

KRC Invites You to Our Annual Farm & Food Conference

The Kansas Rural Center (KRC) will host its annual farm and food conference in Wichita, Kansas, November 8 and 9 at the Drury Plaza Hotel. “Planting Ideas, Growing Our Future: Carbon, Climate, and Communities” will feature two days of keynote speakers and two dozen workshops focusing primarily on building resilience and diversity on our farms and in our communities.

“The Green New Deal, climate change reports, and the emerging crisis in the farm/rural economy raise questions for many of us as we head into another pivotal election year,” stated Mary Fund, KRC Executive Director. “How does climate change affect us here in the heartland? What policies and programs will help us address it? What steps or actions can help us weather the economic problems in agriculture, and what kind of economic development should we pursue that will provide the resilience and diversity we need?”

Speakers and workshops at the Conference will address these questions and more as KRC also celebrates its 40th anniversary with a special reception on Friday evening November 8 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. with food, drink, music and networking.

Fred Iutzi, president of The Land Institute, Salina, will speak Friday morning on “Agriculture’s Role in Ecological Sustainability and Economic Justice” building on an essay he and Texas journalist/communications professor Robert Jensen wrote following the proposal of the Green New Deal last winter. In that essay, Iutzi and Jensen discussed the need for a new way of producing food that does not shy away from a critique of the dominant capital intensive industrial worldview or the reality of ecological disruption. The new food system allows us to go to the root of the problem, and adopts a worldview based on an economic system allowing more equitable distribution of wealth and creation of meaningful livelihoods. In the keynote, Iutzi will address what agriculture and food production needs to address in order to meet the challenges of the future.

On Saturday morning, we hear from Becca Jablonski, Colorado State University’s Food Systems Extension Economist, who will speak to the value of local and regional food systems by “Leveraging Urban Food Markets to Support Rural-Urban Linkages and Regional Economic Development”. Jablonski was a contributor to the Federal Reserve Oct. 2017 Report, “Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities.” She will also lead a workshop on assessing the economic impacts of food systems programming, policies and initiatives.

Each day will feature a dozen concurrent workshops covering a range of topics including practical sessions on building soil health, managing grass and livestock for extreme weather, managing farm financial recordkeeping, managing woodlands, extending the growing season in hoopouses, and coping with stress and anxiety on the farm and in the world. Other workshops will cover critical issues, policy and advocacy looking at local food development, state policy overview for 2020, federal farm policy

and climate smart practices, wind energy and public opinion, and the impact of concentrated animal feeding operations.

Registration is \$75 per day or \$145 for both days. The Conference registration and price includes Friday evening's celebration of KRC's 40th Anniversary with an extended hors d'oeuvres buffet, Kansas beer and wine, and music. The celebration will be held immediately following the end of the day's workshops from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The reception is also open to non-conference goers for \$40. Registration for the conference or for Friday evening's reception can be found at kansasruralcenter.org/2019-conference. Conference scholarships are also available for students and beginning farmers. Inquire at info@kansasruralcenter.org.

New this year will be a Special Land/Farm Owner and Land Seeker Mixer held as one of the workshop sessions on Friday afternoon from 4:00 pm to 5:15 pm. The mixer is an opportunity to network and connect those who have farms or land to those who are seeking a farm or land or an opportunity to gain experience farming. The Mixer is also open to non-conference goers who only wish to attend the Mixer.

But Pre-registration is required for both conference goers and non-conference goers. To register, please visit –
<https://kansasruralcenter.org/kansas-rural-center-to-host-land-owner-land-seeker-mixer/>

The Drury Plaza Hotel has a special conference rate of \$109 plus tax for conference goers. For hotel reservations, call 1-800-325-0720 and refer to group number 2361295 for a rate of \$109 per night.