#### October — November 2024

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**Extension - Spencer County** 

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We deliver practical, researchbased information that enhances lives and livelihoods.

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We will be a leader in providing relevant, high-impact educational programs that transform the lives and livelihoods of individuals and communities in Indiana and the world.

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## **Spencer County 4-H**

Calling all youth currently in Kindergarten- grade 12! Make new friends, learn a new skill, and enjoy a snack! Come join another fun filled year of 4-H. Clubs meet around the county all year. Questions? Contact the office below or register today!

P: (812) - 362 - 8066 Allen393@purdue.edu V2.4honline.com







OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2024

Agriculture & Horticulture Update for the Home and Farm

#### Stalk & Ear Rots: Identify Them Now To Help With Harvest Decisions

It is now time to evaluate fields for any stalk or ear rot symptoms. This will aid in making assessments about field harvest order and if there is a risk of mycotoxin contamination. There are many factors that can contribute to stalk decline. There are both plant pathogenic causes and abiotic stress factors that can play a role in reduced stalk integrity, such as drought and flooding. Either way, as stalk tissue becomes compromised below the main ear, the stalk may become brittle or weak and be prone to lodging.



As the corn plant loses photosynthetic leaf area due to different stresses such as foliar disease and hot and dry conditions, the amount of carbohydrates available for dry matter deposition into the kernels is also decreased. Therefore, plants respond by remobilizing non-structural carbohydrates from the lower portion of the stalk to supply the demand required by the developing kernels on the ear. This response causes stalk strength and integrity to decrease, and increases a corn plant's risk of lodging and infection from pathogens that cause stalk rot. Fields with large ear sizes and strong kernel set, which have a high kernel fill demand, may also be at the greatest risk.

#### Stalk rots

There are a number of plant pathogens that can cause stalk rot including, Anthracnose, Bacteria, Charcoal, Diplodia, Fusarium, Gibberella, and Pythium. Some of these stalk rots have very characteristic symptoms that can help identify the specific problem, while others may require laboratory diagnosis (Table 1). The Purdue Extension Publication Corn Diseases: Stalk Rot has good images to help identify the major stalk rot diseases we see in Indiana (<u>First and foremost, consider the safety of yourself and others around you. Inspect</u>).

It is time to check stalk integrity – check field by using the Push or Pinch Test by evaluating 20 plants in at least five random areas in a field.

- Pinch Test grab the stalk somewhere between the lowest two internodes and pinch between your fingers to see if the stalk is strong enough to handle the force if the stalk collapses, it fails.
- Push Test push the stalk to a 30-degree angle if it pops back up when released, it passes the test, if not it fails. *(continued on page 2)*

Nicholas Held, Extension Educator Agriculture & Natural Resources Community Development

#### In This Issue

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Indiana Farmland Values Hit Record High



**Extension - Spencer County** 

#### Stalk & Ear Rots, cont.

Threshold: 10% or more of the stalks fail then consider field for early harvesting to avoid risk for lodging.

What can you do in the future – management options will depend on the specific disease. Production practices that promote good plant health including balanced fertilization, appropriate plant populations, and good water management can reduce stresses that might predispose corn to stalk rot. In addition, these key management tools can help mitigate future stalk rot issues.

- Properly diagnosis the stalk rot pathogen. (Samples can be submitted to the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Lab)
- Select hybrids with resistance if available.
- Crop Rotation rotating to non-host crop will help reduce stalk rot potential in a field. Note that Charcoal rot and Gibberella stalk rot can infect other rotational crops in Indiana
- Tillage burying infected crop residue will encourage more rapid desiccation and help reduces risk of overwintering in crop residue.
- Good soil drainage and reduced compaction.
- Foliar Fungicides applying foliar fungicides can help protect crop from foliar diseases that could predispose plant to stalk rot when present, but devoid of foliar disease pressure fungicides applications have not consistently been found to help reduce stalk rot.

-Darcy Telenko, Purdue Extension Plant Pathologist & Dan Quinn, Purdue Extension Corn Specialist

See full article with disease identification table in the latest issue of the **Purdue Pest & Crop Newsletter** at <u>https://extension.entm.purdue.edu/newsletters/pestandcrop/</u>

## Grain Entrapment is the Leading Cause of Agricultural Confined Space-related Injuries and Fatalities



As Hoosier farmers begin to harvest, farmers are reminded to keep safety a top priority (Purdue Agricultural Communications)

Purdue University's *Agricultural Safety and Health Program* has released the 2023 Summary of U.S. Agricultural Confined Spacerelated Injuries and Fatalities ahead of *National Farm Safety and Health Week*.

The purpose of the annual report is to maintain public focus on the issue of agricultural confined space injuries and fatalities, aid in the development of evidence-based training, and offer resources and direction to policymakers and engineering organizations in developing improved workplace regulations and design standards.

New findings reported no fewer than 55 cases involving agricultural confined spaces, with 29 fatal and 26 nonfatal cases. This represents a 33.7% decrease over the 83 cases documented in 2022.

Data also revealed that at least 27 grain entrapments took place in 2023, showing a 35.7% decrease over 2022. Of the 55 total cases, 28 were tied to livestock waste-handling facilities, entanglements, and grain dust explosions or fires. Roughly half of the identified cases this year were caused by grain entrapments.

Illinois had the highest total of confined space-related cases, 12, while Iowa had the second-most cases with five; Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin had four cases each. Iowa had the most grain entrapment cases at five. Historically, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, Illinois and Nebraska have had the most grain entrapment cases take place, respectively. *(continued on page 3)* 

#### Grain Entrapment, cont.

Additional findings noted that three incidents involved more than one victim, two fatal cases dealt with livestock waste storage pits or lagoons, and nine grain dust explosions took place at commercial facilities resulting in 12 nonfatal injuries.

Program staff urge agricultural workers to remain diligent and follow safety protocols. Frequency and severity of the reported cases continues to be a major concern. However, the summary notes that there is better documentation of injuries and fatalities due to dedicated investment in surveillance and available data. The number of total cases this year is also less than the 5- and 10-year averages.

<u>Ed Sheldon</u>, report co-author and Purdue agricultural safety specialist, said, "As we move into the busy fall harvest season, farmers, farm workers and those involved in the grain industry should stay aware of the hazards of agricultural confined spaces. Even though we have documented fewer cases last year, the fact remains that confined space incidents are a significant cause of fatalities and injuries in the agricultural workplace."

As Hoosier farmers begin to harvest, program staff remind farmers to keep safety a top priority. Agriculture safety guides and disaster preparedness resources can be accessed <u>online</u> as well. -Ashvini Malshe, Purdue Agricultural Communications

#### Composting Turns Garden Trash to Treasure

Autumn frosts usually means lots of cleanup around the yard and garden. Why not turn that yard waste into treasure? Composting is a naturally occurring process that breaks down organic materials into an excellent soil amendment that improves soil structure, as well as adds some nutrients. Composting will help you recycle your garden wastes, improve your soil and reduce disposal costs.

All organic materials will break down eventually, but gardeners can speed up the process with good management. The basic ingredients for successful composting include organic materials and microorganisms with the proper balance of carbon, nitrogen, water and oxygen.

Good candidates for composting include end-of-season garden plants, pulled weeds, grass clippings, tree leaves and plant trimmings. The smaller the particle size, the faster the organic materials will break down – chopped or shredded plants will compost more quickly. Some kitchen wastes, such as vegetable and fruit scraps, and coffee or tea grounds, can also be added. These materials should be buried in the center of the compost pile to avoid attracting insects, rodents and neighborhood pets. Some organic materials are best left out of the compost pile because of possible health hazards or attractiveness to pests. Because of the danger of disease transmission, human and pet feces should not be composted. Meat scraps, bones and fats will likely attract unwanted visitors.

Backyard composters might do best to avoid materials heavily infested with weed seeds, insects and disease organisms. Although a properly managed compost pile should generate enough heat in the center to kill most of these pests, ensuring uniform heat can be difficult, particularly in a small compost pile. Microorganisms, such as bacteria and fungi, are responsible for breaking down the organic materials in yard waste. Although commercially packaged compost starter is available, adding a little garden soil or finished compost will supply all the microbes you need for composting.

Microorganisms also require a proper environment to work efficiently. Nitrogen is needed by the microbes in order for them to break down and use the carbon found in organic materials. The ratio of carbon to nitrogen in the compost pile will affect the rate of decomposition. If the carbon content is too high, decomposition will be slow. If the nitrogen content is too high, ammonia gas can be given off, creating foul odors. (*Continued on page 4*)

#### Composting, (cont.)

The ideal ratio for composting can be achieved by combining fresh green with brown dry materials, such as fresh grass clippings with dry tree leaves. At this time of year when there is likely to be an abundance of dry materials, you can add a little dried livestock manure or packaged fertilizer if green materials are not available.Water is also needed for efficient microbial action and uniform heating. Compost with optimum moisture content should resemble that of a moistened sponge that has the excess water squeezed out. Be prepared to water the compost if rainfall is lacking.

Oxygen is equally important for efficient decomposition and to prevent foul odors. Breakdown occurs more slowly when oxygen is lacking, and foul odors from fermentation will result. The center of a properly managed compost pile will generate heat as the microorganisms break down the organic matter. A good-sized compost heap, approximately 4-5 feet in diameter and 4-5 feet deep, should reach 130-160 F in the center. Turn the pile with a pitchfork or shovel at least once or twice a month to keep the materials supplied with oxygen, and to bring outer contents to the center for heating. Small amounts of organic materials can be added to actively composting piles, but it's best to start a new pile when compost becomes too tall to work by hand.

Compost can be ready to use in as soon as a month or as long as a year or more, depending on how well the pile is constructed and tended. Finished compost should look much like a uniform potting soil, with no indication of what materials originally went into the pile. Compost can be used as a soil amendment in the garden to add some nutrients, but its primary advantage is that of improving soil structure. Adding compost increases water-holding capacity, aeration and nutrient exchange sites in the soil. *-Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist (retired)* 



Combine green and dry brown plant materials for composting (Lerner)



Multiple bins allow for easy turning of compost (Lerner)

#### Indiana Farmland Values Hit New Record High

The 2024 Purdue Farmland Values and Cash Rent Survey results confirmed Indiana farmland average values hit a new record high this summer. High interest rates and lower farm incomes are placing downward pressure on prices, but the limited supply of land is keeping prices firm. Purdue ag economists Todd Kuethe, Michael Langemeier and James Mintert discussed the survey results in a Purdue Center for Commercial Aariculture View recorded webinar recent webinar. the at https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/



## October 4-H Newsletter



Purdue Extension Spencer County 1101 E CR 800 N. Chrisney, IN 47611 (812) 362-8066 http://www.extension.purdue.edu/spencer

## 4-H Enrollment

It's time for 4-H enrollment! October begins a new season of enrollment. Before you attend 4-H club meetings, please make sure you are re-enrolled. To register please visit v2.4honline.com.

Before you pay with a credit card, please make sure that the expiration date and credit card info is correct. Once submitted, we can not reprocess a credit card.

If you need assistance registering please contact the office at (812) 362-8066.

## 4-H Open House

Sunday, November 3rd will be the Spencer County Open House and Enrollment Night. This is a great time to invite new friends to learn about 4-H!

Join us from 3-5 PM and get some help registering for the year!

## **Volunteer Enrollment**

Thank you to all of the 4-H volunteers that attended our first leaders meeting of the year! Notes from the meeting were emailed out to all leaders. If you have questions or need help after reading the notes, please contact me!

Reminder, all leaders need to be reenrolled and approved before meetings take place. Thank you for helping our program comply with Purdue guidelines!



We will have ice cream floats to celebrate the start of a new year! Club meeting schedules will be available for each club and staff will be here to help with 4HOnline. We will have previous projects completed by 4-H members, so come check out a new project and register for 4-H!

## Leaders Wanted

We are so thankful for all of our 4-H volunteers. Are you looking for a way to get involved with your children's activities?

We can teach you everything you need to know to be a 4-H volunteer! The more adults we have helping our program, the lighter the load for everyone.

Consider helping today and contact Jennifer for more information!

## Invention Convention

Do you have a 4-H'er that loves to invent? Check out the link below to Indiana's Invention Convention. Indiana 4-H will hold an annual Invention Convention in March. If you are interested please contact Jennifer for more information.

In today's rapidly changing world, proficiency in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) matters more than ever. Yet, as important as STEM may be, business decision-makers, government leaders and educators are realizing that students' future success may depend on learning something more.

#### Indiana Invention Convention Link



## Junior Leader

Meetings

Junior Leader Meetings will take place on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 6 PM. Meetings are held at the Youth & Community Center. The first 2 meeting dates are October 8th and and November 12th.

Know a friend from school that's a great leader? Bring them too!

## Upcoming Opportunities

Artificial Intelligence Teens as Teachers-Do you love technology? Do you love helping and teaching others? If so, sign up for the Teens as Teachers AI Team funded through a Google Grant. A training is scheduled for November 2nd on campus. Contact Jennifer for more information.



Ignite 4-H- Join us from across the U.S. in Washington, D.C. for Ignite by 4-H! The four-day interactive summit helps teens find their spark through inspiring speakers, hands-on workshops, off-site experiences, career exploration and connecting with peers.

## **HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES**

Bringing University information to the local level to strengthen families, spend smart, eat right, and live well.

## First Spencer Co Food As Medicine Program a Success

The first Spencer County Food As Medicine program recently concluded and was a huge success. In partnership with the Spencer County Health Department, Gary's Place Community Garden, and Cope's Produce Company, Purdue Extension was able to provide this eight week program free of charge to all participants utilizing Health First Indiana funding.

Each week participants came and learned about combating chronic disease through healthy eating, exercise, and good health habits. Information was shared on how to make lifestyle changes that aid in the prevention of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions that are prevalent both here in Spencer County and across our state.

Participants not only left armed with information, but each week they were provided with a box of fresh, locally grown produce that was provided by either Gary's Place Community Garden or Cope's Produce Company. Items varied from week to week but included potatoes, tomatoes, corn, watermelon, peaches, apples, peppers, cucumbers, yellow squash, and others.

Every class featured a recipe demonstration that utilized in-season ingredients that participants could easily replicate at home. A few examples include Turkey Chili Joe, Fresh Veggie Skillet, and Apple Slaw Salsa.

One participant shared, "I loved everything about this class! the information, recipes, food boxes and taste testing!" We loved sharing this with our community and hope to do similar classes again in the future.









Megan Jaspersen Health and Human Sciences Educator Purdue Extension

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Extension

#### Health and Human Sciences

## Fall is here! Easy Recipe: Apple Sandwiches

Looking for a quick after school snack for the kids or a healthy option to throw in your own sack lunch on your way to work? Try our Nutrition Education Program recipe: Apple Sandwiches! For more great recipes and nutrition facts, visit eatgathergo.org!



#### **Quick Tips**

For a change of pace: Sprinkle the peanut butter with grated carrot, chopped nuts, seeds or granola instead of, or along with, the raisins. Try other nut or seed butters, such as almond, hazelnut or sunflower seed. Use other dried fruit pieces, such as cherries or cranberries.

#### easy as:

#### **Apple Sandwiches**

leer en español

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium apple
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon raisins

#### DIRECTIONS:

 Wash the apple under cool running water and dry. Cut in half from the stem down and lay each half cut-side down on a cutting board. Slice each half into 6 halfround slices and cut out the core.

2. Spread 1/2 teaspoon of peanut butter on one side of each apple slice.

3. Put 4 to 6 raisins on top of the peanut butter on one apple slice. Top with another apple slice, peanut-butter side down. Squeeze gently.

4. Continue with remaining apple slices.

#### get nutrition info »

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#### Health and Human Sciences

## Clean Hands and Happy Students! Starting the School Year with Hand Washing

It's no secret that washing your hands is one of the best ways to stay healthy. First graders at Chrisney Elementary recently got to get up close and personal with hand hygiene. Purdue Extension brought in Glow Germ Handwashing to their classrooms so students could utilize black light technology to see spots that they miss while washing their hands.

First graders learned that germs are called microorganisms and discussed best practices for hand washing. They put special glow lotion on their hands to simulate germs which they were able to see under the black light. After thoroughly washing their hands, they came back to examine how they did. Most students still found a that a few hard-to-clean spots were still glowing! Did you know it is most effective to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, which is approximately the amount of time it takes to sing your ABCs? Students were given the challenge to wash their hands as well as they did for our activity every time they step up to the sink. We are confident they can succeed!



### Want to Stay Up To Date? Like us on Facebook!

There's no better way to stay in the know that liking us on Facebook! See below for social media options for both the Purdue Extension- Spencer County office and the Spencer County Health Coalition. Both pages are great sources of information for current happenings and upcoming programs. Check it out!



Purdue Extension-Spencer County

https://www.facebook.com/PurdueExtensionSpencerCounty



https://www.facebook.com/SpencerCoHealth/

### Bye-bye germs: How to sanitize (the right way) in the kitchen and beyond

"Sanitizing" is different from cleaning. That's one of the many things people get wrong about removing germs that Purdue experts want consumers to understand.

Amanda Deering, associate professor of produce food safety, and Tari Gary, extension administrator for food science, teach growers how to remove germs from produce, but they also offer tips for sanitizing at home.

What is a sanitizer? "A sanitizer reduces the number of microorganisms on a surface," said Gary. "It's different than a detergent or a sterilizer. Detergents just remove visible contaminants, and sterilizers remove all microorganisms." Sanitizing a surface has three steps:

- 1. Clean the surface
- 2. Read the sanitizer's label
- 3. Sanitize according to the label's instructions

Each of these steps plays an important role in killing germs and keeping people safe.

"A common misconception is that you can apply a sanitizer to a dirty surface," said Gary. "To get that full effectiveness promised on the label, clean the surface first, making it as visibly clean as it's going to get. Then, apply the sanitizer. If you don't do that, the sanitizer is going to be used up before it gets down to the surface."

After cleaning, and before sanitizing, people should always review the product's label first. Otherwise, they could endanger themselves by not taking proper precautions.

"Stick to the label," Deering cautions. "Some people say, 'A little is good, but a lot is better,' but that's not true with sanitizers. If you don't follow the label, there's a real risk of using the sanitizer at too high a concentration or using a sanitizer for an unintended purpose."

For example, Deering recalls one time a woman contacted her after a sanitizer made her skin turn white. "In the past, she had bought a diluted version of the sanitizer, but she accidentally bought the same product with a higher, almost dangerous concentration," Deering said. Thankfully, the woman was okay, and the effect was temporary. The situation might have been avoided, however, with careful label reading.

Consumers should pay special attention to labels if they plan to sanitize a food-contact surface. Common sanitizers like sanitizing wipes or aerosol disinfectant sprays work well for many household needs, but they may not work for food-contact surfaces. "The danger is that you could ingest harmful ingredients from the sanitizer," Gary explained. Even if a product is approved for food-contact surfaces, consumers should pay attention to what microorganisms the product is designed to kill. For example, a product label showing "kills Salmonella" would make sense to use after cooking raw chicken but not if the consumer was concerned about Listeria.

"Just look at the label," Deering said. "Before you use any sanitizer, make sure it's labeled, especially if you want to wash or sanitize a food contact surface. You have to be careful what you're using."

## "MAKING THE HEALTHY CHOICE, THE EASY CHOICE."

#### ERIN MEYER, RDN - COMMUNITY WELLNESS COORDINATOR



#### Do I Qualify for SNAP?

To qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, applicants must meet certain non-financial and financial requirements. Nonfinancial requirements include state residency, citizenship/alien status, work registration and cooperation with the IMPACT (job training) program. Financial criteria include income and asset limits. The asset/resource limits are \$5,000 for most households.

Assets include bank accounts, cash, real estate, personal property, vehicles, etc. The household's home and surrounding lot, household goods and personal belongings and life insurance policies are not counted as assets in the SNAP program. All households (except those with elderly or disabled members) must pass a gross income test (130% of poverty) to qualify for SNAP benefits. The gross income is per household size and based on the gross monthly income received by all household members. For more information, please visit: https://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/snap-food-assistance/do-i-qualify-for-snap/

#### MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK: OCTOBER 1-7

VISIT THIS SITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS.

HTTPS://SCREENING.MHANATIONAL.ORG/SCREENING-TOOLS/

## **GROWING TOGETHER**

## **ROCKPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY**



# 100 Pounds of produce harvested

#### Participant Testamonials

" I am 94 years old. I had a garden until I moved here to live. You have no idea how much I appreciate this opportunity to garden again and share the garden's abundance with others!"

"I just love doing this together. I have rearranged by card club to make sure I can come to the garden every week to help take care of it and collect what we've grown together."

#### **GROWING TOGETHER GARDEN IS A SUCCESS**

Since May, Purdue Extension staff including Ag and Natural Resources, Nutrition Education Program Advisor and Community Wellness Coordinator rotate conducting weekly nutrition and gardening sessions with the elderly residents at the Washington Street apartments. Once raised bed gardens were installed, residents meet weekly to plant, maintain and harvest produce from the beds. All produce collected is from the garden is weighed and distributed among the participants or taken to the community room to be used by any resident at this location. All residents here are on a limited income and recipes and ideas are shared on how to prepare and eat these vegetables.





#### extension.purdue.edu/spencer

#### *Growing Together* at Washington Street Apartments

A Growing Together grant was received to install a raised bed garden at the Washington Street Apartments in Rockport, IN. Weekly educational work sessions are hosted by Purdue Extension staff and Master Gardener volunteers with residents of the apartment complex. All food harvested from the garden is donated to the residents of the complex or to the local food pantries.

#### Food as Medicine begins in Spencer County

Two Food as Medicine programs were implemented at Kimball International and in coordination with the Spencer County Health Department. Food as Medicine is designed to support the capacity of cross-sectoral partnerships to address health and resilience by enhancing and connecting local social support systems, providing nutritious food referrals including locally-grown fruits and vegetables to people with heightened vulnerability, and delivering nutrition and cooking education to promote a healthy diet. Approximately 30 participants took part across the two programs.

#### **Extension Provides Leadership to Coalition**

The Spencer County Health Coalition was formed following the Indiana Healthy Community assessment through the Wellness Council of Indiana. Purdue Extension was instrumental in starting this group and currently has two team members serving on the coalition leadership team. With a mission to create a safe, healthy, and thriving community, this group has been a champion for improving access to local health and wellness opportunities. The coalition provides an opportunity for professional networking, collaboration, and working towards common goals that will improve the health of those who live, work, and play in Spencer County.

#### Local Growers Gain Insight on Biologicals

The promotion and use of biologicals as an alternative for synthetic pesticides in agricultural pest management have increased in recent years. As a result, producers are seeking information on the effectiveness and return on investment of such products. To help address this need, a biologicals presentation by Purdue specialist Darcy Telenko at the annual Perry-Spencer Crop Day program highlighted some early research results on the use of biologicals for disease management in corn and soybeans. The program was attended by 78 local producers, with a majority indicating a better understanding of biological fungicides as a result of attending.

Want to learn more? Contact Purdue Extension-Spencer County today at (812) 362-8066.



Extension - Spencer County

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