

2026 Women in Ag Conference Workshop Descriptions

Pre-Conference, Wednesday 1PM-5PM

1. **Leveraging Livestock Insurance for Stability and Success**

Kimberly Stone, Women of the Ranch LLC, Owner

Jacob Dailey, RCIS National Livestock Specialist

In today's volatile markets, protecting your livestock operation is more critical than ever. This session explores two powerful risk management tools—**Livestock Risk Protection (LRP)**, **Livestock Gross Margin (LGM)**—designed to safeguard your bottom line and preserve your legacy. Learn how LRP provides peace of mind against unexpected price declines, from unborn calves to finished cattle, while LGM adds an extra layer of security by covering the margin between market prices and feed costs for cattle, swine, and dairy. We will also compare the newest program; Weaned Calf Revenue Protection sharing how it helps cow-calf producers manage revenue risks after weaning. By integrating these programs into a holistic risk management strategy, you'll gain the confidence to make informed decisions, navigate market uncertainty, and protect the future of your operation for generations to come.

Session 1, Thursday 11:00 A.M.-12:15 P.M.

1. **Rooted in Conversation: Strengthening Farm Family Communication**

Ashlee Westerhold—Director of the Office of Farm & Ranch Transition at Kansas State University

Has your family hit communication roadblocks in the succession planning process? Are there lingering questions on how to move forward and how it will affect the estate plan? We will learn some information on best practices communicating across generations, how to have more effective conversations, and ideas to consider for the future of the operation.

2. **Six Thinking Hats for Evaluating New Enterprises**

Aaron Berger—Nebraska Extension, Livestock Systems Extension Educator

Edward DeBono's Six Thinking Hats is a process for evaluating ideas and opportunities that can be applied to farm and ranch operations as they consider new enterprises. In this workshop we will identify a "new" enterprise and then work through exploring questions, information, and perspectives needed to help evaluate if this is an enterprise that should be further pursued. Utilizing this type of structured process helps give all parties the opportunity to be engaged and

allow participants in the evaluation and exploration process of a potential “new” enterprise.

3. Farm and Ranch Succession Planning

Nate DeWald—Attorney, DeWald Deaver L’Heureux, PC, LLO

Statistics show that roughly half of ag operations have a succession plan. Fewer have a competent succession plan – one that sustains the operation for the next generation, minimizes taxes, and navigates family dynamics. Come and listen to strategies and stories from the front lines of a rural agricultural practice to help you navigate your own situation. **NOTE: This session lasts 150 minutes (two concurrent sessions) to accommodate time for Q&A with speaker. If selected, registrant will automatically be registered for concurrent session. This session is repeated on Friday, February 27th.**

4. Preserving Your Farm Legacy: Maximizing Crop Insurance for Financial Strength

John Schmall, RCIS Nebraska Field Service Representative

Wyatt Bodfield, RCIS Nebraska Field Service Representative

Lurinda Gilliland, RCIS Relationship Manager

Laura Hoelsing, RCIS District Claims Manager

This session will guide you through strategies to use crop insurance to its fullest potential. Learn why good recordkeeping matters—not only for income tax purposes but also for crop insurance claims. Discover how crop insurance supports repayment capacity for operating loans, why lenders value accurate break-even analysis, and how to market your crop without emotion by leveraging crop insurance in your decision-making. This session will help you protect your farm’s future with practical tools for financial stability and risk management.

5. Farm to Table Sales Panel

Liz Schroth, Strategy Feeders & Strategy Bison

Katie Jantzen, West End Farm

Mallore Barnes, The Milk House

Have you ever considered direct farm/ranch-to-consumer marketing? What does it entail? How do I even start? Please join us during this panel workshop session to hear first-hand from producers who have taken the jump head-first into direct farm/ranch-to-consumer marketing. Hear about their experiences, pitfalls, successes, and what they have learned in the process. Come with your own

questions and hear what these ladies have experienced during this panel workshop session.

Session 2, Thursday 1:30 P.M.-2:45 P.M.

1. Money Matters

Jessica Groskopf—Nebraska Extension, Agricultural Economics Cropping Systems Extension Educator

Understanding your numbers is key to making informed decisions on the farm or ranch. This workshop provides hands-on guidance through balance sheets and cash flow statements, showing how they work together to tell your financial story. This session equips you with practical tools to evaluate financial performance and plan ahead.

2. Farm and Ranch Succession Planning (continued...)

Nate DeWald—Attorney, DeWald Deaver L'Heureux, PC, LLO

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3. Asset Mapping Workshop Title: Bridges of Resilience

Sarah Morton—Farmer First, Executive Second, Keynote Speaker

Asset mapping is more than a planning tool - it's a strategy for resilience. In this interactive workshop, participants will learn how to identify and leverage the full range of assets on their farm and in their community to diversify operations, strengthen succession planning, and build long-term sustainability. Drawing on her experience as a third-generation farmer and workforce leader, Sarah Morton will guide participants through:

- Identifying Assets: land, skills, networks, and community resources that can support diversification.

- Connecting Assets to Opportunities: how youth programs, food pantries, and local markets can expand impact.
- Building Succession Pathways through Asset Mapping to Prepare the Next Generation and Ensure Continuity.
- Strengthening Ecosystem: aligning farm assets with regional partners, coalitions, and food hubs for resilience.

Participants will leave with practical tools and a draft asset map tailored to their own farm or community context, ready to apply immediately to succession planning and diversification strategies.

4. Understanding Cash Rental Rates & Key Lease Provisions

Anastasia Meyer—Nebraska Extension, Agricultural Profitability Extension Educator

This workshop provides valuable insights into current cash rental rates and essential lease provisions for farmland owners and tenants. Participants will learn practical strategies to negotiate fair rental agreements, understand market trends, and incorporate important terms to protect their interests.

5. Fueling the Herd: Practical Ration Formulation for Cows

Erin Laborie—Nebraska Extension, Livestock Systems Extension Educator
Brent Plugge—Nebraska Extension, Livestock Systems Extension Educator
Randy Saner—Nebraska Extension, Livestock Systems Extension Educator

Feed costs make up the largest expense category for beef cattle producers. This hands-on workshop will cover best practices for feed sampling, how to interpret a laboratory feed analysis report, and the fundamentals of ration formulation to cost-effectively meet the nutrient requirements of your herd. Participants are encouraged to bring their own feed analysis reports to use in the ration development exercises.

Mini Workshop Sessions A & B **NOTE: The following six workshops will repeat.**
Please Select 2.

1. Optimize Your Time with Artificial Intelligence

Jamie Bright—Nebraska Extension, Rural Prosperity Extension Educator

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming a part of everyday life, from voice assistants and chatbots to tools that help with writing, research, and even art. But for many, AI still feels like an intimidating or mysterious technology. The truth is, AI is just another tool—one that, when used wisely, can make life easier and more productive. This beginner-friendly session will cover some common AI tools, basic prompting techniques, and ethical and privacy considerations.

2. Sleepless in Nebraska

Jordan Luxa—Nebraska Extension, Food, Nutrition, & Health Extension Educator
Hannah Guenther—Nebraska Extension, Statewide Rural Health Extension Educator

How did you sleep last night? 1/3 of US adults are not getting the recommended 7+ hours of sleep each night. That may sound minor, but once you realize that insufficient sleep is associated with increased obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, mental illness, and affects overall safety, it becomes a little more significant. Through this program we can directly impact health and safety related to agriculture with tangible information to help participants sleep better, tonight!

3. Tastes of the Heartland: Building Local Food Connections

Skylar Falter—University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Program Coordinator for Buy Fresh, Buy Local Nebraska

Discover how local food showcases—community celebrations of locally grown food and the farmers behind it—can strengthen rural economies, support women-owned businesses, and grow vibrant food systems. This session explores how engaging communities in food-focused events fosters deeper connections between producers and consumers, promotes specialty crops, and highlights the leadership of women in agriculture. Learn practical strategies for organizing impactful local food events that nourish both community and economy.

4. Taste the Layers: A Hands-on Edible Aquifer Experience

Amy Timmerman—Nebraska Extension, Cropping Systems Extension Educator

Nebraska is known for its vast groundwater resources, which are crucial for agriculture, industry, and drinking water throughout the state. Sitting atop several important aquifers, Nebraska's underground water systems play a vital role in daily life and the economy. In this workshop, we will explore the world of aquifers and the various types found throughout Nebraska, including the High Plains (Ogallala) Aquifer, Platte River Valley Aquifer, and more. To make these underground systems easy to understand, we'll use food-based models to visualize the make-up of the vadose zone—the unsaturated soil layer above the water table—and the aquifers themselves. Join us for an interactive and tasty journey into groundwater science that will deepen your understanding of Nebraska's essential water resources.

5. Discover the Social Value of Livestock Sale Barns

Marilyn Schlake—Nebraska Extension, Emeritus Extension Educator with Rural Prosperity Nebraska and Agricultural Economics
Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel—Nebraska Extension,

Rural Prosperity Extension Specialist

Did you know that Nebraska's livestock sale barns are more than just places to buy and sell cattle? A recent University of Nebraska–Lincoln study reveals that these barns play a vital role in strengthening rural communities—serving as gathering places where relationships are built, stories are shared, and community ties are reinforced. Join us for an insightful presentation that explores how these everyday spaces contribute to social well-being and community resilience. Whether you're connected to agriculture, rural development, or just curious about the power of local spaces, this session will offer a fresh perspective on the value of rural businesses beyond dollars and cents. Come learn how a sale day is about more than the sale!

Optional Session, Thursday 7:30 P.M.-8:45 P.M.

1. Down-Home Design: Landscaping with Heart

Elizabeth Exstrom—Nebraska Extension, Horticulture, Landscape, and Environmental Systems Extension Educator

Discover how to turn your landscape into a welcoming, beautiful outdoor space in Down-Home Design: Landscaping with Heart. This hands-on workshop is crafted especially for those who want to blend practicality with personality in their landscape. We'll explore the fundamental principles of design and how to apply them in real-world settings. You'll also learn key elements of design to bring charm and structure to your yard or garden. From native plants to hardy perennials, we'll cover smart plant selection that suits your soil, climate, and lifestyle. Whether you're creating a quiet retreat or a flower-filled front walk, this session will help you design with confidence—and heart.

Session 3, Friday 9:00 A.M.-10:15 A.M.

1. Building Your Social Media Presence with Purpose

Zoe Kent—Farmer, Keynote Speaker

Are you ready to share your story online—but not sure where to start? This hands-on workshop will guide you through building a social media presence that aligns with your goals, values, and voice. Whether you're looking to connect with others in your industry, educate the public, or simply document your journey, we'll help you clarify *why* you're showing up online and *what* makes your perspective unique.

Together, we'll explore:

- Defining your purpose and goals for sharing content
- Identifying your unique voice and message
- Choosing the right platforms for your audience and content
- Setting boundaries that protect your time, privacy, and energy
- Creating an action plan to stay consistent and aligned with your goals

By the end of the session, you'll walk away with a clear vision for your online presence and a roadmap to build it with intention and confidence.

2. Ag Policy Decisions and Directions

Brad Lubben—Nebraska Extension, Policy Extension Specialist

Farm bill and other policy developments in 2025 set the stage for new producer decisions in 2026. This presentation will cover the relevant policy developments, the impacts on agriculture, and the economic and policy decisions producers will need to make in 2026.

3. Rural Ready: First Aid for Ag Women

Ashley Ahrens—Nebraska Extension, Food, Nutrition, and Health Extension Educator

Agriculture is one of the most high-risk environments to live and work in—especially for rural women who often manage multiple roles both on and off the farm. When medical help is miles away, knowing what to do in the first critical minutes can make all the difference. *Rural Ready: First Aid for Ag Women* is a hands-on, confidence-building workshop designed specifically for the realities of farm and ranch life. Participants will learn practical first aid skills they can use immediately, including how to control severe bleeding, manage fractures and sprains with simple on-farm materials, recognize and respond to medical emergencies, and communicate effectively with 911 from remote locations. Through step-by-step demonstrations and interactive group activities, attendees will leave better prepared to protect themselves, their families, and their operations when emergencies happen.

4. Farm and Ranch Succession Planning

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5. What's it Really Cost to Produce a Weaned Calf?

**Glennis McClure—Nebraska Extension, Farm and Ranch Management Analyst
Extension Educator**

Shannon Sand—Nebraska Extension, Ag Economics Extension Educator

Randy Saner—Nebraska Extension, Livestock Systems Extension Educator

Should you add weight and background those calves? What about growing your own replacement heifers—is it worth it? These are important questions, and the answers can make a big difference to your bottom line. Let's dig into the numbers together using the Ag Budget Calculator (ABC)—a practical, easy-to-use tool designed to help you build enterprise budgets for your cattle operation. Whether you're weighing options for marketing, expanding, or simply tightening up your operation, the ABC program can help you make informed, confident decisions. Join us to explore how this tool can become a valuable part of your management toolbox. The numbers tell a story— let's learn how to read it.

Session 4, Friday 10:45 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

1. Tick Talk: Understanding Ticks and Tick-borne diseases

Dr. Shaun Cross—Assistant Professor at UNMC College of Public Health

Ticks and the diseases they transmit are a growing public health concern across the United States. Outdoor workers, like agricultural workers, are at an increased risk. This workshop will give a clear and easy-to-understand overview of how ticks live, where they are found, how to prevent their bites, and the diseases they cause. We will cover topics such as how to recognize common types of ticks, where they are usually found, and how to protect yourself while working outdoors. Participants will learn easy steps to prevent tick bites, what symptoms to watch for after a bite, and when to seek medical care. The workshop will also share trusted sources for more information and guidance.

2. Making Sense of Farm Tax Law Changes

Tina Barrett—Nebraska Farm Business, Inc., Executive Director

Tax laws keep changing, and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 is no exception. This session will translate the new rules into language that actually makes sense. We'll focus on what these changes mean for your farm or ranch—how they could affect decisions on equipment purchases, business structures, and year-end

planning. You don't need to be a tax expert to get value from this session. You'll leave with a clearer understanding of what your accountant is talking about and how to use that knowledge to make smart financial choices for your operation.

3. Grain Marketing and Price Risk Management

Heather Ramsey—Risk Management Consultant with The ARC Group, LLC

Why do Farmers need independence? What does Risk Management look like? What does having a Marketing Plan look like? These are all questions that can be answered with common sense solutions. We will also look at the lifecycle of Marketing throughout the year and how that matches up with your farm business. Other topics of interest that will be covered include futures, basis, hedge management, carry, pricing seasonality, grain and oilseed markets and their terminology, and options.

4. Farm and Ranch Succession Planning (continued...)

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5. Cow-Calf Production Cycle Game

Alfredo DiCostanzo—Nebraska Extension, Livestock Systems Extension Educator

Become proficient at keeping records and managing cow herds while playing a fun and interactive board game. Teams of players will experience "managing" a cowherd that markets calves at weaning through several production cycles emulating past market conditions. Through this experience, the game helps to review elementary, yet complex, concepts of financial and production record keeping. Using information gleaned from "living" through each board move, players will practice record keeping and decision making.

