

## Mix It Up to Expand Your Gift-giving Dollar

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Source: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition/mix-it-up-to-expand-your-gift-giving-dollar-with-food-mixes-in-a-jar> [download PDF](#)

When the holiday season rolls around, many family budgets become strained. With a long list of family and friends, finding enough money to go around may be challenging. To help reduce the stress of your next holiday season, try making gifts instead of purchasing them.

Consider these fun and economical gift ideas:

- ✓ Create gift baskets. For the family member who loves movies, make a “night-in” basket. Get a large bowl for popcorn to use as the container. Add packaged popcorn and a coupon for a free movie rental. Gardening, sports or any other themed baskets also work.
- ✓ For parents with young children, provide a homemade coupon good for free baby-sitting. Other ideas include coupons for helping walk the dog, painting or cleaning.
- ✓ Create a recipe booklet with favorite holiday recipes. Copy the recipes onto festive recipe cards, punch a hole in the corner of the cards and tie them together with a red ribbon. Holiday photo albums also can be used to hold recipes.
- ✓ Fill a holiday mug with packets of flavored tea, hot cocoa or coffee for those who enjoy warm beverages. Or tie a packet of soup mix to a large wooden spoon. Include a bowl and package of biscuit mix for a complete gift.
- ✓ If you are computer savvy, create homemade calendars for family members. These could include highlighted birthday and anniversary dates. Try adding family photos for a personal touch.
- ✓ Repurpose old tins, filling them with cookies, muffins or other holiday goodies. A gift like this will be a delight to anybody who has little time for baking.
- ✓ Make homemade mixes in a jar. Mixes for soups and cookies are popular gift items that are fairly inexpensive to make. The gift recipient will appreciate the attractive and thoughtful gift and also will value the convenience.



**Check out the workshop page for information on upcoming workshops and programs! Don't see something you like? Let us know what you want to see more of by calling 219-285-8620 x 2800.**

## Cranberry-Oatmeal Cookie Mix



1 c. plus 2 Tbsp. flour  
1 c. rolled oats  
½ tsp. baking soda  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ c. brown sugar  
¼ c. white sugar  
½ c. dried cranberries  
½ c. white chocolate chips

Layer the ingredients in a clean, quart-sized jar. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it and attach a copy of the recipe card.

## Cranberry-Oatmeal Cookies

- 1 container Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix
- Additional ingredients:
  - ✓ ½ c. butter
  - ✓ 1 tsp. vanilla
  - ✓ 1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix butter, vanilla and egg together until smooth. Add cookie mix and mix well. Place by spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for 8 to 10 minutes until golden brown. For best flavor, use this mix within nine months.

Makes 28 cookies. Each serving has 100 calories, 4.5 g fat, 13 g carbohydrate and 70 mg sodium.

## Friendship Soup Mix



½ c. dry split peas  
2 Tbsp. beef bouillon granules  
¼ c. pearl barley  
½ c. dry lentils  
¼ c. dry, minced onions  
2 tsp. Italian seasoning  
½ c. rice  
½ c. macaroni noodles

In a clean, quart-sized jar, layer all the ingredients except the macaroni. Place the macaroni in a sandwich bag and place it on top of the other ingredients. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it and attach a copy of the recipe card.

## Friendship Soup

- 1 container Friendship Soup Mix
- Additional ingredients:
  - ✓ 1 lb. lean ground beef or turkey
  - ✓ 3 qt. water
  - ✓ 1 (28-oz.) can diced tomatoes

Brown meat and drain. Place in a large pot and add the water and tomatoes. Add soup mix except macaroni. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for one hour. Add macaroni and continue cooking for another 10 to 15 minutes (until macaroni is done). For best flavor, use this mix within one year.

Note: To avoid overcooked pasta in leftovers, add the appropriate amount of macaroni to the portion being served.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 4 g fat, 12 g carbohydrate and 390 mg sodium.

## Holiday Hotlines

The holiday season is just around the corner. Have a question about your holiday food preparation? Keep these hotline numbers handy to find the answers you need.

**Turkey Talk** – If you are looking for information on preparing a holiday turkey, check out the **USDA's Meat & Poultry website:**

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/types/turkey/> Information is included on thawing, stuffing, cooking and handling leftovers. Or call the hotline at 1-888-MPHotline, 1-888-674-6854

Other helpful numbers and websites to keep handy include:

**Butterball Turkey Hotline:** 1-800-288-8372 or  
<https://www.butterball.com/online-turkey-talk-line>

**Reynolds Kitchen Tips Line,** Online help at [www.reynoldskitchens.com](http://www.reynoldskitchens.com).

**Land O'Lakes Holiday Online Bakeline** Home economists answer questions online at: [www.landolakes.com](http://www.landolakes.com).



## 2022-2023 4-H Online Enrollment

It is that time again! 4-H Online enrollment is now open, with enrollment fees starting at \$20 for 4-H Members in 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Mini members in grades K-2, are FREE. This year the Newton County Government has graciously covered the enrollment fee for all 4-H members. Families will be able to access the online system to enroll their youth in the Newton County 4-H program. New families will create a family profile and add youth into 4-H, returning families will use the same login information as 2022. Please make sure to select cash/check and do not make a payment!

Website: [v2.4honline.com](http://v2.4honline.com)



## Club Annual Reports and Financial Info

In January, the required annual Club Report and Financial Info forms will be mailed to one leader per club or project. The club secretary can complete the

Club Report, which is a summary of the year's accomplishments. The Treasurer can help complete the 2-page Financial Report. All reports **MUST** be returned to the Extension Office **February 1<sup>st</sup>**.

## 4-H Camp Counselor Application

Have you had a positive experience in 4-H and want to help young members enjoy their involvement in the program? Consider being a 4-H Camp Counselor! Counselors must be enrolled in grades 9-12 and be willing to help 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders have a fun and safe stay at 4-H Camp. This year's camp will be held June 7-9 at Camp Tecumseh. Camp Counselor applications are due by January 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact the Extension Office for an application!



## Volunteer Training

Volunteer enrollment is now open! If you are a returning volunteer, please follow the process on 4-H Online. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please email [brunton@purdue.edu](mailto:brunton@purdue.edu) to start the enrollment process!

Volunteer Training **MUST** be completed before attending any 4-H meetings and events!

## 4-H Scholarships

Looking for a way to pay for college? There are many scholarships available through the Indiana 4-H Program:

- 4-H Accomplishment (Grades 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>): **YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE A SENIOR TO APPLY!** This scholarship seeks to recognize youth who have excelled in life skills development through their 4-H activities and involvement. Due January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- 4-H Club (Senior in High School): Awarded based on scholastic ability, financial need, and achievement in 4-H club work. Due January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Indiana 4-H Foundation Senior Year: This scholarship is for individuals seeking post high school study or training (i.e., college, trade school, or short course). Due January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Newton County 4-H Council Scholarships: This scholarship looks at 4-H achievement and community service. Due February 1<sup>st</sup> to the Newton County Extension Office.

Want more information? Call the Extension Office or email [brunton@purdue.edu](mailto:brunton@purdue.edu)!

Need help/assistance with filling out an application? Want to learn how to create a quality application?

Attend the **Scholarship Workshop on November 16<sup>th</sup> from 7:00pm -8:00pm at the Newton County Government Center!**

## 2022 Livestock Auction Buyers

A huge thank you to those who took part in the 2022 Livestock Auction. We could not be more thankful for your continuous support and investment into the future of our Newton County Youth!

Kentland Elevator & Supply, Inc  
Peterson Ag Service, LLC  
Producers Edge Insurance Company, LLC-  
Brad Barnett  
Ceres Solutions  
State Street Title, LLC  
Rensselaer Monuments, Inc  
Berenda Farms Umbarger Feeds  
Cluster Busters  
Jeff Light Farms  
Hanford Packing LLC  
Dr. Jason Sanders—Kentland Family  
Dentistry  
Creekside Animal Hospital  
KORE Insurance Services – Shawn Wynn &  
Gary Hancock  
Castongia's, Inc  
Josh DeYoung – JD Excavating  
Jesse Fausset & Friends of Logan Fausset  
Harper Livestock Removal, LLC.  
Jon Schrinier Farms  
Emerson Sondgerath  
Swaim Ag Services, LLC.  
Stockland Grain Company, Inc.  
Cody Musser – Beck's Hybrid  
Bane-Welker  
Nutrien Ag Solutions, Inc.

Curtis Creek Dairy, LLC  
Newton County Friends of 4-H  
Wilson Fertilizer, Inc.  
Kentland Veterinary Clinic LLP  
Scott & Carol Carlson  
James & Dianne Smith  
J & S Fencing  
Jeff West  
Frank Terrell  
Community State Bank  
KRG Ag Inc.  
KNM  
Harper Tire, LLC.  
Infinity Grain Systems, Inc  
R Farms Enterprises, Inc.  
Co-Alliance Cooperative, Inc.  
Fargo Technology Services





# Lack of Land Pushes Young Farmers Out of Ag

by Katelyn Allen, Associate Editor, Hoard's Dairyman



The number one challenge for young farmers and young people who want to get into farming is access to land, the 2022 National Young Farmer Survey recently reported. This likely comes as little surprise to those who currently farm and know just how capital-intensive agriculture is. Now consider starting your business over from scratch — where would you start and how would securing that location be possible?

The survey, which was carried out by the National Young Farmers Coalition along with the University of Wisconsin Survey Center, received more than 4,300 responses from current, past, and aspiring farmers under age 40 to gauge the motivations, challenges, and opportunities this group faces in playing their part to feed the world. The young farmers surveyed were most likely to grow vegetables, fruit, and flowers, but we know livestock and dairy production are also home to a number of beginning farmers.

Land is also certainly an issue for farmers of any type and size. Over half of the survey's respondents who are actively farming said they need more access to land to buy or lease, and 59% of young farmers said finding affordable land to buy is very or extremely challenging. Even finding available land to buy was noted as very or extremely challenging for 45% of respondents.

"Regardless of years of experience or geographic location, land access is the top challenge facing the next generation of farmers in the United States," the report stated. This issue is even greater for farmers of color, it continued. Land is a valuable asset on which young farmers can be outbid on by developers or other non-farmers, as well as more established farmers. For smaller operations, saving money for a down payment may be difficult.

The report even notes that two-thirds of respondents who quit farming say that finding affordable land to buy was a major challenge. Even finding land to lease was a significant factor in young people leaving production agriculture. When young farmers do find land to buy, they often said they felt what they pay was at least somewhat expensive, the survey found.

It also noted that due to the advancing age of U.S. farmers, nearly half of our country's farmland is expected to change hands in the next two decades. This provides opportunities for more young people interested in farming to explore land access, but they must have the capital and resources available to purchase or lease it.

Programs exist for young farmers through USDA, but only half of the survey's respondents said they had used any of those tools. The majority didn't know what resources were available to help them. First-generation farmers particularly have difficulty accessing land.

As the development of the next farm bill gains steam in the coming months, there will be opportunities to develop solutions for some of the issues young farmers face in gaining access to land, the report outlines. Access to land provides security for farms to invest in their operations and contribute to their local food system. Ask what farmer can help feed the world when they don't have a farm?

# Picking the Perfect Holiday Tree

Purdue University Forestry & Natural Resources

## Home preparations:

1. Tree Location: Select an area out of direct sunlight and away from the heating vents in your house for the tree. Excessive sunlight and heat will cause your tree to fade and dry out more quickly.
2. Ceiling height: Measure your ceiling heights and take into account the height of your tree stand and the tree topper or you'll have to make excessive cuts in your tree to adjust for the differences. ***Write down these measurements.***
3. Tree shape: Visualize the shape of the tree that best fits the space you have available (tall and thin, short and broad) and keep that in mind. Certain tree types are more expensive therefore knowing your budget will help ensure you purchase the perfect tree for your household. ***Measure the width of the space and write down these measurements.***
4. Tree stand: Anticipate needing to support your tree stand and acquire a piece of plywood that you can bolt the stand to keep it level. ***Measure the inside diameter of the tree stand and write down the measurements.***

## Bring to the farm:

1. List of required measurements for your perfect tree.
2. A large unbreakable ornament to view branch spacing (ensures your ornaments will hang straight).
3. Measuring tape to measure prospective trees before getting them home.
4. Thick gloves for handling your tree as the needles may be sharp and the bark rough on your bare hands.
5. An old blanket that can cover the truck bed or car roof to protect it from sap.
6. Rope, twine, bungee cords, and twist ties to secure the tree to the car if these items are not provided by the tree farm.

## At the tree farm:

1. Check freshness: Bend a needle with your fingers (firs snap, pines bend).
2. Gentle run your hand over the branch from inside to out or if possible, gently bounce the tree on the cut end. If a few interior needles come off, it is probably fresh; if many exterior needles fall off, choose a different tree.
3. Remove and crush a few needles in your hand, if there is little scent choose another tree.
4. The tree should have even coloration 360° around and needles should be fresh (shiny, green) and not old (dried out, brown).

## When you and your tree get home:

1. **Protect Your Floor**– Place a plastic or other waterproof covering on the floor where your tree will stand so you don't ruin the carpet or get watermarks on hardwood flooring.
2. Put down waterproof coverings or plastic sheeting under the tree skirt to prevent ruining the carpet or hardwood floor if water is spilled.
3. Make a fresh cut at the base of the tree, take off ½" from the base so that tree can absorb more water (slows needle drop and helps maintain tree color) and immediately place the tree upright in the stand with lukewarm water.
4. Trim any low-hanging branches that hit furniture or are too thin for ornaments parallel to the floor. Keep them in a bucket of water before using as decorations.
5. Secure your tree to the wall or heavy furniture if you have pets and children that could knock it over or heavy ornaments that may sway the tree.
6. Ensure that your tree stand always has water in it.
7. Take a photo of your tree when set up and secured as a reminder for the following year.



## After the holidays:

1. Recycle your tree through your local waste management company.
2. Trees can also be chipped for mulch. Never burn your tree because of the likelihood of starting a fire.