



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, October 23, 2025

10:30 AM

County Board Room

1. Call To Order

Chairman Juby called today's meeting to order at 10:32 AM.

2. Roll Call

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

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

3. Remote Attendance Requests

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

4. Approval of Minutes: September 18, 2025

RESULT:	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT
MOVER:	Ted Penesis

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Partners

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

Kane County Farm Bureau (KCFB) Mgr. Arnold acknowledged and thanked Development Planner, Matt Tansley, for sending out the Growing for Kane Newsletter. He addressed several items within the newsletter including the Soil Health and Economic Impact Assessment. He stated that this assessment will be featured in the October Kane County Farmer publication, as well as information about the Farmer Weatherization Rebate Program. Arnold noted that applications for the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant for the No-Till/ Strip Till practices will be accepted from October 27 to October 31, 2025. Arnold stated that the 19th Annual Vintage Truck Raffle was concluded on Sunday, October 19. A 1948 Willys-Overland Jeep Pick-up Truck was given away to a West Chicago resident. The 20th Annual Vintage Truck Raffle was held to raise money for college scholarships next year. A lifted 1984 Chevrolet K-10 has been acquired by the KCFB. Ticket prices have not been established, nor has a raffle license been attained at this time. Arnold highlighted that the KCFB is continuing the Drive-Thru Fay's BBQ. On Saturday, November 15, there will be a daytime Drive-Thru Fay's BBQ event featuring a "Giving Christmas Tree" that will be displayed in the parking lot for residents to pick up tags to buy gifts for the less fortunate within the community. A follow-up daytime Drive-Thru event will be held on Saturday, November 22 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for Costco shoppers and residents to return coats and gifts from tags that were pulled off of the giving tree. He stated that the first "pilot" work with the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) inmates was conducted earlier this week. It was a successful opportunity for the JJC inmates to learn labor skills to access the inmates' willingness to work, and potentially integrate back into society. On Sunday, November 16, Arnold announced that the first fundraising Draw/Down will be held at the Elburn Lions Park from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Tickets for this event are now available. The next monthly Kane County Farmer publication will feature an announcement of the college student scholarship that will be available for 2026 and 2027. Arnold predicts that a total of \$50K will be available for scholarships next year. He reminded the Committee of the opportunity to apply for a pollinator conservation grant. He stated that on behalf of Ellen Kamps' request, she would like to print a 2026 pollinator calendar. Information on funding for this will be available in the beginning of December. Arnold noted that there were several discussions with Local Foods, and Land Use Professional, Janice Hill, on applying for a nutrient loss reduction project in January 2026. There will be more information provided at next month's meeting.

B. Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District Updates (Kat Gerdts, Administrative Coordinator)

Kane-Dupage Soil and Water Conservation District (KDSWCD) Admin. Coordinator Kat Gerdts addressed the government shutdown impacts on the KDSWCD. (Committee Member Allan arrived at 10:52 a.m.) Offices located on Dean Street are currently closed. The KDSWCD remains open and continues to operate. Gerdts stated that effective today the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is currently providing essential services including farm loans, crop insurance, and disaster aid to the community. On August 12, a drone-seeding demo day was held at Extensions IDEA Garden. Matt Kline was the raffle winner of \$1,500 worth of drone cover-crop seeding. Last week, North Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) joined KDSWCD in hosting a Building a Blueprint for Local Food Systems workshop. This event outlined methods for farmers and food producers building sustainable and profitable businesses that focus on bringing health, and local foods into communities that need them. The event was held at the Cook County Forest Preserve's Rolling Knolls Pavilion in Elgin. Local Food Economies advocate, Adam Cohen, was welcomed to share local food network visions. Extension Educator on Local Farm Food Systems and Small Farms, Alexis Barnes, discussed Extension programs designed to specifically support urban agriculture producers. Sharie Craddock from the Farm Family Resource Initiative shared resources for mental health support for the agriculture community. The workshop finished with lunch catered by Body Fuel featuring foods sourced from local farmers, including Rosewood Farms and Wurst Kitchen. Kerdts stated that she reached out to the American College of Surgeons (ACS) "Stop the Bleed" organization to attend a first aid course. This initiative offers individuals bleeding control course, first aid kits, and the skills necessary to save lives in the event of severe bleeding. KDSWCD would like to organize a workshop that provides training and knowledge to individuals on how to use new first aid kit tools, and where to purchase them. Lastly, Kerdts stated that the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) for the No-Till/ Strip Till Practices pre-enrollment is currently open. Applications will be accepted between October 27 through the 31.

C. Northern Illinois Food Bank Updates

Northern Illinois Food Bank Sr. Mgr. of public policy and benefits, Rob Desio, addressed the government shutdown and the impacts on SNAP benefits. He stated that as the shutdown continues, November SNAP benefits will not go out until the shutdown ends. Aside from the shutdown, Desio stated that there will be approximately 16K legal Illinois immigrants who will lose eligibility on SNAP benefits next month. Further discussion ensued.

7. Presentations/Announcements

A. Farmer Weatherization Rebate Program (Austin Powell, Sustainability Coordinator)

Sustainability Coordinator, Powell, announced that Kane County is now accepting applications for the Farmer Weatherization Rebate Program. A total of \$800 per rebate will be offered to qualified Kane County farmers who weatherize their home. Farmers can meet this requirement by adding insulation to their attics, or sealing air leakage. This program will benefit between 22 to 36 farmers. All information about the rebate program is available on the county website, including a step-by-step guide to clarify qualification requirements, and additional information regarding residential tax credits.

B. Soil Health and Economic Impact Assessment Outreach (Matt Tansley, Planner)

Dev. Planner Tansley stated that the focus of the Soil Health Impact Assessment is to identify different farm conservation methods, soil health techniques, and the impacts to farm businesses adopting them. All testing will be done by the Cornell Soil Health Laboratory. He noted that there will be a total of up to ten farmers recruited for assessment. Soil testing will begin early to mid-November. There will be two to three select farmers to conduct scenario testing based on shared financial and operating data. In addition to soil testing, there will be business financial analysis for smaller subsets for participating farmers. In terms of Farmland Protection Program (FPP) outreach, Tansley stated that letters were mailed earlier this week to Kane County FPP farmers and landowners announcing the opportunity. All responses from interested farmers will be collected up until the end of the first week of November. He noted that the FPP participants broadly represent the majority of corn and soybean production agriculture across Kane County.

8. New Business

Chairman Juby asked the Committee to review the Agriculture Committee Goals to discuss these for 2026 at the next meeting.

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:	Ted Penesis

This meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Rachel Santora
Recording Secretary