



“Behind the Birdseed”

Sharing Agronomics Across Generations

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Introduction

Throughout 2016, the Wheat State Agronomy Club's (WSAC) educational program focused on teaching people of all ages about Kansas field crops that make up birdseed. Club members gave presentations to students ranging from second to fourth grades at agriculture education events in the community. Additionally, members mixed a ration of birdseed that was delivered to nine nursing homes in the Manhattan area. These birdseed donations began a partnership among the WSAC and nursing homes in the area that continued throughout the year. Club members were excited to share “Beyond the Birdseed” with the community to promote the importance of agriculture and the field of agronomy.



Fig. 1. Sarah, Keren, and Garrett explain management and uses of the crops found in birdseed at Riley County E.A.R.T.H. Days.

Objectives

- Promote Kansas crops to community members by teaching identification, management and products
- Educate the community about agriculture and the field of agronomy
- Develop WSAC members’ communication skills and advocacy experience



Fig. 2. John helps fourth graders identify seeds at Kansas State University Agronomy Youth Field Days.

Materials and Methods

- The club used a variety of seed sources from WSAC members across the state of Kansas:
 - Corn
 - Wheat
 - Safflower
 - German Foxtail Millet
 - Oilseed Sunflower
 - Grain Sorghum
- WSAC members presented at local field days and other events around the area:
 - Kansas Farm Bureau Field Days
 - Riley County E.A.R.T.H Days (Fig. 1)
 - Kansas State University Open House
 - College of Agriculture Ag Adventures (Fig. 6)
 - Agronomy Youth Field Days (Figs. 2 and 4)
- Activities completed for each event:
 - Crop identification
 - Education about management practices
 - Discussion of products and by-products
 - Assembly of individual birdseed bags (Fig. 6)
- Mixed, packaged, and delivered birdseed to local nursing homes (Figs. 3 and 5)



Fig. 3. WSAC member Liam delivering birdseed to excited nursing home resident and activities coordinator.

Acknowledgements

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- Riley County Farm Bureau
- Manhattan, Kansas, area nursing homes
- Glanzer Family Farm
- Orschlen
- Mid Kansas Coop
- Kansas State University Department of Agronomy
- Kansas State University College of Agriculture
- WSAC members and WSAC advisors

Discussion

- Thirty-one WSAC members participated to help promote agronomy at multiple events.
- The program was presented to groups of 10-15 students at several different programs.
- Overall, the impact of educating students about field crops was extensive, reaching about 1,200 students and community members total.



Fig. 4. Clint and Tanner explain the life cycle and uses of grain sorghum at Kansas State Agronomy Youth Field Day.

Conclusions

The Wheat State Agronomy Club’s “Behind the Birdseed” project provided a unique opportunity to impact both youth and the elderly. This activity was an excellent tool for members to educate future generations about crops while advancing a positive message about agriculture and encouraging children to consider careers in agronomy. Birdseed donations to local nursing homes provided a service to the community that the club will continue in the future.



Fig. 5. WSAC members mix birdseed to be donated to local nursing homes.



Fig. 6. Erin helps elementary students at College of Agriculture Ag Adventures make their own birdseed mixes to take home.