

Workforce Partnerships: Investing in Education and Industry

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Introduction:

Kansas is developing creative approaches to bridge public and private resources to the benefit of agriculture education and workforce development. Investing in agriculture education is a proven way to build a solid foundation that supports the Kansas Department of Agriculture's (KDA) mission of creating a "best-in-state plus" workforce and work environments with a positive culture and attitude.

Objective:

To create internship opportunities as a great transition to full-time employment and a knowledgeable future workforce.

Method:

The agency's agriculture workforce development vision recognizes:

- the importance of Supervised Agriculture Experiences in high school
- post-secondary internships
- and purposeful job placement inside the Kansas agriculture industry.



Hands-on welding by high school participants at Caterpillar Works Tools.

KDA continuously seeks input from:

- farmers
- ranchers
- agribusinesses
- and educators

who have a vested interest in keeping the Kansas agriculture sector healthy.



High school students participate in hands-on activities which highlight each area of manufacturing at Caterpillar Works Tools. There were 250 participants.

Public-private partnerships with agribusinesses in the state are key to the successful growth of the agriculture industry.



Cargill employees discuss career opportunities.

Results:

In 2016 and 2017 KDA has partnered with Cargill, Caterpillar Works Tools and Servi-Tech to connect these companies with secondary and post-secondary agriculture education programs within their service areas, for the purpose of recruitment, training and to supply schools the necessary resources to train future employees.

During 2015-16 academic year, Caterpillar Works Tools visited 17 area schools, followed in the fall of 2016 with a hands-on event at Caterpillar Works Tools which included:

- 250 participants
- new hires have been made directly linked to the event.



Northwest Kansas Technical College students work directly with Servi-Tech on precision agriculture advancements.

Servi-Tech is partnered with Northwest Kansas Technical College Precision Agriculture Technology students who work directly with local producers on water technology advancements. Over the past two years, NWKTC students have partnered with 17 producers, received direct support from over 30 businesses and have been afforded 10 new internship opportunities.

In 2016, Cargill partnered with Renwick School District, Kansas Department of Commerce and KDA to take steps in solving the agriculture workforce issue in the Wichita, KS area.

- Cargill employees are involved with career awareness campaigns.
- An agriculture education program was established at Andale High School through a 3-year, \$90,000 grant from the Department of Commerce.
- First year enrollment is expected to be over 60 students.



Representatives from Cargill speak with high school students on the importance of agriculture in feeding the world.

John Niemann, President, Cargill Protein Ingredients and International Channel, based in Wichita, states:

"A sound agriculture education network involving both public and private entities is fundamental to the creation of curriculums that produce talented people who will help us feed the nine billion people that will inhabit the planet in 2050. "

Conclusion:

KDA is committed to supporting agriculture education by serving as the bridge that links business and industry with educators and students. Educators at all levels in agriculture can play a pivotal role in creating similar public-private programs in local communities and in the state.