

Wheat Commission Supports Food Drive

Kansas Commodity groups - including the Kansas Wheat Commission - are helping to reduce hunger in Kansas communities by participating in the "Neighbor to Neighbor" statewide food drive, taking place until March 19.

State leaders, including Governor Sam Brownback and Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman, kicked off the event on Feb. 18.

The food drive, which is jointly hosted by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Dillon's Food Stores, Harvesters - The Community Food Network, the Kansas Food Bank, the Second Harvest Community Food Bank and the Kansas agricultural community, concludes March 19. At that time, the groups hope to raise 50,000 meals for Kansas families during the drive. Kansans can contribute to the campaign at Dillon's Food Stores statewide or at other locations in communities across the state.

As of March 1 - or halfway through the event - 7,093 meals had been raised.

To participate in the Neighbor to Neighbor Statewide Food Drive, folks can either drop off food at a Dillons Food Store, or at your local county food pantry. If you wish, you can tell the folks at your local food pantry that you want to participate in the Neighbor to Neighbor program.

Volunteers from the Kansas Wheat Commission will meet with grocers on March 16, in Dillons Grocery Stores in Manhattan and Garden City to collect canned goods and visit about wheat foods.

"Across Kansas, I am always amazed at the generosity our citizens show to their neighbors in need," Governor Brownback added. "This food drive gives them an opportunity to help their fellow Kansans, to reduce hunger across the state and to support our state's farmers and ranchers. When you are shopping for groceries for your family this month, I encourage you to take part in this important campaign. While one food drive won't end hunger in Kansas, together, we can make a difference."

Governor Brownback teamed up with staff from the food banks to compete against Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman and his team of representatives from Dillon's Food Stores. The teams boxed food items for Kansas senior citizens in need. The Kansas State FFA officer team and representatives from Kansas agricultural organizations were also on hand for the event. Governor Brownback's team put together 109 boxes in 15 minutes; however, Secretary Rodman's team was able to fill 176 boxes in that same amount of time.

"Today's farmers and ranchers work 365 days a year to raise food to feed your family and mine. They work to continuously improve their practices to raise safe, wholesome food. About 30 years ago, one farmer fed approximately 56 people. Today, one farmer feeds 155 people. I hope all Kansans will join us in this important effort to help our neighbors and will also take a minute to say thank you to the men and women who raised that food," Secretary Rodman said.

At the kick-off event, Dillon's food stores made an initial donation of 8,000 pounds of non-perishable food items. That food items will be used to build a display that will be available for Kansans to see in the Kansas State Capitol beginning Feb. 19 and ending March 1. To learn more about the campaign, visit agriculture.ks.gov/neighborstoneighbor.