



OAK Field Notes - November 2025



Check Out the OAK Conference 2026 Agenda!

The OAK team is excited to share the full conference agenda for OAK 2026! Explore session descriptions, see the stellar lineup of speakers and start planning your conference experience today. The full [schedule](#) and [session details](#) are available on OAK's website.

Whether you're interested in organic practices and production insights, regenerative grazing methods, lessons learned from Kentucky farmers or agribusiness marketing strategies, the 2026 OAK Conference has something for everyone. Enjoy locally sourced lunches and valuable peer-to-peer connections throughout the event.

Also, don't miss invited speakers Emily Oakley (Three Springs Farm, Oklahoma) and Hannah Breckbill (Humble Hands Harvest, Iowa), who will join a panel of women farmers highlighting the role and realities of women in organic agriculture in recognition of the UN's International Year of the Woman Farmer. Join us in Frankfort on January 30-31, 2026, for two days full of learning, collaboration and networking. [Register today!](#)

[View the Agenda](#)



Reflections from Kentucky's First Mechanical Weed Control Field Day

In September, OAK partnered with UK's Center for Crop Diversification, UK's Horticulture Research Farm and Glacial Drift Enterprises to co-host this event that gathered over **100 farmers and agricultural professionals** from **five states** to see equipment and tool offerings from **19 manufacturers and dealers**. The day included a trade show, live demonstrations and educational sessions about tillage, weed control, stale seedbed strategies and more for farms of various scales.

One farmer said, "I saw a **breadth of tools and strategies for weed control**, but more than that, I got a **sense of how other growers were fitting these into an overall system...A comprehensive weed-control system is what my farm has been needing to move to a new level of productivity and profitability...I feel much closer.**"

The event was made possible by funding from the USDA Midwest Transition to Organic Partnerships Program (TOPP) and Southern SARE, and invaluable assistance of **almost 40 volunteers**.

Serve on OAK's Board of Directors!

OAK is seeking dedicated individuals to help guide the organization's mission and advance Kentucky's sustainable and organic farming movement.

Board members play a vital role in supporting programs, promoting OAK's work, assisting with fundraising, providing strategic insights and making community and industry connections.

If you, or someone you know, have the time, talent and passion to make an impact, we encourage you to step forward and submit a nomination! Learn more and submit your nomination today:

<https://www.oak-ky.org/board-nominations>

Right: OAK's current board and staff members. Not pictured - Directors Julia Sampson and Tonya Smith.



Reflections from Kilrush Food Forest Field Day



"It's important for all of Lexington, for the whole continent really, that we take spaces like this and try to restore some ecological function to them."

Participants at this OAK Field Day heard Leandro "Nachie" Braga's description of the importance of Kilrush Food Forest, a three-acre urban greenspace initiative that Nachie and his company, Geomancer Permaculture, have stewarded since 2020.

Geomancer and a network of volunteers are using conservation practices to restore and redesign the riparian corridor at a gentle, sustainable pace with desirable plant communities and wildlife habitat.

Read about their plant selections, methods and more!

[Learn More Here](#)

Government Shutdown Effects

The *USDA Lapse in Appropriations Plan* lists the National Organic Program (NOP) as an activity that does not operate during a shutdown and NOP staff are currently furloughed. Further, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Fall meeting has been cancelled (originally scheduled for Nov. 4-6).

For info pertaining to effects on farmers, organic programs and food access:

- Watch the [National Organic Center \(NOC\) 11/3 convening](#)
- Register for the [NOC 11/17 convening](#)
- Read this article, "[How the Government Shutdown is Impacting Farmers](#)"
- Read this [SNAP in KY](#) one-pager for information and action steps



In-Person Events Throughout the Region

Heritage Food Festival

November 7-10

Terrapin Hill Farm Harrodsburg, KY

The third annual Heritage Food Festival is back! Join the whole weekend or one day, for a chance to build long term relationships with others in the work and to learn practical food processing skills.

<https://fieldspeak.org/event/heritage-food-festival/>

Growing Your Farm and Food Business Workshop

November 13 – <https://tinyurl.com/Graves-GYFFBWorkshop>

Graves County

Unlock new opportunities for your agribusiness with KY Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) staff and partners. Don't miss this chance to grow your farm and food business:

- Learn how to create a strong business plan and funding application
- Network directly with funders representing a variety of programs
- Get answers to questions specific to your farm operation

Planning for Farm Diversification Workshop

November 17

Marshall County Extension Office, Benton

This hands-on learning day will help you take a closer look at exciting expansion opportunities—from agritourism and value-added products to renewable energy, alternative livestock, and beyond. You'll walk away with:

- Tools to evaluate diversification ideas that match your strengths
- Strategies for entering new markets while reducing risk
- Fresh inspiration from fellow producers
- Access to Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) resources and support to move your plans forward

Registration is now open! \$20 registration covers lunch

Reserve your spot and let's explore what's possible together.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/planning-for-farm-diversification-marshall-county-registration-1542552960429?aff=oddtcreator>

27th Annual Small Farmers Conference

November 18–20

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm

This year's theme is *"Strengthening Local Food Systems for Small Farms."*

<https://www.kysu.edu/academics/college-ahnrc/events/2025-small-farmers-conference.php>

2025 Habitat Management Symposium

December 2–3

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm in Frankfort, KY

This symposium brings together professionals, researchers, land managers, and students to exchange knowledge, highlight implementation-based projects, and share case studies and expert insights. We are thrilled to be hosting Jeremy French of the Southeastern Grasslands Institute as a keynote speaker this year as well as other members of their restoration team.

New this year: a social networking event on the first evening and two \$2,500 student scholarships for those pursuing careers in natural resources.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1475223067054997/>

Virtual Events

Legal Entities for Land Projects Virtual 3D

November 12, 3-5 pm ET

From Soul Fire Farm: How do we create values-aligned legal entities for our land projects in the context of this colonial, capitalist system? This workshop will be a space for exploring the possibilities of formal legal entities to hold farms and other land stewardship-related projects and businesses.

This workshop is designed for people who are in relationship with land currently or aspirationally, and who are exploring the best legal entity to hold their land-based project.

Learn more and register here <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/legal-entities-for-land-projects-virtual-3d-tickets-1685353229879>

Webinar: What we lose as USDA Household Food Security Reporting ends

November 20, 11 AM ET

This free webinar will explore the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [annual survey of household food security](#), and how it informs the work of different organizations in the U.S. Since the mid-1990s, USDA has reported on household food insecurity in the U.S. and at the state level. The [Trump administration announced it is canceling](#) the annual survey and will release a final report covering 2024 data in October 2025.

[Learn more and register here](#)

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is growing. Together we are creating a more
regenerative and organic food system.

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Organic Association of Kentucky
PO Box 22244, Lexington, KY 40522
e: info@oak-ky.org | p: 1.502.219.7378

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