

For Immediate Release: April 11, 2018

Meet Our Partner – Kansas Department of Agriculture

In promoting Kansas agriculture and outreach efforts, the IGP Institute coordinates with the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

MANHATTAN, Kansas – In the agricultural industry, farmers strive to sell their products and goods through commodity markets and trade on a domestic and international basis. With efforts to promote their products and provide education about the industry, the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) and Kansas State University's IGP Institute work together to advocate for Kansas and U.S. agriculture.

Being the nation's first state department of agriculture, KDA devotes its efforts to the entire Kansas agriculture sector. This division includes farmers, ranchers, food establishments and agribusinesses, and provides that support to make these businesses successful. In addition, KDA team members encourage farmers, ranchers and other business owners to expand in or relocate in Kansas.

Heading the charge is Kerry Wefald, marketing director at Kansas Department of Agriculture. She explains that within agricultural marketing, one of the main areas that KDA focuses on is domestic and international business development. She says that when viewing agriculture across commodity sectors, the industry impacts 45 percent of the total economy in Kansas.

"We try to work with our communities because all of the community agriculture starts at the local level and then expands to regional, state or international," says Wefald.

Since relocating the agency from Topeka to Manhattan in 2014, KDA utilizes several industry and land grant opportunities for its advocacy and outreach efforts. One of these opportunities includes collaboration with the IGP Institute team.

"With moving to Manhattan we have better access to a land-grant institution, we can streamline research and work together on land-grant initiatives that effect other agriculture communities," Wefald says.

Wefald says that the Kansas Department of Agriculture works with IGP in a variety of ways. One of these is representing Kansas at domestic and international trade shows. She says that one of the most exciting parts of the KDA and IGP partnership recently is IGP receiving recognition for hosting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cochran Fellowship course from Serbia to teach about the pet food industry in the U.S.

"When looking globally, pet food is an industry that continues to grow in the global market," says Wefald.

In addition to administrative services, KDA has five divisions including Animal Health, Agriculture Marketing, Business Services and Conservation and Water Resources.

"We value the unique opportunities that IGP brings to the grain industry. With the historical output plus the brand and industry reputation that IGP has, it's easy for us to try to make that



connection with a group directly to IGP because we know the outcome is going to be positive on how to use a certain commodity,” Wefald says.

Many of the global efforts for KDA also involve the department’s international outreach staff that helps Kansas farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses to start exporting products or to expand in exporting. Suzanne Ryan-Numrich, international marketing director at KDA, is among the staff at the forefront of these efforts.

Ryan-Numrich says that many international visitors and decision makers go through training courses at IGP and when she travels abroad, she often interacts with those people who understand the quality of Kansas and U.S. grains versus grains of competitors.

“Trade is built on relationships and IGP is certainly a big part of that relationship building process,” says Ryan-Numrich. “I truly believe it helps to build future trade relationships when they have a positive experience at IGP.”

To learn more about the Kansas Department of Agriculture, please visit their website at:
www.agriculture.ks.gov.

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