

## *Welcome, March!*



*Sugar Creek Farm Market, Franklin, IN*

March marks an important transition for Indiana farmers as winter planning shifts into active spring preparation. This is the time to review soil test results and finalize nutrient management plans, calibrate application equipment, inspect high tunnels and irrigation systems, and begin seeding early-season crops. Orchard and small fruit growers are pruning and monitoring for overwintering pests. It is also a good point in the season to revisit enterprise budgets, evaluate input costs, and refine marketing strategies to ensure your operation is positioned for a productive year.

**We encourage you to join us for the 2026 Indiana Horticulture Conference and Small Farm Conference, held March 3–5 at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds in Danville, IN.** This annual gathering brings together farmers, Extension educators, and industry partners from across the state to share practical production strategies, timely research updates, pest

and disease management insights, and business development ideas. The conference provides valuable opportunities to connect with peers, ask questions specific to your operation, and strengthen your farm with tools and knowledge that can be applied immediately during the growing season.

As we move further into spring, 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', 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

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SAFE PRODUCE INDIANA  
*PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE*  
*GROWER TRAINING*

MARCH 11, 2026  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM ET  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 3/5/26

PURDUE EXTENSION -  
ELKHART COUNTY  
17746 COUNTY ROAD 34, STE E  
GOSHEN, IN 46528

REGISTRATION COST: \$20  
INCLUDES LUNCH, TRAINING  
MATERIALS, AND COURSE  
CERTIFICATE

**Who Should Attend**

Fruit and vegetable growers, 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.'* Participants will receive a course manual and certificate of course attendance.

**What to Expect at the PSA Grower Training**

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



REGISTER AT <https://cvent.me/89oMVv>

If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Tari Gary before 3/5/26 by emailing [tgary@purdue.edu](mailto:tgary@purdue.edu) or calling 765-494-8271. If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Tari Gary by 3/5/26. For special dietary needs contact Tari Gary by 3/5/26.



 **PURDUE UNIVERSITY** | Extension - Safe Produce Indiana  
An equal access/equal opportunity university.

**Register Here**

# FARMERS MARKET CERTIFICATE

THURSDAYS, MARCH 12 - APRIL 2 AT 6 PM EASTERN  
VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM



Extension

## Training for farmers market managers and vendors

In these four 2-hour sessions you will learn how to navigate food safety regulations, understand legal issues of markets, improve market stability, offer food assistance programs, manage conflict, and more.

Registration is \$75 and includes a market manager or market vendor manual, which you select during registration.

If you are in need of accommodations to attend, please contact Sarah Hanson at 765-494-8483 and [sspeedy@purdue.edu](mailto:sspeedy@purdue.edu) by March 2, 2026.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Sarah Hanson at 765-494-8483 and [sspeedy@purdue.edu](mailto:sspeedy@purdue.edu) by March 2, 2026.

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

More information and registration at:

<https://cvent.me/xq5ewq>



Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/  
affirmative action university.

**Register Here**



**Farms, Food & Agribusiness:  
New Year, New Opportunities and Challenges**

A Live Virtual Event  
Date: 02/19/2026 - Time: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. (EDT)

**Indiana Presentation: Small Business Taxes 2026 START STRONG!**

A Live Virtual Event  
Date: 02/26/2026 - Time: Noon to 1 p.m. (EDT)

**The Business Book Advantage: Turn Your Expertise Into Clients**

An In Person and Live Virtual Event  
Date: 03/05/2026 - Time: 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. (EDT)

**Indiana Presentation: Small Business Taxes 2026 STAY STRONG!**

A Live Virtual Event  
Date: 03/12/2026 - Time: Noon to 1 p.m. (EDT)

**To register for these events and others, please scan QR code  
or click on link below.**



**Register Here**

## Market Ready Producer Training



Are you a local food producer interested in selling your products to restaurants, grocery stores, schools or wholesale distributors? Or maybe you just want to explore additional marketing options? Join us for the Market Ready Producer Training Program to gain the tools for business success! The program includes the training, lunch, a buyer panel, and a few words from our program partners.



If you're interested in attending a future session of the Market Ready program, please complete this interest survey. You'll be contacted when registration becomes available for the next program. [puext.in/MarketReady](https://puext.in/MarketReady)



Contact us for additional information:  
Amy Thompson [afthompson@purdue.edu](mailto:afthompson@purdue.edu) or  
Sarah Hanson [sspeedy@purdue.edu](mailto:sspeedy@purdue.edu)



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](https://puext.in/DFFS_Newsletter)

**MarketReady™**



*Kentucky Extension created the materials for the program and will lead this training session. Purdue Extension will co-host the event and will lead future trainings.*

LF

EA/EOU

**Survey**

PURDUE EXTENSION

# FARM SHIELD



*Protecting Your Legacy from Life's Uncertainties*

## Virtual Series Offering

Farm Shield is more than a virtual series; it's a commitment to helping agricultural families build resilience and plan for a secure future. Don't miss this opportunity to protect your legacy with this virtual series!

## Virtual Sessions

- March 4, 2026 - Preparing for the Unexpected
- March 11, 2026 - Estate & Succession Planning
- March 18, 2026 - Managing Financial Responsibility
- March 25, 2026 - Addressing Family Conflict

A complete description is listed on the website.

## Registration Cost

**\$40.00**



Includes: program materials, practical insights you can apply directly on your farm, and an opportunity for post-conference collaboration with Purdue Extension Educators tailored to your farm's needs.

Dates: Wednesday Evenings in March 2026

Time: 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Location: Anywhere you have internet

Register: <https://bit.ly/farmshieldvirtual>

This work is supported by the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center, project award no. 2024-70027-42470, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

 **USDA** National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



 **PURDUE** UNIVERSITY  
Extension

The in-person conferences went so well that we decided to host them again virtually for those who were not able to attend. One participant at the in-person conference said, "I just paid \$40 for a \$1,000 program!"



**More information:** <https://bit.ly/farmshield>

If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Mathias Ingle prior to the meeting at 765-456-2313 or [mingle@purdue.edu](mailto:mingle@purdue.edu) by February 27th. If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Mathias Ingle prior to the meeting at 765-456-2313 or [mingle@purdue.edu](mailto:mingle@purdue.edu) by February 27th.  
Purdue University is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access University

**Sign Up Here**

# SPECIALTY CROPS

## BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (SCBG)

### OVERVIEW

The goal of this program is to develop and deliver produce food safety programming for small fruit and vegetable growers in Indiana. In addition to current educational offerings that assist specialty crop growers in achieving compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule.



### ► CLEANING AND SANITATION WORKSHOP

This hands-on workshop will focus on essential topics including:

- Proper cleaning and sanitizing techniques.
- Third-party audit requirements and effective recordkeeping systems.
- Growers will learn how to implement practical sanitation procedures that reduce contamination risks.
- Preparing for audit inspections and how to organize records to meet regulatory standards.

**REGISTER:** [https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_81blwfoCQNWOSYS](https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_81blwfoCQNWOSYS)

### ► FREE - PORTABLE HANDWASH STATION

- Time to build: 25 minutes
- Cost of equipment: \$130 (tax not included)
- Trash can and paper towels are not included.
- Clean water capacity: 8 gallons.
- Wastewater capacity: 5 gallons; bucket provided separately.
- Soap capacity: 1.3 gallons
- Operates on foot pump system



**FREE handwash station link:**

[purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eCJPp9AzWmE2G](https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eCJPp9AzWmE2G)

Join us for a FREE, hands-on Cleaning & Sanitation Workshop to strengthen your farm's food safety practices and prepare for audits!

March 25, 1:00–5:00 EST

Tuttle Orchards– Greenfield, IN

Learn from #PurdueExtension about:

- Cleaning & sanitizing basics (wash/pack areas, sanitizer dilution, etc)

- Regulatory requirements for produce safety
- Writing SSOPs & recordkeeping for third-party audits
- Proper water sample collection (hands-on)

Build practical, farm-ready skills that protect public health, improve efficiency, and build buyer confidence.

Free to attend — registration required

**Register Here**



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A  
VETERAN OR A VIF  
MEMBER TO ATTEND!

VETSINFARMING.COM

# VETERANS IN FARMING STATE MEETING 2026

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026  
SHERATON INDIANAPOLIS CITY CENTRE HOTEL

**PRACTICAL SKILL SESSIONS FOR ON-FARM SUCCESS**

- FOREST & WOODLOT MANAGEMENT: LEARN SUSTAINABLE TIMBER AND WOODLAND STEWARDSHIP
- BEGINNING BEEKEEPING: GET STARTED WITH HIVES AND HONEY PRODUCTION
- SELLING FLOWERS: TIPS TO GROW, MARKET, AND SELL CUT FLOWERS PROFITABLY
- GARDENING SMALL SPACES: MAXIMIZE YIELDS IN GARDENS UNDER AN ACRE
- RESILIENT & PROFITABLE ANIMALS: SMALL-SCALE LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT FOR CATTLE, SHEEP, HOGS, AND POULTRY

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**ACCESS TO EXPERT RESOURCES AND FUNDING GUIDANCE**

- USDA/NRCS RESOURCES: EXPLORE PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNING VETERAN FARMERS
- SARE RESOURCES: LEARN ABOUT SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE GRANTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- GRANT & BUSINESS PLANNING: BUILD A WINNING GRANT APPLICATION OR SOLID FARM BUSINESS PLAN
- REGENERATIVE FARMING: PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE SOIL, WATER, AND FARM RESILIENCE

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**COMMUNITY & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES**

- VETERAN PANEL: HEAR EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM FELLOW VETERAN FARMERS
- AGRABILITY RESOURCES: LEARN ABOUT FARM ADAPTATIONS FOR PHYSICAL CHALLENGES
- FOOD PRESERVATION TASTE TEST: EXPLORE PICKLING, FREEZING, AND CANNING METHODS HANDS-ON



**Permaculture Basics**

*Becca Koetz*  
Extension Educator  
for Urban Agriculture  
at Purdue Extension-  
Lake County

The USDA's AgVets program aims to enhance agricultural opportunities for military veterans by providing grants to non-profits. These grants support comprehensive, hands-on, and immersive model farm and ranch programs that lead to successful careers in the food and agricultural sector. The program encourages the development of training opportunities specifically designed for military veterans, offering onsite, hands-on training and classroom education. It also aims to strengthen agricultural production and rural economies across the United States by creating pathways for veterans in agriculture. The program is designed to help veterans gain the knowledge and skills necessary to secure meaningful job and career opportunities that increase individual, family, and community vitality.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran. If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Emily Kring prior to the meeting at [ekring@purdue.edu](mailto:ekring@purdue.edu) by 3/13/26.







Veterans in Farming State Meeting

March 28 at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel

More info at [vetsinfarming.com](http://vetsinfarming.com)

[More Info Here](#)

Diversified Farming and Food Systems



# SAVE THE DATE!

## Grass to Garden VIRTUAL Program



### Start a Community-based Garden With Purdue Extension

From improving access to fruits and vegetables to educating people on how food is grown, community gardens offer many benefits to the place you call home.

Now, Purdue Extension can help you get one started in your own neighborhood with its Grass to Garden program!

### What will I learn?

Every garden project is unique, and Grass to Garden will help you learn more than just how to grow plants — helping your program thrive by:

- Strengthening agricultural and community development efforts
- Improving access to local, nutritious foods
- Creating healthier communities, and more!

**Thursdays | April 2, 9, 16, and 23, 2026**

**10:00 am - 12:00 pm (ET)**



[Register Here](#)

# PURDUE EXTENSION MONTHLY *Hot Topics*

12:00 - 1:00 PM EST



SEASON 7

**08**  
JAN

**Charles Deam:  
Our First State Forester**

Bill Horan  
ANR Extension Educator

**09**  
APR

**Growing Natives in Indiana**

Amy Thompson  
Extension Specialist,  
Diversified Farming

**12**  
FEB

**The Dandelion**

Geoff Schortgen  
ANR Extension Educator

**14**  
MAY

**Harvest Gardening/  
Small Gardening**

Chris Adair  
Purdue Student Farm Manager

**12**  
MAR

**Fruit Tree Care**

Clay Slaughter  
Orchardist & Master Gardener

**11**  
JUN

**Invasive Species  
Update**

Bob Bruner  
Exotic Forest Pest Educator

Each month join a Purdue Extension Professional or Partner through this free, live, virtual program as they discuss their research and hot topics in their area of expertise.

**REGISTER**   
HERE

<https://bit.ly/ExtHotTopics2026>

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution.  
Intended audience is age 18+.

  
**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY

Extension

**Register Here**

March 24, 2026: Join us for a webinar on  
Challenges of Breeding Tomatoes for Both  
Flavor and Disease Resistance

Jim Myers, Oregon State University, Julie  
Dawson, University of Wisconsin, Jared  
Zystro, Oregon Seed Alliance



REGISTER  
WITH THE  
QR CODE!

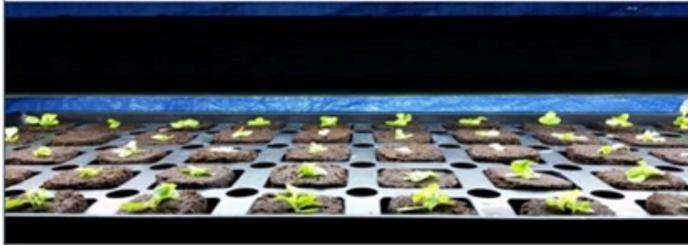
This free webinar takes place at 11AM Pacific, 12PM  
Mountain, 1PM Central, 2PM Eastern, and is for plant  
breeders, variety trial coordinators, Extension professionals,  
seed and specialty crop researchers, and growers interested  
in on-farm plant breeding.

Join eOrganic for a webinar on challenges in breeding tomatoes, with the ideal combination of great flavor and disease resistance! It takes place on March 24, 2026, at 11AM Pacific, 12 PM Mountain, 1PM Central, and 2PM Eastern Time.

[Register Here](#)



Agricultural and Biological Engineering



## Be a part of research at Purdue!

**The Mission:** To advance research that improves urban agriculture, controlled environment agriculture, and vertical farming.

**Eligibility:** 18+ years of age, involved or interest in high-tech agriculture

Join our list of potential participants. Your name and provided information will remain anonymous. Researchers will share the results of their studies and publication at your request. There is no direct compensation for participating in the study. Your information will not be shared beyond the researchers and will be retained unless you request its removal.

Purdue University IRB#: 2200-1200

**The Need:** Voluntary research participation from individuals and organizations



Scan the QR code to take a two-part survey



### Questions? Contact:

Dr. Robert M. Stwalley III, [rms3@purdue.edu](mailto:rms3@purdue.edu), 765-494-1791

Ronald J. Smith, [rsmith00@purdue.edu](mailto:rsmith00@purdue.edu)

**Survey 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 11th 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](mailto:mbilenky@purdue.edu).

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The [Rural Grocery Initiative](#) is excited to co-host the 2026 Summit with two organizations that have a long history of supporting rural grocers in their states: the [University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships](#) (RSDP) and the [North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives](#) (NDAREC).

The National Rural Grocery Summit, hosted every other year, is the premier networking and resource-sharing venue for independent grocers and rural food access stakeholders. It brings together grocery store owners and managers, community leaders, food suppliers, academic researchers, healthy food access stakeholders, policy makers, and funders to connect and share lessons learned. The event is focused on sustaining locally-owned rural grocery stores and improving access to healthy food in rural communities.

**Register Here**



*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**

An advertisement for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's survey. The background features a blurred image of a grocery store aisle with produce. The text is centered and includes a QR code for survey access.

**INDIANA**  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

# Hoosiers: We'd love to hear from you!

**COMPLETE SURVEY NOW**

**Have Questions?**  
Reach out to Caroline Patrick  
cpatrick@isda.in.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](mailto:cpatrick@isda.in.gov)

**Share 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:

- **Early Bird (through March 9, 2026):** \$650
- **Regular (March 10 – April 26, 2026):** \$700
- **Onsite:** \$750
- **Student:** \$425

**Register Here**



The Planning Committee for the [2026 Urban Food Systems Symposium](#) invites you to submit an abstract for consideration as an oral or poster presentation. **Abstracts are due March 4th, 2026.**

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 be academic, policy-oriented, educational or program-specific.

If you have questions, you can reach us at [UFSS@ksu.edu](mailto:UFSS@ksu.edu)

**Click for More Information**

**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**

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## **CONNECT WITH US**

**Click Here to Visit the Purdue DFFS Website**

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