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Meet Our Partner – Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission

The IGP Institute joins with the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission to create a preference for U.S. and Kansas sorghum.

MANHATTAN, Kansas – When asking non-natives what comes to mind when they hear the word Kansas, many will cite a rock band from the 70s, sunflowers, buffalo, cattle, wheat and the Wizard of Oz. And while Kansas does have those connections, the many people may not know that Kansas is also the number one grain sorghum producing state in the country.

According to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service 2.9 million acres of grain sorghum, also known as milo, were harvested last year. This commodity thrives in Kansas because it is efficient with respect to solar energy and water usage. Of the grain sorghum grown in Kansas, a portion of it is processed into livestock feed and used in ethanol production, and one-third of it is exported overseas.

Helping to promote those exports abroad is the IGP Institute.

"When groups come to the IGP Institute, the instructors teach international buyers about the grain markets," says Jesse McCurry, executive director of Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission.

This education happens through both on-site and distance offerings. From 2016 to date, the team at the IGP Institute has trained 439 professionals through 20 courses for both international and domestic audiences.

"We are able to promote grain sorghum through our courses and field trips allowing us to provide international groups information about Kansas and U.S. grain production and marketing," says Jay O'Neil, senior agricultural economist, and grain marketing and risk management curriculum manager for the IGP Institute.

Along with the courses, the IGP Institute also hosts trade teams set up through the partnership with the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission and the U.S. Grains Council.

"We work hard to stay up-to-date and share with our international guests current topics and how the U.S. and Kansas commodities meet those customer demands," O'Neil says.

Along with supporting education, the Kansas grain sorghum farmers are committed to funding sorghum research says McCurry.

"One of the primary duties of the commission is to invest in grain sorghum research to help farmers improve their production efficiencies and commodity marketing," McCurry says. Many of these projects are funded through market development grants.

When speaking about the IGP Institute, McCurry adds that it offers Kansas and U.S. grain sorghum farmers a ready vehicle to support international trade.

"It feels like we are home when we come to IGP and Manhattan," McCurry says. "It's also a plus that we have the IGP Institute to play a major role in our educational programs and help provide the technical expertise for our courses."

To learn more about the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, please visit their website at: www.ksgrainsorghum.org.

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