



The Seed Source

NEWSLETTER OF THE KANSAS CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

February 2010

Important Dates

February 2

Groundhog Day

February 9-10

KCIA/KSIA Annual Meeting
K-State Alumni Center
Manhattan, KS

February 14

Valentine's Day

March 15

Applications for Summer Field
Inspections Due

May 1

Payment for Certification of
Summer-Inspected Crops Due

2010 Annual Meeting Reminder

Don't forget to reserve your spot at the 2010 KCIA/KSIA Annual Meeting, February 9-10 in Manhattan, KS.

The event will take place at the K-State Alumni Center. Registration forms and a tentative schedule can be found on our website www.kscrop.org.

THE SEED SOURCE

If you would like to receive "The Seed Source" via email, please contact us at kscrop@kansas.net

Board Selects Schuler Executive Director, Fabrizius becomes Associate Director

Steve Schuler has been selected Executive Director of KCIA, replacing Daryl Strouts who has taken a position as President of Kansas Wheat Alliance. Schuler has been with KCIA since 1999, most recently serving as Director of Certification Services. Eric Fabrizius will become Associate Director, which is a new position in the KCIA management. Eric has served as Seed Quality Lab Manager since 2000.

"Eric will keep his seed laboratory duties while taking on additional supervisory and administrative duties", said Steve. "Likewise, I plan to keep my current field supervision duties in conjunction with key responsibilities as Executive". "In effect, we will be combining three positions into two", Steve added.

(see New Executive on next page)

Sarah Bids Farewell to KCIA

Dear KCIA Members and Staff,

As many of you have probably heard by now I have left The Kansas Crop Improvement Association to advance my career in communications. I have accepted a position with the KU Med Center in Kansas City as a coordinator for a research program encompassing nine universities in Kansas. The time I spent at KCIA was very valuable in further developing my skill sets and abilities by providing me priceless opportunities and education, which undoubtedly assisted in my acquisition of my new position.

I have really enjoyed all my activities at KCIA, and will miss planning events, managing the website, and trying to provide interesting articles for you in the newsletters. Mostly I will miss the people. I truly value all the relationships that have developed in my time at KCIA. Agriculture has been a large part of my life and education, and learning from experts such as the KCIA staff and members has been a precious experience. I hope that these relationships can continue to grow.

I wish you all luck in everything you do, and hope your next crop is a successful one. If you would like to keep in touch please feel free to email me at svelasquez@kumc.edu, or contact me through Facebook.

Sincerely,
Sarah

Noteworthy Items

- Annual Meeting is February 10, 2010 – Register today and be a part of YOUR KCIA!
- If you have not renewed your KCIA Membership for 2010, you will not be allowed to vote at the Annual Meeting.
- Form A/C due date is March 15 for summer inspected crops – Please apply now for all certifiable fields (you can always cancel on your Form B).
- We will begin sending out Form B statements for summer inspected crops in mid-March. Payment is due by May 1 but we will gladly accept payment early.
- Lab reports are available by email. If you would like your results immediately upon completion in .pdf format, please make your request to efkcia@kansas.net.

Results of Inspector Survey Indicate Overall Satisfaction - Steve F. Schuler

Surveys requesting grower feedback on field inspection services were sent last fall to KCIA members certifying fields in 2009. I have had forty-seven returned. The vast majority of the respondents expressed satisfaction with their field inspectors and the inspection program. This is great news and tells us that we are on the right track. We'll not become complacent, however, and will continue to recruit and train the best people we can find. My appreciation goes out to all of the respondents.



An issue that occasionally comes up when I send out this survey is dissatisfaction with an inspector that rejects a field rather than bends the standards. The dissatisfaction often arises from the fact that the problem seems too insignificant to the grower to cause the rejection of an otherwise good seed production field.

A common example is the presence of field bindweed, though the problem could just as easily be field isolation. There are fields rejected where there is no question that the bindweed poses a threat to seed quality, and these seldom become an issue. But what if the inspector finds only a vine or two and rejects the field? Who's at fault? Generally, the inspector is thought to be incompetent for rejecting the field.

The field certification standards for wheat state very clearly that the presence of uncontrolled noxious weeds in a field, regardless of plant maturity is grounds for rejection. This is unambiguous. The standard leaves no room for an inspector to use "judgment".

The inspector traverses a field, observing only a representative portion of that field, and verifies that the standards have been met. If the field does not meet standards, the inspector is duty-bound to state the problem. The issue is not that there is one little vine in the field but that there are uncontrolled noxious weeds in the field and the standards say there can't be. There are likely more plants than just what the inspector found. Hence, the field is rejected.

Standards are in place to maintain the quality of certified seed. Inspectors are in place to maintain the integrity of the standards by verifying that they are adhered to. There will be of course, the occasion where a new inspector may not properly identify a weed, or incorrectly interprets the standards. I try, in my training, to address and hopefully avoid, these issues while the inspector gains experience. A grower should never hesitate to call me if there is a concern.

It is neither correct nor desirable to expect that a field inspector "look the other way" if there is a problem. KCIA membership sets forth the standards that they feel will create the best quality and benefit to the Kansas farmer. Fields must meet standards. Growers have recourse. If a standard is too strict or unrealistic, you, the KCIA member have the power to make changes to the standards by relaying your concern to the Standards Committee, or to your Board representative. The standard will be reviewed. If you have a problem with a standard, feel free to call me, or contact your Board representative. The inspector survey is also a great way to make your concerns known. I do read them and address issues to my inspectors. Identities of the responders are kept confidential.

New Executive Director, from page one

One benefit of the new management structure will be closer contact with the members. Plans are also in the works to review current personnel position assignments and expand the areas of responsibility for each, if possible, in a way that benefits both KCIA and the employees.

With KCIA's Membership Services Specialist, Sarah Velasquez, leaving, there are actually two fewer positions currently. The next few months will be used to decide if existing personnel can absorb the additional workload, or if additional full or part-time help will be needed. "Regardless", assures Steve, "we plan to continue to provide quality service to our members as efficiently and as economically as possible".

Man, despite his artistic pretensions, his sophistication and his many accomplishments, owes his existence to a 6-inch layer of top soil and the fact that it rains. - Anonymous

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