

**ILLINOIS SPECIALTY CROPS, AGRITOURISM, AND ORGANIC CONFERENCE  
TO FEATURE MORE THAN 160 SPEAKERS AND EXHIBITORS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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BLOOMINGTON, IL. — The Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference (ISCAOC) will be held January 9-11, 2019, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. The conference, which features nearly 100 speakers and 60 trade show exhibitors, will again host four concurrent preconference workshops, general sessions, and breakout sessions aimed at helping Illinois specialty growers cultivate their operations.

Wednesday, January 9, participants may attend one of the pre-conference workshops, including: Specialty Farming and Financing, Cut Flowers, Beginning Berries and Beyond, and Sweet Corn.

A special opportunity for farmers is scheduled for Wednesday, January 9, begins at 8:00 a.m. as The University of Illinois Extension will conduct a full Food Safety Training Workshop. This workshop will satisfy the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule requirement stating, *“At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration”*. Farms selling over \$500,000 in average annual produce sales must be in compliance by January 26, 2018. This year only, you will receive the manual and certificate for only \$45. This is a \$75 saving. Deadline for registration for this event is December 20, 2018.

Thursday, January 10, the convention’s keynote speaker, Dr. Kimberlee Kidwell, Dean of ACES, University of Illinois will provide insight into the future of University of Illinois and Extension.

Participants also are invited to attend breakout sessions on Thursday, January 11 and Friday, January 12 featuring:

- Agritourism and Marketing
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Herbs
- Organic Foods
- Of Special Interest

Following Thursday’s breakout sessions, the annual banquet will include a keynote speech titled, “Tanner’s Expansion: A Bold Leap” by Craig Tanner, Tanner Orchard, Speer, Illinois. Their farm is the oldest family farm in Livingston County and was settled in 1830. It is a working small family farm managed today by the seventh and eighth generations.

The 30th annual Apple Cider Contest and 17th annual Hard Cider Contest will again be held in conjunction with the conference, with winners being announced during Thursday evening’s banquet.

To receive registration materials or to obtain exhibitor information, please contact Charlene Blary at 309-557-2107 or [cblary@ilfb.org](mailto:cblary@ilfb.org). Conference registration will be offered online. A detailed conference agenda, registration, and cider contest information can be viewed at [specialtygrowers.org](http://specialtygrowers.org).

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at a rate of \$101 per night. Please call the hotel directly at 217-529-7777 and ask for the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference room block to make reservations at the conference rate.

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