Thanks to the 2020 Kansas Ag Heroes!

Bob Morando, Farmer Direct Foods

In March, as schools and businesses were closing and people were preparing to go into quarantine, flour, amongst other pantry staples, became almost non-existent on store shelves. Despite a shortage of flour on the shelves, there was no shortage of wheat. In fact, Kansas farmers are really good at growing the high protein hard white wheat that goes into every bag of flour milled at Farmer Direct Foods in New Cambria. The bottleneck in the supply chain was the production lines used to package flour in smaller bags that you typically see on retail shelves. Just a few days into the COVID-19 pandemic, Bob Morando, CEO of Farmer Direct Foods, was getting calls from long-time customers asking what it would take to double production. In less than two weeks, Bob was able to bring back a few retired employees and hire and train a couple of Kansas State University milling science students. Soon, the mill was running two shifts, six days a week. Not only had they doubled production to meet retail demands, Farmer Direct Foods established an internship program with Kansas State University that Bob plans to maintain in the coming years. At Farmer Direct Foods, they're continuing to produce flour to stay ahead of the anticipated fall and holiday baking rush, and Kansas farmers are continuing to grow high protein wheat to be milled into flour in New Cambria—all performed essential functions during the pandemic and became real heroes of Kansas agriculture.