



THE CULTIVATOR

DECEMBER 2025

Letter from the Chair:

Fellow Farm Chicks,

As we close out another year, we are reminded of the resilience and innovation that define our agricultural community. December is a time for reflection, gratitude and anticipation – and we have so much to look forward to!

Mark your calendars for March 3-5, 2026, when we gather for the Rooted Together in Agriculture, hosted by Farm Women's Symposium in beautiful Frankenmuth.



Photo by: Emelee Rajzer

We're thrilled to return to the Bavarian Inn Lodge, where lodge guests will enjoy full access to their brand-new water park, which opened earlier this year.

Registration is now open! We're excited to offer online registration again through Eventbrite, making it easier than ever to secure your spot. Inside the Cultivator, you'll find the printed registration brochure along with a detailed overview of our 34th event. This event isn't just a meeting – it's a celebration of progress, collaboration, and the shared vision that keeps our industry thriving. Together, we'll explore new ideas, strengthen connections and plant seeds for a future full of opportunity. Let's carry the spirit of growth into the new year.

We can't wait to see you in March!

Warm wishes for a joyful holiday season and a prosperous year ahead.

Emelee Rajzer
FWS Chair

Introducing the committee

Executive Board

Chair: Emelee Rajzer
Vice Chair: Wanda Skinner
Treasurer: Keri Bancroft
Secretary: Diane Loew
5th Member: Christina Gelder

Planning Committee

Barb Miller Shelley Bryant
Ginger Newman Anne Gentz
Ashley Sholes Laurie Korte
Alecia Storms Sally Sahr

Advisory Committee

Karly Creguer
Rebecca Potter
Rachel Young



2026 Program Overview

BY: DIANE LOEW



What's happenin' at FWS 2026?

Not much.

Just . . . a gathering of women taking some time to get to know each other Tuesday evening before going on a fantastic bus tour the next day before having a delicious banquet followed by a fun auction evening before a full day of amazing speakers on so many topics it will make your head spin! . . . Talk about making your head spin . . . take a breath here.

Ok, Tuesday is our meet and greet gathering with hors d'oeuvres and drinks. Carla Schultz from Eight Plates Farm will share with us about her operation and life.

Wednesday is the Bus Tour – see bus tour for more information. After the bus tour you're in for a Run for the Roses banquet experience. Great food and a fun auction to follow.

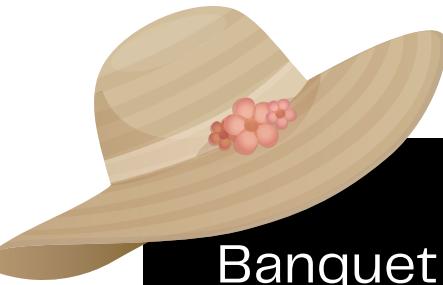
Thursday is our meat and potatoes day. We fill the day so full of information, encouragement and enjoyment that you won't want to eat for a week. On the menu is Katie Dilsee our keynote speaker. When preparing a meal the chef benefits from staff that assists. Katie will present "The Right Support" which will equip us and strengthen us. She will also share "What the World Needs Now" in the afternoon. Just enough ingredients to spice up our lives and balance the flavors of our lives. A meal needs color to be healthy. Pam Driesenga will be showing how to choose our best colors and how we can find our perfect color pallet. Some side dishes will be a self-defense segment with Bry Galganski and returning author Susie Finkbeiner will share "From Dawn to Dusk and Back Again: The Lives of Farm Women". No meal is complete without dessert and we have a delicious one on the menu. Comedian Melissa Hager will be presenting "The Funny Farm Girl from Frankenmuth."

The final component of our symposium is you. We need you. We need your experiences, encouragement and time together. Life-time friendships have been born at FWS and there are more to come.

Don't regret not being part of this fabulous, life changing three days.
Sign up now. See you soon!



THE CULTIVATOR



Banquet Details

BY: DIANE LOEW

“Run for the Roses at the Kentucky Derby”

Banquet and Live Auction

We are running with the Kentucky Derby theme for our banquet and live auction. What do we know about Kentucky Derby attire?

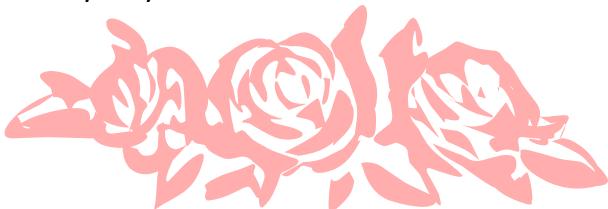
Bold, bright, floral, black and white are colors frequently worn. Dressy is the standard for the “real deal”. We want you to be comfortable so – do the derby your way.

One thing we are doing is a hat contest. What is a Derby without flamboyant hats? There will be one winner at each table. Judging will be done by outside attendees and a prize will be awarded at each table.

Hat suggestions:

When choosing a hat for the Kentucky Derby, first decide on the size you want. Next, choose a color; bright, bold colors are always a good choice, as are the Churchill Downs colors of red, black, white, and gold. Finally, look for a hat with interesting accents and details to help you stand out from the crowd.

Looking forward to the amazing array of flamboyancy.



Hats off to You!

2026 Bus Tour

BY: CHRISTINA GELDER

“A Tour Of Little Bavaria”

This year’s bus tour will highlight just a few of the great spots to explore in the Frankenmuth area. It was truly a challenge to narrow down our options.

Zwerk and Sons farm has been in operation since the 1940s and currently has 7500 acres. They are known for sugar beets, beans, wheat and commercial hemp but they also have a trucking business with multiple types of trucks. It should be interesting to see how they work together as a family to run various aspects of the business.

Heading back downtown to the Bavarian Inn Castle Shops, we will have the opportunity to get our hands a little dusty as we participate in a pretzel making class. Pretzels are a fun nod to the history of the area and while they bake, shopping is sure to fill the time.

We plan to enjoy lunch and a little bit of learning at the MSU Saginaw Valley Research and Education Center. We have a couple of speakers lined up while we eat before we return to downtown Frankenmuth.

The end of this year’s bus tour is a little different. You will have the opportunity to “choose your own adventure” for the remaining time. A few of the options include checking out more shopping, visiting a local historical museum, exploring Bronner’s, or even heading back to the hotel to enjoy the water park or rest in anticipation of the evening’s banquet.

More details to come once we are onsite but we are very excited to have a girl’s day out with all our favorite farm chicks!





Exciting News: Your Home Away from Home

BY:WANDA SKINNER

The Facility Committee is thrilled to announce our official lodging partner for the 34th Farm Women's Symposium, taking place March 3rd - 5th, 2026, in beautiful Frankenmuth, Michigan:

The Bavarian Inn Lodge and Conference Center!

We've secured fantastic rates for our attendees, ensuring a comfortable and memorable stay.

- Standard rooms: \$139 (Total with taxes and fees; \$194.12)
- Premium Rooms: \$149 (Total with taxes and fees: \$205.42)
- Suites: \$229 (Total with taxes and fees: \$295.82)

But that's not all! Your stay at the Bavarian Inn Lodge includes complementary access to their renowned indoor water park, perfect for relaxing after a day of enriching sessions.

To make reservations, please use our special hotel reservation:



Don't miss out on this opportunity to stay at the heart of the symposium.

Call a friend and sign up today!

We look forward to seeing you in Frankenmuth!

2026 Facility Committee:
Christina Gelder, Emelee Rajzer and Wanda Skinner



See you there!



THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS

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Farm Bureau Insurance – Scott Warren

Legend Seeds

Michigan Milk Producers

United Title Agency

Weiss Equipment

Sponsorship Levels

Diamond—\$10,000 Platinum—\$5,000 Gold—\$1,000 Silver—\$500 Bronze—\$250

Farm Women's Symposium
Ashley Sholes
3949 S. Three Mile Rd
Bay City, MI 48706

**Hey Chickies, Don't miss the
34th Symposium: Frankenmuth
March 3-5th, 2026**

LOOK INSIDE FOR:

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- ***2026 Registration and Hotel information***

