

# DAVENPORT DIGEST

WINTER 2026 EDITION

I hope you all had a wonderful, restful, and refreshing holiday season surrounded by family, friends, and the people who matter most. I also hope each of you had a safe and plentiful harvest this fall. As we turn the page into a new year, I want to take a moment to express my appreciation for the strength, dedication, and resilience of our local agriculture community. Your hard work continues to shape the landscape of LaPorte County, and it's an honor to serve and support you through Purdue Extension.

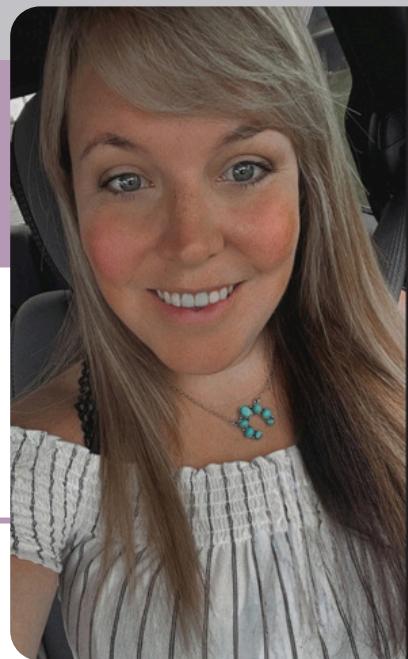
This time of year offers a chance to reflect on the past season, look ahead to new opportunities, and prepare for what's to come. Whether you're considering new practices, exploring research-based resources, or looking to get involved in upcoming programs, I'm excited to partner with you in the months ahead. Purdue Extension is here to walk alongside you—providing education, connections, and support to help your operations and families thrive.

Thank you for all you do to keep our agricultural community strong. I'm looking forward to another year filled with learning, collaboration, and meaningful conversations. Wishing you a successful and hopeful start to the new year!

**JESI DAVENPORT**  
ANR Educator  
Purdue Extension



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Extension - Agriculture  
and Natural Resources

# WHY YOU MIGHT BE A TOURIST THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

OLIVIA DE YOUNG

Before most holiday shoppers begin decorating, Christmas tree growers are already years into the process. On average, it takes seven years to grow a Christmas tree with the quality and appearance consumers expect.

Across Indiana, many Christmas tree farms are embracing agritourism, welcoming visitors to participate in agriculture-related activities while creating memorable seasonal experiences. Agritourism includes operations such as pumpkin patches, wineries, apple orchards, and Christmas tree farms, all of which allow the public to connect directly with local agriculture.

Producing a high-quality tree remains the foundation of these operations. Growers carefully select cold-hardy varieties like Scotch pine, white pine, and Canaan fir and manage them through years of irrigation, weed control, and maintenance. Purdue Extension supports these efforts by sharing research-based practices that can improve tree quality and reduce production time.

Beyond production, many farms enhance the visitor experience through seasonal activities that encourage families to spend time outdoors and return year after year. These experiences add value for customers while strengthening farm businesses and community connections.

Purdue Extension supports agritourism operations across Indiana by providing education and assistance in agriculture, marketing, and business development, helping growers succeed from seed to sale.

Read the full article: Why You Might Be a Tourist This Holiday Season on the Purdue Extension website at

👉 <https://extension.purdue.edu/news/2025/12/why-you-might-be-a-tourist-this-holiday-season.html>



# EVENTS UPDATE

## Drones in the Classroom

Tello drones are making their way into classrooms across LaPorte County, giving students a hands-on opportunity to explore technology, problem-solving, and real-world applications of STEM concepts. These interactive lessons allow students to learn through flight challenges, coding basics, and teamwork, while connecting classroom learning to agriculture and innovation. If you, or a teacher you know, would like to bring this experience to a classroom, please reach out to learn more.



## Master Gardener Basic Training

The 14-week Master Gardener training recently wrapped up, with four dedicated participants from LaPorte County successfully completing the course. Throughout the program, participants gained a strong foundation in horticulture through research-based education, hands-on activities, and meaningful discussion. We are excited to welcome these new Master Gardeners and look forward to the positive impact they will have as they share their knowledge and serve our community.



## Purdue EDGE in Ag Conference

The Ag Engage Conference is quickly approaching and will take place on February 19, 2026, in Bloomington, Indiana. Formerly known as the Women in Agriculture Team, the Purdue EDGE in AG Team, is hosting the Ag Engage Conference so that it reflects an expanded focus on welcoming a broader audience while continuing the tradition of meaningful conversations, practical education, and strong networking opportunities. This year's conference will feature keynote speaker Zoe Kent, along with a variety of engaging sessions designed to inform, inspire, and connect individuals involved in agriculture. Registration is now open, and attendees are encouraged to secure their spot for a day dedicated to growth, collaboration, and engaging with the future of agriculture.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## January

- January 20: Farm Fertilizer PARP in Hamlet
- January 21: Keystone PARP in LaPorte

## February

- February 6: Fruitful Fridays Webinar begins
- February 17: Grain Market Navigator Series at Pinney begins
- February 26: Purdue Extension - LaPorte County Annual Meeting

## March

- March 11-12: LaPorte County Ag Days
- March 23: Barn Quilt Workshop #1
- March 24: Barn Quilt Workshop #2
- March 30: Barn Quilt Workshop #3
- March 31: Barn Quilt Workshop #4

See flyers below for more information about the above events

## Reminder

Follow our Facebook page or check the Purdue Pesticide Program page for all upcoming PARP events as they are added.





Extension - Agriculture  
and Natural Resources

# Pinney Purdue Field Day SAVE THE DATE

August 19, 2026

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2026

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR  
ANNUAL MEETING  
HOSTED BY PURDUE EXTENSION | SOIL & WATER  
26 FEBRUARY 2026

# Northwest GREAT LAKES Irrigation Workshop

Join us for a morning of practical irrigation insights and hands-on learning.

Registration is \$20 and includes lunch. **CCH, CCA, and PARP credits available.**

For special dietary needs, accommodations, or interpreter/ translator services, please contact the Extension Office at 219-324-9407 or [laporteces@purdue.edu](mailto:laporteces@purdue.edu) at least one week prior to the event. Purdue University is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access University/Affirmative Action Institute.

## AGENDA:

- 8:30 – 9:00 AM: Registration & Welcome
- 9:00 – 9:30 AM: Irrigation Scheduling, Apps & Tools
- 9:30 – 10:00 AM: Soil Moisture Monitoring
- 10:00 – 10:30 AM: Dealer Roundtable
- 10:30 – 11:00 AM Diagnostic Guide
- 11:00 – 11:30 AM: High Yield Practices
- 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM: Irrigating with Pesticides and Fertilizers
- 12:00 – 12:30 PM: Lunch
- 12:30 – 1:00 PM: Significant Water Use (DNR)
- 1:00 – 1:30 PM: Cash Rents
- 1:30 – 2:00 PM: PARP
- 2:00 PM: Adjourn

**LAPORTE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
COMMUNITY BUILDING**

**2581 IN-2  
LAPORTE, IN 46350**

**February 24, 2026  
9-2 PM CST**



**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**



# MANAGING FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Succession, Business, Estate and Retirement Planning

**5 Week  
Virtual Series  
January 15, 22, 29  
February 5, 12  
10am - 12pm  
Cost \$25**



It can be challenging to create a transition plan for a farm, ranch, or growing operation to continue as a productive agricultural business. In this multi-session course, you will develop these skills as well as develop networks. Participants will learn how the areas of succession, business, estate, and retirement planning join together to create a transition plan.



Extension



**ANNIE'S PROJECT**  
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

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# 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/eWOv8G>



If you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out.  
Sarah Hanson - [sspeedy@purdue.edu](mailto:sspeedy@purdue.edu) or **765-543-1230**  
Brianna Slonaker - [brianna@purdue.edu](mailto: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](mailto:sspeedy@purdue.edu) by January 6, 2026. For special dietary needs contact Sarah Hanson at 765-543-1230 and [sspeedy@purdue.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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](https://puext.in/DFFS_Newsletter)

*In partnership with:*



# FRUITFUL FRIDAYS IN FEBRUARY!

Purdue Extension invites current and aspiring adult backyard fruit growers to join our 4-session program and learn about ways to improve their fruit production. Educators and Specialists will discuss modern fruit production practices, pest and disease management, and more!

## Live/Virtual Program

February 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Eastern

## In Person Host Sites:

Clinton, Elkhart, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Jasper, Johnson, Lake, Madison, Marion, Porter, Putnam, Vanderburgh

To register, visit:



If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Emily Evers prior to the meeting at (574) 235-9605 or [everse@purdue.edu](mailto:everse@purdue.edu) by January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Emily Evers prior to the meeting at (574) 235-9605 or [everse@purdue.edu](mailto:everse@purdue.edu) by January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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



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# Grain Market Navigator

## Program Series



### Overview:

Take the guesswork out of grain marketing with this hands-on program designed to help farmers sharpen their marketing knowledge and confidence. Through interactive sessions, participants will explore the fundamentals of grain marketing and gain practical tools to use on their own farms.

### Registration & Information:

Price: \$40 In-Person, \$55 Virtual

To register for virtual or in-person, visit our website: <https://bit.ly/GrainMarkets>

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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](mailto:smith535@purdue.edu) by February 3rd.

If you are in need of a translator please contact Jenna Nees prior to the meeting at 765-653-8411 or [smith535@purdue.edu](mailto:smith535@purdue.edu) by February 3rd.

### Join Us

In person or virtual option available!

FEBRUARY 17

Grain Marketing Lingo,  
Basis, Cash vs. Future

FEBRUARY 24

Contracts 101

MARCH 3

Market Outlook

MARCH 10

Grain Buyer Panel

### Location

Pinney Purdue Ag Center  
11402 S County Line Rd  
Wanatah, IN 46390

5:30pm-7:30pm CST



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# Barn Quilt

## CREATION WORKSHOPS

### 4 SESSION SERIES

Create your own colorful, geometric 2' x 2' masterpiece to hang on a barn, a home, or a business. Boards, primer, tape, brushes, and up to 4 paint colors will be available for participants. For accommodations or interpreter/translator services, please contact Jesi Davenport at 219-324-9407 or [jfurness@purdue.edu](mailto:jfurness@purdue.edu) at least one week prior to the event.

#### WORKSHOP DATES

Monday, March 23: 4:30-7 pm CST  
Tuesday, March 24: 4:30-6 pm CST  
Monday, March 30: 4:30-6 pm CST  
Tuesday, March 31: 4:30-6 pm CST

#### LOCATION

Purdue Extension - LaPorte County  
2857 W. State Road 2, Suite A  
LaPorte, IN 46350

Register at:

<https://tinyurl.com/BarnQuiltPorter>  
by March 13. 2026

**Registration fee: \$50**



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# Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Technology Program

**THIS COURSE WILL HELP PREPARE  
YOU FOR UAV PILOT CERTIFICATION**

- FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Test Preparation
- Flight Instructions/Practice Flights
- Flight Plans & Record Keeping
- Sensors & Artificial Intelligence
- Emergency Preparation

**NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!**



**APRIL 21 - 22, 2026  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM EST**

St. Joseph County Fairgrounds, 5117 Ironwood Rd., South Bend, IN 46614

**COST: \$200**

**REGISTRATION:** <https://cvent.me/eA1PGZ>

If you have questions about this program, please contact Emily Evers at [everse@purdue.edu](mailto:everse@purdue.edu) or 574-235-9605. If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, have any special dietary needs, or need an interpreter or translator, please contact Emily Evers prior to the meeting by April 20<sup>th</sup>. Limited to 20 participants. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

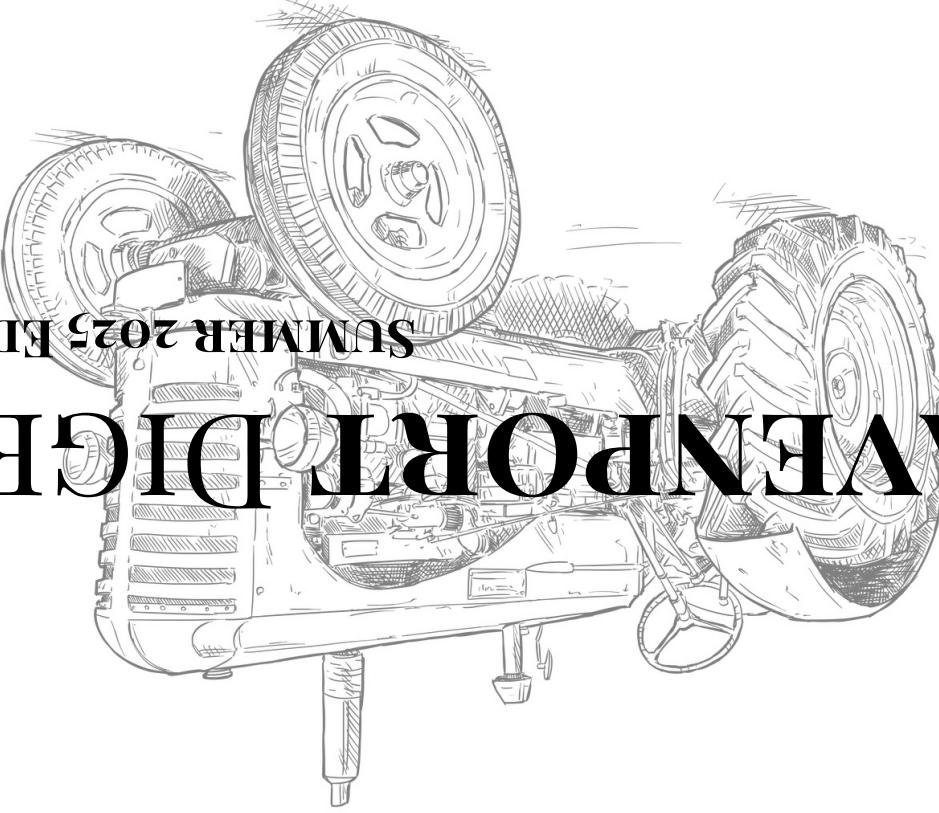
**MUST ATTEND BOTH DAYS**



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# SUMMER 2025 EDITION

# DAVENPORT DIGEST

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**Megan Sholey**, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

### Office Hours & Contact

Monday- Friday 8am-4pm | (219) 324-9407 | [extension.purdue.edu/county/laporte](http://extension.purdue.edu/county/laporte)

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