



What's Growing In Kansas?



How Does Agriculture Affect You?

Part one of a seven-part series on Kansas Agriculture

Research has shown that most Americans know very little about agriculture and its social and economic significance in the United States. Agriculture is a multi-billion dollar industry that touches the lives of every American. It supplies the U.S. and many other countries with a wide variety of products and remains one of the top industries in terms of total employment.

But how does agriculture affect you?

Look at everything around you, what you are wearing and think about what you have eaten today. It is likely that many of the things were produced or processed in Kansas. Agriculture plays a major part in our lives: from what we eat and wear to what we use in our classrooms, homes and

workplaces. Most daily essentials can be traced to an agricultural source. The sheets we sleep on and the jeans we wear are made of cotton. The cereal, milk and sausage we eat for breakfast, pencils, crayons and paper that we use; and the baseballs and gloves that we use for pleasure all originate from raw agricultural products. You are surrounded by and reliant on many agricultural products everyday.

Agriculture is the largest industry in Kansas. Kansas has 64,500 farms with an average farm size of 732 acres. These farms produce wheat, corn, soybeans, grain sorghum, dairy and beef cattle, hogs, cotton, sunflowers, alfalfa, pecans, grapes, melons, broilers, eggs and many other

agriculture products. Agriculture and agribusiness also contribute to the total economy of Kansas, directly and indirectly. Nearly 20 percent of all Kansans, rural and urban are employed in jobs related to agriculture.

In 2004, Kansas was number one in wheat flour milling capacity, all wheat produced, sorghum grain produced and cattle slaughtered. It ranked second in sorghum silage produced, acres of cropland and prime farmland, as well as cattle and calves on farms. It ranked third in red meat production, cattle and calves on grain feed, sunflowers produced, commercial grain storage capacity and acres of land in farm land. Kansas ranked sixth in agricultural exports.

Did you know?

- An acre of farmland, which is about the size of a football field, can produce 14,000 ears of sweet corn, 36,000 pounds of potatoes, 24,000 heads of lettuce, 2,800 loaves of bread or 266 pairs of blue jeans.
- One Kansas farmer produces enough food to feed 145 people.
- Kansas is known world-wide for producing grain. Can you name six different grains and oil seeds that Kansas sends around the world?

Answers: Wheat, Grain Sorghum, Sunflowers, Corn, Soybeans and Cotton.

A Growing Career Choice

Historically, agriculture has been perceived as farming, but that is not reality. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only two percent of the jobs in agriculture are in production. Approximately 74 percent of those working in agriculture-related occupations nationwide are in support areas such as animal/plant resources, food science, agribusiness, renewable/natural resources, landscaping and horticulture. Here in Kansas, agricultural production has a slightly higher employment percentage (four to eight percent). But undoubtedly, the Kansas agriculture scene has evolved from a production-centered industry into a competitive field that demands a blend of scientific, technological and business skills.

Activities

1. List five jobs that are related to agriculture.
 - a. Are you interested in any of these jobs as a personal career choice?
 - b. If so, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/oco/ to research this job.
 - c. If not, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/oco/ to research one of these careers:
 - a. Food Scientist, Agriculture Engineer (under Engineer), Landscape Architect, Agronomist or Veterinarian.
 - d. Write down the job description, educational requirements, salary and necessary skills.
2. Look through the "Help Wanted" advertisements and circle all of the ads for jobs that are agriculture-related.

Sources: Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, Kansas Department of Labor Statistics and Occupational Outlook Handbook

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