



Extension - Diversified
Farming and Food Systems



Welcome, February!



MARTY TRAVIS

Spence Farm and Down at the Farmers

Join Marty Travis from Spence Farm and Down at the Farms for a thought-provoking look at how local foods impact more than just our plates. Known for his expertise in food aggregation, marketing and local supply chain logistics, Marty has helped build resilient food systems that uplift farmers, chefs and communities. We look forward to hearing his insights at the 2026 Horticulture and Small Farm Conference.

INDIANA HORTICULTURE AND SMALL FARM CONFERENCE

2026 March 3-5 *Hendricks County Fairgrounds • Danville, Indiana*

February brings subtle signs of transition as days slowly lengthen, and farmers across Indiana move from winter reflection into active preparation for the growing season ahead. As crop plans are finalized, seeds ordered, and priorities set for spring, this is also a valuable time to learn from peers, sharpen business and production strategies, and reconnect with the broader farming community. One of the best opportunities to do that is to attend the 2026 Indiana Horticulture Conference and Small Farm Conference, where farmers, Extension educators, and industry partners will gather to share practical insights, timely research, and ideas to strengthen your farm in the year ahead.

Nathan Shoaf

Assistant Program Leader | Agriculture and Natural Resources

Urban Agriculture Specialist | Diversified Farming and Food Systems

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Services

Registration is now open for the 2026 Indiana Horticulture Conference and Small Farm Conference (IHSFC)—we hope you will join us!

The IHSFC will take place **March 3–5** at the **Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds and Conference Center**. This newly combined conference brings together the Indiana Horticulture Conference and the Indiana Small Farm Conference. Attendees can expect the same high-quality, timely content found at those conferences in past years, along with opportunities to learn, connect, enjoy local food, and engage with a wide range of agricultural organizations and commercial vendors through an expanded trade expo.

Program Overview

Day 1 – Tuesday (3/3):

Sessions will cover business practices, resilient agriculture, food safety, fruit, labor, flowers, and vegetables. A Cider Contest will also take place. CCA, CCH and PARP credits will be available.

Day 2 – Wednesday (3/4):

Topics include livestock, urban agriculture, flower production, business practices, food safety, fruit, and niche opportunities. The keynote presentation will be delivered by **Marty Travis** <https://spence-farm.com/>

Day 3 – Thursday (3/5):

Sessions will focus on business practices, flowers, vegetables, livestock, urban agriculture, and more. A facilitated networking luncheon will be held where you can meet with other farmers to discuss opportunities and challenges you're facing on your operation.

The full conference schedule can be viewed here:

<https://indianahortconference.org/schedule-2026/>

Trade Expo & Networking

The trade expo will be open all three days. Additional networking opportunities will be available Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and evenings, including a poster session highlighting research efforts and on-farm innovation.

Registration Details

Register here:

<https://puext.in/IHSFC26>

Registration fees are as follows:

- **3-day registration:** \$240
- **2-day registration:** \$160
- **1-day registration:** \$85

Registration includes lunches, breaks, and Tuesday and Wednesday evening networking socials. Online registration will remain open through **February 24 at 12:00 PM**. On-site registration will be available during the conference; however, meals and snacks will not be included. Interested in participating in our trade show or sponsoring the conference? Find more information here <https://indianahortconference.org/> or email ljollybr@purdue.edu

Register Here



Struggling to get your farming operation off to a great start? Our virtual Beginning Farmer program can help!

This 8-session virtual 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 Feb. 16, and includes a digital copy of the Beginning Farmer workbook.

The program is offered to beginning farmers with farms of any size, but the typical audience tends to be those with smaller farms, those with urban farms, and people wanting to launch a farm that includes direct-to-consumer sales.

To register, click here: <https://cvent.me/xEyg2g>

Register Here

Diversified Farming and Food Systems

 PURDUE UNIVERSITY Extension

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



 OA

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



Annie's Project at AG ENGAGE CONFERENCE

When: February 18th
Where: Monroe Co. Convention Center
in Bloomington, IN
Registration fee: \$50 + Ag Engage
Conference Registration
To register,
Visit this link: <https://cvent.me/8V51nP>
or scan QR code or
Register By: February 10, 2026

Schedule

9:30 AM - Welcome	1:30 PM - Mission & Vision
10:00 AM - Real Colors	2:30 PM - Networking
11:30 - Lunch	3:00 PM - Farm Finance
12:30 - FSA & You	4:00 PM - Risk Activity
	4:30 PM - Wrap Up & End



Participants must attend the Ag Engage Conference and the three virtual sessions listed below. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Jenna Nees by calling 765-653-8411 or emailing smith535@purdue.edu.

Ag Engage Conference
February 19, 2026
Registration check-in starts 8:30 a.m. Eastern
Program 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern
Monroe Convention Center
302 S College Ave, Bloomington, IN 47403

Price \$125 Early-Bird, \$135 after Jan. 22nd
Registration Deadline: February 6th

Virtual Sessions
February 25th from 6:30 - 8:30 PM

- Crop Insurance
- NRCS Programs

March 4th from 6:30 - 8:30 PM

- Farm Insurance
- Land Leases

March 11th from 6:30 - 8:30 PM

- Web Soil Survey
- Code Red

If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Jenna Nees prior to the meeting at 765-653-8411 or smith535@purdue.edu by February 10th.
If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Jenna Nees prior to the meeting at 765-653-8411 or smith535@purdue.edu by February 10th.
Purdue University is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access University

Annie's Project at Ag Engage Conference

Date: February 18, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Location: Monroe Convention Center, Bloomington, IN

Cost: \$50 & registration to the Ag Engage Conference

Annie's Project empowers individuals within the agriculture industry by equipping them with essential skills to manage and lead modern farm businesses. Through small-group activities focused on financial, production, marketing, human resources, and estate planning, participants gain confidence, build business knowledge, and form valuable support networks through shared experiences and expert guidance. To fulfill the Annie's Project course requirements, individuals must attend the Ag Engage Conference and three virtual sessions (February 25th, March 4th, & March 11th from 6:30-8:30 PM).

Space is limited to the first 20 individuals, so early registration is encouraged!

Register at <https://cvent.me/8V51nP>

Register Here

**Seton Harvest Farm
 Evansville, IN
 Sunday, February 15
 2 PM - 5 PM CST**



LIVING FARM SERIES

SEASON EXTENSION & CONSERVATION

ON-FARM EDUCATION FOR INDIANA'S SMALL-SCALE GROWERS, JULY 2025 - APRIL 2026



CLICK TO RSVP HERE!!

INsmallfarms.org



Composting

Pollinator Habitat

Aquaculture/Year-Round Production



Register Here

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

GESWEIN
 FARM & LAND

PURDUE
 UNIVERSITY Extension

The Succession Planning Team

YOUR LAND IS YOUR LEGACY

Plan today to protect
tomorrow.



Are you planning for the future of your farm or don't know where to start?

Succession planning is deeply personal and complex, but you don't have to do it alone. Local professionals and land-transfer experts can help you understand the resources available.

Join Geswein Farm & Land, Purdue Extension's Succession Planning Team, and American Farmland Trust for an informative workshop on [planning for the future of your farm](#) on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 from 9 a.m. to Noon EST.

This workshop is designed to demystify the farmland transition process and equip you with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to plan confidently for your farm's future.

All generations involved in the farm—family and non-family members alike—are encouraged to attend.

The event is free, but registration is required. An informal lunch will follow. Attendees will receive a complimentary copy of Johnny Klemme's new book "American Family Farmland, Preserving Values and Creating Wealth: A Landowner's Guide to Inheriting the Farm."

Register today at:
<https://forms.office.com/r/JGjIKFppY>

Warmly,
Angie Doucette
 Midwest Senior Farmland
 Program Manager

Date:
 February 24, 2026

Time:
 9 a.m. to Noon EST

Location:
 Purdue's Beck
 Agricultural Center
 Room 111,
 4550 US Hwy 52

[Scan or click to reserve your spot and register today!](#)




 American Farmland Trust

Sign Up Here

PURDUE EXTENSION MONTHLY *Hot Topics*



SEASON 7

12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

- 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.



<https://bit.ly/ExtHotTopics2026>



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

Register Here

March 4, 2026: Join us for a webinar on How to Conduct Culinary Evaluations of Vegetable Breeding Lines

Lane Selman and Jordyn Bunting
Oregon State University



**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, chefs/culinary partners supporting breeding, and growers interested in on-farm evaluation approaches. This webinar is from the NIFA-OREI funded Tomato Organic Management and Improvement Project (TOMI).

Register Here

Purdue Extension Farmers Market Certificate



Training for farmers market managers & vendors



Purdue Extension is offering a virtual Farmers Market Training series designed for both market managers and vendors. The program covers multiple aspects of farmers market operations including market regulations, food safety, liability, maintaining a stable market, food assistance programs, and conflict management. Each participant will receive a printed toolkit and will engage through Google Classroom.

The four-session virtual series will be held on Thursday evenings beginning March 12 via Zoom. The cost is \$75 per person. Participants who complete the program will receive a certificate. Registration is available at <https://cvent.me/xg5ewq> For more information, contact Sarah at sspeedy@purdue.edu

[Purdue University Food Science "Ask an Expert" for Entrepreneurs](#)

When?

- Spring offerings begin January 14th and occur every other Wednesday
- 1pm -2 pm EST
- Capacity: 5 participants per workshop

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/purdue-university-food-science-ask-an-expert-for-entrepreneurs-tickets-1640976257159>

Who is this for?

Do you have entrepreneurs in your network that have burning questions about starting a food business?

Please share this opportunity to join Purdue University's Food Entrepreneurial and Manufacturing Institute (FEMI) online for a unique opportunity to **ask an expert** in the field of food science, marketing, and business. Get insights, tips, and guidance to help kickstart their entrepreneurial journey in the food industry.

FEMI "Ask an Expert" workshops are **free**. For more in-depth product-specific questions to dig in deeper, we offer \$100/hr consultation.

[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

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

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.

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Veterans in Farming State Meeting

March 28 at the Sheraton Indianapolis City Centre Hotel

More info at vetsinfarming.com

[More Info Here](#)



The Purdue University Center for Food Conservation & Waste Reduction wants to hear from you! Let them know what you are working on, what you need help with, and/or ideas to help others **conserve food and reduce food waste**. They will share the results in their future newsletters. Scan the QR code, click [here](#), or copy and paste this URL into your browser: https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5hzotTVbvGASxXU.

Not familiar with this Center? They are on a mission to accelerate progress toward national food loss and waste reduction targets by co-creating solutions with individuals and communities to conserve food and reduce waste, thereby improving nutrition security, community health, and environmental sustainability.

Check out their website (<https://conservefood.org>) to sign up for their newsletter and follow them on social media: [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [X](#) | [LinkedIn](#),

[Share 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



Hoosiers: We'd love to hear from you!

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.

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

Share 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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