

February — March 2025



Extension - Spencer County

Our Mission

We deliver practical, research-based information that enhances lives and livelihoods.

Our Vision

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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Ag Agenda

Agriculture & Horticulture Update for the Home and Farm



Snow provides insulation for garden plants (Lerner)

Snow is Good for Gardens

Though your aching back may not agree, recent heavy snows actually will be good for your garden and landscape. Snow provides moisture as well as protection from cold and wind. Snow is an excellent insulator against low temperatures and excessive winds. The extent of protection depends on the depth of snow. In addition, the soil gives off some heat so that the temperature at the soil surface can be much warmer than the air temperature. One study found that the soil surface temperature was 28°F with a 9-inch snow depth and an air temperature of -14°F!

Snow brings welcome moisture to many landscape plants, which will in turn help prevent desiccation injury. Even dormant plants continue to lose moisture from twigs (as water vapor) in the process known as transpiration. Evergreen plants, which keep their leaves through the winter, are at even greater risk of injury.

On the other hand, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Some evergreens will suffer from too much snow load. The weight of snow and ice can bend or even break branches, particularly on multi-stemmed shrubs, such as arborvitae. If needed, snow should be gently removed by brushing away with a broom or rake. Do not try to remove ice, since it is more than likely that you will break the stems. Multi-stemmed shrubs that are known to be susceptible to breakage can be bound with twine to hold branches together to prevent them from splitting apart.

Of course, there's still more winter to come before we'll know how well our plants fare. In the meantime, rest assured that there really is a silver lining to this storm cloud.

-Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist (retired)

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Newsletter Highlights

Purdue Crop Cost & Return Guide a Resource to Project Financials

Indiana Small Farm Conference

Red in Winter - What are those Fruits I See?

Save the Date - Perry-Spencer Crop Day

Ag Women Engage Conference

Indiana Organic Grain Farmer Meeting



Extension - Spencer County

Crop Cost Guide a Resource to Project Financials



The Purdue Crop Cost and Return Guide, available online at <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2024/12/2025-crop-cost-and-return-guide/> offers farmers a resource to project financials for the coming cropping year. The current version contains updated December 2024 crop budget estimations for 2025, prepared by Purdue faculty members Michael R. Langemeier, Department of Agricultural Economics; Shaun Castell and Dan Quinn, Department of Agronomy; and Bill Johnson, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University.

A companion spreadsheet tool is also available to examine gross revenue, costs, and earnings for crop enterprises. It can be found at:

<https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2024/12/1/crop-budget-spreadsheet/>.

A user can evaluate up to three full-season crops, and the wheat double-crop soybean system. Gross revenue, cost, and net returns are evaluated on a per acre and per unit basis. Breakeven prices to cover variable and total cost are computed for each crop.

-Source: Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture

2025 Purdue Crop Cost & Return Guide

December 2024 Estimates

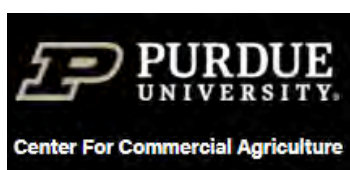
NOTE: Production prices and input prices may have significantly changed since these estimates were prepared.

Table 1. Estimated per-acre crop budgets for low, average, and high productivity Indiana soils.

Crop & System	Low Productivity Soil					Average Productivity Soil					High Productivity Soil				
	Cost	Revenue	Net	Cost	Revenue	Net	Cost	Revenue	Net	Cost	Revenue	Net			
Estimated price per bushel	188	188	0	71	111	40	143	143	0	42	217	175	48		
Variable costs	84.5	84.5	0	50.0	50.0	0	84.5	84.5	0	84.5	84.5	0	84.5		
Fixed costs	103.5	103.5	0	61.0	61.0	0	58.5	58.5	0	58.5	58.5	0	58.5		
Net return	103.5	103.5	0	61.0	61.0	0	58.5	58.5	0	58.5	58.5	0	58.5		
Break-even price	3.15	3.15	0	2.75	2.75	0	3.15	3.15	0	3.15	3.15	0	3.15		

These prices assume average moisture conditions and timely application of inputs. Actual yields and input prices may vary significantly. The high productivity soil is representative of the best soil in the state. The low productivity soil is representative of the worst soil in the state. The average soil is representative of the average soil in the state. The prices are based on the December 2024 market prices. The costs are based on the December 2024 market prices. The net return is the difference between the revenue and the cost. The break-even price is the price at which the net return is zero.

Published each year and updated as necessary, the Purdue Crop Cost & Return Guide is a detailed resource to help farmers project income and expenses for corn and soybean operations



Indiana Small Farm Conference will Feature Speakers, Trade Show for Small and Diversified Farmers

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — The 2025 Indiana Small Farm Conference will take place at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds on March 4-5. The conference, hosted by Purdue Extension, serves as an annual educational and farmer-to-farmer networking event for the Indiana small and diversified farm community.

“Attendees can look forward to great educational sessions, networking with other farmers as well as Purdue and ag agency personnel, meeting with trade show exhibitors, and great locally sourced food,” said Amy Thompson, event co-chair and Purdue Beginning Farmer coordinator.

Attendees can choose sessions from nine different tracks, including vegetable production, livestock, business and urban agriculture. Session speakers include farmers and Purdue Extension experts with firsthand experience working with small and diversified farms.

The event’s keynote speaker will be Clarendia “Farmer Cee” Stanley. Farmer Cee is the founding CEO of Green Heffa Farms, which produces more than 40 varieties of herbs, medicinal plants and loose-leaf herbal teas. Farmer Cee will share her expertise in business and sustainable agriculture.

The trade show will offer attendees the opportunity to meet with a range of commercial and nonprofit organizations. Applications for trade show vendors will be open through Feb. 25 or until spots fill up.

“The trade show is a great opportunity for exhibitors to showcase their products and services in a relaxed atmosphere to unique clientele,” said Phil Cox, Extension educator for agriculture and natural resources in Vermillion County.

Those interested in participating in the trade show can register [here](https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2024/12/1/crop-budget-spreadsheet/). To receive additional information, including vendor rules and regulations, contact Phil Cox at 765-492-5330 or cox119@purdue.edu. (continued on page 3)

Small Farm Conference (*cont.*)

Attendee registration is open online through Feb. 25. People may register for one or both days, with one day costing \$85 and both days costing \$155. Lunch is included in the registration fee. On-site registration will be available for the same prices, but meals will not be included. To register or learn more, visit puext.in/SFC25Attendees.

The Hendricks County Fairgrounds are located at 1900 E. Main St., Danville. More information about the event can be found [here](#). For questions or to request accommodations, please contact Amy Thompson at afthompson@purdue.edu.

Follow the conference on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) at @PurdueDFFS, with the hashtag #PurdueSmallFarms.

Red in Winter - What are those Fruits I See?

Once the leaves have fallen and the landscape is dominated by shades of brown and gray, bright colors like red catch our attention. There are several red fruits that we may encounter in the late fall and winter here in Indiana that add some color to the landscape. These fruits are retained on trees and shrubs for a variety of reasons. Some are not as palatable to wildlife, so they are eaten later in the season. Some are more resistant to freeze damage and thus cling to branches longer than delicate fruits. There may also be an advantage to their appearance. Many of these plants have seeds dispersed by wildlife like birds, which eat the seeds and excrete them later, providing an opportunity to produce new plants away from the parent. Many birds can see much of the same color spectrum we do, plus enhanced vision in the ultra-violet bands. Brightly-colored seeds with waxy skins may reflect more ultra-violet light and be more noticeable to the birds.

What are some of those red fruits?

One family of plants accounts for several red fruit we can see in late fall and winter, the rose family. This family includes apples, plums, cherries, hawthorns, pears and others as well as the roses. In Indiana we have several hawthorns (*Crataegus* species) that produce a fruit resembling a tiny apple. These vary in size by species but are typically ¼ to ½ inch diameter and often held in clusters. Hawthorns are typically small trees and may have long thin thorns on the twigs.

Another rose family member are the apples and crabapples with some small native trees like sweet crabapple, *Malus coronaria*, and several varieties of fruit-bearing apples and ornamental crabapples planted but sometimes escaping to natural areas. While our native crabapples are usually about 1-2 inches diameter and green to yellow, the domesticated apples and crabapples often have red fruit in various sizes from large apples to ½ inch diameter crabapples.

We also have several beautiful native roses in Indiana, and a particularly problematic exotic invasive rose in multiflora rose. Unfortunately, you are more likely to encounter multiflora rose with small ¼ inch clusters of red fruit. Our native roses typically have larger fruit and fewer fruit per cluster.

Holly is also noted for red fruit and some being evergreen as well. Our native Indiana hollies are all deciduous, losing their leaves in the fall but often retaining the red fruit on the female plants into winter. The most widespread species is winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*, a shrub which is seeing more use ornamentally due to its striking red fruit held past Christmas most years. American holly, an evergreen broadleaved tree, is well-known for its glossy, spiny foliage and red fruit on the female trees. Although not native to Indiana, it is spreading from plantings into natural areas. Several evergreen hollies from Europe and Asia are also common in ornamental plantings and may escape into natural areas.

Not only are these late-season showy fruit attractive, but they also provide some important nourishment for wildlife when the many other fruits are long-gone.

-Lenny Farlee, Purdue Extension Forestry Specialist



Multiflora rose fruit, one of many red fruits seen throughout the landscape in winter (Farlee)

Save-the-Date: Perry-Spencer Crop Day

Plans are currently being finalized for the 2025 Perry-Spencer Crop Day program. This collaboration between Purdue Extension and SWCD in Perry and Spencer Counties will be held on March 13 at 6:00 PM at the St. Meinrad Community Center and will feature a presentation by Dr. Tommy Butts, Clinical Assistant Professor, Site-Specific Weed Management, at Purdue. PARP & CCH credit will be available.



Diversified Farming and Food Systems

2025 Indiana Organic Grain Farmer Meeting

SAVE THE DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2025

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

@OrganicAgPurdue
 Purdue Extension
www.purdue.edu/dffs/organicag

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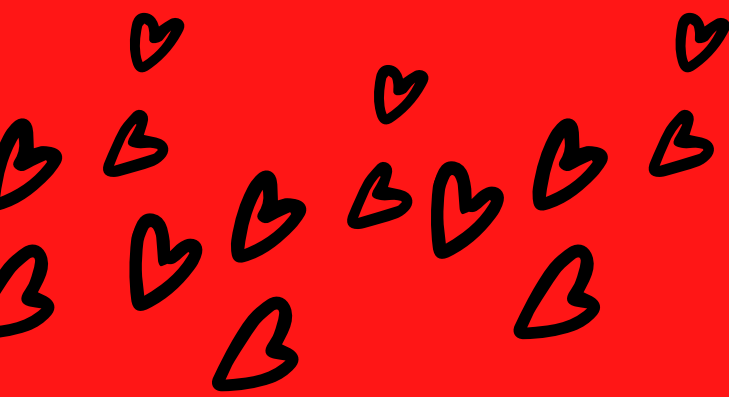


[Purdue Extension-Spencer County](https://www.youtube.com/PurdueExtensionSpencerCounty)



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February- March 2025 4-H Newsletter

4-H Registration & Drop/Add

4-H Registration is still open if you have not registered for this year. Bring a friend to a club meeting or workshop and help them join 4-H too! If you haven't registered yet for this year please go to v2.4honline.com to register.

If you need to drop or add a project please email Jennifer (allen393@purdue.edu) or Kara (kdilger@purdue.edu) with the project you would like to drop/add. Reminder, the deadline for dropping/adding projects is May 15th.

4-H Camp Counselor

4-H Camp Counselor applications are open and will be through 4HOnline. When you go to your profile and click the "Event" tab, you will see "2025 4-H Camp: Gibson, Knox, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh Counties". Please answer all the questions before submitting your application. Camp will be June 2-4 with Counselors arriving June 1st.

We will offer the Junior Leader roles again this year. These counselors will help guide the decisions and directions at camp before and during camp meetings. If this sounds like something you are interested in, please indicate this on your application. We have lots of qualified, seasoned counselors that would be great at this!

Trip Applications

Trip applications are available in 4HOnline for all current 7th-12th graders. Prior to submitting a trip application, please make sure the dates and times will work with your schedule to attend. Teen Leadership Weekend will replace the Junior Leader Conference. There are lots of great options, so please look at your schedule and apply for a few trips that will fit with your schedule! Many of these are at no cost to you and sponsored by our 4-H Association!

4-H Camp

Spencer County 4-H Camp will be June 2-4 at the Historic Santa Claus Campground for current grades 3-6. Applications will again be completed through 4HOnline this year and be \$55. Our 4-H Association offsets the cost of each 4-H'er attending camp and pays the other \$55 it requires us to attend camp. Please help continue to make this possible by attending events such as the Pork Chop Dinner!

Camp applications will be available in February. Please mail all payments to the Purdue Extension Spencer County office at 1101 E County Road 800 N. Chrisney, IN 47611.

The application will also ask for bunk buddies. If your child would like to room with a friend, please indicate this on the application under "bunk buddy". While we can't guarantee multiple requests we will try to have at least 1 requested buddy. In order to register, you will need to be enrolled and approved in 4HOnline.

Pork Chop Dinner

Save the date for the Spencer County 4-H Pork Chop Dinner **Saturday February 22nd** with dinner beginning at 5 PM and the auction directly following. Tickets are available at the office or from any board member for \$15.

All the proceeds raised from the Pork Chop Dinner & Auction directly benefit the youth in Spencer County 4-H. Funds are used for 4-H trips such as Academy and Round-Up, camp, project workshops, 4-H books and program supplies, and many other things. If you would like to make a donation towards the auction or the 4-H program, please contact Jennifer or Kara at the office (812) 362-8066. Please come out and support our program!

4-H Fair Updates & Reminder

The 4-H Fair will be June 27th- 30th with clean up after fair on July 1st. We will begin setting up for the fair on Saturday, June 21st. It takes all of us to make the buildings and grounds ready for the projects and animals, so please plan accordingly and plan to help us for a few hours.

Project check-in will be on Monday June 23rd in the evening. The Ambassador Contest is tentatively scheduled for Saturday June 21st after clean-up, so please mark your calendar! More information will be coming soon on fair.

HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

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

Create a Winter Emergency Kit for your Car

We all know the importance of preparing for an ice storm or other potential natural disasters. Having an emergency kit with essential items in your home is the first step to surviving such an event. But you should also think about your car. Winter storms can create dangerous roads and a higher risk of frostbite, hypothermia, and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Create an emergency kit for your car and be prepared if caught out during a winter storm. Include the items below and have them in a bag, bucket, or small tote for easy access.

- Warm clothes (heavy coat, extra socks, gloves, hand warmers)
- Blankets
- Ice scraper
- Bottled water
- Shelf-stable snacks (Choose high protein foods to provide energy.)
- Flashlight
- Cell phone charger and battery backup
- Jumper cables or battery-powered jump starter
- Sand or kitty litter (to help with traction if you are stuck in snow)
- Small or collapsible shovel
- Roadside flares or glow sticks
- Flat tire inflation canister (non-explosive)



During the winter months, you should keep your gas tank full. Don't let it get low, as you never know when you might be sitting for a while and not able to refuel. If you're stranded, only run the engine for 10 minutes each hour to charge your phone and run the heater. Be sure to open a window slightly to allow fresh air to enter the car and avoid carbon monoxide poisoning while it's running.

Contact your local Extension office for more information on preparing for severe weather or other natural disasters.

Source: University of Kentucky Extension, Annhall Norris, University of Kentucky Food Preservation and Food Safety Extension Specialist

Reference: <https://www.ready.gov/winter-ready#travel>; Picture generated using AI technology



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Spencer County Health Coalition

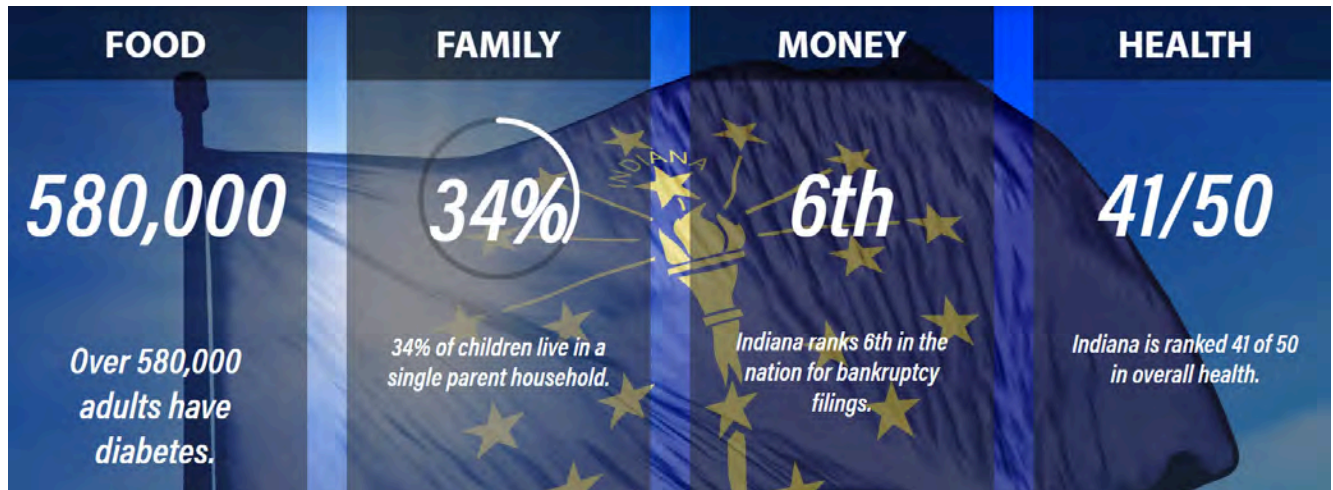
<https://www.facebook.com/SpencerCoHealth/>

Spencer County Health Coalition- Where Colaboration Breaks Down Silos

The Spencer County Health Coalition has been in existence since 2020 and was birthed out of a need for connection. Throughout Spencer County's assessment process of becoming a designated "Indiana Healthy Community" by the Wellness Council of Indiana, it was clear that starting a coalition to bring together everyone in the county working on health initiatives would benefit organizations and individuals alike. The coalition has since been working to improve the health of those who live, work, and play in Spencer County.

With the new year upon us, now is an excellent time to think about ways that you and your organization can contribute to the health of Spencer County. The health coalition meets virtually via Zoom every other month for one hour to discuss pertinent health issues, network, work on health related goals applicable to the community, and share relevant events. If you are interested in learning more or would like to get involved, the coalition is open to all. Please contact Megan for additional information.

Indiana by the Numbers: Room to Improve our Health Outcomes



The start of every new year provides an opportunity for us to pause and reflect. This reflection often leads to a variety of resolutions. This could include losing a few pounds, keeping better track of finances, investing more time being intentional with our families, or improving our mental health. If any of these goals surface as you think about ways to improve your personal health this year, know that you are not alone. The statistics listed above include data from across the state and indicate that we have room to improve in a variety of areas here in Indiana.

Regardless of your focus this year, Purdue Extension HHS can assist you in reaching your goals. We offer a variety of programs encompassing the topics of food, family, money, and health. My aim as your local HHS Educator is to provide education to individuals and our communities by bringing university information to the local level – both in person and online – to help people strengthen relationships, eat smart, improve health, and achieve financial wellness. If you would like to explore any of these topics or learn more, please reach out to us to see what the year ahead can hold for you!

Source: <https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/extension/>

Gooney Pizza Dip



Ingredients:

- 1 c. (8 oz.) reduced fat ricotta cheese
- 1 c. fat free mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 c. (6 oz.) shredded part of skim mozzarella cheese divided
- 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 can (2 1/2 oz.) sliced ripe olives, drained, divided
- 3/4 c. diced seeded plum tomatoes, divided
- 1/4 c. sliced turkey pepperoni
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/8 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- Assorted whole grain crackers
- Non stick cooking spray

Directions:

Kitchen Equipment Needed:

Oven or toaster oven
Measuring cups and spoons
Mixing bowl
Spoon, knife
Cutting board
Can opener
Small colander or strainer
9" pie plate
Hot pads
Serving Spoon

1. In a bowl, combine the ricotta, mayonnaise, 1 c. mozzarella, parmesan cheese, 1/2 c, tomatoes, 6 T olives, pepperoni, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and pepper flakes.
2. Spread into a 9" pie plate coated with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Sprinkle with remaining mozzarella.
4. Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes or until edges are bubbly and top is golden brown.
5. Sprinkle with remaining tomatoes and olives. Serve with crackers.

Serving size: 1/3 c. number of servings: 9 Actual ingredients analyzed (if different from above): Plum tomatoes - fresh, whole - 1.25 cups to get 3/4 c diced/seeded Turkey pepperoni - used 2 oz

Recipe Source: Taste of Home Holiday Guide, Dec/Jan 2008

"MAKING THE HEALTHY CHOICE, THE EASY CHOICE."

ERIN MEYER, RDN - COMMUNITY WELLNESS COORDINATOR

Looking to Reduce Your Family's Added Sugar Intake? Here's How:

Eating patterns with fewer sources of added sugars are associated with lower rates of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer in adults. There is even evidence that higher intakes of added sugars have been linked to dental cavities in both children and adults. Since many foods and beverages with added sugars also contribute extra calories, there is also a risk for overweight and obesity. Minimizing added sugars is a priority for many parents, but it's not as simple as trading cookies and soda for fruit and water. Avoiding obvious sources is one thing, but added sugar can be found in many foods where you may not expect it.

Added sugars sweeten a food or beverage — and although they add calories, they offer very little nutrition. On an ingredient label, sugar may appear under many names. Some common ones include cane sugar, evaporated cane juice, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, raw sugar and crystal solids. And, don't forget brown sugar, honey, maple syrup and brown rice syrup.

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting added sugars to less than 10% of daily calorie needs. That's about 12 teaspoons (48 grams of added sugar) on a 2,000-calorie diet. But for kids — especially little kids, who may only need 1,200 to 1,400 calories per day — it's even less. For them, added sugars should not top 7 or 8 teaspoons (30 to 35 grams of added sugar).

But, rather than obsessing over grams and teaspoons, focus on reducing added sugars by limiting products that contain them.

Common Sources of Added Sugars

Some sources of added sugars are easy to spot, such as:

- Sugar sweetened beverages (soda, fruit punch, energy drinks, and some coffee and teas)
- Sweetened cereal
- Candy and chocolates
- Flavored yogurt
- Baked goods such as cakes, pastries and cookies

However, added sugars can hide in some surprising places, including:

- Whole-grain cereals and granola
- Instant flavored oatmeal
- Frozen foods
- Granola bars, protein bars and cereal bars
- Pasta sauce
- Dried fruit, canned fruit, applesauce and fruit juices
- Baby food
- Barbecue sauce, ketchup, salad dressing and other condiments

Tips for Reducing Added Sugars

The first step in reducing your family's intake of added sugars takes place in the grocery store. Scan ingredient lists and Nutrition Facts Labels while in the aisle and, when possible, choose options that don't use added sugars. Try using naturally sweet fruits and vegetables when baking and cooking. Examples include bananas, sweet potatoes and apples. You can add a fruit like berries or mashed banana to your cooked oatmeal in the morning for sweetness.

For beverages, choose plain water and milk most often for children older than 12 months. Kids five years old and under should avoid flavored milks, non-dairy milks (with the exception of soymilk for dietary or medical needs), caffeinated beverages and low-calorie beverages. Add fruit and fresh herbs, like lemon slices or mint leaves, to water for extra flavor. You also can reduce added sugars at home by cooking from scratch. By making your own granola, pasta sauce and condiments and serving homemade baked treats, you are in control of the ingredients used and the amounts. As your family's taste buds adjust, gradually use less and less of the sweetened varieties.

Make a healthy relationship with food the overall focus instead of a completely sugar-free diet. Encourage positive associations with foods such as fruits and vegetables by playing up their good qualities and fresh taste — and save the super sweet stuff for special occasions.



The Spencer County Health Coalition (SCHC) is where institutions and communities come together to share resources, reduce gaps, improve wellness in the interest of building resilience and hope for families.

Mission: Creating a safe, healthy, and thriving Spencer County.

Vision: All people achieve wellness, engage in their community, and promote wellness together for generations to come.

Goal: To improve access to health and wellness opportunities in Spencer County.

Core Values: Cultural competency, community based, & operational characteristics of SCHC.

Please consider joining one of our work groups!

- Behavioral Health (Mental health, substance use/abuse)
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Worksite Wellness

All meetings are held via Zoom.

Meeting Dates for 2025:

February 6

April 3

June 5

August 7

October 2

December 4

Please contact Erin Meyer at meyer258@purdue.edu to receive meeting link and coalition updates!

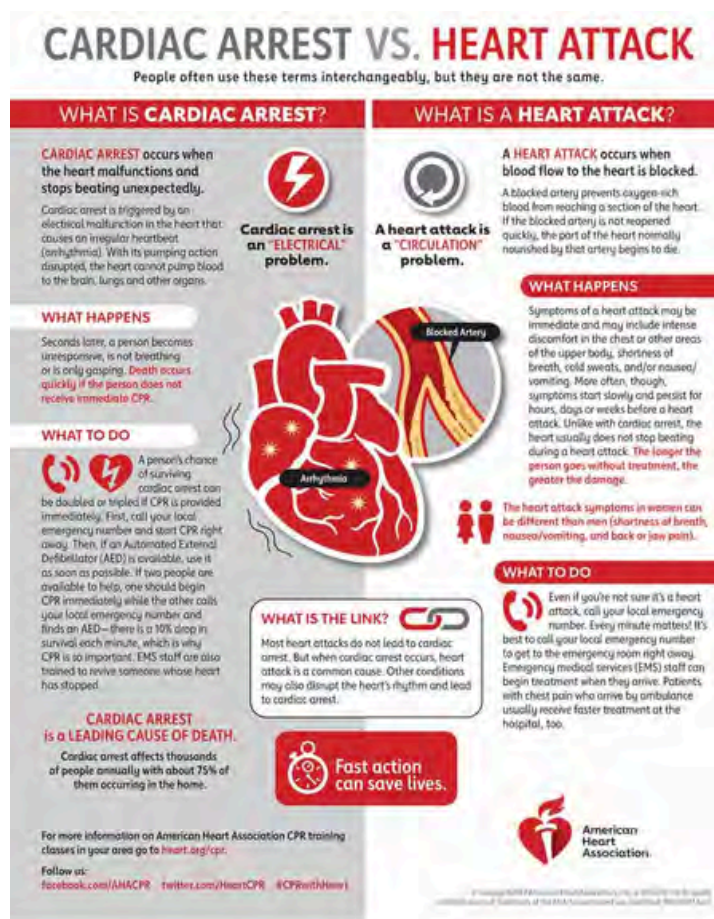
American Heart Month in 2025 is celebrated throughout the month of February.

This month-long initiative focuses on raising awareness about heart health and cardiovascular disease, and how to prevent them.

Here are some ways to get involved in American Heart Month:

- Wear red - On the first Friday of February, National Wear Red Day, wear red to raise awareness about heart disease.
- Join the #OurHearts movement - Share on social media how you're working to be heart healthy with friends and family.
- Take action - Make healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy weight.
- Get checked - Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure and cholesterol.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women.



<https://newsroom.heart.org/events/february-is-american-heart-month-national-wear-red-day-black-history-month-and-more>

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***4-H Association Pork Chop Dinner &
Basket Auction
February 22nd Serving @ 5:00***