

Kansas Breeders Promote Beef Genetics Abroad

In September 2016, a Kansas beef producer took his first steps across international borders to take part in an agricultural trade mission to Uruguay. With the goal of exploring opportunities for U.S. and Kansas beef genetics abroad, Jason Pratt of Dwight, Kan., was interested in learning more. “I wasn’t sure what to expect,” said Pratt. “You read publications, magazines and online articles, making you believe you have a picture of what international agriculture looks like, but it’s really hard to grasp until you see it in person.”

The trade mission was sponsored by the Kansas Department of Agriculture with assistance from funds from the U.S. Livestock Genetic Export, Inc. Pratt chose to submit an application to participate in the trade mission, was selected, and traveled along with three other Kansans: Russ Smith of RS Angus, Dodge City, Kan.; Galen Fink of Fink Beef Genetics, Randolph, Kan.; and Billy Brown, KDA agribusiness development coordinator.

During the three-day trade mission, the Kansas breeders attended Uruguay’s largest livestock exposition, Expo Prado, where they were able to interact with breeders and genetics companies to promote the use of U.S. beef genetics.

Smith said that these meetings were invaluable. “It was an opportunity to get a feel for the wants, needs and desires that Uruguay has for U.S. beef semen and genetics,” he said.

Kansas trade mission participants also fostered relationships with Uruguay producers by participating in field tours. Smith said he was surprised by the advanced use of artificial insemination in the average commercial cow operation. “This provides a great opportunity for semen sales and/or selling bulls for semen collection,” he said. “We’d really like to get a foothold in that market.”

KDA strives to encourage and enhance economic growth of the agriculture industry and the Kansas economy by exploring and expanding both domestic and international marketing opportunities.

“The trade mission gave me and the other participants a firsthand grasp on the differences between the United States and Uruguay. We were given a better understanding of how cattle are sent to market, their selection criteria based on market demands, and even production management,” said Pratt. “This program provided by KDA was a great opportunity for beef producers to gain exposure and develop tools necessary to access markets around the world.”

For more information on this or other international trade missions, please contact Suzanne Ryan-Numrich, KDA international trade director, at Suzanne.Numrich@ks.gov or 785-564-6704.