

South Central Kansas Regional Convening on Agriculture Summary Report April 18, 2019

Approximately 100 policymakers and business leaders from the agriculture industry convened over lunch at Exploration Place on April 18. The purpose was to highlight the financial impact on the local economy of the agriculture industry in South Central Kansas, and get a better understanding of emerging employment trends, market forecasts and policy priorities that are effecting the industry and region. Information will be provided on trends in the agriculture sector, amount of exports, employment projection, and the impact of technology to the industry. The event was co-hosted by REAP and Kansas Farm Bureau and lunch, provided by Larkspur Euro Bistro, was sponsored by Cargill.

Wellington mayor, Shelley Hansel, was master of ceremonies and provided an overview of the event and the role of REAP for the region.

John Niemann, President, Cargill Protein Ingredients & International, welcomed guests and gave a brief summary of Cargill's impact/investment in Kansas, including the following statistics:

- 4,100 employees in two dozen locations across Kansas
- Investment highlights from the past 5-6 years:
 - \$70 million to build a new Cargill North America headquarters in Wichita, completed in December 2018
 - \$50 million to expand the Wichita soybean plant, announced in 2016
 - \$17 million Innovation and Sensory Center in Wichita in 2011
 - \$1 million collaboration with K-State to support Project Impact and \$1 million to WSU's Barton School of Business
 - Ongoing capital expenses to maintain and modernize our two dozen facilities across Kansas
 - And ongoing donations to community organizations where we live and work.
- Commitment to investing in youth through involvement with FFA

Congressman Ron Estes, spoke about the importance of agriculture to south central Kansas. In addition to the 2018 Farm Bill, he discussed the significance of the US-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement (USMCA) and ongoing negotiations with China. As a member of the leadership team for the USMCA and an advocate for free and fair trade, he is looking to ensure our trade deals open more markets for Kansas agriculture.

Industry Affairs & Development Director for Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB), Mike Matson, gave an overview of the agriculture industry in Kansas and the role KFB plays in supporting and growing the industry. He emphasized the growth of the farm-to-table movement and KFB providing mini-grants to Kansas Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapters across the state for projects in the school or community that promote agriculture.

As a member of the Agriculture Committee, Congressman Roger Marshall spoke about his recent meeting with President Trump. In that meeting, the president assured the congressman that he would

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not sign a trade deal that would negatively impact Kansas farmers. He also stated that great progress is being made with China and that the president has prioritized the approval of USMCA by Congress.

Following Congressman Marshall, Harvey County Commissioner and REAP Vice Chair, Chip Westfall, moderated a panel discussion. Panelists included Ardent Mills plant manager, Mike Ginal, Kansas farmer/rancher David Wendling, and Neimann. Panelists were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and priorities for sustaining and growing the agriculture industry in south central Kansas. They all agreed that it is paramount to promote education and job opportunities within the industry to our youth.

The next South Central Kansas Regional Convening will be in mid-July. More details to come!