

Kansas Agriculture Day

Kansas Wheat played a major role in the celebration of Kansas Ag Week, March 12-19 throughout the state, as the agriculture industry received its due from consumers and industry.

The Kansas Department of agriculture led Agriculture Week activities, starting with the Neighbor to Neighbor food drive in which the KDA, Dillons Food Stores and several food banks teamed up to raise 58,000 meals for needy families throughout the state. The food drive, which was supported by members of the Kansas commodity groups, was a huge success, according to Dale Rodman, Kansas secretary of agriculture.

"While the Neighbor to Neighbor food drive won't end hunger in Kansas, it will provide food to families in need across the state," Secretary Rodman said. "From raising animals and crops to sustain us, to producing energy and more, the Kansas agriculture community is dedicated to serving others. The first-ever Neighbor to Neighbor food drive gave us a unique opportunity to help our fellow Kansans, to reduce hunger across the state and to support our state's farmers and ranchers."

Kansas Wheat volunteers Melanie Eddy, Syracuse, and Jana Patton and Krista Patton, Topeka, gathered food and monetary donations at Dillons stores in Garden City and Topeka, respectively. The volunteers were part of a network of agriculturists that sponsored displays at Dillons stores throughout the state on March 16. Collectively, their efforts helped propel the month-long food drive past the initial goal of 50,000 meals.

Rich Randall, Kansas Wheat Commission Chair from Scott City, presented the KWC's annual report to the Kansas Senate Agriculture Committee on Ag Day. Each year, the KWC presents to both the House and Senate Ag committees.

On Agriculture Day, March 19, KAWG joined the Kansas Sorghum Association, Kansas Soybean Association and Kansas Corn Growers Association for the annual "Wake Up to Kansas Agriculture" pancake breakfast for the state legislature. The breakfast enabled grower-leaders to show appreciation to lawmakers for their service to the state. Radio interviews with members from each association were aired live on 580 WIBW's Ag Issues program.

Also on Kansas Agriculture Day, Kansas Wheat Commissioner Jay Armstrong, Muscotah, joined other thought-leaders in agriculture to participate in a "Dialogue on Kansas Agriculture" at the Kansas State Capitol. Topics brought up during the session included nutrition, animal care, food safety, environmental stewardship, serving the world, the economy and education and technology. The panel was asked several topical questions, including challenges facing agriculture and what could be done about them. Armstrong mentioned the importance of research in overcoming environmental challenges.

"It means research and it means the right kind of research. Research dollars are a very limited resource. We need to decide what it is we want to invest in and put the limited amount of money towards that."

Armstrong added that research can help overcome a myriad of challenges facing the wheat industry, including the current drought, gluten sensitivity, yield increases and disease stress.

"We've got to add value to whatever we are producing and the thing that adds value is technology.....That's the future and the future is bright," he said.