

Welcome, January!



Redbud Farm and Caprini Creamery, Spiceland, IN

January settles in across Indiana with colder temperatures and snow-covered fields on many farms. Storage areas, high tunnels, and greenhouses continue to supply root crops, greens, and other stored produce from last season's work. For many farmers, winter is a time to catch up, evaluate what worked well, address challenges, and begin shaping plans for the year ahead.

As the new season takes shape, farmers are reviewing production and marketing strategies, ordering seed and supplies, and prioritizing winter projects that will strengthen their operations in the months to come. This planning period is also an important opportunity to connect with other growers, learn from shared experiences, and gather ideas to support long-term farm resilience.

Purdue Extension is here to support you throughout the winter months. Our educators, programs, and online resources are designed with farmers in mind whether you are working to improve soil health, explore new production techniques, diversify markets, or build a more resilient farm system.

We also encourage you to join us at the [Indiana Horticulture & Small Farm Conference](#), held March 3–5 at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds. This is a valuable opportunity to connect with fellow farmers, Extension educators, and industry partners. The conference offers practical, farmer-focused sessions, hands-on learning, and networking opportunities to help you prepare for the upcoming growing season.

As we begin the new year, we wish you a safe and productive winter. Thank you for supporting Indiana's farms, families, and communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathan Shoaf', with a stylized, cursive script.

Nathan Shoaf

Assistant Program Leader | Agriculture and Natural Resources

Urban Agriculture Specialist | Diversified Farming and Food Systems

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Services

BEGINNING FARMER PROGRAM

This 8-session program helps new and beginning farmers find success through creation of a practical action plan. Farmers will set goals, identify assets and challenges, and become aware of resources that can lead them towards a successful farming operation.

Registration is \$90, closes on Jan. 5, and includes a digital copy of the Beginning Farmer workbook.



If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Amy Thompson prior to the meeting at 812-360-6821 or afthompson@purdue.edu by Dec. 16, 2025.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Amy Thompson prior to the meeting at 812-360-6821 or afthompson@purdue.edu by Dec. 16, 2025.

Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

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THURSDAYS, JAN 8 - FEB. 26, 2026

There are eight (8) sessions to this program. Optional additional resource sessions will also be held between normal class sessions.

VIRTUAL PROGRAM

This program will meet via Zoom and utilize the Google Classroom platform to share course materials and provide networking.

7:00 TO 8:30 P.M. (EST)

6:00 to 7:30 P.M. (CST)



Extension

REGISTER AT
<https://cvent.me/xEyg2g>
OR SCAN QR CODE



[Register Here](#)

PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE GROWER TRAINING

REMOTE VIA ZOOM

JANUARY 14, 2026

9:00 AM- 5:00 PM ET

REGISTRATION:

<https://cvent.me/ZaalEO>



Extension - Safe Produce Indiana

The Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training is for fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety.

The PSA Grower Training Course is one way to satisfy the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement outlined in § 112.22(c) that requires '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.' The trainers will spend approximately seven hours of instruction time covering content contained in these seven modules: Introduction to Produce Safety Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training Soil Amendments Wildlife, Domesticated Animals, and Land Use Agricultural Water (Part I: Production Water; Part II: Postharvest Water) Postharvest Handling and Sanitation How to Develop a Farm Food Safety Plan.

This training will be offered remotely via Zoom. All participants are required to have access to an internet connection, speakers, a microphone, and a webcam. Participants are required to be present for all training modules in order to receive a Certificate of Course Completion. Attendance will be monitored via video.

[Register Here](#)

MarketReady Producer Training



January 21, 2026 - 9 a.m.-2 p.m. ET
Gallery on West - Marshall County Fairgrounds
202 West St., Argos, Indiana
Lunch will be provided by FARMWISE Indiana.
Cost: \$50

MarketReady is a program that helps local food producers prepare for selling to wholesale markets. The program focuses on business skills needed to meet the expectations of potential buyers. Producers will learn about product quality, food safety, insurance/managing risks, marketing and more. The program will include a panel of wholesale buyers.



Secure your spot today! Registration is limited to the first 30 participants.
<https://cvent.me/eW0v8G>



If you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out.
 Sarah Hanson - sspeedy@purdue.edu or 765-543-1230
 Brianna Slonaker - brianna@purdue.edu or 574-935-8545

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If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Sarah Hanson prior to the meeting at 765-543-1230 and sspeedy@purdue.edu by January 6, 2026. For special dietary needs contact Sarah Hanson at 765-543-1230 and sspeedy@purdue.edu by January 6, 2026.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Sarah Hanson prior to the meeting at 765-543-1230 and sspeedy@purdue.edu by January 6, 2026.



Subscribe to our Diversified Farming and Food Systems newsletter to find out about other programs that support small farms in Indiana puext.in/DFFS_Newsletter

in partnership with:



LF

Purdue Extension is hosting the MarketReady training on Jan 21 from 9am to 2:30pm in Marshall County. As Indiana's local food producers explore new marketing channels, the MarketReady program offers essential tools and resources to help them successfully sell to restaurants, institutions, distributors, and more. This training will focus on key skills needed for wholesale success—including product quality, food safety, insurance, and risk management. The workshop will be held in Argos, IN. Registration is \$50 (including lunch and a workshop manual). There will also be a panel of buyers for afternoon Q & A. Lunch sponsored by FARMWISE Indiana.

Register Here

FARMERS' MARKET SIGNATURE PROGRAM

TUESDAYS | JAN 27 - FEB 17 | 1-3:30PM ET

PURDUE EXTENSION MARION COUNTY
DISCOVERY HALL 1202 E 38TH ST, STE. 201 INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46205

\$75 (INCLUDES A MARKET MANUAL)
OPTIONS FOR GUESTS AND EXTRA MANUALS AVAILABLE

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This program covers multiple aspects of a successful farmers market for both market managers and vendors. Content includes market regulations, food safety, liability, sustaining a stable market, food assistance programs, and conflict management. This program follows our Market Manager Toolkit and Market Vendor Toolkit publications.

Our in-person series will take place for 4 afternoon sessions in Marion County, starting January 27, 2026. The cost is \$75 per person. The registration deadline is January 21.

For more information, contact Jayde Grisham at jmgrish@purdue.edu

Register Here



Join a Black Soldier Fly Derived Compost On-Farm Research

WHY BLACK SOLDIER FLY COMPOSTING?

- Generate compost and insect protein for animal husbandry.
- Reduce organic waste streams.
- Create healthy and uncontaminated soils.
- Increase economic and ecological vitality in urban food systems.
- Increase self-reliance and autonomy.

PROJECT DURATION AND TIME COMMITMENT*

2 years (2025-2026)
May-Sept. 2hrs/week

*Participant honorarium included

Sign up to be considered for an on-farm participatory study to help identify how insect-derived composting with black soldier fly larvae can help improve soil health and crop yields within urban communities. As an urban or peri-urban farmer, by participating in this project you will have the opportunity to generate two economically viable products: soil amendment and animal feed.

SIGN UP



PROJECT DETAILS



SPONSORED BY:



PARTNERSHIPS:



Questions about the project? Contact us

Peri Forbes, Graduate Research Assistant | ✉ forbes.133@osu.edu

Fernanda Krupek, Assistant Professor | ✉ krupek.1@osu.edu

Laura Ingwell, Assistant Professor | ✉ lingwell@purdue.edu



Sign Up Here

REGISTER



**Food is Medicine:
BRINGING
AGRICULTURE INTO
HEALTHCARE FOR
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

A webinar discussing creative market expansion based on successful models across the southeast focused on healthcare systems and building resilient food systems for local economic development, and regional rural prosperity.

SAVE THE DATE

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026
1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. ET**



The graphic features a background of a green field under a cloudy sky. On the left, there are two circular inset images: the top one shows a wooden cutting board with sliced vegetables like tomatoes, avocados, and leafy greens; the bottom one shows a red apple, a stethoscope, and a clipboard with papers. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of bold and regular fonts.

Low-interest Loans for Indiana Meat Processors: MPILP now live via IMPPA

The Indiana Meat Packers & Processors Association (IMPPA) is administering a \$15 million revolving loan fund under USDA's MPILP to expand access to affordable capital for Indiana's small and very small processors. Loans target projects that increase capacity, improve efficiency, or strengthen compliance (for example, equipment, facility upgrades, and food-safety investments). Independent plants (not affiliated with major packers) are the focus, with application details and eligibility posted by IMPPA. The program aims to reduce financing bottlenecks that have slowed modernization and throughput. For shops planning capacity, labor-saving, or regulatory upgrades, MPILP can close critical funding gaps.

More info can be found here: <https://imppa.org/meat-and-poultry-intermediary-lending-program-mpilp>

[Register Here](#)



The poster features a circular logo in the top left corner with the text "NORTHEAST INDIANA LOCAL FOOD NETWORK" around a green leaf design. The main title "SAVE THE DATE" is in large white serif font. Below it is a photograph of a basket filled with fresh produce including green beans, yellow squash, and purple grapes. A yellow banner across the basket reads "ALL ARE WELCOME!". The event details are listed in white and gold serif fonts: "LOCAL FOOD NETWORKING", "TUESDAY, JANUARY 27TH, 2026", "1- 3 PM", and "UNION STREET MARKET MEZZANINE". The website "neifood.org" is at the bottom.

SAVE THE DATE

ALL ARE WELCOME!

LOCAL FOOD NETWORKING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27TH, 2026
1- 3 PM
UNION STREET MARKET MEZZANINE

neifood.org

Come meet with farmers, producers, buyers, sellers, and supporters of local food in Northeast Indiana and connect with the suppliers, buyers, and collaborators you need to help your business or organization thrive.

[Click Here for More Information](#)



NORTHWEST INDIANA VEGETABLE FARMER WORKSHOP

February 2, 2026
1-4pm CST

Porter County Public
Library - Valparaiso Branch
(103 Jefferson Street
Valparaiso, IN 46383)

Workshop Courses:

- *Cultural Practices for Top Quality Vegetables*
- *Eyes on the Field: Disease Scouting in Diverse Vegetable Crops*
- *Sprayer Calibration Basics for Managing Vegetable Diseases and Insects*
- *Unexpected Insect Damage: How to Scout, Identify and Manage*

*Indiana Private Applicator Recertification (PARP) and Commercial Applicator Credits (CCH) expected. Those in need of PARP credits should mail \$10 cash/check to Purdue Extension Lake County Office, 2293 N Main Street, Crown Point, IN 46307

This workshop is designed for market farmers and wholesale growers, but anyone wanting to learn about vegetable farming is welcome!



Extension - Agriculture
and Natural Resources

Purdue University is an equal
opportunity/equal access
university.

If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Emily Evers at 574-235-9605 or everse@purdue.edu by January 26th.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Emily Evers at 574-235-9605 or everse@purdue.edu by January 26th.



Northwest Indiana Vegetable Farmer Workshop. Feb. 2, 2026. Valparaiso, Indiana. PARP and CCH credits are available. Payments for PARP credits should be made in advance by mailing check for \$10 to Purdue Extension Lake County Office, Attn PARP, 2293 N. Main St., Crown Point, IN

[Register Here](#)



PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE GROWER TRAINING

LEBANON, IN

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

9:00 AM- 5:00 PM ET

REGISTRATION:

<https://cvent.me/3xZlnP>

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Extension - Safe Produce Indiana

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- Introduction to Produce Safety
- Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
- Soil Amendments
- Wildlife, Domesticated Animals, and Land Use
- Agricultural Water (Part I: Production Water; Part II: Postharvest Water)
- Postharvest Handling and Sanitation
- How to Develop a Farm Food Safety Plan

Register Here



SAVE THE DATE

Indiana Horticulture & Small Farm Conference

March 3 - 5 , 2026

Join us as we merge two popular Purdue Extension events into one dynamic conference
Designed for specialty crop growers and small farmers region wide, featuring premier educational sessions

Event Location: Hendricks County Fairgrounds

1900 E Main St. Danville, IN 46122



IHC

*** Education * Trade Show * Poster Session * Social & Networking Event**

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SFC

[Click Here for More Information](#)

2026 Indiana Organic Grain Farmer Meeting

SAVE THE DATE:
FEBRUARY 18, 2026

Location:
The Beck Center at the
Agronomy Center for
Research and Education (ACRE)



purdue.ag/iogfm



@OrganicAgPurdue



Purdue Extension



www.purdue.edu/dffs/organicag



An Equal Access/Equal Opportunity University

The Indiana Organic Grain Farmer Meeting will be held at the Beck Center in West Lafayette on February 18th this year! We are pleased to host Joel Gruver, Professor of Soil Science and Sustainable Ag, and Director of the WIU Organic Research Program, as our keynote speaker this year. Early bird registration is \$60.

[Register Here](#)



Marbleseed's 37th Organic Farming Conference

Theme: Abundance Grows in Solidarity

February 26-28, 2026

La Crosse Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin

We are excited to announce that planning is underway for 2026! The Marbleseed Organic Farming Conference is one of the largest organic farming conferences in the United States. Every year regenerative and organic farmers from a wide range of farm sizes, experiences, and backgrounds gather to learn the latest in organic farming methods, build community, and shape the future of the organic farming movement.

Join us for an inspirational lineup of educational content covering diverse production types, business management, soil health, and more to advance resilient organic farms and regenerative food systems. Whether you're certified organic, using organic practices on your regenerative farm, or considering the switch to organic, you'll find the people, partners, and skill-building opportunities to help your farm business thrive.

[Register Here](#)



Ohio
AQUACULTURE
ASSOCIATION

2026 Ohio Aquaculture Conference! Registration is now OPEN

Conference will run all day Friday (23rd) and a half day on Saturday (24th).

You can register at <https://www.ohioaquacultureassociation.com/events>
Registration includes Fri. & Sat. Continental Breakfasts, Friday Lunch, Friday Evening Social (after hours Social at Top Golf), and Session Breaks.

Register Today!

Early Bird Registration for new and existing members is available from now until January 10th at \$150. After January 10th conference registration will increase to \$200. This is also the time to renew your OAA membership as well if you have not already done so.

<https://ohioaquacultureassociation.com/membership>

Location: Quest Conference Center, 9200 Worthington Road, Westerville, OH 43082

Hotel Options:

Hampton Inn by Hilton 1-614-885-8400 8411 Pulsar Place Columbus, OH	Fairfield Inn by Marriott 1-888-918-5605 9000 Worthington Rd Westerville, OH	Four Points by Sheraton 1-844-209-3559 8505 Pulsar Place Columbus, OH	Drury Inn & Suites 614-854-0216 8805 Orion Pl Columbus, OH
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Whether you are expanding your agronomy expertise or seeking to stay current with evolving agricultural practices, Purdue offers the coursework to support your professional growth from anywhere.

[**Learn More 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 Photos Here**](#)

CONNECT WITH US

[Click Here to Visit the Purdue DFFS Website](#)

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