

Report to the Legislature: 2014 Activities

The Situation

KCSAAC is a K-State Research and Extension Center focusing on research, education and outreach for sustainable agriculture, alternative food, fiber, and medicinal crops in Kansas. It also administers the Kansas Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (KS SARE) Program. A committee of producers, extension agents, extension specialists, and agency personnel offer guidance.

Program focus topics identified by the Advisory Committee for 2014 were cover crop education and demonstration, grazing and pasture management with an emphasis on drought planning, and local foods.

KCSAAC Activities

Cover Crop Education

Cover crops and soil health are current concerns of many Kansas producers. Activity included:

- Kansas represented at the invitation-only National Cover Crop Conference.
- K-State joins Midwest Cover Crop Council
- K-State Extension agronomists assist with updates for the Midwest Cover Crops Field Guide, second edition; published in late 2014.
- Cover Crop workshops/tours
 - Sept. 26 – Labette County
 - Oct. 14 – Republic County
 - Nov. 14 – Jackson County
 - Dec. 12 – Washington & Republic Counties

Grazing & Pasture Management Activities

Managing grazing and the cow herd through and following a drought was identified as another topic of concern for 2014. Education and outreach included:

- Kansas Graziers Association Winter Meeting

- Water + Energy Progress Program – advisory board
- Provided letters of support and assistance to Amazing Grazing Projects I & II that included workshops on grazing, water development, herd management, and ranch planning
- Provided 6 scholarships for Extension Agents to attend “Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle” conference in Oklahoma

Local Foods

Consumer demand and heightened nutrition awareness continue to provide a perfect environment for local food development. KCSAAC cooperated with the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s (KDA) From the Land of Kansas and Farmer’s Market programs, the Kansas Rural Center’s (KRC), and others to help create many opportunities for local food outreach in 2014.

- Farm To Fork Food Systems Project, KRC
- Kansas Farmer’s Market Conference, KDA
- From the Land of Kansas Conference, KDA
- Kansas Envirothon Special Topic: Sustainable Agriculture Locally Grown, KS Association of Conservation Districts
- Statewide Partnership Initiative: Community Food Solutions for a Healthy Kansas; KCSAAC is a statewide partner, KRC
- Farm-To-School initiatives through Kansas Rural Center and Kansas Department of Education

Grant Programs

The Center is tasked with expanding small farm research at K-State. To meet that responsibility, small grants were awarded to KSU researchers to assist with sustainable agriculture projects. The Center’s affiliation with SARE creates more opportunities for grants through the North Central Region SARE (NCR-SARE) grant programs.

NCR-SARE educational grants awarded in 2014 included:

- 3 Farmer Rancher Grants (\$41,043 total)
 - Growing Mushrooms on Local Agricultural Byproducts
 - Economics of Grazing and Haying Cover Crops in North Central Kansas
 - Feasibility, planning and purchase of Mobile Processing Unit (MPU) for scaling up free range poultry meat processing for high volume retail market
- 3 Graduate Student Grants (\$30,000 total)
 - Developing Thermal Imaging System for On-demand Corn Temperature Profiles for Variable Rate Irrigation
 - The Influence of Elevated Temperatures on a Residual Insecticide and Inert Dust to Disinfest Empty Bins Prior to On-Farm Grain Storage
 - Elevating Camelina stavia as a Fallow Replacement Crop in Wheat Production Systems

KCSAAC pilot/feasibility grants in progress during 2013 included (totaling \$25,000):

- Fenugreek as an Alternative Forage Crop for Western Kansas
- Implementing alternative production management practices to improve the sustainability of integrated crop and animal production
- Exploring Early Season Sweetpotato Slip Production Opportunities Utilizing High Tunnels
- Effect of Roasting on Sensory Properties of Pecan Cultivars
- Investigating optimal variety selection and production practices for dry field pea

KCSAAC Advisory Committee

Charlie Barden, K-State Extension Forester; Ginny Barnard, K-State Extension FCS Agent, Riley County; Rachael Boyle, K-State Extension Ag Agent, Phillips-Rooks District; Glenn Brunkow, farmer, Westmoreland, KS; Dan Devlin, KCARE director; Mary Fund, Kansas Rural Center; Gregg Hadley, K-State Extension Ag & Natural Resources Director; Annarose Hart, KS Dept. of Agriculture; Mary Howell, Kansas Graziers Association; Rhonda Janke, K-State Horticulture Department; James P. Murphy, K-State Bio and Ag Engineering Department; Donn Teske, farmer, Wheaton, KS; Candy Thomas, NRCS agronomist

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

Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops Contact Information

Kerri Ebert, Project Coordinator
129 Seaton Hall

Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
(785) 532-2976

kebert@k-state.edu

www.kansassustainableag.org

www.kansassare.org

[Twitter: @KSSARE](https://twitter.com/KSSARE)

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Research and Extension

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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