

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

MARCH 20-26

Kansas celebrates Agriculture Day Monday

Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky invites all Kansans to join the state's agricultural groups and Governor Kathleen Sebelius in celebrating Kansas Agriculture Day, Monday, at the Statehouse.

This focus of this year's event will extend beyond food production and include information about biobased products, including fuels like ethanol and biodiesel.

"Kansas continues to steadily expand its biobased fuel production, which is good for Kansas farmers and our environment," Polansky said.

"Clean-burning, renewable fuels like ethanol promote better air quality and increase the value of grains grown by Kansas farmers."

To mark the event, Governor Sebelius will sign a proclamation declaring March 21 Kansas Agriculture

Day. She will meet the winners of the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's annual agricultural art contest for kindergarten through sixth grade students.

The day-long celebration is a collaboration of the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Department of Commerce's agriculture marketing division.

Kansas Ag Day is a local event held in conjunction with National

Ag Week to raise awareness of the significance of U.S. agriculture in our national and global economies. National Ag Weeks runs from March 20 to 26.

"Agriculture is incredibly important to the Kansas economy and our day-to-day lives," Polansky said. "Farmers provide the food we eat and the ingredients needed for products used in transportation, energy

production, health care, construc-

tion, manufacturing, printing, personal care, education and sports."

Representatives from the state's agricultural organizations will have displays on the first floor of the capitol rotunda on Monday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Exhibitors include: Kansas Department of Agriculture; Kansas Department of Commerce; Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom; Kansas Farm Bureau;

The National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame; Kansas Soybean Commission/Association; Kansas Corn/Sorghum Commission/Association; KSU Research and Extension; Kansas AgriWomen; Kansas Agritourism Project; ICM Inc.; United Bio Energy; and KSU Department of Grain Science and International Grains Program.

Farmers in D.C. this week

Farm bill, renewable fuels, trade, top agenda

A group of about 150 Kansas county Farm Bureau presidents and their families are bound for Washington, D.C., to carry the message that agriculture remains an integral focus of the nation's economic well being.

Three representatives from Sherman County are part of the Kansas group, County Farm Bureau President Greg Sederstrom, his wife Amy and Linda Franklin who has been elected to the state Farm Bureau board.

The county Farm Bureau presidents represent a group of volunteer farmers and ranchers in each of the state's 105 counties. The group will spend today through Wednesday carrying the agriculture message in the nation's capital.

While in Washington, the Kansas county Farm Bureau presidents intend to push for renewable fuels, trade issues, the permanent repeal of the death tax and the preservation of the integrity of the 2002 farm bill.

"When Congress passed the '02 farm bill, they entered into a covenant with American farm and ranch families," said Stacey Forshee, president of the Cloud County Farm Bureau, who chairs the state's Young Farmers and Ranchers committee. "Our family operates our farm just like any smart American businessperson, by planning ahead. To undo those commitments now would leave a perception that Congress can't keep its promises."

This trip to Washington is part of a year-round Kansas Farm Bureau public policy advocacy and education process. The grassroots effort involves regional and state dialogue that culminates each fall with the adoption of a set of Kansas Farm Bureau policy proposals, which the organization then advocates for in Washington and Topeka.

"This kind of personal contact with members of Congress is absolutely vital," said Steve Baccus, an Ottawa County agriculture producer who serves as president of Kansas Farm Bureau. "Personal interaction with the folks who support their families on the farm and ranch helps lawmakers put a face on the policy work they're involved with."

In addition to visits with members of Congress, the Kansas Farm Bureau delegation plans to visit the Canadian embassy to engage in a dialogue about the ongoing trade and animal health issues which have an impact on producers in both nations.

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