



OAK Field Notes - January 2026



Great Speakers Await - Register for OAK Conference!

Have you seen the incredible speaker lineup featuring 37 farmer speakers - 33 of whom are farming in Kentucky? [Meet the speakers on OAK's webpage](#) and in person on January 30-31, 2026 in Frankfort.

The 2026 OAK Conference will kick off Friday, January 30, with inspiring updates, a brief [Member Meeting](#) (open to all) and the presentation of the inaugural Organic Farmer Award. Saturday, January 31, will open with a women farmer panel featuring Hannah Breckbill, Fatima Jackson, Emily Oakley, Robin Verson and panel moderator Rae Strobel in recognition of 2026 as the UN's International Year of the [Woman Farmer](#).

Registration for the OAK Conference closes in two weeks - on January 23, or sooner if the event sells out. Join us in Frankfort and register today!

Please be aware of spam emails! Conference organizers will not contact you offering to distribute or sell attendee contact information. If you receive questionable emails about this conference, please let us know at conference@oak-ky.org.

Register Now



Healthy Soil Gets Rewarded - OAK's Project Returns

Good news - OAK's soil health project is back! This \$4 million project is part of USDA's relaunched "Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) Initiative," formerly known as the "Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities (PCSC)." Beginning in 2022, OAK worked with 50 farms through this project to adopt organic and conservation practices, supported by technical assistance and incentive payments. After a multi-month pause, OAK's project is returning as **FARM Kentucky: Farmers Advancing Resilient Markets**. Participating farmers will receive technical assistance, incentive payments, personalized farm data and marketing assets promoting and rewarding production practices that improve soil health and environmental outcomes. Eligible farms may receive up to \$13,500 annually in incentive payments each of the next three years! Commercial farms in Kentucky of any production system (organic, conventional, etc.) are encouraged to **apply by January 25th** to be considered for the first cohort. Learn more [here](#).

Get paid for practices that benefit soil health - apply today!

Farmers, Apply Here

Opportunity is Knocking - OAK is Hiring!

OAK is seeking a passionate and organized **Soil Health and Conservation Project Manager** to lead the administration of our relaunched [soil health project](#), FARM Kentucky.

This role supports Kentucky farmers by rewarding production practices that strengthen farm resilience, improve soil health and deliver environmental benefits. Join a mission-driven team working at the intersection of agriculture and sustainability.

Apply by January 22 for full consideration. The position will remain open until filled.

Apply Now



OAK Members, We Want to Hear from You



OAK's Annual Member Survey is **live** and awaiting your feedback. You are invited to share insights and ideas about OAK's priorities and programs in 2026 and the future ahead. Please take **5 minutes** to complete the Member Survey!

By completing the survey, you will be entered to **win Patagonia gear** during OAK's Annual Member Meeting in Frankfort on January 30th (must be present to claim).

Don't miss this chance to share your insights and take home an excellent prize! Complete the survey by January 29th.

Take the 5 Minute Survey

Webinar: Conservation Resources for Organic and Organically-Managed Farms

Henry County farmer Joseph Monroe of [Valley Spirit Farm](#) has partnered with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) since 2016 to create effective rotational grazing systems. Monroe has improved forage, increased crop pollination, supported plant and wildlife diversity and created sustainable on-farm watering systems for livestock and crops.

Join Joseph Monroe, OAK and NRCS-Kentucky for this free, one-hour webinar on February 18 from 12-1 ET to learn about conservation assistance for all working lands, certified organic or conventional.

This event is supported by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



[Learn More & Register](#)

OAK Members, Your Vote Matters



OAK members are invited to vote for three board candidates to serve on OAK's nine-member Board of Directors. OAK board members serve three-year terms and actively support and promote OAK's mission, vision, programs, outreach and fundraising efforts.

Please review the candidate's bios, vote and submit recommendations for future candidates! **The voting deadline is January 28th.**

Each OAK membership allows for at least one voting member (Family Farm Memberships have voting rights for two individuals). Contact Robin (robin@oak-ky.org) if you would like to add another person to your Family Farm Membership.

[Vote Here](#)

Latest News

USDA Farmer Bridge Payments: What You Need to Know

The \$12 billion USDA Farmer Bridge Assistance (FBA) Program is a one-time payment program designed to provide short-term financial support to crop farmers based on 2025 planted acres. Eligible crops include corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, cotton, sorghum, barley, oats, peanuts, peas, lentils, canola, flax, and other covered row crops. Farmers can learn more or review their information by contacting their local

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or visiting <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/farmer-bridge-assistance-fba-program>

Kentucky Farm Launch Accepting Applications For Second Season

Applications will close February 1, 2026.

KY Farm Launch — a partnership between UK, the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) and the Kentucky Sheep and Goat Development Office — provides hands-on training for beginning farmers. .

The free training program lasts nine months, with weekly workshops on the sustainable production of vegetables, small fruits, beef cattle, sheep, goats and poultry. Business, management and market planning are woven into the courses as well. For more information on KY Farm Launch and to apply to the 2026 cohort, visit <https://bfrdp.mgcafe.uky.edu/>.

CIG On-Farm Trial Biochar Initiative in Kentucky

Spring 2026 Sign-up Ends February 1, 2026

KADA, Inc, invites farmers to participate in the CIG On-Farm Biochar Trial — an exciting opportunity to explore how biochar can improve soil, crop productivity, and sustainability on the farm.

By joining the trial, participants will:

- Gain hands-on experience with biochar applications
- Contribute valuable data to support sustainable agriculture
- Connect with other innovative producers and researchers
- Earn Farmer Incentives

Sign up today! <https://airtable.com/app6NtjP9BKDOmK3L/pagMghTyoEOObhvt4/form>

USDA Launches 2025 Organic Survey — Producer Participation Matters

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has launched the **2025 Organic Survey**, which collects essential data on organic acreage, production, sales, income, expenses, and marketing practices nationwide. The survey is being mailed to **all known organic farms and ranches**, including those transitioning to organic.

Please take a moment to complete the survey [online here](#) or return it by mail.

In-Person Events Throughout the Region

Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference

January 11-13, 2026

Bowling Green, Kentucky

Farmers don't want to miss the great line-up this year's **Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference** .

Tuesday's Organic Track will feature *Organic Carrot Production Tips* with Chelsea Barbour, Alex Rickman, Kristi Durbin, and John Bell; *Short and Long Term Weed Management Systems* with Sam Oschwald Tilton and Bryce Baumann; and *Organic Disease Management* with Nicole Gauthier and Kim Leonberger.

Moreover, the conference's other tracks include talks about: Business Management; Alternative Fruit and Nut Crops; Beginning Farmer Basics; Experienced Growers; Greenhouse Production; Urban and Small Scale Farming; Tree Fruit; High Tunnel; and Cut Flower tracks. The pre-registration price of \$80 ends Friday, and on-site registrations are available for \$100. Don't wait—register today! Learn more and register via the link below.

<https://kyhortcouncil.org/2026-kentucky-fruit-vegetable-conference/>

Virtual Events

2026 Agroforestry Symposium: Growing Opportunities in Emerging Tree Crop Industries

January 15, 2026, 10am - 5pm ET

Online (or in-person, Columbia, Missouri)

Join the Center for Agroforestry for our 17th Annual Agroforestry Symposium! This year, we will bring together farmers, researchers, industry professionals, and stakeholders to explore tree crop production and agroforestry systems. The symposium features expert panels on farm-level management and economics, regional development opportunities, and mixed species agroforestry systems.

Whether you're interested in scaling tree nut industries, exploring specialty crop development, or learning about sustainable farming practices, this hybrid event offers both in-person networking opportunities and virtual participation options to dig deep into these intertwined subjects.

Planning Your Farm Transition

Join This Winter 2026 Online Course to Begin Farm Transition Planning Today

Are you a farm family or landowner thinking about the future or next steps for your farm?

Are you interested in planning for the next generation of farmers on your land?

Do you have a spouse/partner helping to make these decisions? Are you both on the same page?

Are you ready to begin the planning process but don't know where to start?

JOIN IN: Online Tuesdays — January 27 to March 10, 5:30 p.m.- 8 p.m.

<https://landstewardshipproject.org/transition2026/>

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cultivate and activate a resilient

food and farming network.

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Join us! The organic farming network in Kentucky
is growing. Together we are creating a more
regenerative and organic food system.

Renew your OAK Membership

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