

Kansas Companies Participate in Trade Mission to Mexico

In March 2017, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the Kansas Corn Commission, sponsored an agricultural trade mission to Mexico to expand market opportunities in corn, distiller's grains and ethanol. Participants on the trade mission included: Brian Baalman, Western Plains Energy, Oakley, Kan.; Tom Bauck, Kansas Ethanol, Lyons, Kan.; Brad Rayl, Kansas Ethanol, Lyons, Kan.; Pat Ross, Lawrence, Kan.; and Terry Vinduska, S and V Family Farms, Marion, Kan. The group was accompanied by Greg Krissek and Stacy Mayo with the Kansas Corn Commission and Kellen Liebsch and Brooke Minihan with the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

"I felt the meetings were all very constructive. I now see how many opportunities there are for Kansas grains in Mexico," said Vinduska, a Kansas corn producer and Kansas Corn Commission member. "I am excited for what is coming in trade relations, and think there is a lot of potential here for us."

The participants visited Grupo Lala and Rancho Lucero in Torreon; the U.S. Consulate, Northeastern Cattle Producers Association and Petrорack in Monterrey; and Los Choneros and Bartlett Grain in Aguascalientes. Additionally, Ryan LeGrand and Javier Chávez with the U.S. Grains Council provided an ethanol update to the group.

"I was previously unaware of how much is going on in Mexico and how fast they are growing," said Bauck. "It is now apparent that we need to work together and establish relationships that will benefit both countries."

Mexico is a key trade partner for Kansas agricultural commodities. In 2016, Mexico imported almost 30% of the state's total agriculture exports, easily making them Kansas' number one trade partner. "If you look at the logistics of Mexico, no other country can replace it as a customer for Kansas grain. It's more important than ever to let our friends in Mexico know that we are advocating for agricultural trade," said KDA international trade director Suzanne Ryan-Numrich. "The relationship is far too important for us to ignore."

The trade mission was sponsored by KDA with assistance from a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration using a State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) grant. The STEP grant helps Kansas non-exporters to get started and existing exporters to export more.

KDA strives to encourage and enhance economic growth of the agriculture industry and the Kansas economy by exploring and expanding both domestic and international marketing opportunities. For information on this or other international trade missions, please contact Suzanne Ryan-Numrich, KDA international trade director, at suzanne.numrich@ks.gov or 785-564-6704.