



Kane County

KC Agriculture Committee

Meeting Minutes

Government Center
719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A
Geneva, IL 60134

JUBY, Roth, Allan, Lenert, Penesis, Sanchez, Williams and ex-officio Pierog (County Chair)

Thursday, July 17, 2025

10:30 AM

County Board Room

1. Call To Order

Chairman Juby called today's meeting to order at 10:50 AM.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT	Board Member Leslie Juby Board Member Bill Roth Board Member Deborah Allan Board Member Bill Lenert Board Member Ted Penesis Board Member Jarett Sanchez
ABSENT	Board Member Rick Williams Ex-Officio County Board Chair Corinne M. Pierog

Also present: Co. Bd. members Arroyo*, Molina*; KCFB Mgr. Arnold, KCFB President Dale Pitstick and Illinois Farm Bureau Manager Associate Ben Freehill; Dev. Dir. VanKerkhoff and staff Tansley and Castro; ITD staff Peters; and members of the press and public including Extension Program Educator Alexis Barnes, Executive Planner and Farmland Protection Manager Janice Hill; Sustainable Agriculture & Food Consultant Ellen Kamps, Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District Senior Resource Analyst Isabella Borzeka, and former Board Member Mike Kenyon.

3. Remote Attendance Requests

There were no remote attendance requests for today's meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes: May 22, 2025

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Bill Roth

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Partners

A. Kane County Farm Bureau Updates (Steve Arnold, Manager)

Kane County Farm Bureau (KCFB) Mgr. Arnold introduced newly elected KCFB Vice President Dale Pitstick and two new Directors Wayne Gehrke and Davis Espe. He also introduced Illinois Farm Bureau Manager Associate Ben Freehill. He stated that in June the KCFB rolled out the "Eat, Join, Win" promotion. There are a total of 20 BBQ drive-thru events. You will receive a punch on your punch card for every meal ordered at Fay's Drive-thru BBQ, which will run till September 25, 2025. If you order 20 dinners before October 9, you will receive a complimentary raffle ticket to win a vintage 1948 Willie's Jeep. In addition, there were 25 college scholarships awarded for a total of \$45K to students studying careers in agriculture. The KCFB will be taking orders for fresh, Southern Illinois peaches through August 13. Arnold stated that at the July Board meeting, Carolyn Brummel and Jonathan Koepke to discuss wetlands and mitigation banking. There will be a report from Koepke in the August Kane County Farmer publication. He thanked Ellen Kamps for her outstanding writing about the Garlic Breath Farms of Elburn article. The article will be featured in the July Farmer issue. On July 8, there was a donor recognition and scholarship awards event held at the Kane County Cougars Stadium. Arnold announced that the Kane County Fair will be held on Friday, July 18 thru Sunday, July 20. The KCFB will promote farm safety, the vintage truck raffle, and several fun, family activities. There will also be a Blue Ribbon Sale silent auction that will turn into a live auction on Sunday, July 20 on several farm toys gifted by Scott Horton of St. Charles who recently passed away. The funds will benefit the KCFB foundation and to support causes that were meaningful to Horton. Lastly, there is a coupon within the July Farmer issue for free, family ice cream. Arnold mentioned the "swag" that was handed out at the Kane County Fair, including recipes for pork, beef, and sweet corn. Additional items that were handed out were magnets with tips converting measurements and ingredient substitutions for cooking. Much discussion took place.

B. Northern Illinois Food Bank Updates (Robert Desio, Senior Manager of Public Policy and Benefits)

No report was made.

C. Master Urban Farmer Training Program 2025 (Alexis Barnes, Extension Educator)

(Committee Member Allan arrived at 11:04 a.m.) Local Food and Small Farms Educator with Illinois Extension, serving Kane County, Alexis Barnes stated the Urban Farmer Training course will begin this fall. This is a twelve week program which will run from September 22 through December 8. Every other week there will be discussions on production, business and marketing. These trainings are geared towards beginner specialty crop farmers, and their mission and visions. Barnes announced that applications for this training course will be available on Monday, July 21, 2025 and will be open for one month. The cost is \$75. Much discussion ensued.

7. Presentations/Announcements**A. Conference Recap and Local Food and Farm Funding Options (Janice Hill, Consultant)**

Executive Planner and Farmland Protection Manager, Janice Hill, provided a recap on the Local Food and Farm Funding Options. She stated that the American Farmland Trust is a national non-profit organization that has been partnering with the Farmland Protection Program since 2001. She noted that saving America's working lands is intended to meet the growing demand for protecting and retaining U.S. agricultural land. The main topics discussed at the conference were conserving agricultural easements, agricultural viability and planning, access and affordability, and economic sustainability. Hill reviewed the real estate transfer tax status of state programs, and the recording and mitigation fees. The fees used most often are fees implemented within their county government, such as bonds, recording fees, and real estate transfer tax. Hill asked the Committee for further direction on funding options for Kane County to expand funding streams to support Farmland Protection in the coming years. Hill addressed questions and comments from the Committee. Further discussion took place.

B. Kane County Food Systems 2025 Update (Ellen Kamps, Consultant)

Sustainable Agriculture & Food Consultant, Ellen Kamps, provided an update on the 2025 Kane County Food Systems Program. She highlighted her recent work with the Kane County Development Department, and the newly formed Kane County Economic Development Corporation. Operating along this spectrum has allowed Kamps to work hyper-locally with Kane County farmers, and to analyze projects from a 30K foot view. Her goal is to provide information to the county through a state-wide, national, and global lens. She participated in the Illinois Food Systems Roadmap initiative, which is designed to strengthen the state's food system through community, formed planning, and coordinated action. The second initiative she attended was her trip to Washington D.C. for personalized access to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), municipal planning departments, and meeting with congressional agricultural committees who work on legislation. The third initiative she attended was the Bayer Chicago Invite. This was an intimate conference that focused on regenerative agriculture methods and corporate partnerships. The fourth initiative was the USDA Trade Mission to Peru where she represented Kane County and the Economic Development Corporation on a USDA Agribusiness Trade Mission. The fifth and final initiative she attended was the Georgetown University Consulting focusing on a developing opportunity for consulting that will occur throughout the next few months. Between now and November, the Georgetown pre-scenario team will help the Kane County Food Systems Program organize projects, and create an identity around food and agriculture prosperity in Kane County. Kamps addressed questions and comments from the Committee. Further discussion ensued.

8. New Business

Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District Senior Resource Analyst, Isabella Borzeka, announced that there will be a cover crops field day, drone seeding demonstration held on Tuesday, August 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Master's Gardener's Idea Garden. After the field visit, there will be a lunch and panel discussion, followed by a raffle to win a fall 2025 drone cover crop seeding on a Kane or DuPage County field of the winner's choice.

9. Reports Placed On File

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Bill Roth

10. Executive Session (if needed)

None.

11. Adjournment

RESULT:	APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE
MOVER:	Leslie Juby
SECONDER:	Jarett Sanchez

This meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Rachel Santora
Recording Secretary