



FEED & FORAGE

Feed and forage production is an important sector of the Kansas agricultural economy. Livestock producers depend heavily upon the hay, silage, forage and feed grains that are produced in the state. Advancements in the feed industry have increased yields and efficiency of production, especially in the areas of irrigation technology and plant genetics. The strength of the Kansas livestock industry provides a solid foundation of demand for the entire feed and forage industry, which is supplemented by advances being made in export opportunities. Expansion of the ethanol industry and development of ethanol by-products increase demand for Kansas grain. Kansas also offers support in terms of positive public policy including weed free forage certification, and in the field of research and education.

Although the feed and forage sector has long been a strength of Kansas agriculture, challenges exist which have the potential to prevent future growth within

the industry. Continued advancements in technology will require an increasingly skilled workforce as well as the ability to navigate concerns about technological developments. Much of the potential growth could come from export markets, which is complicated by issues of transportation, regulations and free trade agreements.

The development of a strategic growth plan for the feed and forage sector will require collaboration between the key partners in the industry. Initial steps could include enhanced educational opportunities and research developments in the areas of water, crop, forage, and grassland (both native and introduced) management. Both public and private stakeholders must contribute to the planning to identify specific actions and policies that can open up the feed and forage industry to new growth.

Status

Kansas feed and forage production is an important sector of the state's agricultural economy. Kansas livestock producers are a major outlet for hay, silage, and feed grains that are produced within the state's borders. Specifically, Kansas ranks 6th in total beef cows, and 16th in dairy production. Both sectors of the cattle industry require high-quality forage to maintain healthy cattle. A variety of forages are available to livestock, including silage of corn, sorghum, wheat, triticale, and hays including native grass, alfalfa, tall fescue, sorghum-sudan and brome, among others.

Key Kansas forage production statistics for 2022 include:

- 2nd in sorghum silage production — 13.91% of U.S. total
- Sorghum silage production is currently 788,000 tons
- 3rd in all hay production: 5.36 million tons — 4.75% of U.S. total
- 4th in feeds and fodder export — \$296.1 million
- Corn silage production: 4.62 million tons — 3.59% of U.S. total

The top five destination countries for U.S. hay exports in 2022 accounted for 95.40% of the total U.S. export volume with said countries being China, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Taiwan.

According to a Kansas Department of Agriculture IMPLAN economic model, the estimated direct impact of the forage industry is \$306.9 million in output and 5,478 jobs. Including indirect and induced effects, the total impact of the industry on the Kansas economy reaches \$546.9 million in output and 6,673 jobs.

Successes

- A national alfalfa checkoff program was established in spring 2016 with the creation and implementation of the U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative (USAFRI), better known as the Alfalfa Checkoff Program. The Land Institute in Salina was the first Kansas recipient of checkoff dollars in September 2018.
- K-State has done two years' worth of research on the use of crabgrass — Mojo Crabgrass and Quick and Big Crabgrass in particular — as an alternative summer annual for use in Kansas. The study includes looking at harvest intervals and fertility. Crabgrass has been used for years, but this research has already helped it gain in popularity and usefulness.
- The intermodal facility in Edgerton is taking advantage of the significantly reduced freight cost of shipping containers returning to China and other Asian markets by shipping distiller's grains from Kansas into those markets in containers.
- An irrigation efficiency study that looked at combining the principles of center pivot irrigation with drip irrigation showed that new technology can reduce the amount of irrigation water required with a typical center pivot system.
- A Kansan sits on the National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance board of directors.