

Welcome, April!



Marty Travis (Spence Farm), keynote speaker at the 2026 Indiana Horticulture and Small Farm Conference. Photo credit: Ashley Adair.

April marks a critical transition for Indiana farmers as early spring preparation shifts into fieldwork and planting. This is the time to finalize planting schedules, begin transplanting and direct seeding of early-season crops, and closely monitor soil moisture and temperature conditions. Farmers are preparing high tunnels and irrigation systems, and should remain attentive to early-season pests, weeds, and disease pressure. Orchard and small fruit producers are managing bloom, continuing pest monitoring, and preparing for frost protection as needed. It is also an important point in the season to reassess inputs, labor needs, and market readiness to ensure your operation stays on track for a productive year.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all farmers, partners, and participants who joined us for the 2026 Indiana Horticulture and Small Farm Conference. Your engagement, insights, and commitment to advancing specialty crop production and small farm viability across Indiana made this year's event a success. We are especially grateful to our speakers, sponsors, and community partners who contributed their time and expertise to create a meaningful and impactful experience for all involved.

As we move further into the growing season, remember that Purdue Extension remains committed to supporting farmers with research-based information and hands-on programming. Be mindful of upcoming USDA and conservation program deadlines, explore cost-share and grant opportunities early, and watch for local Extension announcements about workshops, field days, and trainings in the months ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathan Shoaf', written in a cursive style.

Nathan Shoaf

Assistant Program Leader | Agriculture and Natural Resources

Urban Agriculture Specialist | Diversified Farming and Food Systems

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Services

KIRAG Entrepreneur Workshops

KIRAG Strategy, in partnership with Purdue's Food Entrepreneurship and Manufacturing Institute (FEMI), and Purdue Diversified Farming & Food Systems (DFFS), presents a workshop series for food entrepreneurs, farmers, and agriculture/producers who are looking to sell direct to consumers and into commercial markets.



Workshop 1: Food Business Launch Essentials

FREE Half-Day | In-Person | Open to All

This first workshop helps local food producers get ready to sell direct, into wholesale markets or scale into a full food brand.

You will learn in these expert-led sessions from FEMI & DFFS :

- How the food industry works and where your product fits
- What makes a product truly market-ready
- How to scale from home production to commercial kitchens

Includes:

- Roundtable discussion with peers
- Opportunity for *advanced virtual workshops*:
 - **FEMI Series 1:** Food Manufacturing and Commercial Sales (retail, foodservice, etc.)
 - **DFFS Series 2:** Wholesale Commodities & Direct to Consumer (commodity/farmers markets, institutional, etc.)

Join us!

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

8:30 a.m. to noon EST

MEADOW SPRINGS EVENT CENTER

8631 S HWY 421 FRANCESVILLE, IN 479466

Scan the QR code or use the link below to register today!



Click for Event Tickets Here

See full link below

Completion of Workshop 1 allows participants to apply for admission into advanced FEMI and DFFS workshops

FEMI Series 1 Workshops | \$100 full series

Series 1 virtual workshops begin with evaluating new food product feasibility through market research and. Participants learn to assess competition, identify category trends, and measure shelf life and sensory performance to guide successful product launches.

The second workshop focuses on turning product concepts into viable businesses. It covers building an effective business plan, defining target consumers, developing marketing strategies, and applying food safety and sanitation practices essential for consistent and compliant production.

A sample of tools participants will receive:

- 1-on-1 growth consultation
- Business plan templates
- Cost of goods calculator
- Social media marketing toolkit with AI support
- Marketing plan builder

DFFS Series 2 Workshops | \$100 full series

Series 2 virtual workshops offer practical tools to help small growers and producers strengthen their operations. The first covers essential production and business fundamentals, including food safety, basic farm finances, and recordkeeping for sustainable growth.

The second workshop explores crop expansion and diversification, help aligning production with capacity, seasonality, and market opportunities.

The final session focuses on marketing and distribution strategies, from pricing and channel selection to accessing institutional and wholesale markets.

Tools participants will receive:

- The Purdue Hort Calculator
- Enterprise budget examples
- Purdue Business INventure Plan tool

Are you a farmer hoping to diversify your operation or an aspiring local food entrepreneur? Join us on April 9 in Francesville, IN for a free workshop.

The KIRAG Accelerator & Purdue Dept of Ag (The Food Entrepreneurship Manufacturing Institute and Diversified Farming & Food Systems), present a workshop series for food entrepreneurs, farmers, and agriculture/producers who are looking to sell direct to consumers and into commercial markets. Send questions to sspeedy@purdue.edu

Register Here



Fundamentals of Farming with Horses Workshop

The Sustainable Horticulture Lab at Purdue University together with Old Capitol Farm and Burgess Draft Logging and Lumber bring you a hands-on introductory workshop on the fundamentals of farming with horses - from handling to harnessing to hitching.

April 11, 2026. 8:00am - 5:00pm

Location: Corydon, IN

Cost: \$15/person

Local lunch provided by Singing Trees Keep.

This workshop is limited to 10 people.

To register email mbilenky@purdue.edu.

Register Here

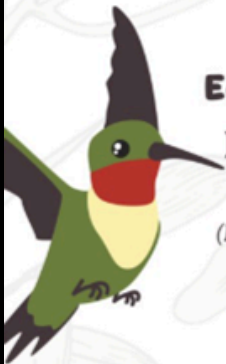


POLLINATOR DAY 2026



Join us for our
annual Pollinator Day
for family-friendly fun!

Enjoy hands-on activities,
games, crafts, local vendors,
food trucks, native trees and
seeds, and info-packed booths!



Educational Classes Pollinator Pockets

Cara Bezuska
(Purdue Extension Master Gardener
& Indiana Master Naturalist)

Prescribed Burns

Jarred Brooke
(Purdue University Extension Wildlife Specialist)



MASTER GARDENER



Extension - Floyd County



Supported in part by grant funding
from Duke Energy Foundation,
Meta, and C.F.S.I.

APR 25

SATURDAY
10AM-3PM

PURDUE RESEARCH PARK

3000 TECHNOLOGY AVE
NEW ALBANY



**FREE and
Family-
Friendly**

Purdue University is an
Equal Opportunity/Equal
Access University.

If you are in need of accommodations
to attend this program, please contact
Gina Anderson prior to the meeting
at 812-948-5470 or
gmanders@purdue.edu by April 10th.

If you need an interpreter or
translator, please contact
Gina Anderson prior to the meeting
at 812-948-5470 or
gmanders@purdue.edu by April 10th.



FACTS FOR

FANCY FRUIT

A Newsletter for Commercial and Advanced Amateur fruit growers.

Facts for Fancy Fruit is a newsletter for commercial and advanced amateur fruit growers. It provides timely information on weather conditions, production practices, pest and disease control, and other topics likely to be of interest to fruit growers.

[**Subscribe Here**](#)



The Vegetable Crops Hotline is a newsletter for commercial vegetable growers that the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service prepares. The newsletter aims to bring timely information to vegetable growers between February and October.

[**Subscribe Here**](#)



PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE FIELD DAY

JULY 16, 2026

Register now at purdue.ag/fruit-veg-field-day



Register Here



PURDUE UNIVERSITY
Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

SMALL FARM EDUCATION FIELD DAY

JULY 23, 2026

Register now at purdue.ag/small-farm-field-day



Register Here



PATHWAYS TO MARKET

SAVE THE DATE!

LEARN & EARN\$: Pathways to Market – Business Development & Buyer Readiness

Join us for this virtual webinar to hear from business and economic development experts about how to prepare your enterprises and get your products to Federal markets using artificial intelligence and other related/necessary skills.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, Small Business Development Center and Apex Accelerator have partnered to equip agricultural enterprises and other small businesses with the tools, resources, and knowledge required to navigate the product to market journey. Participants will obtain best practices and enhance their understanding of how to convert innovative ideas to buyer ready products.

Wednesday, April 22, 2026
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm EST

[REGISTER
HERE!](#)



U.S. Small Business
Administration



APEX Accelerator



Small Business Development Center
at *Kennesaw State University*
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

All Federal programs and services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.

[Register Here](#)



APRIL

EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR

Featuring Indiana State Department of Workforce Development
and Labor

April 8, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (EST)

Topic: H2A process with the State Workforce Agency,
Agricultural Recruitment System and Migrant Seasonal
Farmworkers



Scan to Register

Presented by



Wednesday April 8, 2026, from 1 pm – 3 pm EST

Webinar link and call in information below

Meeting ID: 229 412 250 638

Passcode: fF6L8rf2

[Join the Meeting Here](#)



APRIL

EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR

Featuring Nicole Driscoll with Small Business Development
Center

April 22, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. (EST)

Topic: Marketing and Creative Social Media



Scan to Register



Presented by



Wednesday April 22, 2026, from 1 pm – 2 pm EST

Webinar link and call in information below

Meeting ID: 294 445 453 599 19

Passcode: R9qk2ms9

Join the Meeting Here



National Urban Extension Conference 2026

The conference will be held May 11–14, 2026, at **The Westin Book Cadillac** (1114 Washington Boulevard) in **Detroit, Michigan**. This year's theme, *Driving Innovation Ahead*, highlights a continued commitment to advancing research, professional development, and innovative strategies that serve urban, suburban, and peri-urban communities.

NUEC brings together Extension professionals from all program areas to share emerging research, explore best practices, and strengthen collaboration across urban and rural systems. The program includes workshops, presentations, and Urban Extension Field Tours showcasing applied learning throughout Detroit.

Registration for NUEC 2026 is now available, with the following rate structure:

- **Regular (March 10 – April 26, 2026):** \$700
- **Onsite:** \$750
- **Student:** \$425

[Register Here](#)

INDIANA
STATE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Hoosiers: We'd love to hear from you!

COMPLETE SURVEY NOW

We're gathering insights from Hoosiers across the state to better understand how you shop, eat, and engage with Indiana's food and farming businesses. Take a few minutes to complete the Indiana Food Insight survey and help strengthen the future of local food in our communities.

Have Questions?
Reach out to Christine Patrick
cpatrick@indiana.gov

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture is gathering feedback on how Hoosiers shop local and support Indiana food and farm businesses. Share your voice by taking the survey and passing it along to your community.

Questions:

CAROLINE PATRICK | *Indiana Grown Program Director*

Indiana State Department of Agriculture

Email: cpatrick@isda.in.gov

Survey Here

August to November



(Once a month, Third Wednesday, Noon to 1.00 pm)

Presentations covers production of specialty crops including flowers, vegetables, and fruits grown in greenhouses

There are no fees, but registration is required to attend.

Details on how to join the webinar will be sent to your email after registration.

[Sign up here](#) to receive emails to join each webinar.

Contact Details: Lori Jolly Brown (ljollybr@purdue.edu; 765-494-1296)

Dr Krishna Nemali (knemali@purdue.edu, 765 494 8179)

Sign Up Here



URBAN FOOD
SYSTEMS SYMPOSIUM

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY



Join us for the 2026
Biennial Urban Food
Systems Symposium in
Kansas City

September 14th - 17th

Cultivating Communities,
Cities, & Food Systems

The 2026 symposium will be held **September 14-17 in Kansas City, Missouri**. The theme of the symposium is "**Cultivating Communities, Cities, and Food Systems.**"

This multi-day symposium brings together a national and international audience of academics, non-profit professionals, government officials, and research-oriented experts to share and gain knowledge on urban food systems. We welcome and encourage a wide variety of abstracts – whether they are academic, policy-oriented, educational, or program-specific.

If you have questions, you can reach us at UFSS@ksu.edu

Register Here

Share your Scenes from Diversified Farming and Food Systems in Indiana

Do you have photos that capture the unique aspects of Indiana's agricultural production or food distribution systems? We would love for you to share them with us! Your photos could help shine a light on underrepresented facets of the industry and will be used by the DFFS staff and Purdue Agricultural Communications in materials such as newsletters, promotional content for programs like Market Ready, the Small Farm Conference, field days, and more.

You can share your photos either through this link or by utilizing the QR code below. The photo size limit is 16MB.

We will attribute all photos we utilize. Thanks in advance for sharing the breadth and diversity of agricultural production in Indiana.



Share Here

CONNECT WITH US

Click Here to Visit the Purdue DFFS Website

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