

# KANE COUNTY FARMER NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2019

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**FINAL**

Prepared by New Venture Advisors

July 3, 2019

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kane County Development and Community Services Department, through its oversight of Kane County's agriculture and farmland programs, is interested in enhancing and sustaining community food systems and health-focused planning initiatives. As part of its efforts to better understand the needs of local food farmers, the Department's Planning and Special Projects Division contracted New Venture Advisors (NVA) to assess how the County can help its farmers achieve their operational goals.

Through interviews and a survey distributed to local farmers, NVA found that farmers of all scales are interested in expanding their farm to include new enterprises, refining their internal business operations, retaining good labor, and connecting consumers to their farms through on-farm events and agri-tourism. They also expressed a desire for programs and resources to help them achieve these goals.

Fortunately, many programs and resources aimed at these topics already exist. Unfortunately, they are often difficult for the farmers to locate or navigate. NVA recommends Kane County act as a bridge between agencies and farmers by developing an efficient information hub of resources that can be easily accessed by its farmers. Kane County should conduct an additional project to compile and index these resources into a common database, provide access and visibility through a simple webpage, promote this resource within their farmer community, and then perform a gap analysis to what needs, if any, cannot be addressed through existing resources. In the event a gap is identified, Kane County should explore funding a new program to address it.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2013, Kane County established the [Growing for Kane Program](#), an ordinance designed to increase county residents' access to locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

This program has created an opportunity to efficiently connect local farm production with regional markets and populations struggling with limited healthy food choices. In support of the ordinance, Kane County commissioned a Food Hub Feasibility Study in 2015. The study found just 17% of the county's surveyed vegetable growers were selling through wholesale channels that reached the majority of outlets serving Kane County residents. The top barriers cited by growers were difficulty finding and negotiating with buyers, limited access to post-harvest handling facilities, and high cost of product delivery.

As part of its continuing efforts to refine and improve farmer support via the Growing for Kane Program, Kane County engaged New Venture Advisors to accomplish the following:

1. Interview and survey farmers with regard to the challenges and obstacles they face in achieving their operational goals,
2. Recommend strategies and programs to address these challenges and identify associated sources of funding, and
3. Demonstrate how these strategies and programs can further the goals of the Growing For Kane Program and those of its funders.

## Timeline of Project

Farmers Interviewed	April 2019
Farmers Surveyed	April-May 2019
Farmer Assessment Report Prepared	May-June 2019

## Project Team

Name	Organization	Role
Janice Hill	Kane County	Project Oversight
Matthew Tansley	Kane County	Project Management
Kathy Nyquist	New Venture Advisors	Consultant; Oversight
Jason Zielke	New Venture Advisors	Consultant; Engagement Leader
Nikki Seibert	New Venture Advisors	Consultant; Project Manager
Sheree Goertzen	New Venture Advisors	Consultant; Research Analyst

## Methodology

Kane County provided NVA with an overview of the local farming landscape, the County's goals for the project, and a list of Kane County food farmers with recommendations for interviewees. The County's recommendations were based on a desire to gain a perspective from a wide range of farm types.

Kane County staff and NVA authored a tailored interview guide (found in Appendix 2). Interviews of the following six stakeholders took place from April 11-24, 2019:

Name	Farm
Cari Shaw	Renshaw Farms
Donna Lehrer	Big Rock Farms
Tony and Sharon Pferschy	Garlic Breath Farms
Glenn Mize	Heritage Prairie Farms
Katie Palomares	Mighty Greens Farms
Patty Marco	Wiltse Farm

In response to these interviews, the team developed a targeted survey. A survey package, which included 31 questions, was then sent to 35 Kane County farmers (See Appendix 3), along with a letter describing the project goals and an update on the Growing for Kane program (See Appendix 1). The twenty-one farmers who completed the survey between April 30-May 8, 2019 were offered a \$50 stipend from the County.

## Survey Participant Demographics

In order to obtain an accurate picture of the local farming landscape, NVA targeted a wide sample of farmers with the survey. The twenty-one respondents were diverse in many aspects including in

farming tenure, operating size, ownership structure, production types, market outlets, and products grown. (Please note that respondents were allowed to select more than one response for some questions, so percentages do not always sum to 100%, and total responses may exceed the number of individuals who answered each question.)

<b>Years Farming</b>	52%		New Farms or Beginning Farmers (0-10 years)
	48%		Established Farms or Experienced Farmers (over 10 years)
<b>Type of Farmer</b>	43%	9	First Generation
	38%	8	Multi-Generational
	14%	3	Farm Manager/Employee
	5%	1	Coop
<b>Farm Ownership</b>	38%	8	Partial Owners
	33%	7	Full Owners
	24%	5	Renters
	5%	1	Family Owned
<b>Products Grown</b>	81%	17	Vegetables
	38%	8	Eggs
	33%	7	Protein
	29%	6	Fruits
	24%	5	Grains
	19%	4	Dairy
	10%	2	Honey
	5%	1	Mushrooms
<b>Acres by Product Type</b>	43%	9	Vegetables/Fruit >10 acres
	57%	12	Vegetables/Fruit <10 acres
	48%	10	Livestock >10 acres
	14%	3	Livestock < 10acres
<b>Sales/Markets (&gt;50% of products sold through channel)</b>		9	On-Farm Stand/Retail
		1	Restaurants
		3	Community Supported Agriculture
		4	Wholesale
<b>Certification</b>	76%	16	No Certification
	10%	2	Certified Organic
	5%	1	GAP Certified
<b>Production Methods</b>	33%	7	Conventional
	10%	2	Certified Organic
	48%	10	Organic methods, not certified
	19%	4	Pasture based
	5%	1	Biodynamic
	0%	0	Permaculture
	0%	0	Hydroponic
	5%	1	Integrated Pest Management
	5%	1	Automated Milking
	5%	1	Regenerative, Chemical-Free
	10%	2	I would prefer not to answer
<b>Organizational Planning</b>	57%	12	Has Food Safety Plan
	42%	9	Has Business Plan
	33%	7	Has Transition Plan

# SURVEY RESULTS

## **Kane County Farmers' Barriers to Achieving Operational Goals**

Through the data collected in the interviews and surveys, the Kane County farmers revealed where they would like the most assistance. According to the farmers' collective voices, providing assistance within the following categories can address a number of their challenges:

- Awareness of programs and resources aimed at small to mid-sized farms, especially increasing access to available capital,
- Consumer education and marketing support,
- Farmer education and assistance with compliance, certifications, and best practices, and
- Business and technical assistance.

### **Challenge 1: Locating Available Programs and Resources, Especially Related to Accessing Capital.**

#### Key Findings:

1. 66% of survey respondents indicated they lack knowledge of useful resources and tools available through government grants and programs.<sup>1</sup>
2. 81% of respondents listed access to capital as a significant barrier to achieving their operational goals.<sup>2</sup>

### **Challenge 2: Consumer Education and Marketing Support**

#### Key Findings:

1. Survey respondents reported that more consumer education is needed in the following areas:
  - How and why to buy local (71% of respondents)<sup>3</sup>,
  - The relationship between cost of production and the price of buying local (43% of respondents).<sup>4</sup>
2. Survey respondents requested assistance with a number of marketing topics ranging from branding/signage and product labeling to digital skills such as Google Analytics and social media.<sup>5</sup>

### **Challenge 3: Farmer Education and Assistance with FSMA Compliance, GAP Certification, and Best Practices**

#### Key Findings:

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<sup>1</sup> Q25

<sup>2</sup> Q25

<sup>3</sup> Q19

<sup>4</sup> Q18

<sup>5</sup> Q17

1. After assistance with capital access and value-added processing, assistance with FSMA compliance was the third biggest priority farmers requested of the County.<sup>6</sup>
2. 47.6% of respondents are interested in receiving GAP certification training.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Challenge 4: Gap in Business Planning and Technical Assistance**

##### Key Findings:

1. Survey respondents requested training and technical assistance to help with business and enterprise planning, managing cash flow, financial planning, grant applications, and recordkeeping.<sup>8</sup>
2. Most notably, 57% of survey respondents requested training and tools related to retail pricing and 48% requested tools for evaluating cost of production per crop.<sup>9</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The above challenges create a number of opportunities for Kane County to provide additional support to its farmers in furtherance of the goals of the Growing for Kane Program. The following recommendations address both farmer identified pain points and farmer preferred methods of learning.

When possible, it is recommended that Kane County leverage existing programs, resources, and services to increase collaboration, avoid duplication, and reduce the burden on county staff. Many federal, state, and collegiate agricultural focused agencies are interested in connecting with food farmers and would likely make eager partners.

### Program and Resource Education

The most pressing recommendation to emerge from this project is one that will assist with all five challenge areas: Kane County should conduct a project to compile and index all existing public, private, state, local, and national resources aimed at farmers of the demographics specified above and then conduct a gap analysis as to missing resources for unmet needs. This project should leverage the work of other organizations who have already begun this indexing process so as not to duplicate efforts. These resources should be located on a simple to access webpage which should be promoted widely throughout the farming community through mailings and farm visits. Workshops and trainings for accessing these resources should be planned and publicized.

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<sup>6</sup> Q26

<sup>7</sup> Q23

<sup>8</sup> Q21

<sup>9</sup> Q20

This indexing project would not only assist individual farmers with quickly finding resources to address their particular needs, but also would greatly facilitate the creation of themed events and workshops for large sectors of the farming community and their customers.

**Example:**

One model for an initial event is a “Resource Rodeo” in which agencies relevant to a particular topic of interest are rounded up into one location to share their programs. These events often include a guest speaker, a panel of key technical assistance providers, and a hands-on demonstration of online resources to help farmers find information after the event. Sponsors for these events could include attending organizations, farm equipment dealers, farm supply stores, etc.

## Microgrants and Low Interest Loans

Farmers cited access to capital as the largest barrier to achieving their operational goals.<sup>10</sup> In addition to indexing and promoting existing resources that provide capital to farmers, it is recommended that the county provide or coordinate microgrants farmers. Small specialized grants ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 could have significant impact for the farmers in Kane County. Farmers specifically requested grants for on-farm infrastructure and equipment (61.9%), low interest loans for farm improvements (47.6%), and grants for FSMA improvements (38.1%) and certifications (38.1%).<sup>11</sup>

**Example:**

Examples of microgrants from other states include reimbursement for organic and GAP certification costs, equipment grants for the building of cold storage using cool-bots, disaster relief funds for crop loss, and mini-grants for new enterprises. One well developed example is with the [Rural Advancement Foundation International](#) in North Carolina.

Concerning loan programs, the Illinois Dept of Commerce and Economic Opportunity offers a [Participation Loan Program](#), which appears to offer the type of gap financing the Kane County agricultural producers are requesting. Another good example, is the Kansas Department of Commerce which manages an [Entrepreneurship Community Partnership](#) program. In this program the state provides funding to local communities to support entrepreneurs through a matching loan program. The Department of Commerce works directly through Counties to do this work and in Kansas a number of agricultural and food service retail businesses have been started through e-communities.

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<sup>10</sup> Q25

<sup>11</sup> Q22



## Consumer Education and Marketing

After access to capital, farmers cited consumer knowledge and awareness of local food production as their largest barrier to achieving their operational goals.<sup>12</sup> As part of its Growing for Kane Program, the County should support a large public information campaign with agri-tourism and farm-to-table events to educate the public with regard to how, where, and why to buy local. An “Eat Local” Week or Month that included farm tours or other on-farm events would engage the public with recreational options. Similar to the farmer-facing webpage of indexed resources described in the section above, a consumer-facing web page could index topics of public interest: upcoming local farm events, farmer favorite recipes, locations of U-Pick operations, lists of local farmers markets, lists of markets that accept EBT/SNAP/Double Bucks, etc.

Farmers would also like assistance with their own marketing efforts. They specifically requested workshops and trainings related to Google Analytics (42.9%), website development (38.1%), branding/signage (33.3%), product labeling (33.3%), and social media (33.3%).<sup>13</sup>

## Workshops and Trainings

Farmers chose technical workshops as one of their top three preferred methods of learning new information.<sup>14</sup> Two recent workshops organized by FamilyFarmed (Wholesale Success and Food Safety Planning) were cited as examples of the types of workshops they’d like to see replicated. In those instances, a local farmer was teaching and providing hands-on tools. It is recommended with all future workshops, Kane County coordinates a local farmer expert, a resource provider, and a technical expert when possible. Outside presenters and experts should be briefed on the local demographic of their audience prior to the event so the trainings and workshops can be tailored to the relevant audience. Trainings should provide attendees with hard-copy and digital resources to take home. In addition, it is recommended that training materials be uploaded on the County’s website for others to access in the future. Post training technical assistance (discussed more in the following section) should also be provided.

## One-on-One Technical Assistance

Kane County farmers cited one-on-one technical assistance as another of their top preferred methods of learning new information, especially when navigating government programs, grants, and compliance requirements including the FSMA.<sup>15</sup> In many cases, this technical assistance already exists, but farmers are unaware of or do not know their local representative. It is important to note, however, that in some agencies there may be a lack of technical assistance providers familiar with small to mid-sized diversified farms. In these situations, the county might explore facilitating partnerships to provide education and professional development for those agencies.

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<sup>12</sup> Q25

<sup>13</sup> Q17

<sup>14</sup> Q27

<sup>15</sup> Q27

Example:

The [Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Farm Services](#) program in the Carolinas is a strong example of a nonprofit providing technical assistance both in partnership with state and federal programs as well as directly to farmers in the form of individual business planning or food safety technical support.

In many states the Research and Extension offices are often good resources. For example in Kansas, the Extension is the go-to resource for producers needing one-on-one assistance.

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/dkk/localfoods.html>

## Farmer Networks

Survey respondents selected “farmer to farmer conversations” as their most preferred method of learning. While the interviewed farmers surfaced a cultural divide openly spoken about between first generation small farms and mid to larger sized multi-generation farms, these two groups identify similar operational challenges and often complement each other’s strengths and weaknesses. While workshops provide a purpose driven activity to bring farmers together, it is important to note the value created in farmer-to-farmer networking, idea-exchanging, and community building.

Example:

The [CRAFT model](#) is popular in many areas with one active group in the Kane County area that could potentially make for a great partner. Another partner could be the [National Young Farmers Coalition](#) for new and beginning farmers (Chapters currently in Central Illinois and Chicago Area).

## CONCLUSION

Farmers have identified several barriers to achieving operational goals and have prioritized for the county programs that could provide assistance to them. The most pressing recommendations to address these challenges are to (1) compile, index, and promote a list of resources among farmers, and (2) to spear-head a large consumer facing public education campaign about how and why to buy local. NVA recommends the county embark on this new phase of the project to complete the trajectory of what Kane has already begun through the Growing for Kane program.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: Update to Farmers Script

**Subject:** Growing for Kane Updates and Farmer Assessment

All,

Greetings from the Growing for Kane team at the County Development and Community Services Department! We are reaching out to provide updates on recent project activities and discuss how you can help us with the next steps in our planning process. As farmers in Kane County, you all are the heart of the local food system and we want to ensure that your perspectives are reflected in our planning efforts and in any recommended programs or resources developed to assist Kane County food farmers in achieving their goals.

Many of you have participated in various Growing for Kane initiatives, including the Food Hub feasibility study and the more recent Fresh & Local Rx program. The [Growing for Kane](#) Initiative and Ordinance, approved in 2013 by the County Board, provide the justification and direction for Kane County to support efforts such as these, aimed at increasing the production of locally grown foods and improving channels of access to healthy, local foods within our communities.

The Food Hub Feasibility Study, completed in 2016, demonstrated a significant market opportunity for aggregating local produce from Kane County farmers and selling it to regional buyers. Following an operator search, the food hub was launched in 2018 as the distributor for a pilot project called The Fresh & Local Prescription Program, which delivered fresh produce to patients at Rush Copley Hospital. Food hub operator, Dream Hub, is pursuing new opportunities to supply institutional buyers with locally grown foods during the 2019 season.

Thanks to feedback provided by farmers who participated in the Fresh & Local Rx Program, the food hub is better positioned to make informed judgements about fair pricing and the logistic requirements of moving food from local farms. Farmer input on this program will also help streamline communications processes across future sourcing operations.

### **How you can help us moving ahead...**

Moving forward we hope to refine and improve the support opportunities offered to Kane County farmers through the Growing for Kane initiative. To do so we are interested in learning more about the challenges and obstacles you as Kane County farmers face in achieving the goals of your farm. We are conducting a farmer needs assessment to determine what types of programs, training, and services the County can provide to support your operations. We are working with New Venture Advisors (NVA) to conduct interviews and surveys of farmers in order to develop recommendations in this area and **we would greatly appreciate your participation.**

You can participate in this brief 15-20 minute survey by following the link provided: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K5C3ZFF>. **Participating Kane County farmers will receive a \$50 check for completing the survey.** Information from this survey will shape the types of services provided to farmers in the County, so we encourage you to add your voice to the process and share the link with your Kane County farmer networks. You have the option to answer the survey anonymously but in order to

receive the \$50 check you will need to provide your name and mailing address. Please only fill out one survey per farm operation. **The survey will close on Monday May 6th.**

Also, as business operators, your individual survey responses will be kept confidential at your request. In your survey please mark that your responses include “proprietary, privileged, or confidential information” to ensure that no information identifiable to your farm/business be made public.

Thank you for your time and input.

## **APPENDIX 2: Farmer Interview Guide**

### **Interview Objectives:**

1. Gain insight and perspective from initial interviews to provide qualitative data to guide the development of the survey approach, focus areas/categories, and type of questions.
2. Provide greater narrative and context for the results of the surveys and in some cases, reveal the underlying motivations or biases for answers.

### **Interview Candidate List:**

*The following attributes of candidates were requested: large farmer, a smaller sustainable farmer, beginning farmer and a farmer on public land. Ideally, these would also represent farmers producing fruit, vegetables, protein, and grain.*

1. Name, Farm, Type of Farmer, Type of Production.

### **Introductory Statement:**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me. I am currently contracted by Kane County to conduct a farmers needs assessment to identify the challenges and obstacles Kane County farmers face in achieving their goals for their farm operation. The staff provided your name for an interview based on your experience and perspective and I appreciate your time in this process. We estimate this interview will take approximately 30 minutes. Is now still a good time? The information gathered from interviews will inform the surveys as well as the final recommendations. The answers to these questions can be kept anonymous at your request and if you do not wish to answer a question, please feel free to let me know.

### **Interview Questions:**

1. Would you please describe your farm including what types of products you are producing and at what volume?
  - a. What goals do you have for your farm and your farm business?
  - b. Are you thinking about any new products?
2. What are your growing practices? Do you use any specific types of production methods or certifications?
  - a. Are you interested in learning more about any specific types of production or certifications? Do you think other farmers in the area are?
3. What are your current sales channels? Which are most successful? Which would you like to grow?

- a. What % of your harvest reaches local markets (wholesale vs. direct to consumer (CSAs, farmers markets, market stands ... etc.)?
    - i. Does your farm operate a CSA program? If not, have you considered operating one in the future?
  - b. Do you feel informed about new and emerging market and sales trends and opportunities in your area?
4. What has been most successful in your overall business during the past three years?
  - a. What do you attribute this success to?
  - b. Would you be open to sharing this success with other farmers in a workshop or farm tour?
5. What have been the biggest challenges in your operation over the past three years?
  - a. What have been the biggest barriers to increasing your sales and/or production?
  - b. What strategies might address these barriers? [unaided]
  - c. What has kept you from investing in any of these strategies?
  - d. Would you be interested in attending a training or receiving technical assistance to address these barriers?
  - e. What challenges are others growers like you facing?
  - f. How significant are these potential barriers to you and other growers like you?
6. What infrastructure are you using to support cooling, grading, packing, processing, storage, etc?
  - a. What is used on the farm versus off the farm?
  - b. How are other growers like you dealing with post-harvest handling?
7. What type of infrastructure or equipment, either on farm or shared use, would be helpful to you and other local farmers in increasing the sales or adding value to your product? [AIDED  
Examples include cooling, transportation, chop, freezing, butchery, dairy processing, milling]
8. What types of resources would help you on the business side of your operation?
9. What is your understanding of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)?
  - a. What have heard about FSMA from other farmers?
  - b. What are the implications of FSMA for your farm?
  - c. What are any changes or costs you are aware of that would be associated with updating your farm to achieving FSMA Compliance?
  - d. What types of programs or services would help you feel prepared for changes associated with FSMA? (Examples: Workshops, technical assistance, farm tours, grants)
10. What are the primary ways in the next 3-5 years that Kane County could assist you in achieving your goals that have not already been mentioned? What about over the next 5-10?

11. [Aided] You did not mention [choose from list] in your discussion of challenges. Do you have anything to add to your remarks related to this/these area(s)?

- a. GAP certification
- b. Land access and use of public land
- c. Water/irrigation
- d. Labor and use of temporary visa program
- e. Season extension
- f. Value-added processing on or off farm
- g. Funding and access to capital
- h. Pricing and access to market channels
- i. Writing a business plan
- j. Recordkeeping
- k. Transition planning

Thank you so much for your time and insight in this process!

## APPENDIX 3: Farmer Survey

# Kane County Farmer Needs Assessment 2019

Kane County and its community partners are exploring how they can best support food producing farmers in reaching their goals for their operation. The following survey is intended to gain your perspective on the challenges and obstacles facing local farmers to determine what types of programs, training, and services the County can provide to support your operations.

Kane County farmers can receive \$50 for completing this survey if they provide a name and mailing address to collect payment. The check will be made payable from the County's non-profit partner, Seven Generations Ahead. This is only a survey, not a reporting document or test, and your responses are not binding in any way. The responses to the survey will be kept confidential and you have the option of also remaining anonymous, but a name and address is required to receive the \$50 (Please submit only one survey per farm operation).

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Thank you so much for your time and participation. Please forward the survey link to other Kane County producers who may be interested.

### Question Title

\* 1. In what zip code is your farm located? w

### Question Title

\* 2. How many years have you been farming? w

- <1
- 1-3
- 3-5
- 5-10
- 10-20
- 20+

### Question Title

\* 3. How would you describe yourself? w

- First generation farm business owner
- Multi-generational farm business owner
- Farm manager and/or employee (non-owner)



Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

4. Please select the option that best describes your land access. w

I own all of my farmland

I own a portion of my farmland

I rent all of my farmland

Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

5. Which of the following do you currently grow or produce on your farm? (Select all that apply)

w

Vegetables

Fruit

Eggs

Dairy

Protein

Grains

Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

6. Approximately how many plantable acres do you have access to? w

<4

5-9

10-24

25-49

50-99

100+

**Question Title**

7. Approximately how many acres of fresh fruits and vegetables do you farm? w

<4

5-9

10-24

25-49

50-99

100+

N/A

**Question Title**

8. Approximately how many acres do you have dedicated to livestock? w

<4

5-9

10-24

25-49

50-99

100+

N/A

**Question Title**

9. What are estimated sales percentages by market? w

0 <10 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

On-farm sales/retail

Restaurants

Community  
Supported

0 <10 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Agriculture/CSA or pre-sold boxes

Wholesale

Donation

Other

Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

10. Please rate the significance of each in contributing towards loss of product. w

Not at all significant      Somewhat significant      Significant      Very significant      N/A

Pest and disease

Weather

Lack of labor

Lack of necessary equipment

Unharvested due to drop in market price

Lack of market outlet

Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

11. Do you have any of the following certifications? (Select all that apply) w

- GAP (Good Agricultural Practices)
- HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points)
- Organic
- Naturally Grown
- Certified Humane
- American Grass Fed Association

- Animal Welfare Approved
- Food Justice Certified
- I do not have any certifications.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

12. How would you describe your production practices? (Select all that apply) w

- Conventional
- Certified organic
- Organic methods, not certified
- Pasture based
- Biodynamic
- Permaculture
- Hydroponic
- I would prefer not to answer.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

13. Do you have an up-to-date business plan for your farm? w

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer.

**Question Title**

14. Do you have an up-to-date food safety plan for your farm? w

- Yes
- No

I'd prefer not to answer.

**Question Title**

15. Do you have an up-to-date transition/succession plan for your farm? w

Yes

No

I'd prefer not to answer.

**Question Title**

16. What challenges does your farm face with labor? (Select all that apply) w

Accessing skilled labor

Cost of labor

Managing labor (human resources)

Paperwork/processing (payroll, workers comp, taxes)

Understanding H2A programming (for temporary agricultural workers)

Participating in H2A programming

I do not have any challenges with farm labor.

Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

17. What areas of Marketing and Communication would you like more training on? (Select all that apply) w

Branding/signage

Website development

Labeling

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

Google Analytics

Newsletter

- Blog posts
- I do not need any training on marketing and communications.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

18. What area of Sales could you use support with? (Select all that apply) w

- Crop planning for specific markets
- Meeting buyers
- Negotiating contracts
- Setting prices
- Evaluating appropriate markets for specific products
- Consumer education on the price of local
- Tracking sales/invoices in Quickbooks
- I do not need any support in sales.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

19. Do shoppers who reside in Kane County need education on how and why to buy local? w

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**Question Title**

20. What types of tools would help you in pricing your product? (Select all that apply) w

- Average wholesale pricing range for the region
- Average retail pricing range for the region
- Tools for evaluating the cost of production per crop

- Training on pricing products by market channel
- Pricing list by production type (Organic, GAP, locally grown, etc)
- I do not need any support in pricing.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

21. What areas on the business side of your operation would you like training on? (Select all that apply) w

- Recordkeeping
- Business and enterprise planning
- Maintaining certifications
- Budgeting
- Financial planning
- Managing cash flow
- Payroll
- Inventory Management
- I do not need training on the business side of my operation.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

22. What resources would be the most helpful in addressing challenges around funding? (Select all that apply) w

- No-cost technical assistance for state and federal grant program applications
- Training in budgeting, managing cash flow and financial planning
- No-cost technical assistance in writing a business plan
- Low-interest loans for farm improvements

- Grants for the adoption of FSMA improvements
- Grants for certifications
- Grants for on-farm infrastructure and equipment
- I do not need any resources related to funding.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

23. Please indicate any certifications for which you would be interested in receiving training [and/or more information about]. (Select all that apply). w

- GAP (Good Agricultural Practices)
- Organic
- Naturally Grown
- Certified Humane
- American Grass Fed Association
- Animal Welfare Approved
- Food Justice Certified
- I do not need any resources on certifications.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

24. What challenges does the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) create for your farm? (Select all that apply) w

- Increased recordkeeping
- Additional costs for compliance
- Change in production practices
- Increase in management time



- Training staff
- I would need more information about FSMA to answer.
- I do not have any challenges with FSMA.
- Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

25. Please indicate the significance of the following possible barriers in preventing you from reaching your farm production and business goals. w

	Not at all significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very Significant	N/A
Availability of suitable land					
Cost of suitable land					
Availability of labor					
Knowledge of H2A programs (qualifications, requirements, recordkeeping)					
Access to capital					
Customer knowledge/awareness of local food production					
Concerns about fair pricing					
Lack of tools for evaluating new on-farm enterprises					
Financial management					
Recordkeeping					

	Not at all significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very Significant N/A
Production equipment (tilling, planting, weeding, harvesting)				
Risk of not selling what you grow				
Difficulties finding and/or negotiating with buyers				
Knowledge of government grants and programs				
Knowledge about post harvest handling (grading, cooling, washing, packing)				
Equipment for post harvest handling (grading, cooling, washing, packing)				
Concerns about food safety requirements including FSMA regulations				
Cost, time and/or labor to get GAP certified and to implement/follow GAP protocols				
Delivery cost/limitations in current delivery range				
Lack of processing capacity				

Not at all significant      Somewhat significant      Significant      Very Significant N/A

Lack of adequate slaughter and meat processing facilities

Management skill to run a larger operation

Other (please specify)

**Question Title**

26. Please select the top five topics you would like the County to prioritize in developing resources for farmers. (Select up to 5) w

- Compliance with FSMA
- Post-harvest handling
- Crop planning
- Certifications
- Record keeping
- Financial management and budgeting
- Land access and use of public land
- Labor
- H2A/temporary visa program
- Water/Irrigation
- Season extension
- Grain production
- Integrated Pest Management
- Weed Management
- Equipment and tools

- Government programs and grants
- Value-added processing on or off farm
- Funding and access to capital
- Pricing and access to market channels
- On-farm events/agritourism
- Transition/Succession planning
- Other (please specify)

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**Question Title**

27. What are your top three preferred methods for learning new information? (Select three). w

- Farmer to farmer conversations
- Technical workshops
- Farm-tours of other operations
- One-on-one technical assistance
- Hard copy books, magazines and educational hand-outs
- Digital resources, magazines, and hand-outs
- Instructional videos
- Google
- Podcasts
- Facebook groups
- Other (please specify)

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**Question Title**

28. How many miles are you willing to travel for a one-day training that is a priority topic for your farm? w

- <10
- 10-15
- 16-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- >45
- I am unable to travel

**Question Title**

29. Please provide any additional comments or feedback below. w

**Question Title**

30. Please provide your name and mailing address to receive your thank you gift (optional). w

Name

Street Address

City

State

Zip Code