

KRC to Host Women in Farming Workshop

Topeka, Kansas - On Saturday, May 6, 2017, the Kansas Rural Center (KRC) will sponsor an all-day, women-only workshop and farm tour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Walton Rural Life Center, (500 Main St., Walton, Kansas) about 8 miles from Newton, Kansas. This is the first of two KRC educational workshops in 2017 for women farmers or want-to-be-farmers, women landowners, and women interested in sustainable farming, food production, and local food initiatives.

The workshop will include a morning presentation on local food initiatives around the state, including an update on the "Feeding Kansas" report, by KRC's program director Natalie Fullerton, and an update on local food and farm councils around the state by Missty Lechner of the American Heart Association. Duane Hund, director of the farm analyst program for KSU extension, will present on financial tools and planning, including the Finpack software system. Sheri Grinstead, farm loan officer with the Farm Service Agency, will present on financing options and loan programs specifically available for women farm operators and diversified farm operations. In the afternoon, Candy Thomas from the National Resource Conservation Service will provide a presentation on soil health and give hands-on demonstrations of various soil tests and analyses. Attendees will also learn about the Walton Rural Life Center, which is a charter school with a project-based curriculum that focuses on agriculture, such as raising pigs, chickens and vegetables on the school grounds.

Following the presentations, attendees will head to nearby Morning Harvest Farm, operated by Paula Sims with her husband, Eric, for a farm tour. Morning Harvest Farm produces grass-fed beef, seasonal produce, and pastured pork and poultry and eggs, raised on non-GMO, soy-free supplements and grass. This year, Morning Harvest Farm is adding a unique freshwater fish operation. Attendees will have a chance to learn how the Sims run their diversified operation, including the farm's CSA program.

Cost to attend: \$15, to cover lunch, speakers and farm tour costs. Please RSVP by April 28, 2017, for us to have adequate meals and materials available at <http://conta.cc/2oY2aRG>, or contact info@kansasruralcenter.org, or call 866-579-5469.

In conjunction with the Saturday workshop, KRC is hosting an informal Women in Farming Roundtable discussion and social on Friday evening, May 5, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Community Room, Harvey County Courthouse (basement) at 800 N. Main St., Newton, Kansas. Snacks, coffee and tea will be provided. The Roundtable allows women coming into town the night before the workshop an opportunity to gather together for networking and information sharing. Local women interested in farming and local food issues are encouraged to attend, too.

Participants will have an opportunity to share their farming stories, information, experiences, and good company with other female farmers and women working to advance local food in their communities. Confirmed conversation leaders include Paula Sims of Morning Harvest Farm; Donna McLish of Wichita's Common Ground Mobile Farmers Market; Anne Pitts of the Harvey County Food and Farm Council and Harvey County Extension; and Anna Anderson and Lynn Stephan from Women for Kansas. There is no charge to attend the roundtable, but KRC encourages RSVP's in order to have enough food and drink.

RSVP for the roundtable at <http://conta.cc/2ozM3NR>, or contact info@kansasruralcenter.org, or call 866-579-5469.

KRC has also reserved a block of rooms at the Comfort Inn in Newton. Call 316-804-4866 by April

28 to reserve your room at the group rate. Tell the hotel you are with the KRC Women in Farming Workshop. Room rate: \$84.99 plus tax. Continental breakfast provided.

For more information about the workshop and/or the roundtable, email KRC at info@kansasruralcenter.org or call 866-579-5469.

If you are unable to attend this event, mark your calendars for the second workshop in our series, which will be held June 10 in Clay County in North Central Kansas. Location will be announced closer to the event, but the day will include a farm tour of Lucinda Stuenkel's pasture-based beef operation at Sunny Day Farms near Palmer, Kansas.

This workshop series is funded in part by a mini-grant from the Great Plains Conference of the United Methodist Church, and sponsored in part by the Harvey County extension office, the Harvey County Food Policy Council, and the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops /Kansas SARE Program.