



# Kansas Center *for* Sustainable Agriculture *and* Alternative Crops

## Report to the Kansas Legislature: 2012 Activity

### KCSAAC Enabling Legislation

KSA 76-4, 103 – “...Functions and duties of the center of excellence on sustainable agriculture and alternative crops shall include but not be limited to:

- Emphasizing research, education, outreach and marketing for sustainable agriculture and alternative food, fiber and medicinal crops.
- Assisting farmers to increase their share of the food system dollar.
- Collecting and analyzing basic information on the Kansas food system and opportunities for production and direct marketing.
- Focusing research on value added processes and new crops that offer low-volume, high margin niche opportunities.
- Assisting small farmers to access lower input costs through a delivery system with expanded access to sustainable agricultural practices.
- Marketing assistance to promote products produced and processed in Kansas.
- Expanding small farm research to include: Organic products; less capital intensive investments; energy saving technology; and agricultural practices that reduce soil erosion and restore soil health.
- Developing and distributing a guide of all state services for small farms and value added agriculture

### Highlights from 2012

#### Education & Outreach

Assisted with educational opportunities for Kansas producers to learn about managing and marketing their products. Opportunities included:

- Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch – Kansas Winter Grazing Conference
- Kansas Grazing Workshops - 2 intensive two-day workshops
- Farmers Market Webinar Series – Topics were:
  - ◆ Is There Profit at the End of the Tunnel?
  - ◆ Market Customers Eat with Their Eyes (and their noses, and hands, and ears)
  - ◆ Post Harvest Handling: Keeping It Fresh
  - ◆ Direct Marketing 101: Farmers Markets and Other Venues
  - ◆ Risk Management for Farmers Markets: Protecting the Public and Vendors and the Market Organization
- High Tunnel Building Workshop at Red Tractor Farm, Lawrence, Kansas
- High Tunnel Basics - a series of videos containing information for producers interested in the season-extending benefits of high tunnels for growing produce.
- Healthy Farms Healthy People: Kansas Agriculture & Health Summit

# KCSAAC Report: 2012 Activity

## Highlights from 2012 - continued

### Education & Outreach - continued

➤ Organic Farming Forum: Resources, Research and Marketing for Organic Agriculture in Kansas

### Research

Expanded small farm research at Kansas State University. Research results will be available in late 2013. Grants funded:

- Willow Lake Student Horticulture Research Farm
- Organic Field Crop Production Curriculum for the Dept. of Agronomy/Agronomy Learning Farm
- Development and Adoption of No-Till and Minimum Tillage Vegetable Production Systems
- Assessment of Nitrogen Dynamics in a Wheat, Cover Crop, Sorghum, Soybean Rotation
- Evaluating Local Food System of Manhattan, KS and Identifying Market Opportunities for Producers with Retail Grocers, Schools, and Hospitals
- Analysis of Black Walnut Cultivars Comparing Flavor Variability Over Different Seasons

### Marketing Assistance

Participated in activities that will ultimately help farmers promote and distribute agricultural products, including:

- Strategic Marketing Workshop for Livestock Producers
- Kansas Department of Agriculture Stakeholders Meeting for Simply Kansas Marketing Program

### Capacity Building

- A team of seven Kansans attended and are planning activities for 2013 to meet a North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) Initiative entitled “Carbon-Energy-Climate” as agriculture responds to climate variability.
- More than 40 professionals from wildlife, natural resource, and range management agencies, along with Extension professionals increased their knowledge of grassland management with fire and grazing at a Patch Burn Grazing Conference.

## KCSAAC Plans for 2013

Projects and activities planned for KCSAAC and the Kansas SARE Professional Development Program include providing assistance for:

- Drought Management – continue to cooperate with organizations and agencies providing meaningful, timely outreach to Kansas farmers and ranchers.
- Continue Pilot Feasibility Grant Program to encourage research at Kansas State University that benefits small farms and ranches
- Maintain social media presence – through Twitter (@KSSARE) and web site (kansassustainableag.org) – to promote sustainable agriculture-related resources for Kansans
- Increase involvement with the Growing Growers program, an apprenticeship program for organic fruit and vegetable growers
- Increase involvement in multi-state, multi-agency activities focusing on beginning farmer resources, especially resources for veterans
- Continue to provide resource materials for Kansas family farms and ranches