

Kansas Agriculture Develops Growth Strategy Project

From workforce development to increased market access to research and development of new technologies and products, agriculture is primed for growth. Based on direct input and collaboration with hundreds of Kansas agricultural leaders, the Kansas Department of Agriculture has compiled and summarized industry feedback into desired growth outcomes for 19 specific sectors of the industry. The outcomes document has now been published on the Kansas Department of Agriculture website, agriculture.ks.gov/GrowAg, along with documents providing expanded background information for each of the 19 agricultural sectors.

“At every stage of this project, we have been pleased with the enthusiasm, initiative and spirit of cooperation shown by agricultural leaders throughout the state, who are eager to work together to enhance an environment for growth in Kansas,” said Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey. “It comes as no surprise to us that the farmers, ranchers, and agricultural business leaders of Kansas understand the need to look to the future in strategic ways to create short-term and long-term expansion of our state’s agriculture industry.”

The Kansas Agricultural Growth Strategy project has been coordinated by KDA, with participation by more than 500 agricultural stakeholders. This project is a direct response to the call to action issued at the August 2015 meeting of the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors hosted by KDA. A highlight of the project was the inaugural Kansas Governor’s Summit on Agricultural Growth, which was held in Manhattan in August 2016. The Summit brought together nearly 400 leaders from across industry sectors under one roof to talk about barriers, challenges, opportunities, growth goals and next steps.

Input from the Summit, as well as from smaller meetings both before and after the event, led to the identification of desired industry outcomes, which can be found at the Ag Growth website. These documents are not intended to represent the opinions and priorities of the state government, but as a compilation of feedback from agricultural stakeholders which will now serve as a guidance document for private, public and academic partners to work together to grow the agricultural industry.

“Growing the Kansas economy is a top priority, and to grow the Kansas economy the agriculture industry must grow,” said Governor Sam Brownback. “I appreciate the commitment of everyone across the state who has worked on this agricultural growth project and I look forward to seeing their progress in the future.” Agriculture is Kansas’ largest industry and economic driver, contributing \$64 billion to the Kansas economy, and employing nearly 13 percent of the Kansas workforce.

Individual action plans for each outcome have been developed by members of the KDA Growth Team in consultation with industry partners, and will be used to track progress of the strategic growth project.

The industry will gather once again this summer for the second annual Governor’s Summit on Agricultural Growth on Thursday, Aug. 24, 2017, to evaluate progress on the actions plans and to identify next steps for the Kansas agriculture industry. Information on the Summit will be posted as it becomes available at agriculture.ks.gov/summit.