

TENTATIVE Kansas Farmers Union Convention Schedule

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

8:00 AM – Registration Opens

9:00 AM – Welcome & Call to Order – Kansas Farmers Union President Donn Teske

9:15 AM – Perennial Agriculture at The Land Institute

During this session, dive into the world of perennial grain agriculture, working towards a future where we regenerate the soil, air, and water we depend on by growing our staple crops. We will take a closer look at Kernza, the first perennial grain available for commercial purposes in the US, and explore the research findings that suggest how this grain can help improve water and soil quality while generating multiple types of crops for farmers. Additionally, you will learn about the ongoing efforts to cultivate more perennial grains and establish sustainable agricultural and social systems around them.

10:00 AM – Kansas Department of Agriculture’s Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

The Kansas Department of Agriculture has been awarded a \$6.46 million cooperative agreement with the USDA to administer the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program in our state. The purpose of the program is to build resilience in the middle-of-the-supply-chain and strengthen local and regional food systems by creating new revenue streams for Kansas producers. Funds will be used to award competitive infrastructure grants and equipment-only grants to Kansas food and farm businesses and other eligible entities. Join agency staff to learn more about the program and walk through the grant application process.

10:45 AM - What is the state of mental health in rural America? And what can we do to help?

Suicide rates are higher, mental health services are harder to access and tele-health is not the answer some people assume. However, the tide is turning. More resources are available than ever before and the stigma around asking for help is decreasing. Julie Lux, vice president of communications of [Rural Minds](#), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with a mission to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources, will offer actionable tips to help rural residents identify potential mental health challenges and find ways to help. Together we can realize the organization’s vision to end the suffering, silence and stigma around mental illness in rural America.

11:30 AM – Lunch sponsored by Great Plains Kubota (ticket required)

12:15 PM – Kansas Farmers Union Officer, Board, and Delegate Nominations & Caucusing

12:45 PM – Join Concordia, KS author **Lindsay H. Metcalf** for a book tasting of a few of her nonfiction titles for children, including ***Farmers Unite! Planting a Protest for Fair Prices***, about the American Agriculture Movement tractorcades of the 1970s and 1980s, and ***No World Too Big:***

Young People Fighting Global Climate Change, a poetry anthology about young people helping our shared planet. Metcalf will leave time for questions and book signing.

1:30 PM – Connect with your Neighbor; Connect with your Town - Improving a Community's Vitality by Building Social Capital & Engaged Residents

Shifts in communication, entertainment, technology, and population over the last 40-50 years have led to a state of individual isolation as well as communities that lack the engagement and input of a large swath of their residents. Americans have become disengaged from community involvement, including decreased voter turnout, attendance at public meetings, service on committees, work with political parties, civic organizations, religious service, and communing together for enrichment. This disengagement leads to a loss of social connectedness and overall discontent as a community drift without input and those left doing the work tire. We'll discuss this breakdown in Kansas communities and discuss the benefits of having an engaged community.

2:00 PM – Discussions on Civics and Democracy - Governor John Carlin

2:45 PM - Break

3:00 PM – Expanded Farmers Union Member Benefits through FUMA – Jeff Downing, Kevin Harrington, & FUMA Financial Services Team

3:30 PM – Someday, All This Will Be Theirs – How Will the Next Generation Regard Us?

The triple bottom line has never been more important. How do we relearn the art of regeneration with an eye toward history? Pete Ferrell, CFO, Business Administrator and Executive Director of Ferrell Ranch

4:15 PM – 2024 Kansas Legislative Session Preview - Lobbyists Sean Gatewood and Josh Svaty and Kansas State Representatives Susan Concannon & Ken Rahjes

5:00 PM – Convention Recesses

5:30 PM – Kansas Wine & Cheese Social featuring Smoky Hill Wines & Grazing Plains Farm Cheeses

6:30 PM – Convention Banquet sponsored by NextEra Energy Resources (ticket required)

- **Keynote Speaker - National Farmers Union President Rob Larew**
- **FUMA Update – General Mgr. Jeff Downing**
- **Awards Presentations – Kansas Farmers Union President Donn Teske**
 - Ruth Hirsh Award
 - Linda Hessman Lifetime Achievement Award
 - Agent of the Year Award
- **KFU Foundation Fundraiser Live Auction**

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7:00 AM – Registration Opens & Washington Breakfast (ticket required)

8:00 AM – National Farmers Union Washington Update

There are many unchecked boxes on lawmakers' to-do lists in Washington. The farm bill needs to be reauthorized, competition rules await final approval, climate initiatives are soon to be implemented, and local and regional food systems would benefit from further investment. With the current uncertain political environment on Capitol Hill, these items of business are going to need a push to completion and National Farmers Union is helping out. We'll learn more about these issues during the Washington Breakfast update from NFU Vice President of Advocacy Mike Stranz.

8:45 AM – Lessons Learned While Fighting for Right to Repair - Tyler Garrett, Director of Government Relations, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Farmers Union has tirelessly advocated for farmers and ranchers on Right to Repair for years. Farmers and ranchers around the country should be able to enjoy the freedom of choice that Colorado farmers and ranchers were granted earlier this year. Tyler will discuss the legislation, the process, the lessons learned, and what is on the horizon for the Right to Repair movement.

9:45 AM – SARE Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Panel – Mary Hendrickson & Miranda Duschack

10:15 AM - Is the Federal Farm Safety Net Expanding? Evidence, Questions, and Policy Options - K-State Ag Policy Specialist Jennifer Ifft

11:00 AM – Reason Together for Success: The Importance of Diversifying the Agricultural Workforce Through Partnerships with Universities and Student Organizations – Representatives from K-States College of Agriculture, K-State Research and Extension Diversity Programs, and Kansas State Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Chapter.

11:30 AM – Lunch sponsored by Kansas Department of Agriculture (ticket required)

K-State 105 is Kansas State University's answer to the call for a comprehensive economic growth and advancement solution for Kansas. The initiative leverages the statewide K-State Research and Extension network to deliver the full breadth of the university's collective knowledge and solution-driven innovation to every Kansan, right where they live and work. Additionally, K-State 105 forges the connections and partnerships that create access to additional expertise within other state institutions and agencies, nonprofits and corporations — all part of an effort to build additional capacities and strengths in each of the 105 counties in the state. - Jessica Gnad, Director

12:00 PM – KFU Business Meeting (Credentials Elections, Policy, & Special Orders of Business) & KFU Board Reorganization Meeting (upon adjournment of convention)