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Kansas Rural Center to Host Land Owner– Land Seeker Mixer

The Kansas Rural Center (KRC) will host a special "Mixer" for Land/Farm Owners and Farm/Land Seekers at their annual Food and Farm conference on Friday, November 8, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Mixer is free but pre-registration is required and is separate from the regular conference registration. The Mixer is also open and free to non-conference goers.

The conference will be held November 8 and 9, 2019, at the Drury Plaza Hotel Broadview in Wichita. Registration for both the Mixer and the conference is available at <https://kansasruralcenter.org/2019-conference/>.

Many retiring farmers do not have a family successor in mind. Some landowners want to find a farmer who will use sustainable, regenerative or organic farming practices. Farm seekers are often looking for lease-to-buy opportunities, or for learning opportunities. Finding affordable available farming land or farming opportunities is a big challenge for beginning farmers.

“Sometimes we hear from those seeking a farm or land to buy or lease, or for an opportunity to work with a farmer as they gain experience. Retiring farmers or absentee landowners who have inherited farmland also call seeking a farmer to farm the land as they would like to see it farmed,” says Mary Fund, KRC Executive Director. She adds, “A common theme is that land owners want someone who will care about the land and farm as they have; or seekers are looking for a farm learning opportunity to prepare them to lease or buy a farm, or maybe they are looking for land where they can put into practice sustainable, regenerative, or organic practices, or raise specialty crops with local and regional marketing options in mind.”

Research has shown that the biggest challenge for farm succession to a non-related successor is for these two groups to find each other; and successful transitions need time for relationship building. KRC will tackle this dilemma by offering a workshop at their annual conference bringing these two groups together—the farm/land owners and the farm seekers. The workshop requires separate registration from the conference overall. Only those who pre-registered for the workshop will be allowed to attend.

Attendees will be asked during registration to complete a short survey designed for them as a farm/land owner or a farm or land seeker. Registrants will be asked to describe what they are looking for in terms of a farm, type of farm, or what kind of farm or land they have available. This information will only be used to inform the workshop format, and names will remain confidential.

“The Mixer is a pilot effort or experiment,” stated Fund. “It is not a matching service or a workshop to answer legal questions. It is an opportunity to meet like-minded people with similar goals. KRC hopes to gauge interest in how events like these might help land owners and seekers identify each other and establish a better understand of the challenges and opportunities they encounter. Hopefully it will also help the attendees refine what they are looking for in a farm or farming opportunity, and the options available for finding a successor, or partner in farming.”

For more information on the Mixer, contact Mary Fund at mfund@kansasruralcenter.org or 866-579-5469.

The conference theme "Planting Ideas, Growing Our Future: Carbon, Climate and Communities" lays the foundation for up to 12 breakout sessions each day and two dynamic keynote speakers. Workshops and keynote speakers will represent a focus on building resilience and diversity on our farms and in our communities; climate and agriculture; farm transitions; and policy and action.

Registration to attend the two day conference is available at \$75 per day or \$145 for both days. The price includes a Friday evening celebration of KRC's 40th Anniversary with an extended hors d'oeuvres buffet, Kansas beer and wine, and music. The celebration will be held on Friday, November 8, from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The reception is open to non-conference goers for \$40. Registration for the conference, anniversary celebration, and special workshop Mixer can all be found at kansasruralcenter.org/2019-conference.

For more information about the conference, speakers, and registration visit kansasruralcenter.org/2019-conference. Or call 866-579-5469 or email info@kansasruralcenter.org.

The mission of KRC, founded in 1979, is to promote the long-term health of the land and its people through community-based research, education, and advocacy that advances an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just food and farming system in Kansas. For more information, visit kansasruralcenter.org.