

KDA Seeks Volunteers

This summer, the Kansas Department of Agriculture will be the first state in the nation to launch a comprehensive volunteer corps to address agriculture emergency response. The Kansas Agriculture Emergency Response Corps (KAERC) will be made up of volunteers representing a broad range of skills who will be trained and prepared to respond rapidly and efficiently to an agricultural emergency. KDA needs skilled, dedicated citizens from many different backgrounds, possessing a wide range of proficiencies, to be members of this volunteer corps.

“The agriculture emergency response corps will play an important role in responding to agricultural emergencies,” said Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey. “Kansas is at the forefront of emergency preparedness in case of an agriculture emergency, and through our annual exercises we have determined that one of our greatest needs for an adequate response is more people. Kansans have always been willing to step up and help when emergencies occur, and this new volunteer corps will provide structure and training to maximize that community support. We look forward to working with these volunteers across the state.”

During a large-scale incident, the limited state and federal staff cannot fill all the necessary roles, so the KAERC will use the wide range of skills of volunteers in local communities to meet the needs. Volunteers will be able to choose roles they feel comfortable in and will operate under direct supervision of KDA.

All volunteers, regardless of their role, will complete several training courses to serve as an introduction to the KAERC program and to form a foundation for the emergency response framework. Other role-specific training will also be required, depending on the position held by the volunteer. KAERC volunteers will gain valuable emergency preparedness knowledge, skills and experience, giving them the tools to not only aid the state, but their communities and families.

More information about the application process, specific volunteer roles and training can be found at agriculture.ks.gov/KAERC. For more information, please contact KAERC program manager David Hogg at david.hogg@ks.gov.