



Dean and director John Floros welcomes Alumni Fellow Dana Peterson to campus.

**Alumni Fellow Dana Peterson encourages students to be involved**

# *Advocate for Agriculture*

“Diversify your learning experience by getting to know students and faculty outside your chosen field and become involved in clubs and organizations,” Dana Peterson, 2013 Alumni Fellow for the College of Agriculture, shared that advice with students in the Introduction to Animal Science class on February 21.

Peterson also encouraged students to advocate for agriculture.

“There are about 300 million Americans and less than 2 percent are farmers and ranchers,” Peterson said. “The number of producers is down, but productivity has skyrocketed. We need to be able to talk about what we do.”

She spent the last three years as the chief executive officer for the National Association of Wheat Growers advocating before Congress and federal agencies on topics ranging from federal farm policy to environmental regulation, biotechnology, and transportation.

“I spent much of my time explaining the basics of agriculture and the issues involved with growing, selling, and transporting wheat, which accounts for 20 percent of calories consumed worldwide,” explained Peterson.

She said she was excited about a recent project involving the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance.

“The alliance brings people from all sectors of agriculture together to discuss how to communicate with one voice,” Peterson said. “Many not involved with agriculture are fearful of technology. They don’t understand the science and research involved and agriculture’s long history of caring for plants and animals.”

Before going to Washington, D.C., Peterson worked at Kansas Wheat for nine years and a short time at Kansas Farm Bureau, developing environmental programs. She also serves on the Dean and Director’s Advisory Council.

Peterson earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agricultural economics at K-State, while taking a broad range of classes. She also belonged to Block and Bridle, Collegiate Agri-Women, and was a member of the 1996 meats judging team.

“Traveling with the judging team gave me a broad perspective of agriculture in the Great Plains and

helped establish contacts that helped me in my career,” said Peterson.

She grew up on a farm near Smith Center, now run by two of her four brothers, and was active in 4-H and FFA.

Peterson said she found record-keeping for her 4-H projects came easy to her and influenced her choice to major in agricultural economics.

Peterson was on campus as the Alumni Fellow for the College of Agriculture. Each K-State college honors an alumna in February. While on campus, they share their experiences with students and faculty.

In addition to speaking to the animal science class taught by her former professor Dave Nichols, Peterson addressed Kevin Donnelly’s Introduction to Plant Science class.

She was scheduled to meet with agricultural economics students and several other classes, but February 20 classes were cancelled because of a major snowstorm. She hopes to reschedule class visits and continue sharing her passion for agriculture.