

Iowa Specialty Producers Conference

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iowa, kendra, conference, talk, recertification, specialty crops, sessions, awesome, topics, event, vegetable growers, producers, small farms, wine growers, fruit, growers, specialty, highlight, business, cac

SPEAKERS

Christa Hartsook, Kendra Meyer

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- C** Christa Hartsook 00:15
Hello, and welcome to the Small Farms Podcast, a production of the Small Farms Program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Our podcast covers the opportunities and challenges associated with rural life. In this episode, I interview Kendra Meyer, Executive Secretary for the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association to talk about the upcoming Iowa Specialty Growers Conference. I'm Christa Hartsook, Small Farms Program Coordinator and we hope you enjoy the show. Kendra, welcome to the show. Thanks for being here.
 - K** Kendra Meyer 00:47
Thank you for having me.
 - C** Christa Hartsook 00:48
So we're talking about winter conference season and there's a lot of them coming up. But you've got a great one coming up in January.
 - K** Kendra Meyer 00:55
We do and winter is a great time to do some advanced planning for your operation and

get out network with others. And so this winter, for the first time we're having a conference called the Iowa Specialty Producers Conference, and that is being held January 23rd and 24th at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny, Iowa.

C

Christa Hartsook 01:12

So the Iowa Specialty Growers Conference is a brand new thing, what's happening there.

K

Kendra Meyer 01:18

So the Iowa Fruit Vegetable Growers Association has been having conversations with the Iowa Wine Growers Association for several years now. And we're excited that this year, we are able to start this brand new event called the Iowa Specialty Producers Conference. And this is made possible with special funding from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. So, it's going to be a great event. We have over 40 different sessions going on and a wide variety of topics. And we want to be very inclusive in this conference. So we have sessions ranging from fruit and vegetable topics to analogy, viticulture, specialty crops, business, marketing, and everything in between.

C

Christa Hartsook 01:58

That's awesome. So tell me a little bit about the keynote speaker that's kicking off the event.

K

Kendra Meyer 02:03

Our keynote speaker is John Stanley, and he is a well known speaker and author. John has spent the past 30 years working with his family business in the farming industry throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and the UK. His skill is in interpreting the broad global trends. He then provides practical low cost ideas to help producers maximize current economic, social, and lifestyle trends. His goal is to help them increase visitor numbers, boost sales, and grow their business. So we're really excited to have him come this year and speak at our conference. He'll have a keynote session both days. On Thursday, he is going to have a session titled 'Become a Game Changer' and on Friday, his session is titled 'The devil is in the Detail.'

C

Christa Hartsook 02:46

Nice. So he's really going to be talking about those business and marketing aspects that people need.

K Kendra Meyer 02:51
Yes.

C Christa Hartsook 02:52
Awesome. So you briefly mentioned kind of some of the different tracks that are going to be available at the conference. Can you tell us a little bit more?

K Kendra Meyer 03:00
We have a wide range of fruit topics, vegetable topics, grape and wine specialty crops, including Christmas trees, agritourism hops, nuts, beekeeping, we have all sorts of topics and anything related to non-traditional agriculture in Iowa. We are pretty much hitting, including the new proposed regulations from Idaho on hemp production.

C Christa Hartsook 03:22
Awesome. Are there any specific sessions you'd like to highlight?

K Kendra Meyer 03:25
I would like to highlight that we are offering the CSE recertification course. And so there are nine different sessions that will count towards a CSE recertification. And then at the end of the day, on Friday, there is a mandatory CAC course that you must attend. And if you do those two things, you will get your CAC recertification.

C Christa Hartsook 03:46
Awesome. Kendra, I know there's an evening activity for this conference too. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

K Kendra Meyer 03:51
Yes, on Thursday evening, beginning at six o'clock. We have the Iowa Specialty Producers Awards Banquet, and that is just a fun evening to get together, talk with different growers, a great networking opportunity. And then we are excited this year to have Secretary Nay come in and give the welcome, and then also we are excited to have several awards that are going out and we'll be highlighting winemakers, industry partners, fruit growers, and vegetable growers.

- C** Christa Hartsook 04:18
That sounds awesome. Can you talk to me a little bit about how I can get registered for this event? Where can I find that information?
- K** Kendra Meyer 04:25
So, you can register for the specialty producers conference by visiting www.ifvga.org so the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association website. You can also find me event on the Iowa Wine Growers Association website's page.
- C** Christa Hartsook 04:43
Awesome. So I would assume you know even if we couldn't remember the address googling it would help us bring it up.
- K** Kendra Meyer 04:47
Absolutely.
- C** Christa Hartsook 04:48
Awesome. Kendra, is there anything else that we should know about this event?
- K** Kendra Meyer 04:52
I just like to highlight once more that we have over 40 sessions at this event and in addition, we'll be having a trade show for an opportunity to visit with different vendors. Also on Friday over lunch, there is a special presentation by the state climatologist Dr. Justin Glisten, and he's going to be talking about Iowa weather, the climatological trends, and impacts of growing conditions.
- C** Christa Hartsook 05:14
Awesome. That sounds great.
- K** Kendra Meyer 05:16
Yes, we're really excited for it.

C Christa Hartsook 05:19
All right, and that website one more time Kendra?

K Kendra Meyer 05:21
The website is www.ifvga.org.

C Christa Hartsook 05:27
Thanks so much for being on the show today

K Kendra Meyer 05:28
Thanks for having me.