



**Comments from Kent Moore, Kansas Corn Commissioner and Past Commission Chair
Annual Report to the Legislature | Feb. 4, 2020**

I am Kent Moore, and I serve on the Kansas Corn Commission representing growers in the south-central district. I am a farmer from Iuka in Pratt County. Thank you for this opportunity to give an update on the Kansas Corn Commission's activities.

Kansas corn farmers produced a record corn crop in 2019, harvesting an estimated 801 million bushels. That beat our old record of 699 million bushels set in 2016. Our overall yield was average at best, but we harvested a million more acres of corn in our state this year. Kansas ranks 6th in the nation in corn production and leads our state in grain production. With stronger genetics and improved farming practices, corn has become a more resilient and reliable crop.

It's a good thing our corn crop was resilient enough to withstand the weather challenges we experienced. We began the year with unusually cold, wet conditions and some flooding and ended the year with extreme drought in some areas. Today, 38 counties are rated from abnormally dry to severe drought, while other counties are already preparing for spring floods. Farming in Kansas is always interesting.

In addition to the weather, our farmers also closely watch the markets and economics. We continue to feel the effects of the downturn in the ag economy due to large world supplies and challenging trade issues. This is when the work our checkoffs do in market development, education, research and promotion are most important.

The Kansas Corn Commission is working hard with our Kansas Corn staff to continue to build innovative programs that are making a positive difference in Kansas. We are aggressively working with partners like U.S. Grains Council and U.S. Meat Export Federation to build international markets for corn and corn products, especially with Mexico, our top market and closest neighbor. We are supporting Kansas teachers and students with our STEM education program, reaching college students, young farmers, consumers and decision makers to build a statewide network of people who have a better understanding of the value of corn and agriculture in the Kansas economy. Our research programs focus on increasing corn usage and building effective sustainable farming. Combined, these efforts are sparking optimism and new ideas for Kansas corn.

ETHANOL

The Kansas Corn Commission continues its work to expand infrastructure of E15 and higher ethanol-blended fuels. E15 is approved for use in nearly every gas-powered vehicle on the road today. We continue to make this cleaner, higher-octane, lower cost fuel available at more stations across the state. And we are seeing very positive results.

This past summer driving season we saw E15 sales increase by over 40% compared to 2018 at gas stations we have partnered with and supported. In fact, the top performing stations we have worked with have averaged 60% year over year ethanol sales growth since 2016.

FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Through our work with the U.S. Grains Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation and K-State's International Grains Program, the commission aggressively pursues opportunities to build market for corn and corn products overseas. We are working to export corn as grain, or in value-added forms like red meat, ethanol and DDGS. Ethanol has been the fastest growing U.S. ag export over the past five years, and we fund efforts to build those markets. We continue to focus efforts to build red meat exports to Mexico, Korea and Japan through our support the U.S. Meat Export Federation. Eleven percent of the price of corn is derived from red meat exports.

We host trade teams to build relationships and expand the knowledge of foreign grain buyers. In 2019, Kansas Corn hosted trade teams from 14 countries. My family farm hosted a high-level ethanol team from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka during harvest. They toured my farm, the Lyons ethanol plant and met with ethanol companies in Wichita.

RESEARCH

Our goals for research efforts are to increase the usage of corn, and to ensure our growers are using the most innovative technology and production practices that continue to boost sustainability. We continued our role as the top supporter of the water technology farms that are part of the Governor's Water Vision. These farms study, in real-world conditions, innovative irrigation technologies and practices including row spacing, soil mapping, moisture probes, plant-based sensors, irrigation nozzles and center pivot controllers. We support Kansas-based research with the national Soil Health Partnership to determine what conservation practices and cover crops work best in different areas of our state. In addition, cutting edge new use research on corn-based products is yielding promising results.

EDUCATION

Science plays a key role in corn farming and the Kansas Corn Commission remains committed to supporting Kansas teachers in their efforts teach science. Our award-winning Kansas Corn STEM program is surpassing our expectations. We support STEM education in our Kansas schools by providing K-12 teachers with science lessons, materials and professional development. We reached 50,000 students in the 2018-19 school year. That's up dramatically from the previous school year when we were excited to have reached 20,000 students. We published a book titled "We Grow Corn, Raising Corn on a Kansas Family Farm", featuring Kansas farmers. It's being used in Kansas classrooms and is an excellent source of information about growing corn as well as the science and technology we use to produce our crops.

Kansas Corn's collegiate programs are paying dividends as participants from the last few years are entering the workforce and continuing their involvement with Kansas Corn. We reach college students at campuses across the state with our Careers in Corn programs. We have started the third class of our Collegiate Academy, a program that helps college students take a closer look at a future in the corn industry, and we're providing scholarships to college students considering careers in corn and agriculture. We also support Kansas FFA and provide opportunities for FFA members and chapters to engage with Kansas Corn.

Kansas Corn Corps, our young farmer program, began its fourth class this fall. Through three classes, 32 young farmers have benefitted from this program, building knowledge and networks and solidifying their connections with Kansas Corn. Several Corn Corps graduates are Kansas CommonGround

volunteers, two now serve on the Kansas Corn Growers Association Board and one serves on an NCGA action team.

PROMOTION

We continue to reach out to consumers who are bombarded with information and misinformation about their food and farming. Few consumers know a farmer, but farmers in Kansas and across the nation are changing that by opening dialogues with consumers. Efforts like the CommonGround network of female farmer advocates, U.S. Farmer and Ranchers Alliance and the Kansas Farm Food Connection are all building connections and trust between farmers and consumers.

NCGA

The Kansas Corn Commission leverages resources on the national level by funding efforts in research, market development, promotion and education with the National Corn Growers (NCGA). Lawrence farmer Lowell Neitzel serves on NCGA's Membership and Consumer Engagement Action Team; Randy Small from Neodesha is on the Market Development Action Team; Kansas Corn staff Josh Roe is on the ethanol action team and our chairman Dennis McNinch was elected to the NCGA Corn Board. and I serve on the Risk Management Action Team.

CHECKOFF

The Corn Commission continues to live up to the commitment we made in 2015 when the Kansas Corn Commission voted to increase the checkoff to the 10 mill rate approved by the 2008 Kansas Legislature. The increase took effect for FY16, and it was the first Kansas corn checkoff increase in 25 years. FY2019 represented the fourth year of implementing an aggressive strategic plan focusing on building a strong and sustainable future for Kansas corn growers.

Provided with our comments are copies of the commission's Fiscal Year 2019 financial audit report, the FY2019 Year-End Budget Report, the FY2020 Budget, and our annual report to producers, which is distributed through Kansas Farmer magazine, grower meetings and farm shows.

The Kansas corn checkoff is fully refundable, and our staff honors refund requests in a prompt and courteous manner. The FY19 checkoff refund percentage was 7.66 percent, down from 12.16 percent in FY18.

The staff and the farmers who make up the Kansas Corn Commission will continue our work to benefit Kansas corn producers and our customers. We thank you for your efforts for agriculture.

PROVIDED

- Fiscal Year 2019 financial audit report
- FY2019 Year-End Budget Report
- FY2020 Budget
- [Published annual report printed in the January Kansas Farmer magazine](#)
- ["We Grow Corn" education book](#)