

30 Years of History Confirms There'll Be More Change by Harvey Kiser

“After a decade of operation, the International Grains Program (IGP) looks to the future with great anticipation. The world grain market is constantly changing, and the opportunities for market development for U.S. food and feed grains and oilseeds, both at home and abroad, are as exciting as they are unpredictable.” This statement written 20 years ago by Roger T. Johnson, former associate IGP director, is still appropriate for today – on the 30th anniversary of IGP.

The IGP began quickly after its authorization by the Kansas Legislature in 1978. The first overseas short course was a feed manufacturing course in Korea, April 1979. The first on-campus short course was Latin America Flour Milling, summer 1979. The Grain Marketing Short Course was inaugurated September 1980, and a Price Analysis and Risk Management Short Course began in 1998. Special short courses have covered food uses of white grain sorghum, hard white wheat production and uses, grain grading, grain storage, blending wheat flours, and distillers dried grains.

K-State is widely known, not only because of its leadership position in academic and scholarly endeavors, but also because of the International Grains Program. Alumni of IGP are found worldwide and are proud to say they have been to K-State for an IGP short course or a trade team visit. Others have attended IGP-presented trainings in their home nations across the world.

Supporters of the International Grains Program

The proponents of IGP emphasized that this new institute would work for the best interests of the wheat, corn, soybean, and grain sorghum industry nation-wide. Kansas farmers, through their commodity market development commissions, were instrumental in the establishment of IGP. Farmers have graciously invited the foreign buyers, millers and feed compounders to their farms to learn about production, harvesting and selling risks that farmers experience.

Grain merchandising, flour milling, and feed manufacturing companies have provided access to their executives for IGP presentations. Field trips have allowed international participants to experience the effectiveness of the U.S. grain marketing & pricing system and the flour milling and feed manufacturing industries.

Banks, shipping companies, private consultant companies, other university scientists and U.S. Department of Agriculture have been IGP allies. The U.S. Wheat Associates, U.S. Grains Council and the American Soybean Association supported IGP by sponsoring or recommending international executives and managers to attend IGP short courses. Allied companies of grain and flour milling and feed manufacturing industries have provided information and knowledge about processing and testing equipment and chemicals.

IGP offers a variety of experiences for International Executives

Participants of IGP Courses have learned from classroom presentations and discussions, case studies and laboratory experiences. Field trips have supported and expanded the on-campus experiences. Some of these field trips were visits to integrated poultry operations, dairy and swine operations, grain elevator operations at the country, terminal and export locations, equipment manufacturing companies, feed compounder operations, barge loading facilities, USDA grain inspection agency and field offices, futures market exchanges of Chicago and Kansas City and allied industries. Participants have visited the states of Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Nebraska, Texas, Illinois, Louisiana, Washington, Oregon, and Arkansas.

The International Grains Program offers Off-Campus Programs

Short courses and seminars have been presented nationwide and worldwide. Seminars on grain marketing and unit train loading were held in Nebraska and Oklahoma. Presentations about the U.S. grain pricing and marketing system have been presented to professionals in USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service and the Federal Grain Inspection Service. Eleven short courses on "Export Marketing of Grains" for farmers, legislators and agribusiness leaders were presented from 1983 through 1992. Overseas seminars have covered the U.S. grain marketing and pricing system, U.S. wheat quality, feed manufacturing and nutrition, flour milling, and market outlook and price analyses.

The IGP has exhibited and attended trade shows of Kansas and U.S. farmer and international conventions/expositions, such as the Commodity Classic, North American Grain Convention, the U.S. Wheat Industry Convention and Exposition, and the National Grain Sorghum Convention.

Internationally, the IGP staff has attended and exhibited at the Latin American Flour Millers Association (ALIM), the Brazilian Flour Millers Association (ABITRIGO), International Association of Operative Millers (IOAM), and Asociación de Proveedores de Productos Agropecuarios Mexico (APPAMEX), and the International Grains Council (IGC).

The Future of the International Grains Program

The 2004 dedication of IGP's new Executive Conference Center, as part of the Grain Science and Industry Complex, has attracted more attention by providing participants with a learning environment that better meets their diverse needs, as well as the needs of a rapidly changing industry. IGP will continue to fulfill the additional needs of the domestic and global grain industry. No one knows what challenges the future will bring, but the International Grains Program and its professional staff are planning and will be ready.

Nearly 900 participants have attended flour milling, feed manufacturing, grain purchasing and a variety of other courses in the state-of-the-art IGP Executive Conference Center.