

Report to the Legislature: 2016 Activity & Impact

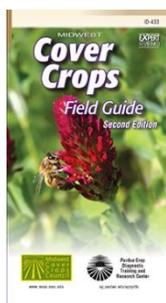
The Situation

KCSAAC's charge is to develop a K-State Research and Extension Center to facilitate research, education and outreach activities for sustainable agriculture, alternative food, fiber, and medicinal crops in Kansas. The Center is also home to the Kansas Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (KS SARE) Professional Development Program. Advised by a committee of producers, extension agents, extension specialists, and agency personnel, the Center's goal is to provide educational training and professional development activities to producers Extension personnel, and other agency professionals.

Program focus topics identified by the Advisory Committee for 2016 were soil health and cover crops, and local foods and specialty crops. It was a busy year in Kansas for both of those initiatives.

KCSAAC Initiatives

Carbon, Energy & Climate



2016 programming focused on grazing and soil health. KCSAAC provided financial assistance for Kansas to join the Midwest Cover Crops Council (MCCC). Thanks to leadership from Drs. DeAnn Presley and Peter Tomlinson, KSU agronomists, and a team of more than 20 Kansas soil health experts, Kansas is now a contributor to the Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide. In addition, the team worked to add Kansas-specific recommendations to the MCCC Cover Crop Selection Tool, an online tool to help farmers select cover crops based on their individual goals and circumstances. The decision tool is available at:

<http://mccc.msu.edu/statesprovince/kansas/>

The Center was also able to co-sponsor a Low Stress Cattle Handling Workshop in Williamsburg, KS Rethorst that included extensive low stress handling demonstrations. This workshop was organized and promoted by County Extension Agents in Coffey County and Frontier Extension District and drew a crowd of nearly 300 ranchers.

Local Food & Specialty Crops

Local food and food hubs continued to be a hot topic in 2016. The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) continues to strengthen its involvement in local food production and marketing assistance through the From the Land of Kansas program. KCSAAC works with KDA, Extension experts, and Kansas farm organizations to support the growth of local food enterprises. Center activities in 2016 included:

- Awarding \$1,000 in scholarships for farmers market managers to attend KDA Farmers Market Workshops and the Kansas Farmers Market Conference
- Hosting a Regional Farmers Forum for the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) at the Kansas Rural Center's Farm and Food Conference
- Providing mini grant funding for two Mushroom Production Workshops conducted by K-State Extension Agent Pam Paulsen
- Awarding travel scholarships for two Kansans to attend the Black Urban Growers Conference in California

- Supporting the inaugural Urban Food Systems Symposium in Olathe; an international gathering of academic and research-oriented professionals who gathered to share and gain knowledge of urban food systems and the role they play in global food security; hosted by K-State Olathe and featuring the Kansas City area urban food system.

Grant Programs

The Center's affiliation with SARE creates opportunities for grants through the North Central Region SARE (NCR-SARE) grant programs: Farmer Rancher, Youth Educator, Graduate Student, Research and Education, Partnership, and Professional Development.

NCR-SARE grants to Kansans included:

- \$7,115 SARE Farmer Rancher Grant to Buller Family Farm/Common Harvest Farm for "Exploring the Economic and Environmental Sustainability of No-Till Organic Sweet Potato Production"
- \$4,047 SARE Farmer Rancher Grant to Jody Holthaus and David Hallauer, K-State Extension, for "Portable Grazing System for Goats on Invasive Weeds and Brush"
- \$7,435 SARE Farmer Rancher Grant to Jaryl Hudson for "Weed Control by Mechanical Implement, Specifically for Row Crop and No-Till Farm Operation"

KCSAAC Enabling Legislation

KSA 76-4, 103 –...Functions and duties of the center of excellence on sustainable agriculture and alternative crops shall include but are 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

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K-STATE
 Research and Extension

Center for Sustainable Agriculture
 and Alternative Crops

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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