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Workshop to Focus on Development of Online Food Co-ops

The first in a series of workshops that will focus on "Food Hubs and Co-ops: How local family farms can feed our communities" will be offered April 6, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. in the Highland Community College's Klinefelter Barn, 1774 230th St., Hiawatha, Kan. The workshop will provide people who grow and enjoy locally produced food with information on how to form partnerships and food cooperatives.

"This workshop was instantly popular, and we realized we needed to develop separate workshops for the food hub and food co-op topics," said Mary Howell, Kansas Farmers Union membership specialist. "This workshop is for anyone involving in local food production, marketing or consumption. Plan to attend the workshop...The room will be full of experts!"

Nationally known speakers will participate, sharing the success stories from their regions. Confirmed presenters include: Kim Barker, producer and founding board member of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative; Darryl L. Birkenfeld, Ogallala Commons director; Chris Schmidt and Chris Sramek, High Plains Food Co-op founding board members; and Bob Mailander, former director of the Rocky Mountain Cooperative Development Center.

Also on the schedule are Vincent Amanor-Boadu, associate professor of agribusiness economics and management at Kansas State University, and Dan Nagengast of Lawrence, farmer and former tomato processing co-op board member.

A break out session will allow individual discussion and Q & A with presenters. The Glacial Hills Food Center, operated by Glacial Hills RC&D, will be highlighted. Producers can rent the Food Center's commercial kitchen for food processing. Jeff Downing, Midwest Regional Agency general manager, will cover general and product liability insurance for direct market farms. The Brown County Healthy Foods Coalition will provide an update on its Postage Stamp Production Project.

Complete event information and registration can be found at <http://foodhubsandco-ops.blogspot.com/>. For questions, contact: Mary Howell - kfu.mary@gmail.com or Gary Satter - gary.satter@glacialhillsrccd.com.

Sponsoring organizations are Kansas Farmers Union, Kansas Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (KS-SARE), Glacial Hills RC&D, Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops (KSCAAC), Kansas Rural Center, Brown County Healthy Foods Coalition, Glacial Hills Food Center and Highland Community College.

To read the full story, visit ksfarmersunion.wordpress.com.