

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agriculture discussion to kick off series of round tables on use of drones

Agriculture is the topic of the first in a series of discussions about the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) by public and private interest groups in Kansas. The working sessions will culminate at the Kansas UAS Summit in Wichita this fall.

The agriculture discussion is scheduled for 2 p.m. March 11 at the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) headquarters, 1320 Research Park Drive in Manhattan. Subsequent meetings will be hosted by the Kansas Department of Transportation's Aviation Division at various locations around the state.

"We continue to field inquiries about the use of UAS, or drones, in production agriculture," said Billy Brown, Agribusiness Development Coordinator for KDA. "Research efforts by KDA recognize that inherent obstacles exist, regulatory and otherwise, that are preventing further beneficial use of UAS in agricultural production systems," he said.

The discussion will focus on four areas:

- What are specific applications of UAS in production agriculture?
- What barriers exist preventing the use of UAS in production agriculture (technology, privacy, etc.)?
- What will the proposed Federal Aviation Administration regulations and policies allow and prohibit?
- In what ways can the state of Kansas assist in eliminating these barriers?

This meeting will focus solely on the use of UAS in the agriculture sector. Subsequent meetings, which will be scheduled later for spring and summer, will focus on:

- **Emergency management and law enforcement**, Hutchinson.
- **Research and survey**, Salina.
- **Small business interests**, Wichita
- **UAS policies and regulations**, Topeka.

“The full integration of unmanned aerial systems is expected to make Kansas a leading state for total economic impact and jobs,” said Jesse R. Romo, Director of Aviation at KDOT. “It’s prudent for us to be on the leading edge of this budding industry, to understand the needs of industry, and to try and figure out how we safely and efficiently get from here to there.”

The public is invited to listen to all the discussions provided by the roundtable participant invitees.

For the March 11 agriculture discussion, a conference call code is listed below for those who are unable to attend but wish to listen. For more information about the agriculture round table, contact Billy Brown, KDA Agribusiness Development Coordinator, by email at Billy.Brown@kda.ks.gov or phone (785-564-6752).

Conference Call Dial-in Number: (866) 620-7326

Conference Code: 9530108754

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