

# *Rural Papers*

Reporting with commentary  
on agricultural and rural issues



No. 266

Fall 2017

## Register Now for Kansas Rural Center's 2017 Farm & Food Conference

Registration for the Kansas Rural Center's Annual Farm and Food Conference is now open. The conference will be held November 17 and 18, 2017, at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel, 530 Richards Drive, Manhattan, Kansas, and promises to have something for a broad spectrum of attendees - from conventional and organic farmers, to beginning and established farmers, conservationists and environmentalists, and local food advocates and community leaders.

This year's theme, "Driving the Change that Matters: Practical and Political Solutions to our Farm and

Food Future" will highlight how biological, human and economic diversity builds resilience, and how we can increase diversity on our farms, in our communities, and in our part of the world.

The keynote presenter on day one of the two-day conference is Denise O'Brien, Women Food and Agriculture Network founder and longtime Iowa farm activist. As a farmer, O'Brien has worked on state, national and international agriculture and conservation policy and written and spoken across the U.S. on women in agriculture, organic and sustainable

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# Rural Papers

Published four times a year  
by the  
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Reprints of articles are encouraged with acknowledgement of Rural Papers and the author.

Rural Papers is the voice of the Kansas Rural Center, Inc. (KRC), a non-profit organization that promotes the long-term health of the land and its people through research, education, and advocacy. KRC cultivates grassroots support for public policies that encourage family farming and stewardship of soil and water. KRC is committed to economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially sustainable rural culture. KRC is funded by private foundations, churches, and individual contributions.

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# Small Farmer Commentary

## Network and Self-educate: Opportunities at KRC's Fall Conference

By Mary Fund

*"Secure a support network" and "Self-educate all you can!" That was the advice South Dakota organic farmer Will Ortman gave transitioning organic farmers at a recent workshop in northeast Kansas. (See article page 6.)*

*This is good advice for all of us in any of our endeavors and good reason to attend KRC's fall conference November 17-18 in Manhattan, Ks. Providing a support network and self-education is what our conference is all about!*

*The last few years and especially last year, conference attendees stopped me over and over again to thank KRC for holding the conference and tell me how great it was to be amongst friends and a community of like-minded folks. "Now," many would say, "If we could only replicate this energy, this willingness to listen and share new ideas closer to home!"*

*If you look at the agenda for 2017, you will find the practical how-to workshops (like the SARE funded farmer research projects/demos) vital for your farm or ranch, value added business, or your local/regional food group. But this year we have also tried to address the communication gap many are feeling, and to give you strategies to take home.*

*Identifying common values is a critical part of overcoming differences in our families, with our neighbors and friends, and within our communities. Whether we are talking with family about what to do with the family farm, or with friends and neighbors about starting a farmers market or local food or wellness group, or find ourselves in a debate about small government vs. large government, or complicated issues of economic inequality and race, we have to learn how to talk to each other—and maybe more importantly, how to listen.*

*You will notice a heavy emphasis on diversity this year. Many farmers and ranchers have realized that multispecies diversity is critical to soil health and ecological health. Now we must learn the benefits of multi-cultural ethnic and racial diversity in our human communities.*

*To that end, we will hold a panel representing some of the diversity in Kansas' food and farming system. We will learn who makes up much of the work force in southwest Kansas' meat processing plants, and dairy and hog farms. The role of refugees and immigrants as agricultural labor is largely invisible to most*

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*continued from page 2*

*people. But times are changing as more people become aware of how our food is grown, by whom, and how it is processed. Access to land is difficult for beginning farmers, but how about access and discrimination issues for long time Black farmers? And what about new refugees from other countries who have long-held ties to food production and seek to replicate that here?*

*The conference will also include a workshop on “When Tyson Comes to Town” that will explain more about how the industrial model of agriculture is built largely on exploiting labor and communities, including farmers. It is ironic that the very same model of agriculture that depopulated much of the countryside, now finds that the rural communities who might welcome them for the jobs and people they would bring back, do not have a tax base or infrastructure to support the processing plants. So the industry moves closer to where the population and money are, or tries to. (See related article on page 4.)*

*It is never enough, though, just to point out problems. So another conference workshop will focus on a dialogue on the challenges and needs of smaller meat producers and processors to build the infrastructure to offer an alternative to the industrial model. Other workshops will highlight what is going on across the state with local food groups, and others will look at what opportunities specialty crop production offers.*

*To know where we are going we need to know where we’ve been. NSAC’s Ferd Hoefner will provide insight into the history of a sustainable agriculture and food system, and into our future. Denise O’Brien will help us understand what one person can do—and how much more we can do together.*

*Secure a support network and self-educate as much as you can. Good advice, indeed. KRC can help you do this! Hope to see you in November.*

### Farmers Eager to Learn About Organic Transition

By Mary Fund

About eighty farmers attended the “Farmstarts” Workshop for beginning or transitioning organic farmers or want to be organic farmers at the Klinfelter Barn Conference Center near Hiawatha in north-east Kansas on August 30. The day-long workshop featured speakers – mostly experienced organic farmers—on “why organic and what is organic? They also covered organic soil fertility, crop rotations, weed control, soil health, organic certification basics, and marketing.

The workshop was organized by Kansas Organic Producers and the National Farmers Organization (NFO) under a USDA Beginning Farmer/Rancher Grant to NFO to host similar workshops throughout the Midwest and Central Plains. An earlier workshop had been held in Hays, Ks. last spring.

The audience, which came from across the state and some from Nebraska and Missouri, was largely farmers who had been farming less than ten years, but in-

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*Jack Geiger talks to beginning and transitioning farmers at Organic Transitions workshop near Hiawatha, Kansas*

## Next It May Be You: Tyson Poultry Complex in Kansas on Hold but Not Gone

By Mary Fund

On the day after Labor Day (Sept. 5) Tyson Foods Inc. announced its plans to build a \$320 million poultry complex near Tonganoxie, Ks. in Leavenworth County, northeast Kansas. The plant, which would be located adjacent to the highly populated urban area surrounding Kansas City, proposed to process 1.25 million chickens per week, and hire as many as 1600 employees.

It would furthermore bring contract poultry production to an area where there was none before. To serve the plant, an estimated 300 to 400 poultry barns would be built within a 40 to 50 mile radius. A feed mill would be built as part of the complex to provide those farmers with feed. Grain farmers in the area would enjoy a small premium to supply the feed mill. Everybody wins, right?

Wrong.

Within two weeks, the deal was on hold as outraged grassroots citizen opposition gained steam as they learned more about the proposed plant, the way Tyson and other poultry companies do business, and the way it would change their community and the surrounding counties. Unanswered questions about waste-

water and other infrastructure demands, impact on water quality, and the collateral damage or demands that would be placed on the community raised red flags. Officials working with Tyson had signed non-disclosure agreements, which meant hardly anyone local knew about the plans in the making. This behind closed doors negotiations with their quality of life spurred even the most conservative residents to protest.

While Leavenworth County and area citizens may feel they won the battle, no one should get too comfortable. The plant at Tonganoxie is on hold, but Tyson expressed in its open Letter to Tonganoxie in mid-September that it is still interested in Leavenworth County and other Kansas communities, as well as other states. On September 29, the Kansas Department of Agriculture announced that at least 32 Kansas communities have expressed interest in hosting the plant. The plant appears to be still in play.

But KRC, and others who have been studying the impacts of these plants around the country, cautions communities and counties to learn as much as they can

about Tyson and other poultry plants and contract poultry production before they make their decisions.

Researchers like Dr. Don Stull, professor Emeritus from the University of Kansas who has studied the poultry industry's impact on farmers, processing workers, and communities for thirty years, writes about how the broiler belt of the south and southeast has been saturated with chickens. Concerns over the industry's treatment of growers and workers, and the environmental issues related to manure and dead birds, water contamination and air pollution have steadily mounted. So poultry companies began moving to new territory—like Nebraska, Iowa – and now Kansas. As the old saying goes, “Be careful what you ask for, as you just might get it and more.”

The fate of Leavenworth County is not clear. The County Commissioner vote rescinding the industrial bonds to Tyson could also change. The vote to rescind was 2 to 1, with Commissioner Clyde Graeber announcing his decision to retire citing health reasons, leaving a swing vote open.

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# Sustainable Food and Farming News

*Tyson Poultry, continued from page 4*

Leavenworth County Republican Party officials will vote on his replacement on October 5.

Leavenworth and surrounding county citizens, who felt blind sided by the announcement, deserve credit for their swift and strong reaction. They quickly organized to come out against the plant in numbers not seen in opposition to such plants in other areas of the country. As intended in a democracy, people called their county officials to task for the secrecy of their discussions with Tyson.

At a special county commission meeting and other public forums, people voiced concerns about the waste and wastewater from the plant, increased traffic on their roads, what the influx of workers and families would do to the local schools, where would they live, and the pollution potential from the new poultry farms. More than 2000 people filled a city park on Friday evening September 15 at a public forum called by the area's state legislators.

By the end of the evening, after listening to residents voice their concerns and questions, the legislators had changed their neutral stance to opposition. The following Monday, Leavenworth Coun-

ty Commissioners rescinded their earlier resolution authorizing nearly \$500 million in industrial revenue bonds for the project in a 2 to 1 vote. Tyson's open letter to Tonganoxie and the county put the project on hold followed by the next day.

News stories out of Nebraska and industry media refer to this as a "mis-step" or "fumble" by Kansas. Their loss is our gain, seemed to be the reaction. But how is asking the right questions about how this impacts your community a mis-step?

Questions about the environmental impact, and the influx of people to schools and housing and roads deserve answers, and involvement of the people most impacted .

But the questions go far beyond infrastructure and the environment. While it sounds like a case of "Not In My Backyard" sentiment, it is really part of a bigger question about what kind of agriculture and food system we want and need. "Next It Might be You" is a more accurate statement.

The industrial chicken model is the height of the prevalent concentration, vertical integration, and contract branding system that turns farmers into serfs on their own farms and leads to high turnover of workers in an indus-

try not known for taking care of its workers. There is no protection for contract poultry producers who sign on eagerly and often leave the industry broken. Promises of jobs and individual farmer opportunities are seductive to communities, but the track record for workers and farmers --and the headaches given to communities—all too often do not meet the dream. Communities and farmers who think hosting a poultry plant on this scale is a great move for the future, should be sure to learn all they can from other communities and farmers who have already lived the "dream".

KRC has used the following questions since its inception. Of any suggested technology, industry recommendation, or policy question we must ask: Who pays? Who benefits? and what are the untold or uncounted costs?

There was no mis-step or fumble in Leavenworth County and northeast Kansas – just smart citizens asking the right questions. Building an alternative food and farming system is part of the answer.

***Please note the resources available to learn more about contract poultry production in this issue on pages 18-19.***

# Sustainable Food and Farming News

*Organic Transitions, continued from page 3*

cluded some older farmers interested in transitioning to organic. Attendees included some father-son teams, as well as some young women farmers taking over the family farm, and ranged from grain and livestock farmers and grass farmers, to specialty crop farmers.

Many were drawn due to low conventional commodity crop prices for grain and the lure of organic price premiums. Others were interested in adopting more ecologically based farming practices and building soil health. Some liked the idea of selling food as opposed to commodities and liked the idea of no chemical pesticides or herbicides used.

Will Ortman, who raises organic grain, beef cattle, poultry and berries near Marion, South Dakota, told three stories as to why he got into organic farming. He started selling organic grass fed beef to local grocery stores and also directly off the farm. He received a call from a woman he knew, who wanted to buy some beef. Knowing that she and her husband raise beef, he asked, “Why don’t you butcher one of your own?”



*Will Ortman addresses the farmers at Organic Transitions Workshop*

The answer was “Because we eat organic and we don’t want to eat our own as we feed GMO grain.”

A second story was similar from a crop consultant friend, who noted that one of his client’s conventional wheat fields was showing some signs of chemical damage (from his own application). But one corner of

the field looked really good. That patch, he was told, was the wheat harvested for the wife’s bread baking and for family consumption. He did not spray it. Ortman thought, “How can we sell things we don’t want or let our own families eat?”

The final epiphany came in 2004 while sitting in line at the grain elevator to unload some of his bumper crop, and he realized the price was \$1.46/bushel. Even with a bumper crop, his family’s farm would not survive at that price. Top yields don’t matter if the price is not profitable.

Ortman, who now farms 600 to 700 acres with his brother, knew that with high land prices, expansion was not an option. So they gradually converted to organic practices and added crops and diversity of enterprises. They raise corn, soybeans, alfalfa, Black Turtle Beans, grassfed beef, poultry and eggs, and started a strawberry and raspberry enterprise.

The Ortman’s do not follow a strict crop rotation but plant according to weed pressures in particular fields. They use cultivation judiciously, but also have three or four different kinds of cultivators. Depending on field conditions. They also use a flame weeder on occasion, and hire hand roguing if needed. This is still cheaper per acre he claims, than most chemical herbicides. The premium he gets for his certified organic grain also helps cover the cost of hiring labor.

For a successful transition to organic, Ortman said you must understand and adopt a new mindset. While conventional agriculture is driven by agribusiness and corporations, which takes away your decision-making freedom, organic is driven by the consumer. Conventional agriculture says, “This is what there is”. In organic, consumers say “this is what I want.”

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# KRC Sustainable Farm & Food Conference

*Registration for KRC Conference Open, cont. from page 1*

farming and local food systems. She organized the Women's Task Force of the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition, directed the Rural Women's Leadership Development Project of PrairieFire Rural Action, Inc., and served as president of the National Family Farm Coalition. In 2012, O'Brien spent a year as a USDA agriculture adviser in Afghanistan. Her presentation "What Can One Person Do? The Perspective of a Long-Time Activist" will cover the power of grassroots engagement and "putting yourself in the drivers seat to make the change that matters."

Ferd Hoefner, Senior Strategic Advisor for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), will be the keynote speaker on day two. Hoefner has been NSAC's senior representative in D.C. since 1988. Today he serves in a mentoring and advising role. NSAC is the leading voice for sustainable agriculture in the federal policy arena, representing over 100 grassroots farm, food, conservation, and rural organizations from all over the country to advocate for federal policies supporting the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities.

Hoefner will speak on "The Past, Present, and Future of Sustainable Agriculture" providing an overview of farm policy, on the ground successes, grassroots efforts to create and change policy, and the work yet to be done to ensure a sustainable food and farming future. "No one knows the ins and outs, the history of farm policy better than Ferd. And to know where you need to go, you need to know where you've been," states Mary Fund, KRC Executive Director. "At a time when most of what comes out of Washington, D.C. is depressing or frustrating, NSAC continues to slog away at building a better food and farming system."

On Friday, Pastor Adrion Roberson, faculty at the Kansas Leadership Center, and co-pastor of Berean Community Church in Kansas City, will also address the conference with comments on "Recognizing the Adaptive Challenges of Defining Our Purpose, our values, our vision for the sake of our future." Division, conflict and disagreement seem common everywhere as we find ourselves with ever more complex problems to solve. Within our communities, at

work, and even within our families and among friends and neighbors, we face more uncertainty of finding common purpose and common solutions. How do we identify common values and a vision for our collective future? How do we communicate that to each other? Pastor Roberson will also facilitate a 90 minute workshop doing a deeper dive into how we start conversations, engage each other and move forward on difficult issues?

On Day two, an afternoon panel on "Diversity in Kansas: The People and Cultures of Food and Farming", will discuss the roles and challenges of diversity in people, culture and ideas at work in Kansas. Just as we've learned that multi-species diversity benefits ecological health, we now need to understand the benefits of multi-cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity in our communities, state, and country. Panelists will come from Southwest Kansas (home to a multitude of nationalities and immigrants), the New Roots for Refugees Program in Kansas City, and the Kansas Black Farmers Association.

Each day will also include 12 to 15 breakout sessions including practical production and marketing information, conservation practices and management, farmer presentations on SARE demonstration projects, the 2018 farm bill, and informative sessions on state policy, community organizing efforts in Kansas, and more.

"Each year conference participants claim that the primary benefit of the conference is the people they meet," states Fund. "The networking and the energy is always incredible. We encourage you to come not just for the how-to info you'll gain, but for your annual dose of hope and inspiration!"

Cost to attend the conference is \$70 per day or \$135 for both days. This includes access to all presenters, lunch and snacks both days, and a Friday evening social hour. Both days will include a lunch from locally-sourced ingredients and will offer conference attendees time for networking and visiting exhibitor booths in order to connect with and learn more about the great people and exciting things happening in farming, food production, and the environment, in Kansas and beyond.

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# KRC Sustainable Farm & Food Conference

## Agenda Friday, November 17, Day 1

- 8:00 am** Registration Opens, Light Breakfast
- 9:00 am** Welcome and Introduction, Mary Fund, Executive Director
- 9:10 am** Keynote: “What Can One Person Do? The Perspective of a Long-time Activist” Denise O’Brien, Iowa farm and community activist, founder of the Women Food and Agriculture Network, and chair of the Pesticide Action Network.
- 10:15 am** Networking, Exhibits Open

Breakout Sessions	Room I - Farmer to Farmer Forum	Room II/III - Future Farmers - Beginning Farmers - Family Transitions	Room IV - Farm Practices & Marketing for Diversification	Room V - Conservation on the Farm & Ranch; Building Diversity	Ballroom - Advocacy & Organizing: Policy & Community Food Solutions
10:30 am	Creating a Depository of Local Honey Bee Strains/Sustainable Beekeeping - Leo Sharskin, Drury, MO	Promoting Farmers Markets in Kansas - Janelle Dobbins & Lexi Wright, From the Land of Kansas; Farmers Markets of Kaw Valley Representatives	The Future of Organic: An Overview of the Status of Organic Practices and Certification - Jack Geiger, Jackie Keller, Ed Reznicek	Building Resilience from the Ground Up: Conservation Practices and Cover Crops in Specialty Crop Production - Jim French, Tom Buller	A Dialogue of Opportunities & Future Vision for Small Meat Farmers in Kansas - Natalie Fullerton, Schenker Family Farms; Dale Family Farms, KDA

- Noon** Lunch featuring locally produced and sourced food
- 12:30 pm** Introducing Fred Iutzi, The Land Institute
- 1:00 pm** Plenary Session: “Recognizing the Adaptive Challenges of Defining Our Purpose, our values, our vision for the sake of our future”- Pastor Adrion Roberson, Faculty at the Kansas Leadership Center and co-pastor of Berean Community Church in Kansas City. Pastor Roberson will provide a discussion on how to communicate values and vision to those we do not agree with.
- 2:00 pm** Break, Networking, Exhibits Open

2:15 pm	Economics of Grazing and Haying Cover Crops - Josh Roe  Diversifying/Intensifying Crop Rotations in Semiarid Environments - Strahinja Stepanovic	Defining Our Purpose, Values and Vision for the Sake of our Future - A Practical Application - Pastor Roberson	Adding Diversity on the Farm: Transitions to Specialty Crops or Other Enterprises - Jack Geiger, Paula Sims, Scott Thellman	Challenges of Addressing Spray Drift in Kansas - A Look at the KS Pesticide & Noxious Weed Law - Zack Pistora, Paul Johnson, Denise O’Brien	Southwest Kansas: A Panel on the Region’s Agriculture, People and Food - Bertha Mendoza, Jonathan Aguilar, Charity Horinek
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- 3:45 pm** Break, Networking, Exhibits Open

4:00 pm	Economics of Organic No-till Sweet Potatoes - Tom Buller  How to Write a Successful Farmer/Rancher SARE Proposal - Kerri Ebert	So You Think You Want to Farm? Farming with Limited Resources. Jackie Keller, Ed Reznicek, Hank Will; Financial planning - Duane Hund	Specialty Crop Opportunities in Kansas - Lexi Wright, KDA, Kellen Liebsch, KDA Economist, Cary Rivard, KSRE	Conservation Biological Control/Attracting Beneficial Insects to Your Farm - Jennifer Hopwood	Local Food Councils in Kansas: Addressing Food & Health Equity in Our Communities - Missy Lechner, Statewide Food Council Policy Representatives
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- 5:30 to 7:00 pm** Social - Network with old and new friends over appetizers and a Kansas beer, wine or cocktail. Dinner on your own.



# KRC Sustainable Farm & Food Conference

## Agenda Saturday, November 18, Day 2

- 8:00 am** Registration Opens, Light Breakfast
- 9:00 am** Welcome and Introduction, Mary Fund, Executive Director
- 9:10 am** “The Past, Present, and Future of Sustainable Agriculture”- Ferd Hoefner, Senior Policy Advisor, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. Ferd will provide an overview of farm policy, on the ground successes, and work yet to be done to ensure a sustainable food and farming future.
- 10:15 am** Networking, Exhibits Open

Breakout Sessions	Room I - Farmer to Farmer Forum	Room II/III - Future Farmers - Beginning Farmers - Family Transitions	Room IV - Farm Practices & Marketing for Diversification	Room V - Conservation on the Farm & Ranch; Building Diversity	Ballroom - Advocacy & Organizing: Policy & Community Food Solutions
<b>10:30 am</b>	<b>Climate, Health, and Resilience: Connections and Conversations</b> - Rachel Myslivy, Dorothy Barnett	<b>Share Your Story and Shape Policy: 2018 Farm Bill</b> - Jim French, Anna Johnson	<b>When Tyson comes to Town</b> - Panelists: Don Stull, author; Terry Spence, Socially Responsible Agriculture Project (SRAP)	<b>Increasing Biodiversity, Carbon and Forest Products in Your Woodlands</b> - Bob Atchison, John DuPlissis	<b>Local food procurement in Kansas: Updates and Future Vision</b> - Tina Khan, Rebecca McMahon, Rachael McGinnis-Millsap
<b>Noon</b>	<b>Lunch featuring locally produced and sourced food</b>				
<b>12:30 pm</b>	<b>JohnElla Holmes, Kansas Black Farmers Association; Recognition of Gil Alexander 1957 - 2017</b>				
<b>1:00 pm</b>	<b>Panel on Diversity - “Diversity in Kansas: The People and Cultures of Food and Farming” Panelists: Bertha Mendoza, KSRE, Vladimir Mitton, Manager, New Roots for Refugees, Cultivate KC, and Johnella Holmes, Black Farmer’s Association</b>				
<b>2:00 pm</b>	<b>Break, Networking, Exhibits Open</b>				
<b>2:15 pm</b>	<b>Portable Grazing System for Goats on Invasive Weeds and Brush</b> - Jody Holthaus <b>Exploration of a Mobile Meat Marketing Unit</b> - Rosanna Bauman	<b>Communicating Before It’s Too Late - Smoothing Transitions in Your Family and Farm Partnerships</b> - Forrest Buehler, Char Hinton, Charlie Griffin	<b>How Agroecological Farming Practices Can Help Improve Crop Production and Grazing Systems and Create a More Resilient Future</b> - Dr. Marcia DeLonge, Union of Concerned Scientists	<b>Soil Health - Carbonomics:</b> - Keith Burns, Green Cover Seed	<b>2018 Kansas WEALTH (Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation and Health) Policy Preview</b> - Zack Pistora, Paul Johnson, Dorothy Barnett, Rachel Myslivy
<b>3:45 pm</b>	<b>Closing Remarks; Return Evaluations</b>				
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>Conference Ends</b>				

Please note that the agenda may change slightly between now and the conference. We will post updates on the KRC website: [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).

Hotel rooms at Four points by Sheraton available at a discounted rate of \$99 for conference participants, the same hotel as the conference. To reserve a room call (888) 627-8649. Request the group rate for “Kansas Rural Center Farm and Food Conference.”

# KRC Sustainable Farm & Food Conference

KRC 2017 Farm and Food Conference  
November 17 - 18, 2017



Registration Form - Deadline Monday, November 13, 2017

Thank you for your interest in attending our conference.  
Full conference information and online registration is at: <https://kansasruralcenter.org/>

Please select which days you plan to attend:

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$70 Friday, November 17  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$70 Saturday, November 18  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$135 Both Days/Friday, November 17 and Saturday, November 18  
\_\_\_\_\_ Total Payment Enclosed

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed check payable to KRC.      Send check to: Kansas Rural Center, 4021 SW 10th Street, #337,  
Topeka, KS 66604

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Company or organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any dietary restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

**No refunds after November 6.**

*Conference Registration, continued from page 7*

Sponsors for the 2017 Conference include: Mother Earth News; The Land Institute; Kansas SARE and Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops; Westar; SAVE (Servicemember Agricultural Vocation Education Corp); Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club; Kansas Forest Service; Kansas Department of Agriculture; Center for Rural Affairs; Eastern Kansas Chapter of Organic Crop Improvement Association; Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams; Kansas Natural Resource Council; Kansas Permaculture Institute; The Merc Co-op; Green Cover Seeds; Kansas Farmers Union; Kansas Organic Producers; Kansas Wildlife Federation; No Till on the Plains; The Nature Conservancy; League of Women Voters; Cromwell Environmental; Kansas Association of Conservation Districts; Blue River Organic Seed; and Climate + Energy Project.

Register online at [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org) or use the printed form above. A limited number of scholarships are available to students and beginning farmers. Call 866-579-5469 Extension 701 or email [info@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:info@kansasruralcenter.org) to learn how to apply.

## Busy Bee Farms Provides Tomatoes to Southwest Kansas

By Charity Horinek

*Part one of a three-part series, highlighting successful specialty crop growers in Southwest Kansas.*

“Busy as a bee” is an idiom come to life in Kismet, Kansas, where Danny and Suzan Nelson and their family have successfully grown and sold tomatoes and other produce under their Busy Bee Farms, LLC, banner for the past 11 years.

The name of their enterprise comes from two sources, said Suzan Nelson – the bumblebees they use to pollinate their tomato crops, and the many helping hands of grandchildren they employ to run their business.

“If you don’t use bees, you have to go around and vibrate each plant to pollinate. But one bee can pollinate 300 flowers,” Nelson explained, adding with a laugh, “And all of our grandkids within a 60-mile radius get put to work as well. They are our little busy bees!”

Busy Bee Farms uses bumblebees instead of honeybees, because they are much better pollinators. The bees live in the greenhouses, and because they use only worker bees, the Nelsons replace the bees every two months.

“The bees work pretty steadily from 10 to 2 each day pollinating

the tomatoes. They don’t really bother anyone, but we have learned to stay away from their boxes,” Nelson said. “There are always a few bees guarding them that get aggressive if we come near.”

Nelson said she had raised pond plants for years, and people kept telling her she needed to sell them. After she and her husband noticed how many people were buying tomatoes at a farmer’s market in Wichita, they decided to grow both her pond plants and a crop of tomatoes. They found two 30-by-120-foot greenhouses at a farm auction, and a business was born.

“The standard advice is always to have a market before starting a business,” she said. “We did the opposite, because we were able to find the greenhouses so cheap.”

Though they have room for 1,700 tomato plants, they currently raise 1,500 at a time and have a section of the greenhouse dedicated to Nelson’s other plants. The tomatoes are grown in the hair from coconut husks, along with a drip system that in spite of its hydroponic label, uses less water than other traditional growing methods.

“It has taken us a long time to build the business,” she said. “For the first year and a half, it was a

struggle going out to get them sold. People had a bad taste for hothouse tomatoes.”

But the Nelsons persisted, knowing the variety they had chosen, Geronimo, had a soft skin and was very flavorful. Soon, customers agreed, and now they sell out of their crop year-round. In addition to being regulars at the Farmer’s Markets in Liberal, Kansas, and Amarillo, Texas, Busy Bee Farms supplies tomatoes to small local grocers in places like Hooker, Oklahoma, and Sublette, Kansas.



*Busy Bee Farm at their stand at the farmers market*

The produce manager at Venture Foods in Sublette, Clarita Giesick, said the tomatoes are popular in her store and she likes having fresh, regionally sourced produce. “Our customers really love Busy Bee tomatoes,” Giesick said. “On oc-  
*continued on page 12*

# Sustainable Food and Farming News

*Busy Bee Farms, continued from page 11*

casian, if tomatoes are not producing and so not available to us, our customers are disappointed, but understanding! We are grateful to Danny and Suzan Nelson for their dedication and hard work.”

Of their 23 grandchildren, about half live close enough to be “put to work,” as Nelson terms it. “They learn so much. How to count back change, set up, create displays, pick and sort vegetables, customer service – we really teach them the whole process,” she said. The grandkids who serve as worker bees range in age from 17 down to three.



*Danny Nelson planting with grandkids.*

In addition to farmer’s markets and small grocers in the area, Busy Bee also provides tomatoes to Billy’s barbecue restaurant in Liberal, and open their farm to face-to-face sales every Wednesday from 1-5 p.m. during the summer.

Future plans include marketing more bedding plants online, but the Nelsons don’t plan any expansions.

Already, Danny Nelson has to hire additional help, and Suzan holds down

## **Groups Deliver Farm Bill Recommendations on Conservation Programs**

Conservation, agriculture, and wildlife organizations recently delivered a comprehensive list of recommendations for the conservation provisions of the upcoming 2018 Farm Bill. National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) joined 25 other signatories in asking legislators to strengthen the next farm bill’s Conservation Title by improving and increasing funding for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs that help producers maintain and advance the health of their crops, soil, and water.

*continued in next column*

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*Busy Bee Farms, continued*

a full-time job in addition to her Busy Bee Farms work.



*Suzan Nelson and granddaughter.*

“We’re at the size we want to be, and plan to continue as long as we enjoy it!” she said.

Busy Bee Farms LLC has a Facebook page, and can also be reached at (620) 482-1306.

*Charity Horinek of Sublette, Kansas, is working on KRC’s Feeding Southwest Kansas Food Assessment. Telling the stories of specialty crop producers and local food businesses in the region is part of the research for the report.*

*Farm Bill Recommendations, cont.*

While Congress has acknowledged the importance of conservation in every farm bill over the past 30 years, major challenges remain including increasingly frequent and severe drought and flooding, ongoing water quality impairment issues, and soil and habitat loss. At the top of the list was a call for an increase in Conservation Title funding to address critical on-the-ground has acknowledged the importance of conservation, major challenges remain including increasingly frequent and severe drought and flooding, ongoing water quality impairment issues, and soil and habitat loss. In the 2014 Farm Bill, Congress switched directions and cut the Conservation Title by \$4 billion over ten years. Since the 2014 Farm Bill passed, Congress has continued to raid conservation programs. Thus the importance of the call to increase funding.

The recommendations also provide programmatic and funding recommendations for key conservation programs, including working lands programs like the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), as well as land protection programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). For more details go to [http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/conservation-consensus/?utm\\_source=roundup&utm\\_medium=email](http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/conservation-consensus/?utm_source=roundup&utm_medium=email).

*From the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, September 28, 2017.*

## Leavenworth Vegetable Farmer Supports Production with Healthy Soils and Cover Crops

By Jim French

Paul Conway has grown vegetables for market on seven acres of land west of Leavenworth since 1996. He markets vegetables through the Leavenworth Farmers Market, and runs a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) service on the farm. He also produces for the Rolling Prairie Farmers Alliance CSA at the Roland Park Community Center distribution point. From the beginning, he knew that planting vegetables alone would only lead to problems and restrict his goal to farm organically and build a healthy soil. After an initial plow down of the clay-based soil, he has rotated vegetable production with both perennial and annual cover crops with only light tillage as needed.

For Conway, cover crops were the tool that would allow the soil to rebuild both nutrients and organic matter after the depleting impact of vegetables. He also observed that “cover crops in rotation help control diseases and suppress weeds.” Conway employs a strip method of production. Out of the seven acres only two acres is annually producing vegetables. The producing acres are in strips alternating with perennial strips. The perennial strips will either be in alfalfa, which a neighbor hays in exchange for manure from his horse barn, or in strips of a perennial grass and clover mix like fescue and red clover.

Conway stated that while alfalfa has been a useful crop, it does have the

disadvantages of “not being easy to kill, and not suppressing Johnson grass which is a major pest on these acres.”

### Intervals between crops

In the beginning, Conway said he knew he had to start somewhere in developing a system using vegetables and covers, and “with experience I would learn to better manage the system.”

Generally, the alfalfa or grass mix stays in 3 years followed by 3 years of vegetable/annual cover crop rotations before returning to a perennial. The strips are generally twenty-four to thirty-two feet wide. In addition to building soil and suppressing weeds, the grass mix strips also provide additional benefits of reducing compaction while providing a place to drive small vehicles, and eliminating erosion.

Horse manure is applied after planting to keep it on top of the strips. Conway spreads a light application in the fall and winter. He said, “I only use manure on the off-season cover crops and perennials. This eliminates the potential for pollution and contamination.”

“While I look for opportunities to double-crop vegetables, I never let any strip go without a cover or live roots for any extended period. Since, I farm organically, I must till at times, so coming in with a crop or cover crop is essential for maintain-

ing a healthy soil,” observed Conway.

The Cover Crop varieties Conway constantly experiments with different varieties of cool and warm season grasses and legumes, but mostly to fine tune what will work best on his own fields. As he stated in a presentation at the Great Plains Growers Conference in 2015, “One size does not fit all – be prepared to manage different fields differently” ([http://www.greatplainsgrowersconference.org/uploads/2/9/1/4/29140369/conway\\_p\\_-\\_tying\\_it\\_all\\_together\\_building\\_healthy\\_soil\\_and\\_profits\\_with\\_cover\\_crops.pdf](http://www.greatplainsgrowersconference.org/uploads/2/9/1/4/29140369/conway_p_-_tying_it_all_together_building_healthy_soil_and_profits_with_cover_crops.pdf)).

With that rule of thumb in mind, Conway has some cover crops that he likes to work with. For the warm season, he likes sorghum-sudan and pearl millet for the biomass they produce, and they work well when mixed with cowpea varieties like Iron and Clay, and Red Ripper. However, he recommends that the mix not contain more than 25% of the summer grass in order that it not outcompete the legume.

For early spring plantings of cover crops, Conway will often choose to

*continued on page 14*



# Sustainable Food and Farming News

*Leavenworth Farmer, continued from page 13*

mix cool season grasses like oats, annual ryegrass, and buckwheat with legumes. The legumes he works with include chickling vetch, spring forage peas, and Lana Woolypod vetch either alone or mixed with oats. Conway stated that “for sheer biomass, nothing beats a forage pea/oat mix.” He also observed that the buckwheat did well to suppress early spring weeds, and it also slowed down the growth of Johnson grass.

While the spring and summer plantings are most often worked in with vegetable production, it is the late summer and fall planted cover crops that will set the stage for the next year’s cash crops. One sequence he described moved from a planting of cowpeas and oats in August, followed by an overseeding of cereal rye in November followed by bean, cabbage, and potatoes the following spring. Conway has also mixed legumes like common and hairy vetch and Austrian Winter Peas, and tillage radishes with the winter grasses.



*Paul Conway, at his market stand.*

Another late summer practice that Conway uses is planting cool season covers like oats and brassicas between September 1 to 15. These crops will develop good fall growth but will freeze out during the winter. He then can overseed with rye, which will cover the ground until terminated in the spring.

## **The Larger Perspective**

Paul Conway admits that his system has taken time to develop and that each grower should start where they are at and make gradual steps to develop what will work best in their setting. However, that doesn’t change what

Conway believes should be the guidelines for sustainable food production whether the grower is organic or not. First, Conway says that continuous vegetable production is hard on the soil. To buffer that impact, he stated that “biologically active healthy soils are the key to growing good crops over the long run.” He noted that healthy soils are more resilient and can better tolerate periods of drought, and the erosion potential of hard rains and winds, and “healthy plants are more resistant to disease and pests” (Great Plains Growers Conference presentation). I visited Conway in late July to prepare for this article. At one point, he dug down with his hand and picked up some soil in a strip of late July planted cowpeas and sudan grass. It had a look of large curd cottage cheese, which meant that it had a good aggregate structure and would hold together while allowing for water absorption and retention. That soil also displayed none of the plating that results from soil compaction meaning that roots could easily move downward and that there was a good percentage of organic matter and carbon.

Paul Conway is dedicated to the health and productivity of his farm. He is also a life-long learner ready to consider new approaches and innovations. In a summary e-mail of his cover crop experience in late 2016 and early 2017, he wrote: “I was planting peas on ground where I had planted rye and spread manure over several years. I was suddenly struck by how friable and mellow the soil was. These strips had been clayey, with terrible tilth. Not any more. How much faster would the soil organic matter percent increase if I had coupled the use of cover crops, especially Summer annual grasses with legumes, with intensive grazing?”

Conway is generous with what he has learned, producing summaries of his experiences and research each year. Persons interested in receiving those summaries or to learn more about his experience with vegetable production and cover crops can contact him at [pconway@wildblue.net](mailto:pconway@wildblue.net) or 913-775-2559.

*Jim French is researching and writing KRC’s third in a series of Specialty Crop guides, “Building Resilience from the Ground Up: Conservation Practices for Specialty Crops” to be published in December 2017. Paul Conway is one of the specialty crop farmers profiled in the guide.*

# Sustainable Food and Farming News

## Three Sisters Success Story from SCCC Specialty Crop Incubator Program

By Charity Horinek

*Part two in a three-part series about successful specialty crop growers in Southwest Kansas.*

Three Sisters Specialty Crop Growers in Liberal, Kansas, began life in an unusual way – it was the result of a class and program offered at Seward County Community College.

“We were made aware of the Specialty Crop Incubator Program at SCCC and decided to be a part, not because we wanted to sell produce or start a business, but because we enjoyed growing things,” said Donna Apsley, co-owner of Three Sisters Specialty Crop Growers with her husband, Travis Apsley.

The program, called SCIP for short, was funded by a Kansas Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant that allowed the college to create “incubator plots” and teach area residents how to grow and profit from specialty crops.

“In January 2016, we enrolled in SCIP and were allowed a plot that measured a bit less than a quarter acre, and we planned our crops and planted as best we knew how,” Apsley said. “That first year, we probably looked a wreck, not really knowing what we were doing, but hoping we could get something to grow!” The Apsleys named their burgeoning business “Three Sisters” for two reasons, according to Donna.

“We are parents to three incredible daughters,” she said. “We derived our business name from the American Indian legend of the three ‘sisters’ that lived together -- corn, beans, and squash. These sisters supported each other, grew alongside one another, and gave back what the others needed to thrive. We would like to think that we have raised our own daughters in the same manner.” But, she noted, that doesn’t mean they are limited to three crops.

“As specialty crop growers, we may not plant our crops specifically in Native American tradition, but we do strive to grow in such a way that our customers know that great care is put into everything we do,” Apsley said.

Three Sisters Specialty Crop Growers primarily sells its products through the Liberal Farmers Market, she said. They grow and sell cool season crops such as lettuces, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage; warm season crops including onions, garlic, several kinds of tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash, eggplant, cantaloupe, watermelon, many kinds of peppers, winter squashes, pumpkins, and okra; and bedding plants. The Apsleys utilize social media marketing to entice customers to come to the Farmers Market.

“As far as marketing is concerned, we sell freshly harvested produce, and not everyone likes to buy produce that they have to prepare themselves. We may have items in our market booth that people don’t recognize or know how to cook. A key for us at market is education,” she said. “We had better know what we’re talking about when a customer asks us what something is, how do you cook it, what does it taste like, et cetera.”

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# Sustainable Food and Farming News

*Three Sisters, cont. from page 15*

Southwest Kansas differs from other regions of the state both in population and climate, which can provide particular challenges and opportunities for specialty crop growers. “Southwest Kansas is home to so many different peoples and backgrounds. Everyone eats, but some eat differently than others,” Apsley said. “If a grower doesn’t want to plant tomatoes and cucumbers, there are so many other nationalities the grower can cater to, allowing those customers to find foods from their own culture.”

Their first year proved successful enough that they enrolled in January 2017 for a second year at SCCC in SCIP. “We were allowed the same plot, as well as an area within a high tunnel – approximately 120 linear feet -- which we could utilize,” Apsley said. “This allowed us to extend our season by growing and harvesting earlier. We also invested in some flower plugs so that we could have bedding flowers available at the local farmer’s market.”

The incubator program not only taught them the basics of a specialty crop business, but it provided a soft landing for mistakes they could learn from. “We are also much smarter! The first year was truly a learning experience,” she said. “We were able to take our successes and failures from the first year, and use that knowledge to work smarter, not harder the second year.”

The couple’s life has changed in more ways than one, Apsley said, since starting their business. “We sure work a lot more! We’ve both lost weight, become physically stronger, and oh, what a tan!” she said. “Farming isn’t easy, and the weather certainly does not always cooperate. But we enjoy it more than anything we’ve ever done. It provides a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.”



*Donna Apsley and one of the “three sisters”.*

One of the biggest benefits to starting their business has been growing not just food, but relationships. “It seems to me that having a specialty crops business is as much about community as it is farming,” Apsley said. “We have built relationships with people we had never met before, people we would otherwise have never known. I now feel responsible to grow and provide the best produce I can because these people are important to me.”

Having outgrown the SCCC plots, the Apsleys have set a goal to be growing on their own property in 2018. “We would like to erect some high tunnels for season extension, and also plant fruit trees and

a variety of berries. The whole big dream also includes honeybees and chickens!” she said. “Our current greatest challenge is finding a place to grow. We feel we have expanded past the point of growing on SCCC property and we need to be out on our own. We need to sell our house in town so that we can buy a bit of acreage, but the real estate market is so slow right now that we’re kind of spinning our wheels.”

Three Sisters has plans for expansion, hoping to venture into Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in the near future, and gaining the certifications necessary to be able to sell directly to local schools and other institutions.

“When we have our own property we will also make available some perennial crops such as asparagus and rhubarb,” Apsley said. Another area of expansion will include value-added products. In 2017, the company did start with offering homemade granola at the first Farmers Markets.

“We had little-to-nothing to sell for a few weeks, so I made some granola to fill out the table,” she said. “It sold! Woo-hoo! People came back for more! Woo-hoo! I didn’t have granola available the second year, simply because we were doing a better job of having produce available.”

With value-added product expansion, of course, comes more paperwork. “Again, there is the  
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# Sustainable Food and Farming News

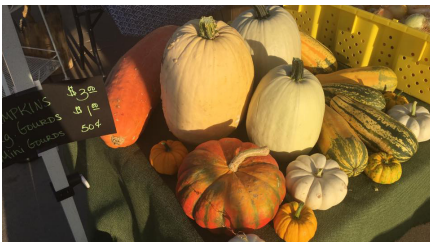
*Three Sisters, cont. from page 17*

matter of certifications and licensing required to do some things, and we're trying to take this one step at a time and not grow faster than we can handle," Apsley said. But she sees a bright future for specialty crop businesses in Southwest Kansas.

"Generally speaking, I think that people want to eat well, buy fresh, and support their local businesses," she said. "In our area of the state, these venues are just starting to open up. I feel like we have kind of been the pioneers out here, and hopefully others will see that a specialty crops business is a viable option here in Southwest Kansas."

Three Sisters Specialty Crop Growers has a Facebook page under its business name, and an Instagram account (3sistersgrow). "Follow us to watch our progress," Apsley said. "This journey has been and continues to be an exciting one, and we enjoy sharing it with others."

*This profile was written as part of KRC's Feeding Southwest Kansas research funded the Kansas Health Foundation.*



*Organic Transitions, cont. from page 6*

The mindset, he argues, is all-important because the first impulse when weeds take over or you suffer a setback is to grab the chemical jug. In organic, he explained, the consumers are the boss. You are entering a written agreement with the consumer who wants no chemicals, often prefers smaller operations, and likes the idea of providing a living wage to the farmer and others.

Jack Geiger, Robinson, Ks. organic farmer agreed that the philosophy of the farm is important. His crop he explained is his family. Farming is the tool. He prefers to think of land as a trust and asks what is our relationship with this land and the people on it? His father did the work of transitioning to organic, so he is simply carrying on the tradition, adding to it as he learns. Geiger's goal is to raise and market food for the local or regional food system, and to support other family farmers.

Geiger stressed the importance of using or recycling resources you have at hand. That extends beyond organic farming practices. He and his family built a seed cleaning facility with recycled lumber. His fences are hedge posts from the farm. He buys only one off farm input and that is lime. He builds bedding piles of manure and straw and spreads it on his fields. He will put cattle on the poorer ground, allowing them to fertilize

it. He feeds 90% of his corn to his cowherd, allowing them to recycle nutrients back to the soil.

Geiger adheres to a strict crop rotation, though it will vary from upland to bottomland, erosion potential and quality of soil. Crops include alfalfa, red clover, wheat, corn, soybeans, and silage sorghum in various combinations. Geiger likes tillage and does not believe it to be the "evil" that is being claimed. Organic farmers probably till too much, he admits, and done wrong it is damaging. Done at the right time it is ok. There is a place for it in an organic system where the rotation relies on perennials and small grains, along with row crops.

He strives to have diverse income streams so that in any one year he can rely on at least one or more of them to be successful. He does not use crop insurance. With livestock, in a drought year for instance, he can chop corn for feed.

Ortman's advice for successful transition to organic included "securing a support network" and "self-educate all you can". These FarmStarts workshops are the beginning of some informal support networks across the Midwest and plains. Kansas Organic Producer and NFO will host another workshop in early 2018.

# Resources

## Farmers Watch “Under Contract “ For Free

RAFI (Rural Advancement Foundation International) is a non-profit organization out of Pittsboro, NC, that works to cultivate markets, policies, and communities that sustain thriving, socially just, and environmentally sound family farms. They work nationally and internationally, focusing on North Carolina and the southeastern United States. For years RAFI has worked with contract livestock producers across the southeast to understand the good and bad experiences of contract farming.

Drawing primarily from farmers’ experience with poultry production contracts, RAFI provides analysis of the long-term social, legal, and economic impacts of the contract agriculture system and possible viable alternatives. In collaboration with other national farm and community organizations, RAFI works for reforms to protect the family farmer who turns to contract production.

Last February they released a one-hour documentary “Under Contract: Farmers and the Fine Print”. The film is available online and on their website. For the first time in a full-length documentary, contract farmers tell their stories and industry experts reveal how the corporate production model pits farmer against farmer.

Under Contract: Farmers and the Fine Print takes audiences on a road trip across the American South and to Southern India to understand what’s happening to farmers living under contract and what we can do to change our food system for the better. In the U.S. alone, 97% of the chicken produced is raised by family farmers under contract with large companies. Around the world and all across agriculture, contract farming is taking hold. But farmers who sign contracts often face unfair challenges and hidden risks under the terms that are offered by large firms. Under Contract provides a timely glimpse into the little understood fine print of modern agriculture.

RAFI encourages farmers to feel free to watch the film for free, as their way of saying thanks to the farmers who provide so much to our communities. The film can also be rented online or purchased. You can access the film at <https://vimeo.com/r/1UIE/ejNiZ2RtcD>. You must have or create a Vimeo account (there is a Basic option for free) and hit rent and a promo code automatically pops up.

You can also go to <http://rafiusa.org/farmers-watch-under-contract/>.

Please note that all proceeds from this film will support RAFI’s direct work with farmers in financial crisis and their work to level the playing field for farmers under contract.

KRC will also have a couple copies available for showing. Contact Mary Fund at [mfund@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:mfund@kansasruralcenter.org)

## Before you Sign a Poultry Contract: Consider Your Risk

Before signing for a loan of any kind or signing a contract to raise poultry, make sure you know what you’re getting into! You are committing your family’s financial security to this investment for the next several decades, so carefully weighing your decision is critical.

RAFI-USA and the Farmers Legal Action Group (FLAG) have developed a document entitled “Questions to Ask Before You Sign a Poultry Contract”. We attach a short excerpt from their longer document. Click [HERE](#) for the short version.

You can download the full document and other resources at <http://rafiusa.org/programs/contract-agriculture-reform/for-contract-farmers-resources-and-guides/>.

For a more detailed explanation of potential risks in poultry contracts, email: [sally@rafiusa.org](mailto:sally@rafiusa.org), call 919-323-7587.

## Socially Responsible Agriculture Project Offers Communities Resources

The Socially Responsible Agricultural Project (SRAP) works throughout the U.S. helping communities protect themselves from the negative impacts of factory farms, officially called Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). SRAP gives family farmers, ranchers, and other rural citizens the tools needed to develop and sustain ecologically sound, economically viable, humane farming alternatives to industrial-scale agriculture.

SRAP is a grassroots organization that educates about the impacts of factory farms while working directly with the communities most heavily impacted. Through education, advocacy, and community organizing, SRAP provides guidance and assistance to communities seeking to develop healthy, sustainable alternatives to industrialized livestock production. Learn more at their website at [www.sraproject.org](http://www.sraproject.org).

## Thanks to Merchant's Pub and Plate!

KRC extends warmest appreciation to Merchant's Pub and Plate at 8th and Massachusetts Street in Lawrence, Ks. for the August 2 Percent Day for KRC! We understand that they had a steady uptick in business all day long from KRC's friends, and that resulted in a nice bonus for KRC's General Grassroots Education Activities! The restaurant works hard to use local food and support the area's local farmers. Keep them in mind next time you find yourself in Lawrence!



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## Calendar

**Nov. 2-4 Women Food and Ag Conference, Madison, WI.** For more information go to <https://www.wfan.org/2017-wfan-annual-conference-celebrating-20-years/>. Or call conference coordinator, Leigh Adcock at 515.450.3591.

**Nov. 14 Produce Safety Workshop, Wichita.** Sedgewick County Extension Office. 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.; \$15 fee.

**Nov. 15 Produce Safety Workshop, Colby.** Colby Community College, 1 to 5 p.m. \$15 fee; For more information on both go to <http://www.kansasfarmersunion.com/event/produce-safety-workshop-wichita/>.

**Nov. 17-18 KRC Annual Conference, Manhattan.** For more information, visit - [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).

**December 1-2, 2017, Kansas Farmers Union Convention, Emporia.** Go to: [www.kansasfarmersunion.com](http://www.kansasfarmersunion.com).

For more events or updated calendar go to: [www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar/](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/calendar/)

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