



Hello ##[Name | First]##,

Winter is the best time for learning and community connection. It's not even been two weeks since many of us gathered in Frankfort for OAK's 12th Annual Conference. The OAK Staff has been reliving those days of learning hoping to capture as many details as we can. We sure hope you have too! Let's all use the inspiration and connection to plan for more opportunities to gather, learn together, and build a nourishing local food system.

Did you know that Organic Association of Kentucky has been selected to receive \$4.4 million to increase climate-friendly practices among farmers? Read more below and share our excitement for the possibilities that lie ahead and the scope of this incredible project.

**OAK Members.** [Registration](#) is now open for OAK's Annual Virtual Meeting on Thursday, March 2 at 5:30pm ET. Plan to join the OAK Community for organizational updates and opportunities to connect with each other all from your own home via Zoom. Continue reading below for more details about filling out your Member Survey, using the various OAK Member Benefits and a last chance to vote for the OAK Board of Director Candidates.

With OAK's 12th Annual Conference behind us, the final touches are being made to the 2023 [Farmer Field Day Schedule](#). You will not want to miss these opportunities to gather at Kentucky Farms across the state and learn together.

This month OAK is also co-organizing KY Proud CSA Week Feb. 20th-24, 2023 and promoting the offerings of over 70 farms across Kentucky. Follow along with this promotion by joining the [CSA in KY Facebook Group](#).

As you read about all of these opportunities, don't forget to check out the resources at the end of this newsletter where you can find new funding programs and an array of both virtual and in-person events.

Finally, please continue to support your local farmers and artisans in the new year. Local, organic foods and products keep us healthy and our communities thriving. Try searching the [OAK Find-a-Farm Directory](#) to find your farmer and source locally all year long!

Warmly,  
Robin Verson  
Membership and Communications Coordinator

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## #OAK2023 was Incredible. Thank You to all Participants.

### **To all of our Conference Attendees:**

Thank you so much for sharing the days of learning and inspiration in January. Team OAK is busily working to prepare the recordings. Keep your eyes on your inbox for password protected links to all recorded content. While you wait, how about taking a few moments to complete the #OAK2023 Conference Survey. The OAK Team will use your feedback and suggestions to make #OAK2024 all you need. Check your inbox, OAK sent you a link to that Conference survey last week. Team OAK and the entire community is grateful for the vital support from these Sponsors, Partners and Funders.

# 2023 Conference Sponsors, Partners & Funders



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We are grateful for these 2023 partners and sponsors!

## Organic Association of Kentucky to Receive \$4.4 million for Climate-Friendly Practices Among Farmers

OAK has been tentatively selected to receive more than \$4.4 million to help hundreds of Kentucky farmers learn about and adopt climate-smart practices to improve soil health and water quality, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and promote wildlife habitat. This project will center organic practices as part of our region's climate strategy. A significant portion of the funds will be distributed directly to farmers to implement and maintain practices that improve soil health and will support on-farm technical assistance. Climate-smart practices including cover cropping, reduced tillage, rotational grazing, agroforestry and others will be incentivized.

Historically underserved farmers – including limited-resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers – will make up a large portion of the beneficiaries, and many more will be operators of “small farms,” with gross annual

farm income under \$250,000. The project and partners will encourage emerging markets for Kentucky crops and livestock grown and raised using climate-smart practices.

The award is part of Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's \$3.1 billion grant program aimed at expanding markets for America's climate-smart commodities and providing direct, meaningful benefits to production agriculture, including for small and underserved producers. OAK anticipates a Fall 2023 launch for this new program. We'll have more information about how you can participate later this year. To learn more, update your email preferences and sign up for [OAK's Soil Health and Climate-Smart e-newsletter](#).

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## OAK Members: Member Perks, Member Survey and the Annual Virtual Membership Meeting

In Fall of 2022 OAK transitioned to a new CRM and website. The shift has offered increased opportunity for community engagement, flawless interface between your OAK Membership and event registration (don't forget current OAK members get discounted registration to all OAK events).

**If you had auto-renewal on OAK's old site, you will need re-enter your details on the new site.** Check your inbox, join or renew with OAK for 2023 and enjoy the new and easy way to connect with the greater OAK Community. If you have any questions about your membership, are struggling to navigate the new site, or just want to touch base, please email [Robin@oak-ky.org](mailto:Robin@oak-ky.org).

Join or stick with the OAK community! We are an engaging group of farmers, eaters, ag professionals, entrepreneurs and more! From farmers who are using regenerative practices to those whose farms have been certified organic for decades, we are folks committed to creating a healthier, more nourishing food landscape.

With Member Benefits from partnering businesses and organizations, like AcresUSA, [Ohio Earth Food](#), [Johnny's Seeds](#), [Chelsea Green Publishing](#), [Earth Tools](#), [Felco](#), and more, OAK Members receive product discounts and more! Active Members can now easily access those member discount codes on a newly published [Members Only Access page here](#).

Current OAK Members, don't forget to update [your member profile](#), create new log in information and connect easily and fluidly with each other. If you have let your Membership lapse or have never taken the plunge to join OAK, now is the time! OAK is growing and working for an exciting future, join us. Be a part of the community working to nourish Kentucky.

Join or Renew Today!

OAK Members, mark your calendars for **OAK's Annual Member Meeting: March 2, 2023, 5:30-7pm, online.**



Register [here](#).

Join together with OAK Members, connect with the OAK Board and Staff and be inspired with the greater OAK Community at this annual opportunity to gather virtually.



Register here for OAK's Virtual Membership Meeting

In an effort to support the organic and regenerative farming community in Kentucky and beyond, Team OAK is always looking for feedback to grow and serve the community better. We need your suggestions. Please take 5 minutes out of your day and fill out the **OAK Member Survey**. The answers to these questions will help guide future programming. Please check your inboxes and complete the 2022 Member Survey. Team OAK is grateful for your input to guide programming decisions into the years ahead.

Take the Member Survey

All current OAK members are invited to **vote for three Board Candidates** to serve on OAK's nine-member Board of Directors. Members check your inbox, you were sent a link to the Board Vote last week. It takes just 2 minutes, and we are hoping for full membership participation. Let your voice be heard and help guide OAK's vision for the future.

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## OAK 2023 Farmer Field Days Start in March

Farmers, meet up with other farmers and agricultural professionals on working farms to see organic systems in action. Share your successes and your challenges with peers and connect with useful resource providers. View previous OAK virtual events on our [OAK YouTube](#) page for recordings, snapshots and lessons learned from host farmers. Have suggestions or ideas for future farms, practices or topics to highlight? Reach out to [Jenny@oak-ky.org](mailto:Jenny@oak-ky.org)

Learn More and Register for 2023 Field Days

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## Save the Date for 2023 KY Proud CSA Week

Join us this month for the KY Proud CSA Week starting February 20th - 24th, 2023. This week of CSA awareness building will feature over 70 CSA farms across the state and help Kentucky consumers learn more about CSA, how to find one, and what to do with their farm share. Join the CSA in KY Facebook Group to follow along with this promotion! Contact OAK's CSA program coordinator [katie@oak-ky.org](mailto:katie@oak-ky.org) if you have any questions.

Join the CSA in Kentucky Facebook Group



## Interested to Go Organic?

We're here to help - for FREE! OAK's Transition Trainers will answer all your questions and work with you to refine techniques, implement best practices, demystify the regulations, develop recordkeeping systems and make a transition plan to help you apply for organic certification. Email us to learn more about process and how we help farmers have a successful certification experience.



Learn more about [OAK's Transition Trainer Program and apply to work with an Organic Transition Trainer today!](#) Questions? Contact [brooke@oak-ky.org](mailto:brooke@oak-ky.org) or 502-219-7378.

## Opportunities, the Latest News & Calls to Action

**Give a Listen! Bioneers Podcast, Black Food: Liberation, Food Justice and Stewardship**

The influences of Africans and Black Americans on food and agriculture is rooted in ancestral African knowledge and traditions of shared labor, worker co-ops and botanical polycultures. In this episode, we hear from Karen Washington and Bryant Terry on how Black Food culture is weaving the threads of a rich African agricultural heritage with the liberation of economics from an extractive corporate food oligarchy. The results can be health, conviviality, community wealth, and the power of self-determination. [Listen here](#).

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## **OAK Joins National Partners to Highlight Farmer Voices on Organic & Small Farm Policy**

### **Organic Trade Association**

[In early 2023 OAK join the Organic Trade Association](#) and gained a farmer seat on the Farmers Advisory Council (FAC). The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 9,500 organic businesses across 50 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA's mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace.

The Organic Trade Association's Farmers Advisory Council (FAC) provides the Organic Trade Association Board of Directors and staff with input from small- and medium-sized organic farmers, ranchers, and growers on matters pertinent to the advancement of organic agriculture, with a specific focus on OTA's policy agenda. Established in 2013, FAC was designed to formalize and improve communication between OTA and organic producers. Through open dialogue, FAC gives organic farmers a voice to directly influence OTA's policy and enables OTA to better represent the diversity of organic producers in its policy and advocacy.

OAK farmer members whose income from farming is less than \$250,000 per year (aligned with USDA definition of "small-farmer") will be eligible for OTA's Farmstead membership and may choose to become a direct member of OTA for an annual membership fee of \$50.

### **Organic Farmers Association**

In 2022 OAK's Executive Director, Brooke Gentile, began a 2-year term on the Organic Farmers Association Governing Council. Participation in OFA meetings and events creates opportunities to elevate the opportunities and challenges we are experiencing in Kentucky organics to a national conversation. In early

March, Brooke will gather with OFA Policy Council and Governing Council in Washington DC to share organic policy priorities with our representatives.

If you are interested to learn more about OTA, FAC or OFA, or talk with us about these strategic partnerships please contact [brooke@oak-ky.org](mailto:brooke@oak-ky.org) for more information. **If you are an OAK member please be sure to fill out your member survey to identify your policy priority areas.**

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## **New Fruit Scout Website allows easier access to IPM Scouting Guides**

The University of Kentucky's IPM Scouting Guide publications for fruit crops were converted into mobile compatible websites beginning in 2017. Now accessing this information is even easier with the creation of the [Fruit Scout Website](#). This new website provides access to the information found on the Apple, Bramble, Grape, Peach, and Strawberry Scout websites all in one place. The Fruit Scout Website is available for grower, agent, and homeowner use and can be accessed from any phone, tablet, iPad, or computer.

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## **USDA Invests \$9.4 Million in Compost and Food Waste Reduction Projects**

USDA is investing more than \$9.4 million in 45 cooperative agreements that support innovative, scalable waste management plans to reduce and divert food waste from landfills. The Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR) cooperative agreements, which are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, are part of USDA's broad support for urban agriculture through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). The projects will be implemented between 2023 and 2025. [Read more here](#).

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## **USDA Nationwide Survey for Prospective Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Managers**

[Take this very important survey](#) by March 31, 2023! This voluntary, anonymous survey will take about 10 minutes to complete and asks about your general views and interactions with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies delivered by farm programs: Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA). All farmers, ranchers and forest managers are encouraged to take the survey. Existing customers and prospective customers both provide unique perspectives they'd like to hear. They'd especially like to hear from a new audience this year



of prospective customers, those who don't know about USDA farm programs or have yet to work with them, and those who were unable to participate in the past.

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## Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award Seeks Nominees

Are you a Kentucky farmer or forester who improves soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on your working land? Apply for the 2023 Kentucky Leopold Conservation Award®.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 25 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In Kentucky, the \$10,000 award is presented annually with the Kentucky Agricultural Council and the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may apply themselves. The application can be found at

[www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA](http://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/ApplyLCA).

**The application deadline date is April 1.** The committee prefers application materials to be sent electronically. Applications can be emailed to colemansteve51@gmail.com or postmarked by April 1, and mailed to: Leopold Conservation Award c/o Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts P.O. Box 4027 Frankfort, KY 40604-4027 [Learn more here](#)

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## UK CCD resources update

The Center for Crop Diversification website has a redesigned maps page, which now includes a Custom Mapping Resources section to help users to learn to develop their own digital maps using online tools and information. Also new are monthly average day length maps, which have been added to the Printable Maps section of the page. The maps page also hosts interactive maps, including a Geographic Horticulture Directory of Kentucky and an Agricultural Service Provider Directory.

Crop profiles that have been updated recently are Truffles & Other Edible Mycorrhizal Mushrooms (CCD-CP-83), and Willows for Cuttings (CCDCP-75). Check for these and many other resources at [www.uky.edu/ccd](http://www.uky.edu/ccd)

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## Educational & Farming Support

## In-person Events Throughout the Region

### **Forest Health Conference**

Feb. 8 , 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST

Kroger Field in Lexington

Presented by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, this fourth annual meeting will highlight plant topics such as climate change and forest health, practical uses for drones, seed zone updates and climate considerations for collectors, butternut canker and breeding programs, cost-share programs for landowners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and much more.

The cost is \$35 and includes lunch. To register, visit

<http://forestry.ca.uky.edu/fhc-conference>.

### **Third Thursday Thing**

Organic Agriculture

February 16, 2023

10:00 AM EST

This full day offers a line up of great speakers and topics relevant to organic production in KY. Join either in-person at the Harold R. Benson Research & Demonstration Farm or online at [youtube.com/kysuag/live](https://www.youtube.com/kysuag/live)

### **PickTN Conference**

Feb. 16-18, 2023

Franklin, TN

For details, go to <https://www.picktnconference.com>.

### **West Virginia Small Farms Conference**

Feb. 22-25

Charleston, WV

[More information here](#).

### **2023 Eastern Kentucky Farmer Conference**

February 24 +25, 2023

Pine Mountain State Park, Pineville, KY

[See the agenda and register here](#)

Stop and say hi to Jenny at the OAK booth!

### **Grower-Buyer MeetUp**

February 24th 10 a.m.-noon

The Eastern Kentucky Grower-Buyer MeetUp, a pre-Eastern Kentucky Farmer Conference event at Pine Mountain State Park in Pineville. This Grower-Buyer MeetUp will be the single largest event bringing together buyers and agricultural food producers, and is co-hosted by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, the Kentucky Horticulture Council and UK MarketReady, with the Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association, and the Kentucky State Horticultural Society. The event is free, but [you must pre-register](#).

### **Indiana Small Farm Conference**

March 2-3

Danville, IN

[More information here.](#)

### **2023 Kentucky Black Farmers Conference**

March 3-4, 2023

Knically Conference Center (Western Kentucky University)

[Registration is here.](#)

<https://cfaky.org/2023-kentucky-black-farmer-conference/>

Come and say hi to Robin at the OAK booth!

### **International Grassland Conference**

Save the Date: May 14-19, 2023

Covington, KY

Scholarships available and due by December 30, 2022

[More details and registration here.](#)

## **Virtual Events**

### **Staffing Up webinar**

Feb. 9, Noon-1:30 pm Eastern Time.

Join this participatory session to share and co-learn effective strategies to hire and retain employees. [Free, advance registration required.](#) Hosted by University of Vermont Extension's Farm Labor Dashboard.

### **Webinar Series: Small-Scale Growing and Marketing for Beginning Farmers**

February 14, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Food Safety Practices

February 28, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Grains and Specialty Crops

March 7, 2023 | 12:00 - 1:30pm Producing and Marketing Cut Flowers

This is a five-part webinar series designed for beginner farmers that will provide education around small scale production and marketing. NCAT is one of the partners producing this series. [Find out more and register here.](#)

### **Biological Nutrient Management: Best Organic Practices for Soil Fertility and Resource Stewardship**

Feb 6, 2023 1:00 pm ET

This webinar will discuss biological nutrient management in organic agriculture using a resource-conserving approach to nutrient management that builds soil nutrient retention, cycling, and delivery capacity.

Participants in this training will be provided foundational information on biological nutrient management practices and up-to-date research in organic agricultural systems. This webinar will include the importance of soil nutrient dynamics, the impact of soil organisms, and the functions of each, as well as guidelines for optimizing practices and outcomes.

Presenter: Mark Schonbeck, Research Associate with the Organic Farming Research Foundation,

<https://conservationwebinars.net/webinars/biological-nutrient-management-best-organic-practices-for-soil-fertility-and-resource-stewardship?sr=wp~mkt-whenPub>

### **Black Soil virtual Off-Season Workshop**

February 12, 3-5 PM

Join this workshop and get to know farmer Travis Cleaver and his family, as they discuss the legacy and resiliency of farming while Black and celebrate #blackhistorymonth. RSVP and [reserve your virtual seat here](#).

### **February Meeting of Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production**

Feb. 23 from 3:30-6pm ET.

USDA encourages urban producers, innovative producers, and other stakeholders to virtually attend the second public meeting of the Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. This Committee will discuss recommendations it intends to submit to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to remove barriers to urban and innovative producers and increase access of urban and innovative producers to USDA programs and services. [Learn more, submit a comment, or register to attend here](#).

### **Silvopasture - What It Is and What It Is Not**

Feb 28, 2023 2:00 pm US/Eastern

Join this webinar to learn about USDA-NRCD Conservation Practice Standard 381, Silvopasture, and how it is used by NRCS. Experts will describe in detail what is Silvopasture and what it is not and discuss the key steps and considerations in the establishment and maintenance of a Silvopasture System. The Standard, Planning Criteria and CART process will be highlighted. [Learn more here](#).

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## **Resources and Funding for Farmers**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making available up to \$7.5 million for grants through its **Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP)**.

The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects.

[A pre-recorded webinar on Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants](#) | [USDA](#) provides an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application.

**Deadline to apply March 27, 2023**

**Silvopasture and Forest Farming Support / Funds Available**



The Catalyzing Agroforestry Grant Program is focused on implementing silvopastures and forest farming practices through direct support payments and will assist producers in designing appropriate projects using technical assistance and science-based planning strategies. The ultimate goal of the effort is to increase ecosystem sustainability and diversity by scaling up agroforestry practices. The Appalachian Beginning Forest Farming Coalition (ABFFC) project will provide up to \$1500/acre for silvopasture implementation and up to \$1000/quarter acre for forest farming implementation depending on project scale and scope. To enhance shared learning, producers who receive support will share successes and lessons-learned with their peers and other interested stakeholders. Minority, female, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and/or socially disadvantaged farmers are highly encouraged to apply.

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/emef>

### **USDA Offers Assistance to Protect Privately-Owned Agricultural Lands**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages people and groups wanting to protect agricultural lands to consider enrolling their property into conservation easements.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP - ALE) focuses on protecting and conserving productive agricultural lands. Landowners are compensated for enrolling their land in easements. Partners include state or local agencies and certain non-profits. Eligible lands include privately owned cropland, pastureland and forestlands. Landowners do not apply directly to NRCS for funding under this program. Applications from eligible entities for 2023 ACEP-ALE funding must be received by December 1, 2022 to be considered for the current funding cycle. Landowners who wish to be considered for ACEP-ALE must make application to an eligible entity.

Entities interested in agricultural easements should contact their [local USDA service center](#) or visit the [Kentucky NRCS ACEP-ALE website](#).

### **Slow Food Bluegrass Garden Grant**

**Deadline:** ongoing

**Link:** <http://www.slowfoodbluegrass.org/gardens>

Slow Food Bluegrass micro-grants support groups in Kentuckiana who foster education about and access to good, clean, fair food. Special priority is given to limited resource communities and to projects that demonstrate a strong buy-in from participants. Grants range from \$500 - \$1,000 and may be awarded throughout the year. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach us at [slowfoodbluegrass@gmail.com](mailto:slowfoodbluegrass@gmail.com).

### **KSU Small Scale Farm Grant**

**Deadline:** The 1st day of every other month

**Funding Amount:** Up to \$5,000 for farmers, \$15,000 for groups benefiting multiple farmers

**Eligible Entities:** Kentucky farmers and Kentucky agriculture groups including farmers markets

**Link:**<http://ksu.edu/academics/cafsss/research-extension/small-scale-farm-grant-program/>

**Overview:** The KSU Small Scale Farm Grant is designed with the small operation farmer in mind. This grant application is relatively simple to complete and the funds can be used to purchase needed equipment related to the proposed project. To qualify, applicants must be producing a value-added product, be an organic farmer, and/or be an aquatic farmer. Farmers markets are often eligible. Previously approved projects have included canning equipment, a walk-in cooler, a water line to a hoop house, a root cellar, a cool-bot for vegetables, and a trailer for keeping meat cool and recently added farmer education assistance with a maximum of \$500.

### **Kentucky Proud Promotional Grant**

**Deadline:** On-going

Funding Amount: Up to 10% annual gross farm income, max at \$8,000 per year; \$1 for \$1 match

Eligible Entities: Kentucky farmers and agribusinesses

**Link:** <http://www.kyagr.com/marketing/grants.html>

Overview: The Kentucky Proud Promotional Grant is a cost share program to help Kentucky farmers and agribusinesses pay for advertising and marketing expenses. The award amount is based on 10% of direct farm impact; for a farmer it would be 10% of their total farm gross sales. The applicant must be a registered member of Kentucky Proud to apply and use the Kentucky Proud logo/brand in marketing efforts paid for with program funds. Examples of fundable items include TV ads, radio ads, web expenses, hats, t-shirts, demos, sampling, labels, packaging, tradeshow, UPC, and bar codes. This is a great program that helps promote our local farms!

### **ON-Farm Energy Efficiency Incentives Program**

**Deadline:** Applications are accepted year round

Funding Amounts: 50% cost share - up to a \$10,000 incentive, plus \$150 for an approved third party energy audit

Eligible Entities: Kentucky farmers with a gross farm income of at least \$25,000

**Link:** <https://agpolicy.ky.gov/energy/Pages/default.aspx>

Overview: The Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund offers an On-Farm Energy Efficiency Program to help Kentucky farmers with energy projects. These cost share funds are available to increase on farm energy efficiency and to support renewable fuel production projects. The applicant is required to have a third party energy audit completed. This program can be combined with the USDA-NRCS Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to get up to 75% of a total project cost covered.

Many thanks to [KCARD](#) for promoting many of these grant opportunities. Did you know KCARD can also answer questions about funding programs and help you prepare an application?  
resources



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