight includes Anderson, Chase, Coffey, Douglas, Franklin, Geary, Johnson, Linn, Lyon, Miami, Morris, Osage, Shawnee and Wabaunsee counties. District nine includes Allen, Bourbon, Butler, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Cowley, Crawford, Elk, Greenwood, Labette, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson counties.

Commissioners-elect for the Kansas Corn Commission

District Seven: Ken McCauley is a corn and soybean farmer from Doniphan County. He currently serves on the Kansas Corn Commission and is an active member of the Kansas Corn Growers Association and National Corn Growers Association. McCauley has an associate degree from Highland Community College, and he also attended Kansas State University. He is married to Mary and has two adult children.

District Eight: Patrick Ross is a corn and soybean farmer from Douglas County. He currently serves on the Kansas Corn Commission and is a member of several agricultural associations, including the Kansas Soybean Association, the Kansas Corn Growers Association and the Kansas Livestock Association. He is married to Mary and has two adult daughters and four grandsons.

District Nine: Randall Small is a Wilson County farmer. He previously served on the Kansas Sunflower Commission and is a member of the National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association, Kansas Livestock Association and Kansas Farm Bureau. He is married to Nicole and has two sons.

Commissioners-elect for the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission

District Seven: No candidates are running for commissioner in District Seven. The Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission will appoint this position.

District Eight: Jeff Casten is a corn, grain sorghum soybean and wheat farmer from Osage County. He currently serves on the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission and is a past secretary of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program. Casten graduated from Kansas State University with a degree agronomy. He has four adult daughters and seven grandchildren.

District Nine: Gary Kilgore grows corn, grain sorghum, soybeans and wheat in Neosho County. He currently serves on the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission and is a member of the Kansas Soybean Association, Kansas Farm Bureau and Kansas Forage and Grassland Council. Kilgore graduate from Kansas State University with a bachelor's and a master's degree in Agronomy. He is married to Lorraine and has three children and five grandchildren.

Commissioners-elect for the Kansas Soybean Commission

District Seven: James Zwonitzer is a corn, grain sorghum, wheat and soybean farmer in Atchison County. He currently serves as treasurer of the Kansas Soybean Commission and is a member of Kansas Soybean Association, the Kansas Livestock Association and his local rural water district. Zwonitzer has a bachelor's degree in agricultural education from Kansas State University. He is married to Sharon and has a son, a daughter and seven grandchildren.

District Eight: Robert Haselwood is a corn and soybean farmer in Shawnee County. He currently serves on the Kansas Soybean Commission, represents Kansas on the United Soybean Board and is a member of the Kansas Corn Growers Association and Kansas Soybean Association. Haselwood has an associate degree from Cowley County Community College. He also is a graduate of the Kansas Agricultural and Rural Leadership class. He is married to Judy and has two children and one grandchild.

District Nine: Mike Bellar raises corn, soybeans and hogs in Elk County. He is currently a member of the Kansas Soybean Commission, Kansas Soybean Association, Kansas Corn Growers Association, Kansas Farm Bureau, Kansas Pork Producers and Kansas Livestock Association. Bellar has a bachelor's degree in agricultural business from Fort Hays State University. He is married to Peggy and has five children.

Commissioner-elect for the Kansas Sunflower Commission

No candidates ran for commissioner in districts seven, eight or nine. The Kansas Sunflower Commission will appoint these positions.

Commissioners-elect for the Kansas Wheat Commission

Districts Seven, Eight and Nine: Jay Armstrong is a wheat farmer in Atchison County. He is a member of the Kansas Wheat Commission, Kansas Corn Growers Association and Kansas Farm Bureau. He is also involved in the Atchison County Economic Development group. Armstrong is a graduate of Kansas State University with a degree in agricultural economics.

2014 election will cover central third of state

Corn, grain sorghum, soybean, sunflower and wheat growers in the central third of the state can expect to learn more this fall about the 2014 election procedure from the Kansas Department of Agriculture website agriculture.ks.gov.

Grain farmers in districts four, five and six will be affected by the 2014 elections. District four includes Clay, Cloud, Jewell, Mitchell, Osborne, Ottawa, Phillips, Republic, Rooks, Smith and Washington counties. District five includes Barton, Dickinson, Ellis, Ellsworth, Lincoln, McPherson, Marion, Rice, Rush, Russell and Saline counties. District six includes Barber, Comanche, Edwards, Harper, Harvey, Kingman, Kiowa, Pawnee, Pratt, Reno, Sedgwick, Stafford and Sumner counties.

Grain growers who plan to campaign for a seat on one of the commissions must collect on an official petition form 20 signatures from eligible voters to be included on the 2014 ballot. Official petition forms will be available through the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the grain commodity commissions.

No more than five signatures from any one county will be used to qualify a candidate. Eligible voters are Kansas residents who will reach age 18 before the election and have been growing corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, sunflowers or wheat during the last three years. The filing deadline for candidates is November 30, 2013.