



# The Cultivator

July 2024

## 2024/2025 Planning & Advisory Committee

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**Wanda Skinner-**  
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**Diane Loew-**  
Secretary

**Jill Miller-**  
5th Member

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## Advisory

Jennifer Berkey

Rebecca Potter

Sally Sahr

Rachel Young

Summer Greetings!

After a very early spring warm-up and a tornado outbreak in parts of the state in early May, the weather seems to have stabilized for the most part. We know that many farmers are happy to have planting behind them this season.

As we merge into summer, we are reminded that seasons change and seasons go. Wanda has led FWS for the past four years, and has led through a great number of changes. With Wanda's leadership we made it through the 2020 pandemic and then completely changed our delivery of the symposium to a one-day virtual event in 2021. We listened to our 2022 and 2023 Symposium attendees, and changed our format for the 2024 event to be a Tuesday evening to Thursday afternoon time-frame. With the new format we are hearing great feedback from FWS 2024 participants who enjoyed more time to get to know one another.

FWS Banquet "Great Gatsby" theme was a hit, with many decked out in their finest roaring twenties' outfits. The live auction, new also in 2024, was a huge success and we personally want to thank Keri Bancroft and her family/staff for the entertaining evening.

Wanda has officially handed over the reins to Emelee, with Wanda filling the Vice-chair vacancy for the next year.

In 2025, we are going back to our roots in Lansing, by holding the Symposium at the Hyatt House. As the group started with MSU Extension, the committee has been attempting to return to Lansing as a host city for many years. This new hotel was built in summer 2023 and you are going to be thrilled to see the amenities offered. Even better- breakfast and parking are free to those staying at the Hyatt House. Our web site is being updated regularly- please visit [www.farmwomenssymposium.org](http://www.farmwomenssymposium.org)

Plans are well underway with speakers, bus tour and banquet planning. We are very much looking forward to seeing everyone in 2025!

Blessings,

*Wanda Skinner*

2023/2024 FWS Chairperson



*Emelee Rajzer*

2024/2025 FWS Chairperson

# 32nd Symposium - Traverse City

By : Diane Loew      Photos By: Kim Sadler, Emelee Rajzer & Shelley Bryant

Even though Farm Women's Symposium 2024 is over and in the past, the memories will last a lifetime. Not only will they last, but they will also be built upon as each year's symposium rolls around.

What was so special about FWS 2024? New! New format, new hotel, new live auction and best of all a lot of new faces.



We had a Queen, a Mariner, Gatsby Girls, female farmers, female ranchers and yoga to round out the symposium.

Great Gatsby was present on Wednesday evening in the form of banquet and a rousing auction by Wayne Bancroft Auction Services. We raised a nice amount of money to go towards FWS 2025.

Our welcome reception was enjoyed by an overflowing room of women reconnecting and making new friends.

Wednesday, we hit the roads in buses and visited The Historical Barns, MSU Horticultural Center and Cherry Republic in Glen Arbor. A new appreciation of the area's history and cherries resulted.



Thursday – Cherry Queen Carmen Beemer and a Mariner from Great Lakes Maritime Academy, Tess Lepky described their lives in their perspective.

Meredith Bernard from North Carolina – The Farm Wife - shared colloquialisms to encourage us in our daily lives.

Diane Loew – A Farm Wife – opened the door to the relational and emotional rooms of farm transitioning.

Zoe Kent – Farm With Zoe – shared her experiences with social media and how she has become so successful.

Christie Salenbein – USDA Farmer Service Agency Acting State Executive Director brought us up to date.

We challenged each other to be part of the puzzle that brings the symposium together.



The symposium came to a close too soon. We all bade our goodbyes to old and new friends.

Many plan to attend Farm Women's Symposium 2025 in East Lansing, March 4-6, 2025.

We hope to see you there.

For more information:

[www.farmwomenssymposium.org](http://www.farmwomenssymposium.org) or follow us on FaceBook – Farm Women's Symposium.



# 33rd Symposium Plans

## Hotel Accommodations

Plans for the 33rd Symposium, to be held in Lansing, are well under way. Subcommittees are meeting during the summer months, working on the program/speakers, bus tour plans, banquet, etc.

In March of 2025, we will be staying in the beautiful Hyatt House, Lansing. New in August 2023, the Hyatt House features spacious rooms,



conveniently connected to the AC Conference Center, where our 2025 Welcome Reception and Program will be held.

Reservations can be made by calling 517-337-2626, referencing that you are part of the FWS. Link to online direct booking can be found on our website at:

[www.farmwomensymposium.org](http://www.farmwomensymposium.org)

Breakfast is included for hotel guests and we have negotiated free parking for all hotel guests. (more details to follow)



2023-2024 FWS Committee

## Keynote

### Announced

Karen Eddington is a 20-year identity researcher and is the author of *Understanding Self-Worth*, who learned proven methods to combat stress by listening to people like you. From rural Utah, Karen shares stress management skills to help those in



agriculture learn how to be strong under pressure.

We look forward to having Karen join us for two topics for our 2025 event!

## Banquet Theme Announced

The FWS Banquet & Live Auction Committee are thrilled to announce the banquet theme for FWS 2025.

The theme will be: **Mardi Gras**





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## Sponsorship Opportunities for FWS

Without the generous support of many organizations and businesses, FWS would not be possible!

This year, we will have the following sponsorship levels available:

**Diamond—\$10,000**

**Platinum—\$5,000**

**Gold—\$1,000**

**Silver—\$500**

**Bronze—\$250**

If you know of any individuals, organizations or businesses that FWS should partner with, please reach out to Wanda Skinner at 989-450-7467 or email at [farmwomenssymposium@gmail.com](mailto:farmwomenssymposium@gmail.com)



Created by: Beck Street Woodworking, Sebewaing, MI

***FWS Mission: The purpose of Farm Women's Symposium (FWS) is to strengthen agriculture, addressing the ever-changing needs of people involved in farming by focusing on women. It provides opportunities for leadership and professional development; strives to enhance communication and management skills, to build an effective family team, and to develop a network of supportive friendships. The Farm Women's Symposium encourages participation from everyone involved with agriculture.***

## 33rd Annual Farm Women's Symposium



**March 4-6, 2025**

Farm Women's Symposium  
c/o Wanda Skinner  
749 S. Van Dyke Rd.  
Bad Axe, MI 48413

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**33rd Symposium—Lansing**  
**March 4-6th, 2025**

***LOOK INSIDE FOR:***

- ***Letter from Chair***
- ***Re-cap of 2024 Event***
- ***2025 Save the Date  
“Postcard”***
- ***Sponsorship  
Opportunities***

