

Kansas Soybean Expo Demonstrates 'Fueling Innovations'

Nearly 250 soybean enthusiasts gathered Jan. 9 in Topeka for the Kansas Soybean Expo, themed "Kansas Soybeans: Fueling Innovations." The Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) organized the annual event, with funding from the Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC), to coincide with the Topeka Farm Show at the Kansas Expocentre.

"It was a fantastic program, and we drew an enthusiastic crowd," said KSA Second Vice President and District 2 Director Raylen Phelon, Melvern, who chaired the Expo planning committee. "It was a great time for farmers and our industry partners to get together for education, information and some innovative ideas."

The opening session featured an update moderated by Gary Kilgore, Chanute, a Kansas State University (K-State) emeritus professor of agronomy. The presenters were Bill Schapaugh, Ph.D., K-State professor of soybean breeding; Chuck Rice, Ph.D., K-State distinguished professor of soil microbiology; and Doug Shoup, Ph.D., K-State southeast area agronomist. Schapaugh discussed phenotyping using spectral analysis, Rice addressed soybean inoculation, and Shoup shared the latest information about soybean fungicides and insecticides.

The audience also heard organizational updates from Bob Henry, Robinson, an American Soybean Association vice president; Sandy Scriptor, Wichita, representing the National Oilseed Processors Association; Tom Verry, director of outreach and development for the National Biodiesel Board in Jefferson City, Mo.; and Teresa Brandenburg, Osborne, and LaVell Winsor, Grantville, who are volunteers for the CommonGround Kansas program.

Brent Hajek, a soybean farmer from Ames, Okla., presented the keynote address. He shared amusing and inspiring details of his quest to set a 182-mph land-speed record at the Bonneville Salt Flats in August 2011 with a Ford F-250 Super Duty pickup running on B20 biodiesel.

"It's the kind of crazy thing you dream up when you spend too much time on the tractor," Hajek said.

Greg Akagi, a farm broadcaster for WIBW-AM 580 in Topeka and the Kansas Agriculture Network, was the master of ceremonies at the luncheon. Mark Taddiken, Clifton, former chairman of the Kansas Senate's agriculture committee, shared a few comments about state agricultural policy.

The featured speaker during the luncheon was U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, who focused mainly on the overdue farm bill. The "fiscal cliff" legislation extended current law, with some modifications, through September. That default action was necessary after the House blocked the Senate's version of a new farm bill.

"We didn't have any responsible solution except to extend that bill, with the opposition we faced in the House. It wasn't the best possible bill. It was the only bill possible," the senator said.

He added that the \$5 million exemption to the federal estate tax was left intact, rather than letting it fall to \$1 million. The tax rate on liable estates will climb from 35 percent to 40 percent instead of the previously scheduled 55 percent.

"We ought to get rid of the doggone thing," Roberts said. "Just get rid of the estate tax, and we'd be

far better off."

To open the awards and recognitions, KSA President Charles Atkinson, Great Bend, congratulated and thanked Marvin Wahl, Oswego; Peggy Bellar, Howard; and James Zwonitzer, Horton, for being the association's top recruiters.

Brice Bunck, Everest, who represented Kansas with his wife, Allison, in the 2012 DuPont Young Leaders program, introduced Wayne Jeardoe, Concordia, as the 2013 young leader.

Atkinson then presented Vern Schaffer, a K-State agronomist, and Taddiken with Kansas Soybean Meritorious Service awards. He followed by giving Roberts the Friend of Soy award for his dedication to all Kansans and to U.S. agriculture.

Kilgore then announced the district and overall winners in the Kansas Soybean Yield and Quality Contests. Henry won the quality contest with a protein and oil premium of \$1.13 per bushel. Howard Taylor, White Cloud, was the yield contest's overall dryland winner with 88.95 bushels per acre. Bob Wietharn, Clay Center, won the irrigated contest with 84.81 bushels per acre. Complete results and all of the award photos are available via the "Producer Information" tab of the KSC website (<http://www.KansasSoybeans.org>).

Atkinson then presided over the KSA Annual Meeting, which included the approval of policy resolutions and the board of directors elections. The voting members present re-elected Lucas Heinen, Everest, as the District 1 director; Grant Webber, Sublette, as the District 7 director; and Nicole Small, Neodesha, as a director-at-large. First Vice President Terry Reschke, Hiawatha, presented Atkinson with the retiring president's plaque to conclude the meeting.

The afternoon session focused on planning for the future as Mike Smith, Wichita, senior vice president and chief innovation executive at AccuWeather Enterprise Solutions, talked about personal safety and enhanced economics. With the tremendous increase in storm-warning predictions in the last 10 years, the meteorologist said, farmers can keep a better eye on the weather.

One smartphone app that is making a big difference comes with GPS-powered warnings that will alert farmers to the possibility of lightening in their areas. Smith cautioned his audience members to follow the best personal safety practices they can while working in the fields. His handout also is available on the KSC website's "Producer Information" tab.

Following the Expo's closing reception, the KSA board of directors met to elect officers for 2013. The new team includes Reschke, president; Dave Sleat, Lebo, first vice president; Phelon, second vice president; Dwight Meyer, Hiawatha, secretary; Gary Robbins, Emmett, treasurer; and Atkinson, chairman.