

Kansas Wheat hosts virtual trade team with customers from Brazil

Kansas Wheat Commission held its first ever virtual trade team on June 10 with customers from Brazil. These customers had the opportunity to learn more about the current wheat crop, growing conditions and updates about how harvest is progressing. The event was moderated by Aaron Harries, VP of Research and Operations for Kansas Wheat and held in cooperation with U.S. Wheat Associates, the industry's export market development organization, and the Oklahoma Wheat Commission.

"One of our priorities has always been trying to communicate directly with buyers and have them stand in a wheat field with our farmers and see the crop," said Justin Gilpin, Kansas Wheat CEO. "This was an opportunity to bring a farmer and a wheat field to them virtually."

Each year, about half of the Kansas wheat crop is exported, and Brazil has become a very important customer. In marketing year 2019/20, Brazil purchased 546.5 thousand metric tonnes of U.S. wheat, more than double the previous marketing year, with hard red winter making up 82% of those purchases. Brazil was the 6th largest export market for U.S hard red winter wheat during the most recent marketing year.

During the virtual trade team meeting, Brazilian customers had the opportunity to hear from experts in the U.S. wheat marketing chain.

Kansas State University's Wheat Extension Specialist Romulo Lollato, a native of Brazil himself, provided a preview of the 2020 Kansas hard red winter wheat crop. He gave this overview in Portuguese, allowing the customers to hear about the crop in their native language.

Mike Schulte, executive director of the Oklahoma Wheat Commission, provided an update on the Oklahoma wheat crop, which was approximately 40% harvested. He said the quality of the Oklahoma crop is excellent this year.

Gilpin gave an outlook of Kansas production, providing a snapshot of the current time, which is very early in harvest. With current travel restrictions, he was glad to see some of his friends and continue these relationships virtually.

He told the participants, "All of you are leaders within your industry and we want to be considered a partner and try to help you be successful in what you're doing and trying to provide you with the right kind of wheat when it's available for you."

Kansas wheat farmer Martin Kerschen, from Garden Plain, gave a live report from a Kansas wheat field. He said his wheat is nearly ready to harvest, stating that they will begin test cutting on June 12 and that harvest should be in full swing by the weekend. He said it will take him about 7-10 days to complete his harvest, with the hot, dry, windy weather that is predicted for the area. Kerschen said the local grain elevator has

started to receive some test samples in, and he estimates that his yields will be above the state average.

"We wish you guys could come up here and see how good this crop is going to look, and the berries in it," he said. "We want to trade with you, knock down the trade barriers, and let's just all get along and have a good time doing it."

Finally, the group heard a perspective from a U.S. grain trade representative. He told the participants that there will be plenty of good quality wheat available for export this year.

"Thank you very much for setting up this conference," said Miguel Galdos, regional director at the U.S. Wheat Associates office in Santiago, Chile. "I think that all the participants have received excellent information and I want to thank again the Kansas Wheat Commission, the Oklahoma Wheat Commission and also to Abitrito for all their support and help for sending invitations to all the millers in the Brazilian market. We are here to help all of our customers at the USW Santiago office."