

Grassland Oregon Blog

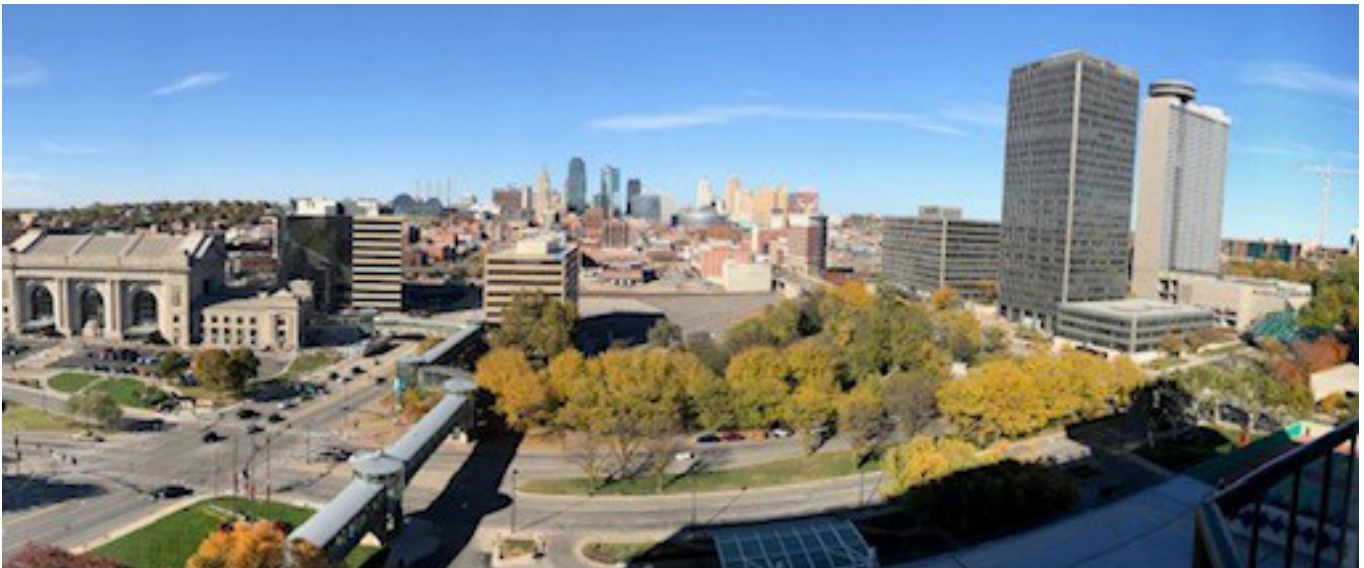
November 14, 2018

Our Communications Coordinator went to the WSA for the first time.
Read her blog to find out what she thought.

My First Western Seed Association Meeting

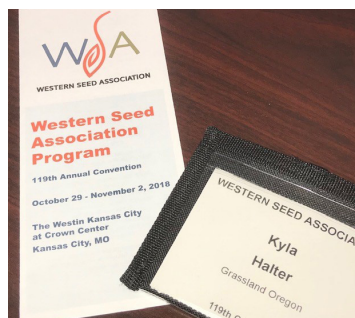
By Kyla Halter

Kansas City, Missouri, known for jazz, amazing barbeque and of course, the Western Seed Association annual meeting.



I've been with Grassland Oregon through seven WSA meetings. Each year I help prepare the team for a successful meeting and wave goodbye. I then stalk their social media feeds and follow the hashtags to see all that's going on. *How do our elevator wraps look? Are people enjoying our cocktail reception? Where are they eating? Oh man that BBQ looks amazing. What's the weather like? Is Jerry behaving himself? Did we ship enough wine?* All questions I ask myself as I continue to browse through event photos.

This year, I was fortunate enough to be able to go to Kansas City with our team and see for myself what the WSA is all about.



Our sales team has a very busy few days each year at the Western. It's not uncommon for them to be in meetings from 7am until 10pm. The main focus behind all our KC meetings is to make a personal connection with our customers. So much of the year's communications are done over the phone or via email, so it's great that our team can take this time and sit down face-to-face with our customers and talk. Over the course of the three days I was able to sit in on meetings with each of our sales staff. It was awesome to see how differently each one ran their meetings

Jerry, being the brains behind Grassland Oregon's research, really enjoys talking to his customers about what's new and upcoming from the GO research department. Risa, being head of marketing, spends time highlighting our marketing efforts from all around the US and helping our customers see what we are doing in their area to help drive sales. Duane, our turf guru, gets excited when talking our great turf products and what's still to come from our GO turf line. Don, who runs shorter, 30-minute meetings, gets right down to business and does a great job of showing his customers their buying trends and supplies them with his predictions for the future markets. Brent has a lot of great insights about our products from his hands-on experience working on our Richland Iowa research farm and his knowledge shines through when listening to him talk to his customers.

While the WSA is a busy time for the GO team, it's not all just business. Most of our sales team has been going to this annual meeting for more than 30 years, which means they've made a lot of friends and have a lot of stories to tell. While I tried my best to get our team talking about "the good ol' days" and all the things that went down, lips were pretty tightly sealed. It appears that what happens in Kansas City, stays in Kansas City.

The WSA receptions are a great way to wind down at the end of a long day of non-stop meetings. It's a great gathering of people and it was fun for me to put faces to so many of the names I've been hearing for so long. One thing I learned from wandering the receptions, walking around with Risa is darn near impossible. She knows EVERYONE. We couldn't make it more than three steps at a time without someone stopping her for a hug and a quick chat.

While I was excited to meet all our great customers and industry friends in Kansas City, I would be lying if I didn't say that I was equally as excited for the food. Year after year, our sales team would come back, a pant size bigger, with stories and photos of what seemed like it must have been a non-stop eating extravaganza. It was almost torture to listen to all the stories having never been to Kansas City myself. Now that my first year is in the books, let me tell you, Kansas City food did not disappoint! I had the world-famous KC BBQ at Country Road Ice House (serving Joe's BBQ) and the fried chicken that both Don and Duane rave about each year from Stroud's Restaurant. I tried the scallops that Risa and the CISCO team had been talking about for months (if not longer) at Room 39. I had an official Kansas City strip steak at 801 Chophouse, a bone-in filet mignon that was incredible from Capital Grille and I even tried a few new foods; rabbit ravioli, oysters and chicken liver. Oh, and I can't forget my new favorite

after dinner drink, the Fragile Baby. (Thanks to Missouri Southern & friends for this, I've had several since.) All the food was incredible, as you can see from the many food photos I took while I was there.



The hotel staff at the Westin Crown Center was fantastic. Rita made sure check in went smoothly, Glen was super helpful with all our many bags, boxes and grocery orders and Tall Paul was awesome. Never thought I'd get my photo taken with a Harlem Globetrotter.



As for the questions I've asked myself year after year, I was finally able to answer them.

How do our elevator wraps look? They looked AWESOME! As did our Gobo light and the napkins in the Brasserie. (A quick shout out to Scott at Speare Seed for your awesome tweet about our elevator wraps, you rock!)



Are people enjoying our cocktail reception? I think so. Everyone had a drink in their hand and a smile on their face, so I'd say they enjoyed it quite well.

Where are they eating? Oh man that BBQ looks amazing. They eat EVERYWHERE and the BBQ is amazing!

What's the weather like? The weather was perfect. Blue skies, decent temps and it didn't start to rain (or snow) until after we had left.

Is Jerry behaving himself? As well as can be expected.

Did we ship enough wine? Yes, there was definitely enough wine.



Overall, it was an amazing trip. Great food, great people and a ton of fun!

My takeaways from WSA 2018:

1. If you're new, always wear your name tag. Helps people to place you, "Oh! You're Kyla, I've talked to you on the phone. It's so nice to meet you!" Plus, it gets you into the reception where there are free drinks.

2. If someone offers you \$7 to drink a bowl of gravy while at Stroud's for dinner one night, always drink the gravy.



*Disclaimer- I did not actually drink the gravy but I never pass up a good photo opp. :-)

3. What happens in Kansas City, stays in Kansas City.

I would like to take a quick minute to say thank you to our customers and sales team who let me sit in on your meetings and to have a few minutes of your time. And a big thank you to Jerry, Risa and Don, who invited me to come and showed me just what the WSA is all about.

Thank you, Kansas City, I'm sure we'll meet again!