

National Agriculture Week: March 17-23, 2013
National Agriculture Day: March 9, 2013

Thanks To Our Ag Industry

Governor's Drought Response Team prepares for continued drought

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback and Senator Pat Roberts participated in a meeting of the Governor's Drought Response Team recently. This is the team's first meeting in 2013. The team heard the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook continues to illustrate drought conditions persisting or intensifying in Kansas, with a higher probability for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

"As the drought persists, we have continued working closely with our partners to reduce the effects and prepare for prolonged drought situations. I recently asked cities and rural water districts to measure their water supply and evaluate their conservation plans to make sure they are adequate for the upcoming year," Governor Brownback said. "We appreciate those who have responded and we are finding many have adequate supply or are on top of their situation. I again encourage all public water suppliers to routinely monitor their supply to avoid emergency situations and my administration is committed to helping communities find solutions if problems arise."

Governor Brownback said it is imperative that not only public water suppliers, but all Kansans and communities evaluate how they can reduce their water usage to minimize the damage of the ongoing drought. The meeting focused on responses from the public water

supply assessment and also included updates regarding current reservoir levels and the status of the emergency drought livestock water supply initiative. There were also discussions regarding the federal government's role in drought management for Kansas.

"The Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation has been implementing an initiative to provide financial

assistance to Kansas livestock producers needing water supplies," said Greg Foley, Division of Conservation executive director. "We have approved 579 applications to date and continue working with county conservation districts, NRCS and landowners to complete the remaining approved applications."

Adrian Polansky, state executive director for USDA Farm Ser-

vice Agency (FSA), reported that earlier this week Secretary Vilsack designated 88 Kansas counties as primary natural disaster areas and 17 additional counties named as contiguous disaster counties due to the drought.

"For clarification purposes, Doniphan Co., KS is contiguous to Andrew Co., MO which was named a primary county, the result being that all 105 Kansas coun-

ties have a primary or contiguous drought designation. This federal disaster declaration makes farmers and ranchers in all Kansas counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans through the FSA," Polansky said. "I encourage affected individuals to contact their local FSA offices for further information."

The Governor's Drought Response Team is chaired by Kansas

Water Office (KWO) Director Tracy Streeter. For a complete list of the 12-member team, visit www.kwo.org. The team will continue to watch the situation closely and work to minimize the effects the drought has on Kansans.

For more detailed information about the state's current conditions, see the Kansas Climate Summary and Drought Report on the KWO website at <http://www.kwo.org>

K-State's Everest is new number one wheat variety in Kansas

Everest, a variety released by Kansas State University in 2009, has soared into the number one position in Kansas, according to Kansas Agricultural Statistic's 2013 "Wheat Varieties" report. The report lists the most widely planted varieties in the state, both overall and for each of the nine crop reporting districts, based on a survey of producers.

Of the nine districts in Kansas, Everest is now the most widely planted variety in all six of the central and eastern districts, its primary areas of adaptability. It also led the state overall in terms of acreage planted to winter wheat in the fall of 2012.

Everest was developed by Allan Fritz, K-State Research and Extension wheat breeder in Manhattan, who said the high-yielding variety provides producers in central and eastern Kansas with a strong combination of traits.

"It is more resistant to barley yellow dwarf than most varieties, as well as more resistant to Fusarium head scab than most varieties," Fritz said. "These two diseases

can be serious problems in central and eastern Kansas, and there are few other varieties on the market with very good resistance to either one of those diseases."

Everest also has Hessian fly and leaf rust resistance, he said.

That unique combination of beneficial traits is the reason the acreage of Everest has increased so rapidly since its release, said Daryl Strouts, president of Kansas Wheat Alliance, the marketing association with first rights to K-State wheat varieties.

"It's unusual for a variety to become so popular just three years after its initial

release. It takes a year or two just to build up a supply of certified seed for wheat producers to plant on their production fields. This essentially means that producers have been well pleased with what they've seen of Everest in their local areas throughout central and eastern Kansas," Strouts said.



The success of Everest and other varieties released by K-State in recent years is a tribute to the strength of the wheat breeding teams in Manhattan and Hays, said Gary Pierzynski, head of the agronomy department at K-State.

"There is a lot of competition now for acreage among wheat producers in Kansas, with several outstanding public and private breeding programs actively involved," Pierzynski said. "We are proud to know that producers value the work being done at K-State."

The wheat breeding program at K-State is on the cutting edge of science and technology, Fritz said.

"But we also keep our focus firmly on the end result, which is to produce varieties that producers in Kansas will want," he added. "We are gratified to see that Everest has met the need of so many producers in Kansas, and will keep trying to improve our program in the future to meet the changing needs of the Kansas wheat producer."

The K-State wheat breeding program that developed Everest and other varieties, including the latest release 1863, is funded in part by the Kansas Wheat Commission, Kansas Wheat Alliance and the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK
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