Expo ’18 includes laughter, learning, laurels

About 225 soybean enthusiasts gathered Jan. 10 in Topeka for Kansas Soybean Expo 2018. The Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) organized the annual event, with checkoff funding from the Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC), to coincide with the Topeka Farm Show at the Kansas Expocentre.

“We were really excited to have so many farmers and friends of the industry join us in Topeka,” said KSA Second Vice President Teresa Brandenburg, Osborne, who chaired the Expo planning committee. “It was a great day to network and advance the Association’s and Commission’s commitments to producer education.”

KSA President Lucas Heinen, Everest, and KSC Chairman Kurt Maurath, Oakley, welcomed the attendees. The opening session featured updates from checkoff-partner organizations. The presenters were Jennifer Geck Ott, director of allied industry relations for the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, and Kevin Roepke, regional director for the Americas at the U.S. Soybean Export Council.

The keynote speaker, farm-boy-turned-comedian Roger Radley, entertained the audience with his wit, humor and stories about growing up on a Wisconsin farm and how we raise kids today.

“Roger was very entertaining, and you never knew what direction he was headed with the next line,” said Charles Atkinson, Great Bend, KSAs representative on the American Soybean Association (ASA) Board of Directors and a member of the Expo planning committee. “His presentation was a great reminder that if you can't look in the mirror and get a good laugh to laugh with somebody else.”

John Jenkinson, Lakin, a farm broadcaster for KSN News and markets editor–anchor for RFD-TV and Rural Radio on Sirius XM, was the master of ceremonies at the luncheon. The featured speaker was Donnell Rehagen, CEO of the National Biodiesel Board (NBB). He emphasized how the soybean checkoff always has ensured the biodiesel industry could support its technological development and marketing projects with the proper research. He also complemented the national and state soybean associations for advocating federal policies to help make biodiesel competitive in the marketplace.

To open the awards and recognitions, Brett Neibling, Highland, and Brandon Geiger, Denton, who represented Kansas in the 2017 DuPont Young Leader program, introduced and congratulated Kim and Kevin Kohls, Moundridge, and Jared Nash, Parsons, as 2018 Young Leaders. Heinen then recognized Marvin Wahl, Oswego, for being KSA’s top recruiter in 2017.

The Friend of Soy award went to Harold Kraus, Hays. He served on KSC from 1999 to 2011 and was its first representative to NBB, serving there from 2001 to 2013. When he started, biodiesel was in its infancy, and it was a billion-gallon industry by the time he retired. His dedication to developing biodiesel helped make it America’s first domestically produced, commercially available advanced biofuel, and NBB gave him the Friend of Biodiesel Award in 2013.

Kraus earned a business degree from the University of Kansas in 1955 then served as a Navy aviator. He and his wife, Virginia, have six children and farm in Ellis County, where he was a county commissioner for 16 years. They continue to host an agriculture day for about 300 students and teachers every year.

Heinen recognized past president Terry

continued on page 8
The afternoon of March 6, I appeared before the Kansas House taxation committee to express our Association’s opposition to HB 2740, which would increase the statewide property-tax levy for schools. Excerpts from the written testimony that accompanied my comments follow.

“Here is an example of the effect of continually increasing state and local taxes on one of my neighbors in northeastern Kansas. Over a five-year period, from 2013 to 2017, his property taxes on 48 acres of unimproved cropland increased, on average, about 15.5 percent per year. What was a $1,145 property-tax bill in 2013 was $2,045 last year, a nearly 80 percent increase overall. The actual amount that benefited the local school district and community college rose from $537 to $964 per year over that period. Per acre, he went from paying about $24 to about $43, with local education’s share going from about $11 to about $20. We suggest agricultural property owners already are doing their fair share.

“Kansas was the 10th-ranked state for soybean production at 189 million bushels in 2017, narrowly missing the record set in 2016. The Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) reports that oilseeds, mainly soybean, in Kansas have a direct output of more than $1.28 billion and provide 1,079 jobs in the state. Adding induced impacts, the oilseed industry supports 4,467 jobs and creates a total economic contribution of about $1.8 billion. Furthermore, soybean meal is a major ingredient in livestock feeds. Kansas has more than 2.2 million cattle and 1.8 million hogs on feed and anticipates a growing poultry industry, according to KDA.

“Kansas soybean farmers, however, face adversity in sustaining and increasing that economic contribution. … Falling soybean prices and rising expenses are making for incredibly thin margins.

“Instead of doubling the statewide mill levy for schools, the state could become an even more committed partner with the soybean industry. Challenges include housing and labor shortages; a lack of processing plants in the state; aging highways, bridges and railroads; uncertainty in our free-trade agreements; and burdensome federal regulations. …

“The Kansas Soybean Association [KSA] encourages state cooperation and assistance in addressing those obstacles. An increased property-tax mill levy for schools, however, would be counterproductive to ongoing strategies for growing the state’s agricultural economy. That is why our Association respectfully asks each of you to vote against advancing HB 2740.”

If you were wondering what KSA has done for you lately, here it is.

"KSA opposes property-tax hike, says ag is doing its ‘fair share’"
Corporate partners and advertisers are extremely important to the overall effort of the Kansas Soybean Association. They provide the Association with financial support and are links to the allied industries that provide soybean farmers with inputs and capital to manage our enterprises. KSA also relies on corporate partners to keep us up-to-date with the latest breakthroughs in production technologies, and we all work together to create and implement environmental and trade policies that benefit the soybean industry.

Thank you, corporate partners
INDUSTRY INSIGHT from DuPont Pioneer

Increasing soybean yields

Farmers are trying new things to increase soybean yields. There are many factors that can influence soybean yields, but one of the most influential is planting date by maturity. A two-year study conducted by DuPont Pioneer at nine Midwestern locations shows an advantage to earlier planting (late April and early May) compared to later planting dates. The earlier timing allowed stands to obtain higher yields when their critical development stages occurred during longer summer days.

Research also was conducted to study the interaction between soybean variety maturity and planting date. The results from the study showed, when varieties differed by one full maturity group, full-season varieties had a greater average yield when planted early. Early-maturing varieties yielded similarly across planting dates.

Additionally, farmers looking to maximize soybean yield should look at Pioneer® brand A-Series soybeans, the highest-yielding soybean line ever introduced by DuPont Pioneer. With local breeding centers located throughout the United States, A-Series soybeans are bred to fit and offer a 2.3 bushel per acre average yield advantage.

In general, to achieve high soybean yields, start with strong fertility. A 60 bushel per acre soybean crop will utilize 320 pounds of nitrogen, 142 pounds of phosphorus, 27 pounds of magnesium and 25 pounds of sulfur. Some of that will return to the soil in the stover, but it is important to note that high yields require a lot of good plant food.

When potassium in the topsoil is deficient, soybean plants will try to obtain it from the subsoil (only as adult plants). Potassium deficiency may occur when soil potassium levels are low, when the pH is very low, when root restriction occurs or when nematodes are a problem. Test soils to determine the proper amount of fertilizer to apply to achieve high soybean yields.

Coalition secures PAYGo waiver

Estimated at $20 billion in fiscal year 2018, funding for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and activities would be subject to sequestration (automatic spending cuts) under the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGo) Act of 2010. The American Soybean Association (ASA) led a coalition of farm-bill stakeholders in a letter to House leadership Dec. 21, 2017, urging that chamber to waive sequestration for a majority of USDA programs.

Programs affected would include virtually all provisions of the 2014 farm bill, excluding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, Conservation Reserve and crop-insurance programs. The consequences of even a short delay in providing a waiver would be severe.

Following the letter, both the House and Senate continuing resolutions contain the PAYGo waiver. The full text is at http://j.mp/usda-paygo on the web.

Directors tackle broad agenda

What follows are the highlights from the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA) Board of Directors meetings convened Jan. 9–10 in Topeka.

- Discussed via telephone the coming budget deal, immigration, trade, the next farm bill, taxes and other issues with the American Soybean Association’s lobbyists.
- Worked on the Kansas Soybean Expo 2018 script.
- Set the office’s fiscal year (FY) 2019 holiday schedule.
- Appointed Bob Haselwood, Berryton, as KSA’s representative on the National Biodynamic Board.
- Accepted the Association’s FY ’17 audited financial statements.
- Introduced a proposed bylaws change affecting the DuPont Young Leaders’ service on the Board for final consideration at the next meeting.
- Received a letter of resignation from District 4 Director Kregg Rennie, Columbus, and slated Matthew Atkinson, Columbus, as the candidate for that position on the Annual Meeting ballot.
- Reviewed the Kansas Soybean Yield and Value Contests results.
- Updated the KSA policy-resolutions document for presentation at the Annual Meeting.
- Established the Association’s top five policy priorities for 2018.
- Re-elected the officer team to serve again in 2018. (See the masthead on page 2.)

The directors scheduled their next meeting for March 23 in Topeka. Those highlights will be in the summer issue of Straight Rows. The summer agribusiness tour and Board meeting will be in the Wichita area, likely in July. Association members can contact any director or Kenlon Johannes in the office to suggest agenda items.

Dec. 7, 2017, was the first day of new farmer-leadership for the American Soybean Association (ASA). Iowa’s John Heisdorffer is serving as the 2018 president, following a vote of the Board of Directors in Saint Louis, Missouri. He follows Illinois’ Ron Moore, who moves to the chairman’s role. Delaware’s Richard Wilkins, the 2017 chairman, rotates off the nine-member governing committee.

The Board also elected Kentucky’s Davie Stephens to serve as vice president, a position that places him in line to be ASA president in 2019. The directors chose South Dakota’s Kevin Scott as secretary and Minnesota’s Bill Gordon as second-term treasurer. Ohio’s Bret Davis, Tennessee’s Eric Maupin, Indiana’s Joe Steinkamp and Charles Atkinson, Great Bend, were elected members-at-large on the governing committee.

“As ASA is a leading voice in the ongoing dialogue about the issues that affect soybean farmers every day,” Atkinson said. “I look forward to helping guide our organization this year.”
CUSTOMERS PREFER U.S. SOY BECAUSE IT’S SUSTAINABLE.

But as demands for sustainability continue rising, meeting those demands remains a journey of continuous improvement. Which sustainable practices do you do now? Which ones could you adopt to improve your sustainable footprint? Show your commitment to sustainability with a free truck magnet available at unitedsoybean.org/sustainability
Association keeps tabs on Statehouse

Jan. 8 was the first day of the 2018 Kansas legislative session. The 125 representatives and 40 senators again face challenging budget questions, mostly centered on K–12 school financing.

The Kansas Supreme Court ruled in October 2017 that the state’s school-finance approach still was unconstitutional, despite the Legislature’s adding $195 million for schools to the 2017 budget and $292 million for 2018. Legislators have until April 30 to defend their program. Plaintiffs in the court case have asked for an additional $600 million for schools, yet the question is how to provide that amount while also funding the child-welfare system, prisons, mental health, highways and other state responsibilities.

In preparation for the session, the Kansas Soybean Association’s (KSA’s) policy committee met Jan. 8 to develop positions on a number of topics for 2018. The result is a comprehensive, practical document that is posted at http://KansasSoybeans.org/policy on the web.

The Kansas Agricultural Alliance (KAA) conducted its annual welcome luncheon Jan. 9 for the entire Legislature. Participation was the best in a number of years, and KSA was well-represented. The first Tuesday-evening reception, sponsored by KSA and other associations, also was Jan. 9 at the Kansas Grain and Feed Association (KGFA) office.

KSA conducted a lunch Jan. 16 for the legislators and Statehouse employees. The event was well-attended, and many commented it is one of their favorites during the session.

More than a dozen members of the House and Senate ag committees attended a tour KAA hosted Jan. 19. The Manhattan-area stops included a diversified family farm and ranch, a feedyard, the Kansas Wheat Innovation Center, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, K-State’s College of Veterinary Medicine, and a full-service farm cooperative. About 15 representatives of KAA-member associations, including two with KSA, helped facilitate the tour and shared the importance of Kansas agriculture with the legislators. A photo recap from KGFA is available at http://j.mp/kaa-tour on the web.

Representatives of the five Kansas commodity commissions reported about their activities to the House and Senate ag committees Jan. 24. They reviewed their current projects and plans for the future. Chairman Kurt Maurath, Oakley, gave the Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC) report. KSA is the primary, administrative contractor to KSC, enacting almost $2 million of state programs annually.

The ag committees conducted informational hearings about dicamba Feb. 5. They sought background from the three manufacturers about the new formulation dicamba rollout, what has happened since then, upcoming label changes, available training and why the technology is needed. In addition, the House panel heard from aggrieved property owners, and KSA President Lucas Heinen, Everest, represented farmers who have had positive experiences with the product.

All KAA-member associations, including KSA, supported SB 405, clarifying animal-conversion units for poultry facilities with dry-manure systems, in a Feb. 21 letter to Kansas state senators. The next day, the Senate approved the proposal 29–10. KAA also supported the proposal before the House ag committee March 6.

HB 2740, increasing the property-tax levy for public schools from 20 to 38 millages (“mills”) over a three-year period, was the subject of opposition testimony prepared by KSA staff and officers. Heinen presented that testimony to the House taxation committee March 6. His remarks illustrated increases in the general property-tax levy and the portion for schools on one northeastern Kansas farm over the last five years. It also compared recent soybean prices to business costs.

Left: First Vice President Dwight Meyer (right), Hiawatha, and President Lucas Heinen, Everest, visit with Rep. Sydney Carlin, Manhattan, ranking minority member of the House agriculture committee, at KSA’s legislative luncheon. Top right: Meyer chats with Sen. Dennis Pyle, Hiawatha, and Rep. Ron Ellis (right), Meriden, both ag committee members, at the “Wake Up to Kansas Agriculture” legislative breakfast. Bottom right: Gary Reser (far left), KSA’s contract lobbyist, listens during the KAA legislative tour.

Other bills KSA is tracking
◆ SB 194, amending groundwater-management districts’ water-use charges.
◆ SB 252 and HB 2168, enacting the Ad Astra Rural Jobs Act.
◆ SB 263, creating a program to research the use of industrial hemp.
◆ HB 2189, protecting surface owners’ property rights.
◆ HB 2246, amending the Kansas noxious-weed law.
◆ HB 2452, limiting the duration of certain conservation easements.
◆ HB 2478, relating to Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) license-renewal dates and late fees.
◆ HB 2488, removing alcohol as a special fuel under the motor-fuel tax law.
◆ HB 2513, relating to surface-water protection fees.
◆ HB 2583, relating to the control and eradication of noxious weeds.
◆ HB 2619, allowing any documentation required under the Kansas pesticide law to be created or maintained in electronic form.
◆ HB 2665, establishing a Kansas water-law study commission.
◆ HB 2691, modifying notification requirements for KDA’s Division of Water Resources regarding multiyear flex accounts and water-right applications.
◆ HB 2728, establishing non-corn-irrigation and low-water-use-crop grant programs and authorizing the Kansas Water Office to issue bonds to fund them.
◆ HB 2732, authorizing KDA’s Division of Conservation to create and administer water banks.
Customers prefer U.S. soy because it’s sustainable. But demands for sustainability continue rising. Making informed management decisions by using data from all aspects of your operation helps you minimize inputs and maximize yields. Adopting this practice is another step forward in improving your sustainable footprint. Show your commitment to sustainability with a free truck magnet available at unitedsoybean.org/sustainability
Farmers, students discuss trade, sustainability, leadership

Current and future industry leaders met in Saint Louis, Missouri, Jan. 9–11 for the American Soybean Association’s (ASAs) 18th annual Soybean Leadership College (SLC). They discussed the agricultural outlook for 2018, effective leadership and how to discuss modern agriculture with consumers.

SLC provides up-and-comers with training to promote the soybean industry, communicate key messages, work to expand U.S. soybean markets and network with farmers from across the country.

This year’s event opened with an overview of what is expected in agriculture from Matt Roberts, Ph.D., an economist with The Kernmantle Group, and Kate Lambert, assistant vice president of FCS Financial. Lambert also discussed transitioning the farm to the next generation and lending for younger farmers.

Kentucky’s Davie Stephens, ASA vice president, and Wisconsin’s Nancy Kavazanjian, a United Soybean Board (USB) director, presented “A Tale of 2 Soybean Organizations.” They outlined their groups’ purposes and how each performs the important work that supports soybean farmers and the industry.

In the breakout sessions, Allyson Perry from the Center for Food Integrity shared how declining trust in the food system requires a new approach to conversations. Another breakout provided insight into serving as a leader in today’s soybean organizations and how to build a strong board.

U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) CEO Jim Sutter presented an update about trade and sustainability, sharing interesting facts like the No. 1 U.S. soybean-meal market now is the Philippines.

Attendees also heard from a panel about sustainability, including Kavazanjian; Rosalind Leeck, USSEC’s director of market access; ASA Chairman Ron Moore; and Diane Herndon, senior manager for sustainability at Nestlé Purina.

Keynote speaker Richard Fordyce, executive director of the Missouri Farm Service Agency, delivered the closing remarks.

“Advocacy has to be consistent, positive and personal,” he said, encouraging everyone to make time in their busy schedules for outreach.

BASF Corp., Farm Credit, USB and FMC Corp. sponsored the event. The Kansas Soybean Commission was among the 17 qualified state soybean boards that also provided funding.

More than 8,000 farmers, agriculture leaders and industry advocates gathered Feb. 27–March 1 at the Anaheim (California) Convention Center for America’s largest farmer-led, farmer-focused convention and trade show, Commodity Classic.

This year’s event attracted a record 1,533 nonexhibitor, first-time attendees and more than 150 media representatives. More than 3,500 farmers from across the nation and several foreign countries were on hand to take part in the educational sessions, tour the trade show and hear from agricultural experts.

“Commodity Classic is run by farmers for farmers, so it attracts people who are passionate about agriculture, thirsty for knowledge and positive about the future,” said Charles Atkinson, Great Bend, who represents Kansas on the American Soybean Association (ASA) Board of Directors.

The meetings and policy-development sessions involving ASA and the national corn, wheat and sorghum farmers’ associations highlight Commodity Classic, which they established in 1996. Next year’s event will be Feb. 28–March 2 in Orlando, Florida.

Expo ‘18

Reschke, Hiawatha, for retiring from the KSA Board of Directors a year ago, after 15 years of service. Maurath thanked Craig Gigstad, Valley Falls, for representing Kansas on the United Soybean Board from 2011 to 2017.

Next, Heinen presided over the KSA Annual Meeting. Atkinson outlined ASA’s policy successes in 2017 and priorities for 2018. First Vice President Dwight Meyer, Hiawatha, who chairs KSA’s policy committee, presented the guiding resolutions for 2018, which the voting members present accepted. The Board elections resulted in Matthew Atkinson, Columbus, and Gary Robbins, Emmett, as the directors for districts 4 and 5, respectively, and Brandenburg continuing as a director-at-large.

After adjournment, the KSA directors met and re-elected their officers for the coming year: Heinen, president; Meyer, first vice president; Brandenburg, second vice president; Doug Shoup, Parsons, secretary; and Robbins, treasurer. Past president Raylen Phelon, Melvern, will continue as chairman.

Shoup, who coordinates the Kansas Soybean Yield and Value Contests, then announced the district and overall winners. (See page 9.)

Participants then heard three K-State Research and Extension updates. Ignacio Ciampitti, Ph.D., crop-production specialist, led “Increasing Yields Through Improved Management.” Dallas Peterson, Ph.D., weed scientist, offered “The Dicamba Conundrum.” Entomologists Brian McCormack, Ph.D., and Mike Smith, Ph.D., presented “An Integrated Approach to Managing Dectes Stem Borer in Kansas.”

Expo photos and presentations are available via http://KansasSoybeans.org/expo on the web.

continued from page 1
Kansas farmers produced high-yielding, valuable soybeans in 2017 thanks to the best farming practices, wisely selected varieties and favorable growing conditions.

“The annual Kansas Soybean Yield and Value Contests recognize outstanding Kansas farmers and provide fun incentives for them to improve,” said Doug Shoup, Ph.D., K-State Research and Extension Southeast Area agronomist, who completed his fourth year as the contest coordinator. “They also allow the Kansas Soybean Association, with checkoff funding from the Kansas Soybean Commission, to share what participants learned to benefit all Kansas soybean farmers.”

The yield contest included 40 entries, down 12 from 2016. The 26 winners in 13 categories had verified yields averaging 78.11 bushels per acre, compared to the reported state average of 40 bushels per acre in 2017. The contest winners’ average decreased by 2.9 bushels per acre, while the state average decreased 8 bushels per acre from 2016.

The value contest had 31 entries, nine more than in the previous year. For their protein and oil contents, the top three entries averaged 93.8¢ (10 percent) in increased value over the $9.18 base cash price. In 2016, that average was 77.6¢ (8 percent) above a $9.68 cash price.

Meier Farms, Rexford, topped the statewide irrigated division with a conventional-tillage entry that made 100.67 bushels per acre – the first entry ever to document more than 100 bushels. Kenny Wilson, Horton, led the dryland division with a conventional-tillage entry of 93.34 bushels per acre. Brandon Geiger, Denton, won the value contest with 97.8¢ per bushel of increased value (10.7 percent over the cash price).

The Kansas Soybean Association presented the state and district winners with plaques or certificates and monetary prizes from the Kansas Soybean Commission at the Kansas Soybean Expo, Jan. 10 in Topeka. The highest dryland and irrigated yields in the state each received a $1,000 award, and Meier Farms got another $1,000 bonus for surpassing 100 bushels per acre. In each district, first place won $300, second earned $200, and third received $100.

Complete results and award photos are available via http://KansasSoybeans.org/contests on the web.

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Calendar of industry events

March 1–31    Kansas Ag Month
March 22–24    3i Show, Dodge City
March 23       Kansas Soybean Association Board of Directors meeting, Topeka
March 24–31    USA Poultry & Egg Export Council strategic planning, South Africa
March 27–29    Mid America Farm Exposition, Salina
March 29       Legislative “Drop Dead Day,” Topeka
April 2–3      U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance board of directors meeting, Saint Louis, MO
April 4–6      Great Bend Farm & Ranch Expo, Great Bend
April 4–5      North American Leaders Session on Ag Technology & Innovation, Orlando, FL
April 5–7      Kansas Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics annual conference, Overland Park
April 9–20     IGP grain-purchasing course, Manhattan
April 9–10     Kansas Grain & Feed Association annual meeting, Wichita
April 10–12    #FarmFoodTour
April 16       Tax Day
April 23–25    Petfood Forum, Kansas City, MO
April 24       Parsons Earth Day, Parsons
April 27       Jefferson West kids day, Meriden
May 3–4        Animal Agriculture Alliance meeting, Washington, DC
May 4          Geary County ag day, Junction City
May 9          Riley County kids’ ag day, Manhattan
May 30–June 1  World Meat Congress, Dallas, TX

See more at http://KansasSoybeans.org/events