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**Meet Our Partner – U.S. Wheat Associates**

*The IGP Institute partners with the U.S. Wheat Associates to create a market preference and improve international trade for U.S. wheat.*

MANHATTAN, Kansas – Today, wheat is a global staple food crop and is the third largest crop produced in the U.S. It ranks eighth in global crops produced. However, many Americans may find it interesting that the settlers in the new world first planted wheat as a hobby crop in 1777.

Fast-forward to 1959, when state wheat organizations in the Central and Southern Plains, including Kansas, formed Great Plains Wheat. In the Northern Plains and Pacific Northwest a few weeks later in early 1960, wheat farmer organizations formed Western Wheat Associates. Those organizations merged to form U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) in 1980 with a mission to promote reliability, quality and value of the six U.S. wheat classes to wheat buyers, millers, bakers, food processors and government officials in more than 100 countries globally. These six classes include hard red winter (HRW), hard red spring (HRS), soft red winter (SRW), hard white (HW), soft white (SW) and durum.

Over those decades, USW has built demand for U.S. wheat through consistently strong trade service and technical support for government buyers, flour millers and end product processors. And the IGP Institute has been a strong and reliable partner in that effort.

The IGP Institute fosters industry training for professionals who are driven to develop and build on their industry knowledge and experience. In 2016, IGP hosted 123 participants in the 10 courses offered that were focused on the milling industry.

“The IGP Institute is a critical partner in USW’s endeavor to promote U.S. wheat in around the world,” says Erica Oakley, USW Director of Programs. “Customers from overseas markets that attend courses at IGP are able to obtain a well-rounded view of the quality of U.S. wheat production.”

USW has a global presence with 15 overseas offices, which Oakley explains is essential to supporting their mission to develop, maintain and expand U.S. wheat market share.

“Through the IGP Institute milling courses, our customers learn about U.S. wheat milling quality and best practices, as well as the U.S. grain marketing system – all of which help in their decision to purchase U.S. wheat,” Oakley adds.

Through valuable training and education at the IGP Institute sponsored by USW, state wheat commissions and the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, potential international buyers are able to learn about the benefits of U.S. grain commodities.

“U.S. Wheat Associates sponsors international individuals in several of the milling courses we host at the IGP Institute to help us achieve the mission of the institute in providing training opportunities in U.S. wheat standards and milling,” says Shawn Thiele, grain processing and flour milling specialist at the IGP Institute.



He adds, “Through several U.S. Wheat Associates-sponsored courses at the IGP Institute we are able to showcase U.S. wheat quality to those international millers and show them milling optimization techniques to understand the full benefit of U.S. wheat and milling methods.”

One such course is the annual Sub-Saharan region training where participants learn about U.S. flour milling, wheat grading standards in the U.S., businesses in the U.S. wheat industry and they also experience a Kansas wheat harvest during the course.

The courses offered at the IGP Institute help introduce international groups to U.S. wheat and to strengthen U.S. grain commodity preferences in the minds of foreign buyers.

Oakley says, “There are many challenges the industry is facing today, but the relationship between the IGP Institute and USW is mutually beneficial and allows both organizations to be able to stay on top of those trends and challenges.”

Visit [www.grains.ksu.edu/igp/on-site-training](http://www.grains.ksu.edu/igp/on-site-training) to learn more about the IGP Institute training offerings through USW.

To learn more about the U.S. Wheat Associates, please visit [www.uswheat.org](http://www.uswheat.org).

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