

What's Growing In Kansas?



Our Other Cash Crops

Part three of a seven-part series on Kansas Agriculture

Kansas has 31 million acres of cropland; second only to the state of Texas. In Kansas, wheat is the chief crop, but there are many other crops that are important components in the Kansas agricultural economy. Kansas leads the nation in the production of grain sorghum, ranks seventh in corn production, ranks 10th in soybean production and ranks in the top three in sunflower production. In addition, cotton production is becoming increasingly important.

CORN

Corn is the nation's largest agricultural crop. In 2005, Kansas corn production totaled a record 465.8 million bushels, ranking 7th in United States. Nearly 60 percent of all the corn grown in the U.S. is fed to livestock. But, there are more than 3,500 different uses for corn products and more uses are being found each day. Corn is also used to make ethanol, a clean-burning automobile fuel. Every American consumes three pounds of corn every day through thousands of food and non-food uses. In fact, 75 percent of all grocery items contain corn in some processed form.



GRAIN SORGHUM

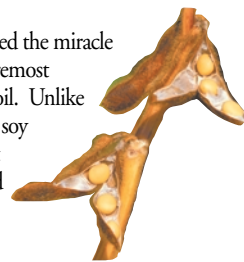
Kansas produces more grain sorghum, commonly known as milo, than any other U.S. state. In fact, Kansas grows over 40 percent of the nation's grain sorghum. Kansas growers value sorghum because it performs well in many types of soils and weather.

Over 80 percent of the sorghum produced in Kansas is used as livestock feed. However, the market is expanding with new uses including the production of ethanol, foods and starch-based biodegradable products like packaging materials. A milling plant in New Cambria, Kansas, is the first in Kansas to mill whole grain sorghum flour.



SOYBEANS

The soybean is often called the miracle crop. It is the world's foremost provider of protein and oil. Unlike other vegetable proteins, soy protein contains all eight essential amino acids and is the highest natural source of dietary fiber.



Kansas ranks 10th in the U.S. in soybean production and Brown County is the top soybean producer in Kansas. The 2004 soybean crop in Kansas produced 95 percent more than the 2003 crop.

Soybeans are used for the meal and oil. More than 94 percent of the meal is used to feed livestock. Soybean oil is used for foods such as margarines and salad dressings. But there are many new uses of soybeans, such as soy ink (which is currently being used by one-third of the nation's newspapers), soy-blended biodiesel and recyclable soy-based containers and building products.

COTTON

Cotton is nature's wonder fiber, providing thousands of useful products and supporting millions of jobs as it moves year after year from field to fabric.

In 2005, there were 85,000 acres of cotton planted in Kansas and the 2006 crop is expected to increase by more than 50 percent. There are four cotton gins currently operating in the state of Kansas which are located near Winfield, Anthony, Cullison and Moscow. The cotton harvested in Kansas is mainly used to make denim. One bale of cotton can make 215 pairs of jeans.

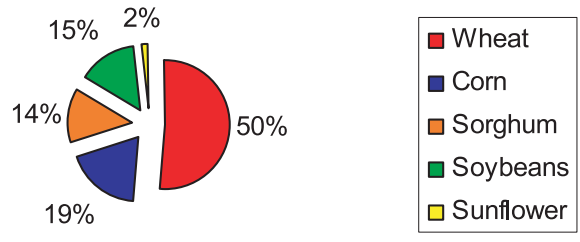


Activities

1. On a map, locate all of the Kansas towns with cotton gins. Who invented the cotton gin?
2. Look at your school lunch menu for the week and figure out how many of the foods contain wheat or corn.
3. The adjacent pie chart represents percentages of acres planted in Kansas in 2005. These five crops total 19,600,000 acres. Figure out approximately how many acres of each crop were planted in Kansas.
4. What are the expenses that a farmer might incur while raising his crops?

Answers: 1. Winfield, Anthony, Cullison and Moscow; Eli Whitney in 1793. 2. Answers will vary. 3. Wheat - 9,800,000; Corn - 5,724,000; Sorghum - 2,744,000; Soybeans - 2,940,000; Sunflowers - 392,000. 4. Answers may include: seed, planter, tractor, combine, land rental, hired labor, fuel, electricity, fertilizer, soil conditioners, irrigation, equipment repairs, chemicals, taxes, etc.

Percent of Acres Planted for 5 Major Crops, 2005, USDA, Kansas Field Office



Sources: Kansas Department of Agriculture (www.ksda.gov), American Soybean Association (www.soygrowers.com), Kansas Soy Bean Commission, Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (www.ksagclassroom.org), The National Agricultural Statistics Service - Kansas Office (www.nass.usda.gov), Kansas Corn Growers Association (www.ksgrowers.com), National Corn Growers Association (www.ncga.com) and National Cotton Council (www.cotton.org)

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