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#### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Kansas Rural Center 2011 Sustainable Agriculture Conference to Highlight Opportunities and Outlook for Food and Farming in Kansas**

*Whiting, Kansas* -- The Kansas Rural Center announces that its 2011 Sustainable Agriculture Conference will focus on food and farm opportunities and the optimism for expanding local and regional food and farming in Kansas. The conference, titled "Options, Opportunities and Optimism: Cultivating Our Food and Farm Future," will take place Saturday, November 19, from 9 to 5 p.m. at Flint Hills Technical College, Emporia.

Speakers, workshops and panels will explore and share ideas and information for building a local and regional food and farm system. Topics that will be covered include:

- Good farming practices and production for all farmers, ranchers and market gardeners
- Food processing and marketing challenges and realities
- Successful production and marketing models
- Opportunities for beginning farmers and transitioning farmers
- Risk management information
- Growing grassroots support for public policy solutions.

Dan Nagengast, owner of Seeds from Italy, Lawrence, and former KRC executive director, will deliver the keynote address on the topic "Feeding the World: Billions of Farmers or Very Few?" Based on his 20 years with KRC, in farming and working in global hunger relief, Dan will present an alternative vision for how the projected 9 billion people walking the planet by mid-century will be fed. His speech will be followed by a roundtable of panelists including government officials, educators, and farmers, who will offer comments from their vantage points on the future Kansas food and agriculture landscape.

Sixteen afternoon workshops will cover practical how- to and informational panels and presentations on vegetable or specialty crop production for direct and retail marketing; mentoring and apprenticeships for farm transitions; cover crops for enhancing livestock production; hoophouse production and possibilities; high and low-tech direct marketing approaches; mobile meat processing unit options; alternative business structures for local and regional food entrepreneurs; grassroots organizing 101; and the 2012 Farm Bill- opportunities for new farm and food coalitions.

Lunch will feature locally sourced foods, prepared by the culinary program at Flint Hills Tech. An afternoon of 16 workshops on topics relating to farming practices, food and meat processing, direct marketing, and public policy will follow.

The conference will provide information and networking opportunities for crop and livestock farmers, ranchers and graziers, specialty crop producers, farmers market vendors and organizers, students and educators, representatives from nonprofits and government, food business owners and restaurateurs, local food and sustainable agriculture advocates, and wildlife and conservation advocates.

Registration cost is \$35 and includes food; some scholarships are available. A complete list of workshops and presenters, more information and registration are available at [www.krCsustainabilityconference.blogspot.com](http://www.krCsustainabilityconference.blogspot.com) or at the KRC website at [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org). Or call the Kansas Rural Center at 785-873-3431.

The conference is co-sponsored by the Kansas Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Alternative Crops, Kansas Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program at KSU, Kansas Farmers Union, and others; and is partially funded by the USDA Risk Management Agency.

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