



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, September 18, 2025

10:30 AM

County Board Room

1. Call To Order

Chairman Juby called today's meeting to order at 10:41 AM.

2. Roll Call

Chairman Juby announced that an in-person quorum was not established. No votes could be taken. The Committee continued on to presentations and reports for informational purposes only until a quorum is established.

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

Also present: Co. Bd. members Linder; KCFB Mgr. Arnold; Dev. Dir. VanKerkhoff and staff Tansley and Castro; Spec. ASA Shepro; ITD staff Peters; and members of the press and public including SNAP-ED Director Deanna Roby and Educator Cristine Birns; Kane DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District Senior Resource Analyst Isabelle Borzeka, Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District Admin. Coordinator Kat Gerdts; Former Board Member Mike Kenyon.

3. Remote Attendance Requests

Chairman Juby announced the remote attendance requests for today's meeting. She asked if there were any objections to Committee Member Penesis attending remotely. There were no objections.

4. Approval of Minutes: August 21, 2025

5. Public Comment

Kane County resident Ginger Romano spoke on her concerns of county fiscal responsibility, and property tax increases. She shared her concerns on commercial, industrial, and solar continuing to cover valuable farmland.

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

Kane County Farm Bureau (KCFB) Mgr. Arnold thanked Ellen Kamps for her story on Growing for Kane highlighting Wilte's Farm Market celebrating 60 years. It was the lead article in the September Kane County Farmer publication. He recognized development planner Matt Tansley for the information on soil health impacts, and economic assessment. Arnold announced that the 131st Annual Big Rock Plowing Match will be held from Friday, September 19 to Sunday, September 21. This event is a celebration of farming traditions featuring plowing competitions, and includes an array of activities for everyone in the family. He stated that the Eat, Join, Win promotion will continue through Thursday, October 9, 2025. This promotion includes weekly Fay's BBQ drive-thru's and the Annual Vintage Truck raffle. The KCFB Foundation will be distributing wallet-sized punch cards at each drive-thru BBQ. Each meal purchased will earn one special character punch. Arnold added that the month of September is the deadline for County Farm Bureaus to establish goals for 2026. In addition to the long-range farm bureau goals, the Board of Directors have added fifteen new goals to reach for next year. He announced that tonight will be a Fay's BBQ fundraiser at the KCFB. On Friday, September 19, the farm bureau is inviting the public to help maintain the pollinator garden. A total of forty new plants were acquired from Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District, and will be planted over the weekend. On Saturday, September 20, there will be a mums sale displayed on the KCFB's lawn and parking lot area. An assortment of mums, straw bales, small gourds, and all sizes of pumpkins will be available. On Thursday, October 9, there will be a giveaway of a Vintage 1948 Willys Jeep pickup truck. Arnold noted that on Sunday, November 16, there will be a draw down fundraiser for college scholarships held at Lions Park in Elburn. Lastly, Arnold stated that the Illinois Farm Bureau is making available \$30K state-wide for pollinator conservation grants. He added that the Illinois Farm Bureau is also making available \$200K for nutrient stewardship grants. There will be more information on these grants presented at next month's meeting. The KCFB has until October 16 to submit program ideas for pollinator conservation or nutrient stewardship.

B. Northern Illinois Food Bank Updates

No report was made.

7. Presentations/Announcements

A. Extension SNAP-Ed Program in Kane County (Deanna Roby, Director; Christine Birns, SNAP-Ed Educator)

SNAP-ED Director Deanna Roby provided information on the SNAP-ED program. She stated that the program is focused on the nutrition education and physical activity programs for eligible communities, aiming to improve healthy eating habits, and increase access to nutritious food. She noted that SNAP-ED initiatives include nutrition classes, social marketing campaigns, and efforts to improve policies, systems, and the environment of communities. (Committee Member Allan arrived at 11:00 a.m.) In regards to public health campaigns, the Find Food Illinois Community Food Map that anyone can use to access food pantries, school and summer meal sites, grocery stores, farmers markets, and SNAP offices. Roby stated that SNAP-ED is available in 102 Illinois counties. There are over 1M households that have been impacted. For Kane County, there were a total of 4,062 direct education contacts. She noted that a total of 4,032 pounds of food was donated last year, and helped partners secure \$31K in external funds for local sites. For every dollar spent on Illinois SNAP-ED, the program returns up to \$9.54 in future benefits. Roby stated that SNAP-ED funding officially ends September 30, 2025.

SNAP-ED Educator Cristine Birns provided an overview on Local Food Access Funding. She stated one of the active programs was the Community Unit School District (CUSD) 300 at Carpentersville Middle School. An established garden was planted to support an on-site pantry forming a garden club for students. The pantry serves about 200 people per week, and the district serves 21K students. The next active program is the East Aurora Resiliency Center which was introduces hydroponics and raised-bed gardens to enhance mental health initiatives, and provide fresh produce for school meals. Birns highlighted the Aurora Area Interfaith Food pantry. This pantry is an enhanced on-site garden to supply pantry needs, and serves 1,500 neighbors per week. The Marie Wilkinson Food pantry and Charity Bloom Garden includes expanded and improved gardens to provide fresh produce for the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry. This pantry serves 1,900 neighbors per week. The Boys and Girls Club in Elgin serves 500 young individuals, with an upgraded on-site garden to promote youth mental health, increase access to fresh produce for summer and after-school meals. The Mercy Housing Food pantry in Batavia serves 400 to 600 neighbors, and has a youth and new adult garden for pantry support. Lastly, the IDEA Garden in St. Charles provides fresh produce to local pantries including the Well Child Center in Elgin. The future goal for this garden is to host educational programs on-site in an outdoor education structure. Further discussion ensued.

Chairman Juby acknowledged Committee Member Allan's arrival. She announced that an official in-person quorum was established.

B. Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District Updates (Isabella Borzeka, Senior Resource Analyst)

Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District (KDSWCD) Admin. Coordinator Kat Gerdts stated that the KDSWCD is in the beginning stages of strategic planning. There will be a Board meeting tonight at 6:00 p.m. focusing on strengths. Gerdts noted that the drone demo event was a success. She announced that on October 1, there will be an event held at the Morton Arboretum with partners "Garden Works" to discuss putting your garden to sleep for a successful next season. Gerdts noted that the Women in Agriculture organization will kickoff in November. Lastly, in January 2026, KDSWCD is partnering with the Kane County Sustainability team to host a social gathering with producers and special guests to speak about his farming experiences.

Kane DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District (KDSWCD) Senior Resource Analyst Isabelle Borzeka announced that on Thursday, October 16, KDSWCD and North Cook County SWCD are hosting a Building a Blueprint for Local Food Systems workshop event held at Rolling Knolls Pavilion in Elgin from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This event will outline methods for farmers and food producers building sustainable, and profitable businesses.

C. Growing for Kane Program Updates (Matt Tansley, Planner)

Dev. Planner Tansley provided Growing for Kane Program Updates. He stated that last year, there were a total of twelve trainees who participated in the first cohort of the Master Urban Farmer Training Program, and the Equitable Local Food Access program. The second cohort is projected to have only five to six trainees starting this month. As of this month, the final payment for the Master Urban Farmer Training Program has been completed. Payments will continue to be made to support the Equitable Local Food Access Projects. The term of the MUFTP program will continue into next year allowing the SNAP-ED team to provide follow-up services. Tansley highlighted the fantastic work done by Food and Small Farms Educator Alexis Barnes. In addition to overseeing the Master Urban Farmers Training Program, she has continued to provide technical assistance to specialty crop farmers, and livestock growers across the county. Tansley stated that Kane County originally received 29 applications, and nineteen were determined to be eligible recipients for the Food and Farm Resiliency Grant Program. The American Rescue Plan (ARPA) team has continuously received and processed reimbursement requests. To date, the total amount of funds awarded to Kane County Food Growers is \$669,363. The current remaining balance of funds for the program is \$121,795.

8. New Business

None.

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:	Bill Roth
SECONDER:	Bill Lenert

This meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Rachel Santora
Recording Secretary