



# 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, May 22, 2025**

**10:30 AM**

**County Board Room**

#### 2025 Committee Goals

Goals from the July Agriculture Committee meeting

- Revise County Code Definition of the Agriculture Committee
- Awareness & Support of Agriculture - Raise public awareness and support for agriculture in Kane County as an industry sector and community resource
- Farmland Protection - Work in concert with the Farmland Protection Commission and County Board to oversee the successful implementation of Kane County's Farmland Protection Ordinance and related conservation efforts, and pursue funding
- Continue Growing for Kane Program - Direct the implementation of programs and policies that expand the production of locally grown foods and improve community access to fresh and healthy food choices, and pursue funding
  - Continue partnerships with Kane County Farm Bureau and Northern Illinois Food Bank
  - Implement current grant funded projects
  - Continue to apply for additional outside grants
  - Implement economic development projects for Agriculture
  - ARPA Small grants for farmers
  - Other projects identified by the Economic Development Strategic Plan for Kane County

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#### 1. Call To Order

Chairman Juby called today's meeting to order at 10:31 AM.

#### 2. Roll Call

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

Also present: Co. Bd. members Kious\*, Lewis, Molina\*; KCFB Mgr. Arnold; Dev. Dir. VanKerkhoff and staff Tansley; ITD staff Kash; and members of the press and public including KCFB Vice President Beth Gehrke, Urban Agriculture Program Mgr. Liz Repplinger, Northern Illinois Food Bank Senior Mgr. Rob Desio, Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District Admin. Coordinator Kat Gerdts and staff Senior Resource Analyst Isabella Borzeka.

**3. Remote Attendance Requests**

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

**4. Approval of Minutes: April 17, 2025**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Bill Roth

**5. Public Comment**

None.

**6. Partners**

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

Kane County Farm Bureau (KCFB) Mgr. Arnold thanked the Committee for the recognition of Steve Pittstick for earning the Master Farmer Award. He stated that he has been communicating with sustainability coordinator Powell suggesting to have the KCFB administer the grants. A decision has not been made. Arnold stated that he will reach out to the office of general council to discuss the legality of the KCFB handling the administration. More updates will be provided at next month's meeting. (Committee Member Allan arrived at 10:48 a.m.) Arnold announced that he attended an informational meeting discussing the American Natural Resources Corporation (ANR) Heartland Pipeline Project. It was a successful meeting, with over thirty landowners seeking information about the pipeline. Arnold provided several handouts listing upcoming farm bureau events. An after hours event will be on Tuesday, June 10 from 4:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. at Acquaviva Winery and Ristorante in Batavia. There will be a preview of the 2025 events and activities, and an announcement of the 25 recipients of over \$45K in KCFB scholarships. On July 8, there will be a scholarship awards and donor recognition. Scholarship recipients and donors will gather at Northwestern Memorial Field in Geneva. Lastly, Arnold announced that for 2025, the KCFB foundation will be distributing wallet-sized "punch cards" at each drive-thru BBQ. Each meal purchased at any of the KCFB BBQ's will earn one special character punch. Any farm bureau member who returns a completed punch card prior to October 1 will earn a complimentary entry in the KCFB 2025 Vintage Truck Raffle fundraiser. Members will also have a chance to win a 1948 Willys Jeep pickup truck on Thursday, October 9. All KCFB BBQ's will be held on every Thursday from May 22-October 9. He introduced KCFB Vice President Beth Gehrke to the Committee. Arnold addressed questions and comments from the Committee.

**B. Illinois Farm Bureau & Urban Agriculture (Liz Repplinger, Urban Agriculture Program Manager)**

Urban Agriculture Program Mgr. with the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Liz Repplinger introduced herself to the Committee. Her work is focused on networking with urban farmers, community gardeners, and food access programs across the state of Illinois. The goal of the program is to assist farmers with building networks within their communities and regions. She stated that the IFB is increasingly involved in promoting and supporting urban agriculture throughout the state. This includes initiatives like the Urban Growers Cohort, which provides resources and guidance to urban agriculture projects. The IFB is interested in strengthening local food systems, addressing food deserts, and providing educational resources on urban agriculture. Repplinger hopes to learn more about the county's local food access programs, and get an insight of what the Kane County Agriculture Committee is involved in, such as the Growing for Kane Program. Further discussion took place.

**7. Presentations/Announcements**

**A. Agriculture Projects Update (Matt Tansley, Planner)**

Dev. Planner Tansley provided updates on the agriculture projects with New Venture Advisors Consultant (NVA). He reminded the Committee that the Kane County Board authorized and extended a service agreement with NVA to provide strategic guidance in addressing local food system needs, and identify opportunities for growing successful agricultural businesses. Tansley reviewed the Soil Health Impact and Economic Assessment (SHIEA). The assessment is to look at the economic, environmental, and public health benefits derived from adopting on-farm health management systems. The Local Food Access Models and Strategies (LFAMS) is another analysis of ongoing initiatives that focuses on increasing the availability of local foods within the region. The intended outcome for the LFAMS is to generate an index of active food system programs and organizations aligned with Growing for Kane objectives. In addition, this project will provide analysis of consumer sentiment and wholesale purchasing trends. The intended outcome for the SHIEA will be to assess the current state of soil health and composition on select Kane County farms. This assessment will provide a business cost and benefit analysis associated with the adoption of soil health practices, and determine the level of economic and public health benefits linked to adoption of soil health practices. Lastly, this assessment will benefit Kane County farmers by providing information to guide operating decisions that affect soil health and quality, and provide farmers opportunities to explore new business lines for generating additional income.

**8. New Business**

Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) Senior Mgr. Rob Desio manages the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program team (SNAP). He stated that 4%-5% of the total meals distributed have been lost due to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) cuts. The NIFB is on track to serve over 93M meals this year. Much discussion took place.

Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District Admin. Coordinator Kat Gerdts announced that there will be Urban Agriculture Programming provided by the district this year. There will be a Cover Crops Assessment event later this year in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension (UIUC) and the Kane County Farm Bureau (KCFB), discussing drone demos for a Cover Crops Field Day.

Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District Senior Resource Analyst Isabella Borzeka hopes to form a partnership with the Kane County agricultural sectors. She is in communication with Matt Tansley and Sarahy Castro in the Development Department to organize a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) committee for the Kane County LESA score. She stated that LESA is a tool in determining viability of land for agricultural use. The first LESA committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 29, 2025 gathering individuals involved in the agriculture community to discuss perspectives on current iterations of the LESA score. Further discussion took place.

**9. Reports Placed On File**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Bill Roth

**10. Executive Session (if needed)**

None.

**11. Adjournment**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Bill Roth
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rick Williams

This meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Rachel Santora  
Recording Secretary