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Kansas Corn Represented on Trade Group to South Korea and China

Mission Designed to Strengthen Relationships and Expand Markets for Kansas Ag

A Kansas Corn Commission (KCC) leader is part of a select delegation of farmers, ranchers and agribusiness leaders during a trade mission to South Korea and China.

Brian Baalman, Menlo, represents the northwest district of the KCC. He is past president of the Kansas Corn Growers Association and serves on the U.S. Meat Federation. Baalman and his wife, Sheri, manage a diversified farm with corn and other crops as well as livestock.

Baalman joins members of the Kansas Beef Council, Kansas Pork Commission, Kansas Wheat Commission, Kansas Soybean Commission, Kansas Farm Bureau, Agtech, Inc. and SureFire Ag. The 18-member delegation will meet with business and governmental leaders and existing buyers of Kansas agricultural products as well as tour import and processing facilities.

Brian has a wide range of interests including the production of corn, beef and ethanol," according to KCC Executive Director Jere White. "He certainly has a good understanding of the importance of exports. This trade mission offers a unique opportunity to meet with current and potential buyers and give the leaders of these rapidly growing nations a first-hand view of the people behind our state's ag production."

The delegation began the mission in Seoul, South Korea to explore ways for Kansas farmers and ranchers to benefit more from the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement. The delegation will spend the bulk of its mission in Beijing and Shanghai, China to learn more about the Chinese marketplace and build a greater understanding for China's food needs for its growing middle class. In both countries, the Kansas delegation is building relationships with new buyers and strengthening relationships with current buyers of Kansas agricultural products.

Both South Korea and China are important markets for the United States and Kansas agriculture. South Korea and the U.S. entered into a free trade agreement on March 15, 2012, in order to increase trade between the two nations. Under the trade agreement, South Korea eliminated or began phasing out tariffs and quotas on a broad range of agricultural products, which will allow Korean consumers access to more American products at an affordable price.

In 2011, Kansas agricultural exports to South Korea totaled \$125.2 million and exports to China totaled \$49.7 million.

The Kansas Corn Commission is a grower-funded, grower-governed organization working to secure the future of Kansas corn through the state corn checkoff. The commission invests the half-cent per bushel checkoff in the areas of research, market development, promotion and education.