

# What's Growing In Kansas?



## Our Main Grain Wheat

### Part two of a seven-part series on Kansas Agriculture

On average, Kansas is the largest wheat producing state. Nearly one-fifth of all wheat grown in the U.S. is grown in Kansas. We are so well known for this major crop that Kansas is identified around the world as the "Wheat State" and "Breadbasket of the World."

Wheat is an important crop for Kansas farmers, the state's economy and our daily diet. The wheat crop supports thousands of producers; their communities; and large industries for supplies, transportation, processing and marketing.

Wheat is grown in 42 states in the United States. In Kansas, the county that harvests the most wheat is Sumner County, Kansas. The other top 10 wheat-producing counties in Kansas are Mitchell, Saline, Dickinson, Rice, McPherson, Reno, Kingman, Harper and Sedgwick.

There are six classes and more than 30,000 varieties of wheat. The six classes are hard red winter, hard red spring, soft red winter, durum, hard white and soft white. Since there are so

many varieties of wheat, it can be grown in many different climates. Somewhere in the world wheat is being harvested every month of the year.

In Kansas, we produce hard red winter and hard white wheat. Hard wheat flours provide a variety of bread products. Durum semolina and flour are used to make pasta. Soft wheat is used to make crackers, cookies, cereals, cakes and pancakes.

Two-thirds of the wheat grown in Kansas is exported to other countries. Kansas ranks first among the 50 states in flour-milling capacity so much of the remaining one-third of the Kansas wheat crop is milled into flour in the state of Kansas.

In Kansas, wheat is planted in September and October and harvested in June and July. The wheat will sprout and grow in the fall until a winter freeze occurs. It will then become dormant until spring, when it will mature until harvest.

Researchers through the years have made many modifications to wheat so that it is now more productive, shorter, and responsive to fertilizers; matures early; resists pests; and has better quality grain for bread and other products.



Sources: Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom ([www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org)), The Kansas Wheat Commission ([www.kswheat.com](http://www.kswheat.com)), Kansas State University ([www.grains.ksu.edu](http://www.grains.ksu.edu)) and [www.wheatmania.com](http://www.wheatmania.com)

### Did you know?

- Kansas State University's Grain Science and Industry program is world-renowned and is the only place in the United States that offers college degrees in baking, feed and milling science and management.
- One bushel of wheat contains approximately 1 million individual kernels.
- In an average year, Kansas wheat farmers produce enough wheat to make over 36 billion loaves of bread, or enough to provide each person on earth with six loaves of bread.
- More foods are made with wheat than any other cereal grain.
- Ninety-three percent of Americans eat AT LEAST one pizza per month.
- Bread products go stale up to six times faster in the refrigerator.

### Activities

1. Circle all of the things that can be made from wheat: Cat litter, pizza, shampoo, concrete, charcoal, golf tees, lotion, fuel, crackers, cosmetics, ink, plastic bags, bagels, wallpaper glue, tortillas or paper.
2. Locate all of the top ten wheat-producing Kansas counties on a map. List at least one city or town that is located in each county.
3. What is your favorite pizza topping? Have each student state their favorite and place a tally mark next to their choice. Then have students make a pie chart with their class totals.
4. In 1998, the United States added folic acid to all enriched grain foods, including bread. What is the benefit of adding folic acid?

Answers: 2.All can be made from wheat. 4. Folic acid helps to prevent babies being born with brain and spinal cord defects. Preliminary results also show that it helps to prevent cancer, Alzheimer's disease, strokes, delft palles and heart disease.

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