

# Waves of change

The introduction of Turkey red winter wheat in Kansas set off waves of agricultural change still felt today.

First recorded wheat crop grown in Kansas, a **soft spring wheat**, was harvested at the Shawnee Methodist Mission, now Johnson County.



1839



On Jan. 29, Kansas becomes the **34th state** in the country.

Bluemont Central College becomes **Kansas State Agricultural College**, the first operational land-grant school under the Morrill Act. It will later become Kansas State University. Its Wheat Improvement Program will eventually use Turkey wheat varieties for breeding.

1861



The **Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad** completes its line through Kansas, opening up the state to more farm settlements and improved commodity shipping to usher in an immigration boom.

1863

Immigrant Bernard Warkentin will scout land for fellow Mennonites coming to America. He builds a grist mill in Halstead and starts growing **Turkey red winter wheat** brought with him from **Ukraine**.



1872

The Baldwin brothers of Nickerson patent their **Gleaner self-propelled combine harvester**. Its compact design allowed the combine and header to fit onto the back of a truck, opening up a new era for custom harvesters.

1874

1917

Botanist H.F. Roberts releases K-State's first improved variety, **Kanred**. In 1919, 82% of Kansas wheat acres are planted to Turkey red. It will remain the top variety until 1939. Average wheat yield in the state is **13 bushels per acre**.

1923



The first farm bill, the **Agricultural Act of 1933**, is signed into law as part of the New Deal. Its programs reduced commodity surpluses and raised crop prices to reach "parity," or a fair exchange value, for farm products.

1933

1947

Elmer Henry and Karl Miller of Dodge City form the **Western Kansas Development Association**, with the Farm and Wheat Division for Kansas wheat growers. In 1951, the division changed its name to the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers. In western Kansas, Raymond Garvey harvests a U.S. record of **1 million bushels** of wheat.

1956

In Hutchinson, Farmers Commission Co. builds the half-mile-long **Elevator B**. Once the world's largest elevator, its hexagonal design provides a whopping **18.2 million-bushel capacity**. ADM now owns it.

1957



Kansas Legislature approves the **Kansas Wheat Act**, establishing the farmer-funded Kansas Wheat Commission. Today, the wheat assessment of 2 cents per bushel funds research, education, marketing and promotion efforts.

1966

The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, led by agronomist Norman Borlaug, continues the **Green Revolution** he began after World War II. His work in dwarf wheat varieties increased yields and improved rust resistance. Borlaug would receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.

1979



American Agriculture Movement organizes the **Tractorcade** on Washington, D.C., protesting crop prices and calling for parity in agriculture. Wheat was selling for \$2.50 to \$3 per bushel.

1983



Kansas hits a record average wheat yield of **41.5 bushels per acre**.

1994

K-State wheat breeder Rollin Sears releases **Jagger, a hard red winter wheat**, which became the leading variety in fields across Kansas and in 12 different countries. It can be found in the pedigrees of dozens of wheat varieties released by breeding programs.

2013



The **25 billionth bushel** of Kansas wheat is ceremoniously cut by Mike Brown on his farm near Colby. Kansas Wheat estimates that 25 billion bushels of wheat is equivalent to 1 trillion commercial loaves of bread.

2015



Darwin Ediger of Meade wins the Kansas Wheat Yield Contest with an average yield of **103.18 bushels per acre**. In 2016, Kansas marks a record state average of **57 bushels per acre**.

2022

FDA favorably concludes its evaluation of **Bioceres Crop Solutions Corp.'s HB4 Wheat**, a genetically modified variety that is drought-tolerant. While still not approved by USDA or commercially available in the U.S., it has been approved for production and consumption in **Argentina**.