

## Farmers Union State Convention Set for December 4-6 in Manhattan

Jim Richardson, National Geographic photographer and Kansas native, will serve up a vast visual journey: the Neolithic dawn of agriculture, today's world farmers working in relative anonymity, and the challenges of feeding an ever-more hungry planet through 2050 at Kansas Farmers Union's (KFU) upcoming annual convention.

Richardson, who has photographed agriculture at home in Kansas and abroad for 20 years, offers both a bird's eye view of world agriculture - and a face-to-face experience of the people who labor every day to feed us. One major question that will be addressed in his presentation during the Friday night banquet: "With more than 40 percent of the world's surface already in agricultural production, how do we feed 9 billion people?"

Larry Mitchell, director of USDA's Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration, will serve as keynote speaker for Friday's lunch banquet where he will discuss "Working for Fair and Competitive Markets for Farmers and Livestock Producers Locally and Globally." GIPSA's programs directly and significantly impact two key sectors of American agriculture - the livestock and grain markets, and Administrator Mitchell will provide insights into these sectors of the agriculture economy.

Registration is now open for the convention, which will be hosted at the Four Points by Sheraton hotel Thursday, December 4 through Friday, December 5, 2014.

Richardson, Mitchell, and other convention speakers will share their experience and expertise on a range of topics including agricultural advocacy, history, new agricultural practices, farm succession and transition, and cooperatives. This year's convention theme "Thinking Outside The Box" encourages members and attendees to be more open-minded about agriculture as a whole, and to take everything into consideration, especially when discussing the challenges those involved in agriculture will face in the coming years.

Convention topics include:

- **Early National and Kansas Farmers Union History**
- **Feeding Kansas:** *Because Feeding the World Must Include Feeding Ourselves*
- **Water for the Future of Kansas:** *The Case for the Kansas Aqueduct Project*
- **Building A Successful Food Co-op**
- **Washington Update:** *National Farmers Union's Take on D.C. Politics*
- **Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration:** *Working for Fair and Competitive Markets for Farmers and Livestock Producers Locally and Globally*
- **Family Farm Advocacy Training:** *Building Personal Relationships with Legislators & Promoting a Proactive Discussion of the Issues*
- **Farm Transition Opportunities**
- **Farm and Ranch Succession Planning**

Conference speakers include National Farmers Union honorary historian Tom Giessel; Kansas Rural Center's Cole Cottin; Chris Wilson and Mark Rude with the Kansas Aqueduct Coalition; High Plains Food Co-op's Chris Schmidt, Chris Sramek, and Leon Atwell; National Farmers Union's Chandler Goule; family farm advocate panelists Ed Reznicek, Mary Fund, Linda Hessman, and Rachel Myslivy; Cody Holmes of Rockin' H Ranch and Real Farm Foods; and Forrest Buhler with Kansas

## Agricultural Mediation Services.

Additional convention highlights include a tour of the Flint Hills Discovery Center, a unique museum that explores the geology, biology and cultural history of the Flint Hills; the annual KFU Foundation Silent & Live Auction where all funds raised benefit KFU education programs; and Kansas cowboy singer and poet Jeff Davidson, who will combine a unique blend of songs, historical facts, and pictures, to revisit the history of Kansas and its tremendous influence on the shaping of the U.S. economy, ideology, and heroism.

KFU members, guests, and the general public are invited to attend the convention. Room reservations must be made by Wednesday, November 26 with Four Points by Sheraton hotel at (785) 539-5311. Please ask for the \$75.00 Kansas Farmers Union block of rooms. For more information, and to register for the convention online, please do so by December 1 at [kansasfarmersunion.com](http://kansasfarmersunion.com).