



## Agricultural education foundation celebrates 30 years

**MANHATTAN, Kan. - Sept. 24, 2013** - Throughout history, agriculture and education are two things that have been a constant in the successful progression of civilization. Starting as early as the settlers who came here and learned how to plant and harvest maize, the tradition we now enjoy as "Thanksgiving" has shaped the fundamental aspects of the United States of America. Through technological advancement, scientists and the people we call farmers, education and farming are still intertwined in the success of every state. The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (KFAC) has been providing agricultural education to our state's youth for three decades now. And they're celebrating.

### **The start of a good thing**

When a representative from Kansas Farm Bureau, Barbara Meyer went to a meeting in Lincoln, Neb., 30 years ago, she was challenged by former Secretary of Agriculture John Block to form an Agriculture in the Classroom program in Kansas. Meyer gathered influential Kansas leaders in agriculture and they formed the Ag in the Classroom Committee. Shortly after, the committee became the foundation it is today.

"After the committee was established, we (the committee) thought it would be a good idea to be a not-for-profit foundation," Meyer said. "We did, and we were the first ag in the classroom program in the nation to become a foundation."

In July 1983, the Foundation was incorporated under Kansas law, which allowed the Foundation to legally accept contributions from individuals and companies that may be deducted from the donor's tax liability.

Shortly after, in 1985, KFAC held its first summer graduate course for Kansas teachers, marking KFAC's commitment to providing teachers with agricultural experiences, credible resources and standards-based, hands-on lesson plans.

### **Teacher tested, teacher approved**

Rather than adding to school curriculum already being used, KFAC's mission is to supplement teachers' requirements. The former United States Secretary of Agriculture John Block explained, "We are not interested in making farmers out of everyone or getting everyone "back on the farm." We simply want a nation of people who understand the significance of agriculture - who appreciate the impact that its food, fiber and forestry have on their lives."

The summer courses KFAC has offered throughout the years have resulted in numerous teacher-created lesson plans. KFAC has also created in-depth background pieces for teachers to utilize in their classrooms.

During its first three decades, KFAC developed four educator guides, *Exploring Kansas Farm Animals* for first grade, *Exploring Kansas Crops* for third grade, *Exploring Kansas Natural Resources* targeting fifth grade, and the new *Exploring Plants: Kansas Crops* also targeting third grade. The recently completed Exploring Plants guide, which replaces the earlier *Exploring Kansas Crops* guide, features 38 Kansas crops and several new units. The educator's guides and their corresponding student magazines, Kansas Kids Connection, are available at no charge to Kansas educators (small fee for postage). Other educational outreach programs include in-service training, the Teacher of the Year Award and an annual art contest. KFAC, in cooperation with Kansas State University and Friends University, also offers summer courses to educators. KFAC also offers a series of Be Ag-Wise workshops for educators and volunteers working in classrooms across the state as a joint project with the Kansas Farm Bureau. Information on these and other KFAC activities, as well as resource order forms, lesson plans, and other educational materials, is available on the website, [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org). All KFAC materials align with State of Kansas curriculum standards.

KFAC works with its Board of Directors, a group of volunteers throughout the state who contribute countless hours of support and expertise. The Board of Directors provide guidance on education, finance and marketing efforts.

### **Cause for a celebration**

This past year, the Foundation has been celebrating the 30th milestone with a social media campaign and funding drive.

"We are celebrating the work of hundreds of teachers who've integrated agriculture in project-based learning in their classroom," Cathy Musick, executive director of KFAC said. "These are the teachers who have used KFAC resources and attended KFAC workshops and classes. We are also celebrating the hundreds of volunteer hours put in by committee and board members while creating research-based resources for teachers and Kansas elementary students."

Several donations have made it possible for KFAC to continue their goals of keeping agriculture in Kansas classrooms. One donor, Amy Langvardt, understands the importance of KFAC on multiple levels. She serves as the co-chair of the Education Committee for KFAC and raises Angus cattle on her ranch in Kansas. Lyons Ranch is a purebred Angus cow-calf operation owned and operated by Langvardt and her husband, Karl, their two sons, Tanner and Trey, and her parents, Frank and Jan Lyons.

"We believe strongly in the mission of the Foundation," Langvardt said. "We wanted to support the cause, so the Lyons Ranch made a one-time donation of \$.30 per head of cattle we own to celebrate the 30th anniversary.

"The Foundation can do so much with just a few dollars. If every farm and ranch family and every agriculture business would contribute just a little toward KFAC's efforts, in time, the youth of Kansas will understand and appreciate the resources around them. Pride for the state, recognition and respect for what goes into putting food on their table, an understanding of the science behind production and the effects of the business side of agriculture - it's exciting to think how the culture could change if all Kansas students could be well-informed," Langvardt said.

To donate to KFAC and support their mission, you can either download the [30/30 Vision donor form](#) or visit the website [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org) and simply use the PayPal option (you don't have to have a PayPal account yourself). Another way to support KFAC is to purchase an Agri-Tag. Find out more

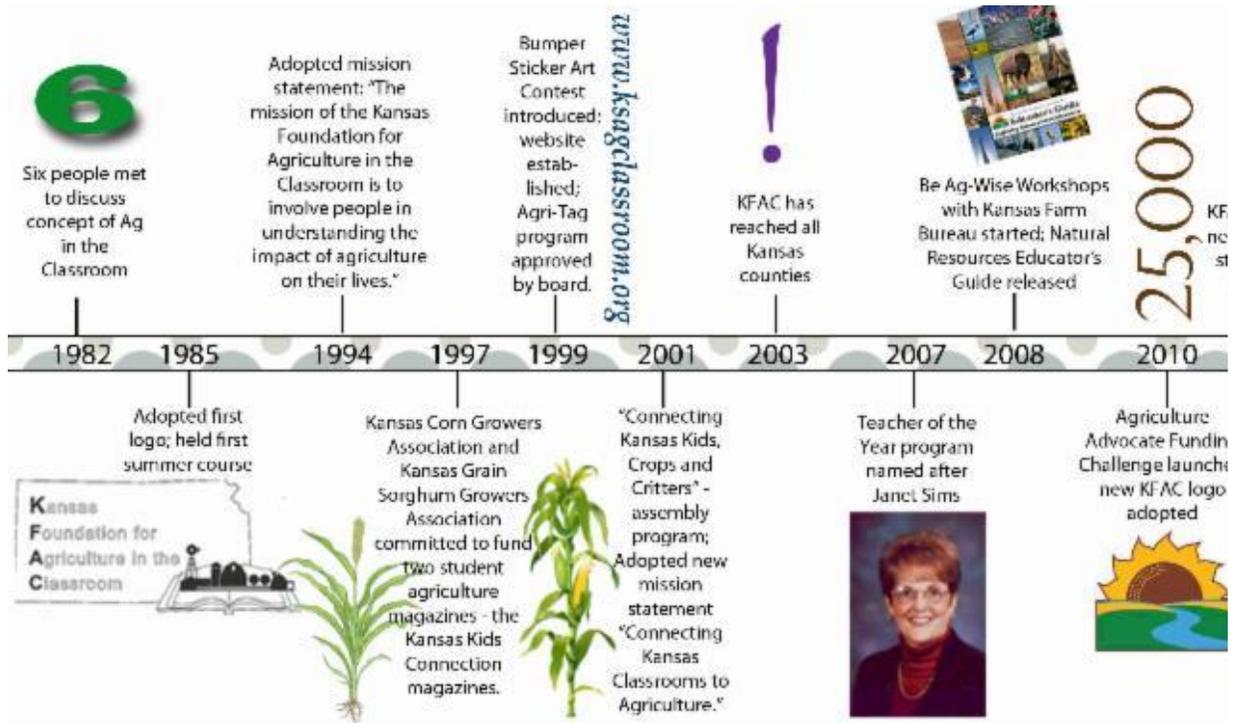
about the program [here](#). Donors of KFAC are listed on a PDF file, posted on the website's homepage.

In addition to the funding drive, KFAC has created a social media campaign on their Twitter and Facebook sites.

"The social media campaign is designed as a way to leverage our mission and one of our resources at the same time," Sheridan Wimmer, KFAC's program assistant said. "We aim to inform our followers about agriculture using daily messages that are educational. These messages are primarily from our newest Exploring Plants: Kansas Crops Educator's Guide."

You can follow the social media campaign and learn more about KFAC through their [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) sites.

"Our mission, vision and goals of the Foundation focus on providing a bright future for the youth in our state," Musick said. "You can help us continue to connect teachers, students and parents to the importance of agriculture in our lives."



[Click to enlarge the 30th Anniversary timeline.](#)

### About Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

The Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. KFAC was founded in 1982 as part of a nationwide initiative to help students gain a greater awareness of the role of

agriculture in the economy and society, so that they may become citizens who support wise agricultural policies. For more information, visit [www.ksagclassroom.org](http://www.ksagclassroom.org) or phone (785) 320-4350.

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