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Governor Brownback presented awards to farmers & ranchers at Water + Energy Progress Luncheon

*Nine Kansas farmers and ranchers were recognized for innovations in water conservation and energy efficiency in agriculture.*

Topeka, KS—Governor Brownback congratulated the 2013 Water + Energy Progress Award Winners at the Top of the Tower on February 27th. Producers from across the state were recognized as models of innovation for their water and energy saving practices which included using cover crops, no-till, intensive rotational grazing, solar pumping stations, wind farms, subsurface drip irrigation, irrigation scheduling and collaboration.

A new program of the Climate + Energy Project (CEP), Water + Energy Progress (WEP), starts a new conversation about the nexus of water and energy. Led by Program Director, Rachel Myslivy, Water + Energy Progress highlights homegrown solutions for water conservation and energy efficiency from the farmers and ranchers of Kansas.

In October of 2012, CEP convened a steering committee made of up water, energy, agriculture and natural resource leaders from across Kansas which collaboratively identified standards for innovations; saving water, saving energy, affordable, replicable and scalable. The steering committee then nominated exemplary producers from within their networks for Water + Energy Progress Awards.

The steering committee chose nine innovative producers who all agreed to be interviewed for case studies about their water and energy saving practices. Each case study is available at [www.WaterAndEnergyProgress.org](http://www.WaterAndEnergyProgress.org).

“Rather than another technical report, the WEP case studies provide insight not only to how the producers are innovating, but also why,” Dorothy Barnett, Executive Director of the Climate + Energy Project. “Sharing these stories will encourage further innovation and collaboration for homegrown solutions on the important issue of water conservation and energy efficiency across Kansas.”

In her opening remarks, USDA State Director Patricia Clark said, “progress is the key word. These producers are making progress every day and they are to be applauded.”

2013 Water + Energy Progress Award Winners include: Gail Fuller, Emporia; Ted Alexander, Sun City; Sheridan
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6 LEMA, Hoxie; Dale Strickler, Jamestown; Darrin Unruh, Pretty Prairie; Eldon Schmidt, Copeland; Wendell Nicholas, Johnson City; Richard Wenstrom, Kinsley; Pete Ferrell, Beaumont.

“These guys are heroes in my books,” Governor Brownback stated at the luncheon. “I applaud what they are doing. Kansans are practical, pragmatic people. In the future, we will have to produce more with less inputs, and that will take solutions that make pragmatic sense.” With water as a priority, the Governor has charged his administration to work with stakeholders to create a 50-year water plan.

Sponsors of the luncheon included Green Cover Seed, Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops, K-State Research and Extension, Kansas Natural Resources Council, Kansas Rural Center, Kansas Sierra Club, Kansas Water Office, the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, and Midwest Energy.

For more information about case studies or to make a nomination for the 2014 Water + Energy Progress Awards visit WaterAndEnergyProgress.org.

About The Climate + Energy Project

The Climate + Energy Project (CEP) is a non-partisan 501c(3) organization working to reduce emissions through greater energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. Located in America’s Heartland, CEP collaborates with diverse partners across the nation to find practical solutions for a clean energy future that provides jobs, prosperity and energy security.

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