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Registration is Open for KRC Specialty Crop Workshops in South Hutchinson and Dighton. Registration is open for the Kansas Rural Center's Specialty Crop Workshops in South Hutchinson and Dighton this March. The South Hutchinson workshop will be held on Tuesday, March 20, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the South Hutchinson Community Building, 101 Avenue C, South Hutchinson. The Dighton workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 21, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the 4-H Building at the Lane County Fairgrounds, Fairgrounds Road, Dighton. There is a \$15 registration fee for each workshop, which will cover the cost of lunch and materials.

For more information and to register for the workshops, please visit - <https://kansasmruralcenter.org/krcs-2018-specialty-crop-workshops/>.

Please register by Wednesday, March 14, so that we can get an accurate lunch count.

The workshops will provide information and education necessary for beginning specialty crop growers to establish a successful specialty crop enterprise in Kansas. Each workshop will focus on conservation, production and marketing practices for specialty crop growers, and will provide an excellent opportunity for beginning growers to connect with and learn from experienced growers.

Each workshop will provide information on the state of specialty crops in Kansas, with David Coltrain answering the question, "What's Special About Specialty Crops?" Coltrain will look at current production, historical production, and potential production of specialty crops in Kansas. Economic considerations and enterprise budgets for growing specialty crops will be covered.

Information on accessing the many resources that are available to help specialty crop growers be successful in their operations will be provided at each workshop. Organizations that offer resources to specialty crop growers include: Kansas Department of Agriculture; K-State Research and Extension; USDA groups, including SARE, NRCS, RMA, FSA; and farm credit lenders. At each workshop, a representative from one of the groups will be on hand to talk about the resources and to answer questions. This session will also provide a number of websites with important information for growers.

At the South Hutchinson workshop, Sheila Corn will discuss the advantages and limitations of farming small and will explore the considerations and options of small farm sustainability. Corn has almost 40 years of experience with market gardening and has been instrumental in organizing the Reno County Producers' Market and is active in food insecurity issues in the Hutchinson area. Discussion will include planning your crop mix, equipment and land requirements, skills needed and how to acquire them, and marketing options.

Ron Hirst will discuss "Money and Markets: Is Growing Local Fresh Food Enough?" Hirst is a long-time farmer and has done economic development and served as the Director of The Quest Center for Entrepreneurs in Reno County; been a member of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Ag Market Advisory Board; the Reno County Extension Board and the K96 Corridor Development Association. Currently he serves on the South Central Kansas Economic Development District Board as chairman, Reno County E-Partners, Reno County Food Policy, and Regional Economic Area Partnership.

Ron Hulsey will talk about growing grapes in Zone 6 in Kansas. Hulsey is a retired U. S. Army Master Sergeant and Project Manager from Boeing Aerospace Company who became interested in grape production while he was serving in Germany in 1975. Having moved 24 times while working for the Army and Boeing, Hulsey and his wife were unable to start a vineyard until he retired in

2006. They planted an experimental vineyard in 2007 with 12 varieties of grapes to see for themselves which grow best in Hardiness Zone 6.

Scott Kohl will talk about viticulture in Kansas. Kohl is the Director of Highland Community College Viticulture and Enology Program, which manages over 5000 grapevines on eight acres and produces around 100 cases of wine per year with plans for a major winery expansion in 2018.

Adam Pounds will discuss Urban Agriculture as a Method for Intensive Production and Community Engagement. Pounds and his wife are gearing up for their third season of production at Simple Abundance Farm in South Hutchinson. As a multi-location urban diversified-vegetable farm with less than a 1/4 acre in production, they are familiar with the benefits and trials of intensive growing in an urban setting. A tour of Simple Abundance Farm will cap off the day.

At the Dighton workshop, Daniel Brooks will discuss “Finding What Works” in specialty crop production. Brooks has been selling vegetables for two years, and apprenticed on an organic vegetable farm in Colorado prior to starting his own endeavor in Kansas.

Steve Michel will talk about things he’s learned during his first year selling vegetables grown in the high tunnels he installed in 2017. Michel is an experienced grower and owner of Prariewind Aquatics in Garden City, which sells trees, shrubs, water pond supplies and other garden center items.

Dr. Cary Rivard, Extension Specialist and Director of the Olathe K-State Research and Extension Center, will discuss opportunities for specialty crop production in Western Kansas, and how to diversify high tunnel production to capture new markets.

Anne Marie Jennings will talk about her experience creating Jennings Family Gardens, a small vegetable and herb farm that focuses on raising healthy, natural products. For the past two years they have been selling locally in Dighton, and recently joined with the High Plains Food Coop to extend their market base to the Denver area. They grow a wide range of crops. A tour of Jennings Family Gardens farm and high tunnels will end the day.

For more detailed information on each workshop and to register, please visit - <https://kansasruralcenter.org/krcs-2018-specialty-crop-workshops/>.

The workshops are part of a five-workshop series that the Kansas Rural Center is hosting this March, as part of their “Linking Experienced and Beginning Kansas Specialty Crop Farmers to Share Information for Establishing Successful Specialty Crop Enterprises Project,” which is funded by the Kansas Department of Agriculture through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

To learn more about the workshops, please contact David Coltrain at 620-330-3951 or [coltraindavid@gmail.com](mailto:coltraindavid@gmail.com), or email [info@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:info@kansasruralcenter.org). For questions about the project as a whole, please contact Mary Fund at [mfund@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:mfund@kansasruralcenter.org) or 866-579-5469.

*The mission of KRC, a non-profit research, education and advocacy organization founded in 1979, is to promote the long-term health of the land and its people through research, education and advocacy that advance an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just food and farming system. For more information, visit [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).*