



Common Good Farm to host learning circle

From Staff Reports

RAYMOND – The Center for Rural Affairs will host the fourth in its series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach.

Working with NRCS and FSA Programs will be held at Common Good Farm near Raymond on Saturday, Sept. 10.

The circles are co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders who provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate.

The program will be held from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Participants will tour Common Good Farm, a cer-

tified bio-dynamic farm and Nebraska’s oldest CSA, to learn more about how they’re using hoop houses to extend their growing season. They’ll also hear from other farmers using NRCS and FSA programs, and how those might benefit their farm business.

“We encourage any woman who is interested in farming or already farming to participate,” commented Sandra Renner with the Center for Rural Affairs. “Our first three circles have been well attended and look forward to gathering together again to learn more from one another.”

Renner added, “Whether beginning or established farmers, we have seen that women on farms largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and

social sustainability. Most raise a combination of specialty crops and small livestock, often with organic practices.”

According to the Center for Rural Affairs, learning circles are an important, innovative method for giving participants the knowledge, confidence, and support they need to enact change. In addition to learning from experts, our group will engage in peer-to-peer learning. Women farming largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability, and the learning circle model supports engagement between women.

Participating women are considered the “experts” on their own production, farmland, and conservation

needs, and are encouraged to speak about their own experiences and goals rather than passively listen to a professional in a traditional lecture format. This format builds knowledge, confidence, and community.

Light refreshments and snacks will be provided after the learning circle.

Since space is limited, interested participants are asked to register in advance. Contact Sandra Renner at sandrar@cfra.org or (402) 320-3444 to register or for more information about the event. Individuals interested can also RSVP to this event on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ruralaffairs/events>).

Common Good Farm is located at 17201 NW 40th Street near Raymond.



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AG HAPPENINGS

*What's happening
out in the field*



Learning circles

RAYMOND — The Center for Rural Affairs will host the fourth in its series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach.

The event will be from 9 to 11:30 a.m. at the Common Good Farm near here on Saturday, Sept. 10.

Since space is limited, interested participants are asked to register in advance by Sept. 7 to reserve a space. Contact Sandra Renner at sandrar@cfra.org or 320-3444.

The last Women's Learning Circle of 2016 will be conducted at the Women Food & Ag Network annual conference on Nov. 4-5 in Nebraska City.



Women's Learning Circle Presents: Working with NRCS & FSA Programs

■ Center for Rural Affairs hosting event at area farm in Raymond, Neb.

Lyons, NE - The Center for Rural Affairs will host the fourth in its series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach. Working with NRCS and FSA Programs will be held at Common Good Farm near Raymond, Neb., on Sept. 10, 2016.

The circles are co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders. They provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate.

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AG HAPPENINGS

*What's happening
out in the field*

Women's circle

LYONS — The Center for Rural Affairs here will host the third in its series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach.

The topic of small livestock and meat production will be covered at the Davey Road Ranch and Branched Oak North Farm near Raymond the morning of Saturday, July 9. The circles are co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders. They provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate.

"We encourage any woman who is interested in farming or already farming to participate," said Sandra Renner with the Center for Rural Affairs. Upcoming learning circles will be on Sept. 10 and Oct. 29. Contact Renner at sandrar@cfra.org or 320-3444 to register or for more information.



Rural Affairs hosting event at area farms

RAYMOND - The Center for Rural Affairs will host the third in its series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach. The learning circle, Small Livestock and Meat Production, will be held at Davey Road Ranch and Branched Oak North Farm near Raymond on Saturday, July 9.

The circles are co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders. They provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate.

Sandra Renner from the Center for Rural Affairs stated that there was a strong interest in eastern Nebraska to hold these types of meetings or what she calls circles.

"And Raymond is a small network of learning opportunities so we've reached out to them," Renner said.

Participants will tour two farms in small livestock and meat production guided by Tammy Austin at Davey Road Ranch, 6505 W. Davey Road, beginning at 9 a.m., and then moving over to Branched Oak North Farm, 17303 N.W. 70th Road, for a tour led by Angie Kubalek. At these farms participants will see herds of hogs: American New Guinea, Old Spot, Durocs, Hampshires (to name a few breeds), along with ducks, chickens, and goats.

Light refreshments and snacks will be provided after the learning circle, which is scheduled to end at 11:30 a.m.

Renner said space was limited and encouraged par-

ticipants to register by July 6 to reserve a space. They can contact her at sandrar@cfra.org or 402-320-3444 to register or for more information about the event. Individuals interested can also RSVP to this event on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ruralaffairs/events>).

Renner said that they held two circles last year, one being at the Prairie Plate Restaurant near Waverly. With such a large turnout, they decided to apply for a grant, which they received, to hold eight more circles over a two-year period.

Two more are planned for this year she said. A Women's Learning Circle will be held Sept. 10, "Working with NRCS, FSA programs, and Hoop Houses" to be held at Common Good Farm near Raymond, and Oct. 29 which includes a tour of Great Plains Nursery near Weston, "Working with Conservation Programs and Policy" to be held at Prairie Plate/Lakehouse Farm near Waverly.

"We encourage any woman who is interested in farming or already farming to participate," she said. "Our first circles have been well attended and ladies look forward to gathering together again to learn more from one another."

Renner added, "Whether beginning or established farmers, experienced landowners or new to management, we have seen that women on farms largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Most

raise a combination of specialty crops and small livestock, often with organic practices."

According to the Center for Rural Affairs, learning circles are an important, innovative method for giving participants the knowledge, confidence, and support they need to enact change. In addition to learning from experts, the group will engage in peer-to-peer learning. Women farming largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability, and the learning circle model supports engagement between women.

Participating women are considered the "experts" on their own production, farmland, and conservation needs, and are encouraged to speak about their own experiences and goals rather than passively listen to a professional in a traditional lecture format.

"This format builds knowledge, confidence, and community," Renner said.



Women's Learning Circle at Robinette Farms on June 18

The Center for Rural Affairs invites women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to join them for the second in a series of learning circles co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders, to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach.

Learning circles provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate. Whether beginning or established farmers, experienced landowners or new to management, we have seen that women on farms largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Most raise a combination of specialty crops and small livestock, often with organic practices. In an increasingly unpredictable climate, it is critical that women farmers and landowners gain the production and conservation knowledge and resources to keep their farms thriving and protect the environment.

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We are excited for this next event and can't wait to get together again! We encourage any woman who is interested in farming or is farming to come and participate!

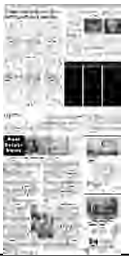
Event Details:

When: June 18, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Where: Robinette Farms, 17675 SW 14th, Martell, NE 68404

Join us for light refreshments and snacks after the learning circle. Feel free to bring something to share!

Please RSVP to this event on Facebook or contact Kirstin at kirstinb@cfra.org or 402-367-8989 with questions.



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RSVP to this event on Facebook or contact Kirstin at kirstinb@cfra.org or 402-367-8989.



Robinette Farms hosts learning circle for women farmers and landowners

MARTELL – Join us for the second in our series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska, co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders, to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach.

The first circle held on April 30 saw an impressive turnout with nearly 20 women in attendance.

We saw a mix of beginning and established farmers, landowners, and those new to management come together to learn. Everyone had a great time meeting new women farmers and discussing their farms.

Learning circles provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate. Whether beginning or established farmers, experienced landowners or new to management, we have seen that women on farms largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Most raise a combination of specialty crops and small livestock, often with organic practices. In an increasingly unpredictable climate, it is critical that women farmers and landowners gain the production and conservation knowledge and resources to keep their farms thriving and protect the environment.

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Organizers are excited for this next event and encourage any wom-

an who is interested in farming or is farming to come and participate.

The event is set to take place June 18 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Robinette Farms, 17675 SW 14th, Martell, NE 68404.

Light refreshments and snacks will be served after the learning circle. Those who participate are invited to bring something to share.

Those interested may contact Kirstin at kirstinb@cfra.org or 402-367-8989 with questions.



Submitted photo

Women chat after the first learning circle on April 30 at Robinette Farms in Martell.



Female farmers discuss farming tools, equipment

Liz Stratman

The Voice News

MARTELL – Rain didn’t stop around a dozen women from discussing farm tools and equipment among other topics at a learning circle at Robinette Farms on April 30.

This women’s learning circle was the first of five being put on this year by the Center for Rural Affairs.

“The whole idea behind the women’s learning circle is that it’s peer-to-peer learning,” Kirstin Bailey, project organizer for the Center for Rural Affairs, said.

She said it is meant to be a conversation for the group to share ideas and knowledge. The learning circles welcome anyone with beginning to expert-level knowledge of farming.

Bailey, who is a small-scale sustainable farmer herself, said she asked Chloe Diegal of Robinette Farms to host two learning circles because she considers Diegal an expert on small-scale farming.

“We’re all about educating future farmers, so anything we can do to give people experiences, give them ideas, let them see new things, we’re all about that,” Chloe Diegal, Robinette Farms’ co-owner, said.

Diegal focused discussion on the

equipment and tools she uses on her farm and showed guests her tractors, seeders and other tools. Learning circle attendees, mainly small-scale farmers, asked questions about Diegal’s reasoning behind purchasing and using the tools she does.

Starting out in 2010, Diegal said she and her husband and co-owner Alex McKiernan didn’t get much more than a tractor, seeder, mower and tiller and a couple of hand tools. Over the years, Diegal and McKiernan’s collection has grown to fit the farm’s needs.

In general, Diegal said anything that’s going to reduce one’s expenses by investing in a piece of equipment upfront will pay off in the end. She advised the group to consider the scale they plan to work at and invest in equipment and tools to fit those needs, even if that scale hasn’t quite been reached.

“Equipment doesn’t really depreciate much, so it’s a pretty good investment,” Diegal explained.

Robinette Farms operates on a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model, so women at the learning circle also asked questions about CSA farms and obtaining funding for them.

Jenny Bandigan of Omaha, who

used to work for the Center for Rural Affairs, attended the women’s learning circle. Bandigan doesn’t currently farm but grew up on a farm. She said she attended a learning circle through the Center for Rural Affairs last year and enjoys meeting people and learning from them.

“The fact that the women themselves are the ones really working on the farms, that keeps me very interested,” Bandigan said.

Katie Jantzen of Beatrice said she came to the workshop not only to learn about farming tools and also to connect with other farmers.

“I think it’s a great opportunity to bring people together to discuss some of these questions that we all evidently have,” Jantzen said. “And there’s a lot of great information being shared today. The conversation started with tools and has gone into some of the broader issues and how we’re trying to deal with those.”

Jantzen grew up on a dairy farm and is looking at starting a small CSA-model farm. The next learning circle through the Center for Rural Affairs will be held on June 18 at Robinette Farms. The topic will be post harvest handling.



Robinette Farms hosts women’s learning circle



Photo by Liz Stratman, Voice News
Chloe Diegal of Robinette Farms in Martell talks with those in attendance at the “Post Harvest Handling” women’s learning circle. Despite rainy conditions on April 30, a good crowd attended the event, which was organized by the Center for Rural Affairs and Robinette Farms. Look for a story in the May 12 edition of *The Voice News*.



Rural Affairs first learning circles scheduled at Robinette Farms

Lincoln Journal Star

The Center for Rural Affairs brings the first of its series of learning circles for women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to Robinette Farms in Martell on April 30.

The program runs 9-11:30 a.m. and the topic is tools and equipment. Light refreshments and snacks will be provided. Robinette Farms is at 17675 S.W. 14th St., Martell.

Space is limited and people are asked to register by April 26. Contact Kirstin Bailey at kirstinb@cfra.org or at 402-367-8989, or go to the Center for Rural Affairs'

Facebook page.

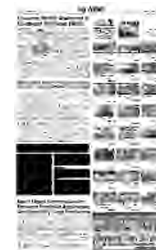
The learning circles will be co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders, addressing successful and sustainable production in a changing climate.

"Whether beginning or established farmers, experienced landowners or new to management, we have seen that women on farms largely share a commitment to environmental, economic and social sustainability. Most raise a combination of specialty crops and small livestock, often with organic practices,"

said Kirstin Bailey, project organizer.

"In an increasingly unpredictable climate, it is critical that women farmers and landowners gain the production and conservation knowledge and resources to keep their farms thriving and protect the environment," she said.

Participating women are considered the "experts" on their own production, farmland, and conservation needs, and are encouraged to speak about their own experiences and goals rather than passively listen to a professional in a traditional lecture format.



Women Farmer, Landowner Learning Circle Near Martell Saturday, April 30

The Center for Rural Affairs is hosting a series of learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska to provide sustainable farming and conservation education and outreach. The first in the series will be held at Robinette Farms, Martell, on April 30.

The circles will be co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs and farmer-leaders. They will provide education on successful and sustainable production in a changing climate.

“Whether beginning or established farmers, experienced landowners or new to management, we have seen that women on farms largely share a commitment to environmental, economic, and social sustainability,” commented Kirstin Bailey, Project Organizer, Center for Rural Affairs. “Most raise a combination of specialty crops and small livestock, often with organic practices.”

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Event Details:

What: Women Farmer and Landowner Learning Circles: Addressing Sustainability in a Changing Climate

When: Saturday, April 30, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Where: Robinette Farms at 17675 SW 14th, Martell, NE 68404

Topic: Tools and Equipment

Light refreshments and snacks will be provided after the learning circle.

Since seating is limited, interested participants are asked to register in advance by April 26 to reserve a space. Contact Kirstin Bailey at kirstinb@cfra.org at 402.367.8989 to register or for more information about the event. Individuals interested can also RSVP to this event on Facebook.



Women farmer, landowner learning circle to be held near Martell

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9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Where: Robinette Farms, 17675 SW 14th, Martell, NE 68404.

Topic: Tools and Equipment

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CFRA grant to assist Nebraska's women farmers

LYONS — Nebraska's Center for Rural Affairs has been awarded \$30,000 for the project, "Women Farmer and Landowner Learning Circles: Addressing Sustainability in a Changing Climate."

The North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) recently announced the award, one of 10 projects selected for the 2016 Partnership Grant Program. The program is designed to foster cooperation between agriculture professionals and small groups of farmers and ranchers to catalyze on-farm research, demonstration and education activities related to sustainable agriculture.

This project will pro-

vide peer learning, expert training and networking through learning circles of women farmers and landowners in eastern Nebraska," said Kathie Starkweather, CFRA farm and community program director. "Learning circles are an important, innovative method for giving participants the knowledge, confidence and support they need to enact change. Such groups can become a longstanding, self supporting resource."

The project will continue through December 2017 and will be co-led by agricultural professionals at the Center for Rural Affairs, with a team of farmers in the first year. In the second year farmers will take the leading role with support from

center's staff. The organization will hold a series of four learning circle meetings per year over two years. Each meeting will be hosted at a woman-owned or operated farm in eastern Nebraska, and will include expert instruction, peer learning and networking as part of a facilitated discussion, along with a farm tour demonstrating techniques.

Policy education will be a piece of these learning circles and the Center for Rural Affairs policy team will participate in several sessions about conservation programs.

In addition to policy, participants will also have opportunities to learn more about sustainable production methods in a changing

climate (water use, season extension, cover crops, etc.), tools/equipment for successful production, business startup and planning, financial management, product distribution strategies, marketing high value and specialty crops, and understanding and interacting with conservation programs.

The Center for Rural Affairs will be offering Saturday morning learning circles in April, June, July, September and November. Dates, locations and details will be announced later.