



# KANSAS CORN UPDATE

The Newsletter of the Kansas Corn Growers Association

Spring 2016

## GROWER ALERT: Will Politics Trump Science In EPA's Atrazine Decision?

EPA Finally Releases its **Atrazine Risk Assessment** that would amount to a de facto ban and then takes it back. **EPA may have hidden the report, but we've got it and we know what's in it.** When the comment period opens, we'll need you to take action.

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## Coming to your area: Kansas Corn Shed Tours in all nine districts.

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## Helping Science Educators teach the Science Behind Corn.

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## NASCAR Returns to Kansas, ethanol wins.

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## Retailers adding ethanol pumps with KBBI Program.

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## Legislative, Regulatory Issues Remain Priorities for KCGA

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# WHAT'S NEW at Kansas Corn!

By Greg Krissek, Kansas Corn CEO

There's a lot of buzz about Kansas Corn, and you're going to hear a lot more. You won't need to look very far to see Kansas Corn in action this summer. We have a full menu of exciting new programs and events. In the past year, the Kansas Corn Commission and the Kansas Corn Growers Association have participated in an intensive planning phase to chart the future of Kansas Corn creating several goals:

- **INCREASE** our investment in building needed infrastructure for higher ethanol fuel blends in Kansas and on the national level.
- **BUILD** domestic and export markets for Kansas corn, corn-fed red meat, DDGS and ethanol.
- **RAISE** the awareness of the positive economic impact Kansas corn and corn-fed products offer for our state, our ag industry and our Kansas communities.
- **CREATE** a strong network of corn leaders and advocates and build understanding of the amazing technological advances that are occurring on our corn farms.

Here is a summary of exciting new Kansas Corn programs that are being implemented.

**Seed to STEM**—This program offers high school science teacher workshops to inspire educators and students to learn the science behind corn and to help students see the bright future in science-based Ag careers. This innovative summer course for science teachers will focus on biotechnology and ethanol focusing on the STEM curriculum (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics). Each teacher will walk away with \$400 in laboratory materials to use in their classroom. Not only are we supporting teaching about agriculture in the schools, we are supporting our science teachers with needed lab materials!

**Summer Shed Tour**—Kansas Corn's summer shed tour will stop in each of the state's nine districts for some good food and discussion. The purpose is to update growers on big issues the association is working on behalf of corn farmers and new programs. You will hear updates on programs funded through the Kansas Corn Commission and your checkoff dollars. These include investments in ethanol and livestock market development, research projects as well as new education programs.

**Kansas Corn Corps**—coming soon! Young (under 45) growers will be invited to participate in this young farmer development program that will offer opportunities to gain knowledge they



Kansas science teachers are excited about our Seed to STEM Program

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# New at Kansas Corn . . .

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can take back to the farm from experts in marketing, agronomy, technology and other fields. This new program will give participants tools to become better ag producers and better farm managers. Stay tuned for more information on this new program.

**Telling the story of Kansas corn**—Corn has quietly become the leading crop in Kansas. Our goal is to help Kansans understand the incredible value of our innovative Kansas corn farmers not only our rural and ag economies, but to the state's overall economic health. Your ability to adopt technology and sustainable practices to provide a needed crop for Kansas is a positive story we want to tell. We'll continue to work with advocacy programs like Common Ground, US Farmers and Ranchers Alliance and Kansas Farm Food Connection and as well as some new corn-focused efforts.

**Ethanol Infrastructure**—Kansas Better Blends Initiative and national ethanol infrastructure programs continue to be a focus for Kansas Corn. We continue to review and accept applications from high-volume fuel retailers to add blender pumps for higher ethanol blends at their stations in Kansas. We've joined NCGA, several other corn states and the ethanol industry in a national effort to build ethanol infrastructure especially in high population areas that can dramatically increase the market for ethanol fuel.

**Water Technology Farms**—The Kansas Corn Commission is funding two Water Technology Farms which are part of the state's water vision program. These research farms will test water saving technologies to improve our sustainability efforts.

I don't have room to touch on everything in this column, but I hope you share our enthusiasm for Kansas Corn. Please plan to participate in these programs with us and provide feedback to the Kansas Corn leaders in your area or to our office. You can email me directly at [gkrissek@ksgrains.com](mailto:gkrissek@ksgrains.com).

## What You Need to Know About Atrazine and EPA

### Will EPA Effectively Ban Atrazine?

#### Politics and Activist Agenda Trounce Science in EPA Report

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a federal agency bound by law to make determinations based on sound scientific evidence. Over the years, the Triazine Network, and informal coalition of farmers and agriculture organizations, has been holding EPA's feet to the fire to ensure verified, credible science is the basis for considering the fates of crop protection tools like atrazine. Based on EPA's recent leak of an atrazine ecological risk assessment, sound science has left the building. The leaked preliminary report recommends an aquatic life level of concern (LOC) at 3.4 parts per billion (ppb) on a 60-day average. EPA's current aquatic LOC for atrazine is 10 ppb for 60 days, however all available credible scientific evidence suggests a safe aquatic life LOC should be 25 ppb or greater.

#### EPA Releases Atrazine Report Accidentally?

According to EPA insiders, the 1,100 page report was "accidentally" posted on the agency's website April 29 but removed days later. Now EPA officials say the report has not been finalized and will be published in two or three months. When it is officially published, a comment period will be opened. During this time, EPA will receive comments from the public on this report. If the timeline is followed, the comment period will be active during late growing season into harvest for fall crops.

#### EPA's Leaked Recommendations Would Amount to a De Facto Ban on Atrazine

This accidental report relies on several questionable studies, including studies discredited by EPA's own Scientific Advisory Panels. It appears these flawed studies are being used to recommend an incredibly low aquatic life LOC for atrazine. **This LOC would effectively ban the use of atrazine in a large portion of the Corn Belt.** *Even more concerning is the potential for this report to set a precedent to ban almost any other approved crop protection tool.*

#### What It Means to Farmers

In 2003, EPA estimated banning atrazine would cost farmers \$28 per acre. Considering inflation, that number has increased with the years. Ironically, profit margins for corn growers are currently about \$30 per acre. Even with a conservative estimate of \$30 per acre, any profit margin farmers now have in this time of low commodity prices would be erased if the EPA continues down this path.

#### What Can You Do?

When EPA officially publishes its report in the Federal Register, a comment period will begin; we'll ask growers to submit comments in support of atrazine, probably late summer or early fall.

## Briefly at Kansas Corn . . .



This young NASCAR fan met American Ethanol spokesman #3 driver Austin Dillon, he also learned about ethanol fuels. Dillon finished sixth in the race, his second back-to-back top ten finish of the season.

### American Ethanol Wins at NASCAR's Return to Kansas

**What:** Kansas Corn promoted American Ethanol at NASCAR's May races at Kansas Speedway. NASCAR races on 15% ethanol fuel.

**Why Important?** Every NASCAR race vehicle has run on E15 fuel since 2011. This year NASCAR will have raced over 10 million miles on E15 fuel.

**Who:** KS Corn talked to fans about ethanol all weekend. NW Kansas grower Dennis McNinch and KCC CEO Greg Krissek were interviewed by MRN Radio during the race, reaching a huge NASCAR audience.

**Biggest Takeaway**—NASCAR and its fans are great ambassadors for ethanol, high performance cars and high performance fuel—E15 delivers!

### Science Teachers Are Pumped About Kansas Corn Workshop

**What:** The Kansas Corn Commission is offering a summer course called Seed to STEM for high school science teachers. On Page 1 of this newsletter is a photo from the Kansas Association of Teachers of Science "KATS Kamp", with Kansas Corn CEO Greg Krissek and Jeanne Gogulski from Education Programs and Partnerships, the firm that designed the program. Their presentation created a lot of excitement at the camp, filling most of the spots available at the Seed to STEM summer workshop in July. Also, K-State's Brian McCornack is adding a corn module to his Summer Science Institute titled, Using Corn in the Curriculum to Advance Inquiry-Based Learning.

**Why Important?** Teachers will learn how to teach about biotechnology and ethanol in their classrooms focusing on STEM curriculum.

**Who:** 35 teachers will be in the first summer course.

**Biggest Takeaway**—Teachers will walk away with corn/science lesson plans, tour a farm and ethanol plant, college credits and \$400 worth of lab equipment for their schools.



What's in the box? Science teachers are excited about Kansas Corn's new Seed to STEM program that provides lessons and materials to high school science teachers. Kansas Corn was at the KATS Kamp to tell science educators about the new program.

### KBBI Signing Up Kansas Retailers to Add Ethanol Blender Pumps

**What:** Kansas Corn is leading the Kansas Better Blends Initiative. KCC and other groups provided matching funds for a Federal grant for this \$2.23 million program.

**Why Important?** Pumps that can sell higher blends of ethanol are needed to build demand. KBBI is providing awards covering up to 90% of the installation cost of blender pumps.

**Who:** Retailers and motorists are the winners. Blender pumps allow retailers to offer customers more fuel choice.

**Biggest Takeaway**—Efforts to build ethanol infrastructure in Kansas and the nation is the best way to significantly increase demand for ethanol.

### KCGA Remains Active and Vigilant in Legislative, Regulatory Efforts

**What:** The Kansas Corn Growers Association testified on several bills during the 2016 Kansas Legislative Session on topics from water to biotechnology. KCGA also recently testified before the Blue Ribbon Water Task for and submitted comments on the Quivera refuge impairment claim. KCGA has also been active on national issues with NCGA. We continue to fight for a federal GMO labeling standard, and are watching EPA closely on its regulatory efforts on water, pesticides and ethanol. We expect a new RVO ethanol volume announcement from EPA in the near future.

**Why Important?** Legislators and regulators must continually be reminded how legislation and regulations affect our family farms. Ethanol in the RFS and pesticide regulations directly impact farmer and our rural economies.

**Who:** Our growers do a great job being proactive in Topeka and Washington DC.

**Biggest Takeaway**—Farmers are a minority in an increasingly urban society that depends on a safe and affordable food supply. Well-funded activist groups continue to wield power in Washington, DC. Farmers must be heard.



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## Announcing the 2016 Kansas Corn Summer Shed Tour

***Kansas Corn will stop in all nine crop districts this summer to share great meals and conversation with growers!***

- June 15 West Central Shed Tour Stop, Dinner at the Heier Farm  
3851 County Road Y, Grainfield, KS at 6:30 p.m.
- June 21 North Central Shed Tour Stop, Dinner at the Valley Venue  
830 Valley St., Concordia, KS at 6:30 p.m.
- June 30 East Central Shed Tour Stop, Ottawa, KS, location to be announced soon
- July 7 South Central Shed Tour Stop, Dinner at the Elks Lodge  
1103 W 5th St., Pratt KS
- July 14 Northeast Shed Tour Stop, Holton, KS, location to be announced soon
- July 27 Southwest Shed Tour Stop, Dinner at the Lawson Room, Grant Co. Fairgrounds  
100 W Patterson St., Ulysses, KS at 6:30 p.m.
- Aug. 16 Southeast Shed Tour Stop, Breakfast at Old Iron Club  
10392 Jade Rd., Fredonia, KS at 8 a.m.
- Aug. 25 Central Shed Tour Stop, Dinner at the 4-H Bldg, McPherson Fairgrounds  
610 W Woodside, McPherson, KS at 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 1 Northwest Shed Tour, Dinner at the City Limits Restaurant  
2227 South Range, Colby, KS at 6:30 p.m.



**RSVPs requested for meal counts. Call the Kansas Corn office at 785-448-6922 or email [corn@ksgrains.com](mailto:corn@ksgrains.com)**

**All corn farmers are invited to attend an event in their district or area.**