

October—November 2023

PURDUE EXTENSION

Nicholas Held, Extension Educator
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Community Development
County Extension Director
E-mail—nheld@purdue.edu

Jennifer Mayo, Extension Educator
4-H Youth Development Educator
E-mail—allen393@purdue.edu

Megan Jaspersen, Extension Educator
Health and Human Sciences Educator
E-mail—mjaspers@purdue.edu

Erin Meyer
NEP Community Wellness Coordinator
E-mail—meyer258@purdue.edu

Nutrition Education Program Assistant
Danica Williams Email: will1179@purdue.edu

Pat Cochenour
Office Manager
E-mail—pcocheno@purdue.edu

Mailing Address: Purdue Extension
1101 E CR 800 N , Chrisney, IN 47611
Phone: 812-362-8066 FAX 812-362-8071
Website: www.extension.purdue.edu/spencer

**MISSION
STATEMENT**

The mission of Purdue Extension is to assist people in the identification of their problems and solutions that improve their homes, families, farms, businesses and communities. The county office with professional Extension Educators serves as a link between research at Purdue and the practical application of that research through informal educational opportunities for all people.

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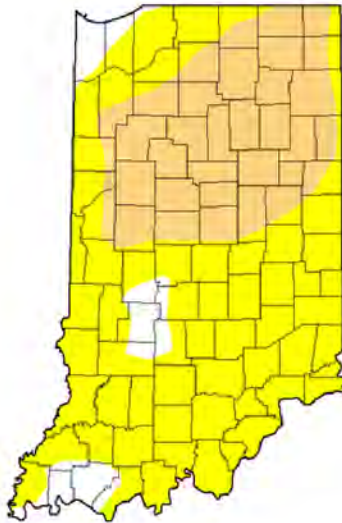
Extension

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Ag Agenda

Agriculture & Horticulture Update for the Home and Farm

U.S. Drought Monitor Indiana



September 19, 2023
(Released Thursday, Sep. 21, 2023)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.02	93.16	32.89	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week 09-12-2023	36.48	63.52	4.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 06-20-2023	2.35	97.65	52.83	19.65	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2023	0.94	93.16	58.37	1.34	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-27-2022	80.92	18.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 09-20-2022	82.95	17.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/about/app/>

Author:
Richard Heim
NCEI/NOAA



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

As of September 19, most of Indiana was either abnormally dry or in moderate drought (Indiana Drought Monitor)

How Dry Will We Get?

Our dry spell continues. Sure, there's been a few passing showers, but Indiana is quickly seeing impacts magnify from the lack of rain. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor map shows the expansion of Abnormally Dry (D0) condition across most of the state (Figure 1). The very few counties not Abnormally Dry or in Moderate Drought (D1) are drying out but have yet to show the impacts the rest of the state has seen. This may change by next week with very little rain in the forecast between now and this coming Tuesday. Northeast Indiana has experienced the worst impacts so far with most of that region now designated in Moderate Drought (D1). Precipitation forecast over the next 7 days (through September 28th) has Indiana dry through most of the weekend with chances of rain across most of the state early next week. Amounts are currently forecasted to range between 0.5" to 1.5" (Figure 2). This will certainly help alleviate short-term impacts, but we may need more rain over the next few weeks to increase pond and creek levels to normal values for this time of year and see vegetation that is normally healthy in late September start to recover from this moisture deficit stress. Unfortunately, the 6-to-14-day precipitation outlook is favoring below-normal precipitation amounts over this period (through October 4th) with greater probabilities of drier-than-normal conditions near the end of that period.

Temperatures have felt more fall-like this past week which means people are thinking more and more about mums and pulling out those Halloween decorations. *(dry spell, continued on page 2)*

Nicholas Held, Extension Educator
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Community Development

Newsletter Highlights

Black Moths Abundant
Around The Farm

The Perennial Garden:
Fall Planting and
Propagation

Indiana Farmland Prices
Continue to Rise in
2023

Purdue Crop Cost &
Return Guide Updated
for 2024

Upcoming Events



Extension - Spencer County

(dry spell, continued) I briefly considered putting out the Halloween lights at my house this past weekend, but my husband talked me out of it. Hey, at least I wasn't wanting to put out Christmas decorations! These fall-like temperatures are favored to shift to above-normal temperatures for this time of year over the next 6 to 14 days. Like the precipitation outlooks, the higher-than-normal temperature probabilities are highest near the end of this upcoming 2-week period. As modified growing degree-day temperature accumulations continue to slow down, Figures 2 and 3 show that since April 15th, Indiana ranges between 2400 (northern Indiana) and 3400 (southern Indiana) units. This is slightly below normal across most of the state.

-Beth Hall, Director-Indiana State Climate Office

Black Moths Abundant Around The Farm

We've received questions about black, triangular moths flying around farms, homes, and yards, and especially to lights at night. These moths are actually mottled grayish-black and when at rest they have the triangular shape of a stealth fighter jet. These are likely the adult green cloverworm (Noctuidae: *Plathypena scabra*). Another large outbreak of these moths in Indiana occurred in 2016.

The slender green caterpillars feed on soybean foliage, as well as alfalfa, clover, and other leguminous plants – and there are obviously many of those plants scattered around the Indiana countryside!

The caterpillars are quite common in soybeans. However, they are generally not at pest levels and their feeding is not economically significant. Normally, fungal pathogens, as well as insect parasites and predators, keep green cloverworm populations in check. Evidently, those natural controls were not as effective this year and allowed the cloverworms to increase in number. The result is lots of the adult moths flying around lights and residences.

These moths are only a nuisance and are completely harmless. The moths will pass the winter in leaf litter and/or other sheltered areas and next spring the survivors will emerge and begin egg laying. *(see photos on page 3)*

-Christian Krupke and John Obermeyer, Purdue Extension Entomology Specialists

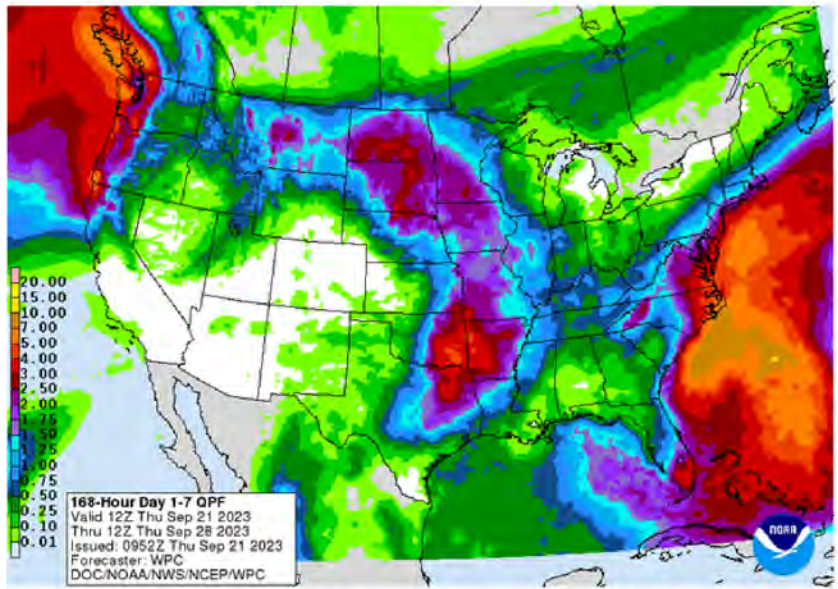


Figure 2. Seven-day total precipitation forecasted for the period from September 21-28, 2023. The small amount forecasted for Indiana is likely to fall after September 24th.

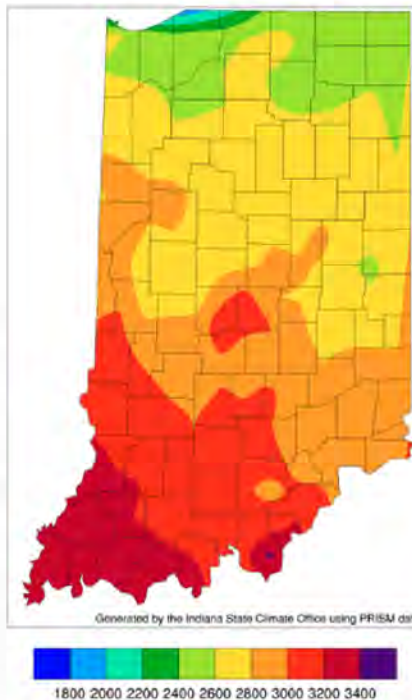


Figure 3. Modified growing degree day (50°F / 86°F) accumulation from April 15-September 20, 2023.

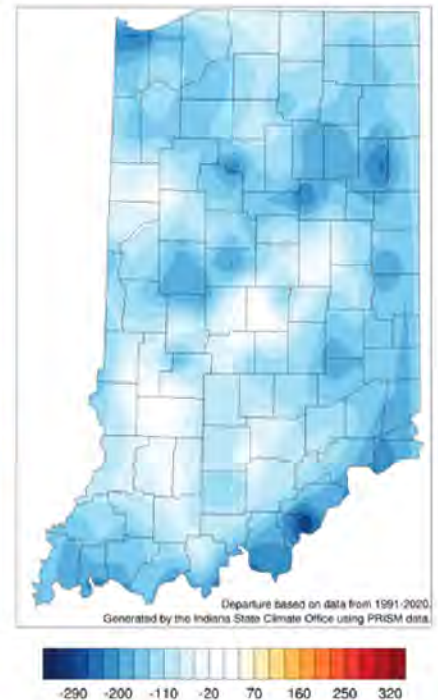


Figure 4. Modified growing degree day (50°F / 86°F) accumulation from April 15-September 20, 2023, represented as the departure from the 1991-2020 climatological average



Close-up of green cloverworm moth on a window screen (Obermeyer)



Green cloverworm caterpillar (Obermeyer)

The Perennial Garden: Fall Planting and Propagation

Planting may not be the first chore that comes to mind when considering the fall garden, but as Purdue Urban Forestry Specialist, Ben McCallister mentioned in the last issue, it's an excellent time to install a new tree¹. However, trees aren't the only thing that can be added to the garden this time of year. As temperatures drop, perennial plants are preparing for dormancy and actively moving resources into the root system to ensure survival through the winter. This is true whether it's a woody perennial or an herbaceous perennial, so take advantage of the end-of-the-season sales (Fig. 1) and add new perennials to garden, but don't forget about the old.

As herbaceous perennials get older, they may begin to die-out in the center (Fig. 2). The new growth on the outside edge competes for resources in the center. When this occurs, there may be fewer blooms and it's time to rejuvenate the planting with division. Division is a process of vegetative propagation where a large perennial clump is cut into segments to create clones. Allium, iris, hosta, hardy aster, and bee-balm are just a few examples of perennials that benefit from division every few years.

Before digging up the old perennial (the parent), prepare new holes for the cut segments (the clones). Planting, watering, and mulching the clones quickly after division will reduce transplant shock. To divide a perennial clump, use a spade to cut down into the soil around the edge of the parent plant and gently lift out. Discard the old center and cut the healthy rootstock into segments. Each segment should have four to six buds. Division not only rejuvenates the plant, but provides more plants to fill the garden (and eventually the neighbors garden as well).

Other perennials will readily propagate in a more conventional method – seed production. Flowers can produce hundreds of offspring as seeds. However, seeds are not clones and may not share the parent plants' desirable traits.

Seed dispersal is also variable and seeds may sprout where they become weeds (Fig. 3). Many of those prolific perennials are setting and spreading seed right now. To gain control of the out-of-control perennials, cut flowers before they go to seed or let them go to seed and harvest for planting in a desirable location (Fig. 4).

-Karen Mitchell, Purdue Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist



Figure 1. Discounts at the end of the season are only as good as the plant material. Selecting healthy plant material is important, especially for a perennial that should live for more than three years



Figure 2. Die-out in the center of a hosta is most obvious in spring as new growth emerges



Figure 3. The light-weight seed of Joe-pye weed is dispersed by wind and may be found growing far from the parent



Figure 4. Swamp rose mallow produces heavy seeds that often drop close to the parent

Indiana Farmland Prices Continue to Rise in 2023

Indiana farmland prices once again hit record highs in 2023, according to the recent Purdue Farmland Value and Cash Rents Survey. Statewide, the average price of top-quality farmland averaged \$13,739 per acre, up 7.3% from June 2022. Average and poor-quality farmland increased 5.8% and 0.7% to \$11,210 and \$8,689 per acre, respectively.

"While farmland prices reached a new peak in 2023, the appreciation rate from 2022 to 2023 was much lower than the record high price growth observed between 2021 and 2022," said Todd H. Kuethe, Schrader Endowed Chair in Farmland Economics and the survey's author. "Farm incomes and liquidity are playing a role in boosting price growth; however, rising interest rates continue to put downward pressure on purchases financed through mortgages."

Statewide cash rents increased by a modest amount between 2022 and 2023; yet, in nominal terms, all three quality grades are at an all-time high. For full article and to download the report, see <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/> or contact the Extension Office.


UPCOMING EVENTS


- **Bale Grazing Workshop** - October 6, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM EDT, Southern IN Purdue Ag Center, Dubois, IN; free event providing insights from graziers who use bale grazing
- **92nd IBEP Bull Sale** - October 14, 2:00 PM EDT, Springville Feeder Auction, Springville, IN; see <https://ag.purdue.edu/departement/ansc/ibep/index.html> for details and a listing of bulls
- **Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association Annual Woodland Owner Conference** - November 3-4, multiple sites in Jasper & Huntingburg, IN; see <https://www.ifwoa.org/resources/annual-woodland-owner-conference/> for details


Contact Us!


Purdue Extension-Spencer County
1101 E CR 800 N
Chrisney, IN 47611

 812.362.8066

 facebook.com/PurdueExtensionSpencerCounty

 nheld@purdue.edu

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

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Purdue Crop Cost & Return Guide Updated for 2024

The Purdue Crop Cost and Return Guide (available online at <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2023/09/2024-crop-cost-and-return-guide/>) offers farmers a resource to project financials for the coming cropping year. The guide currently contains September 2023 crop budget estimations for 2024, prepared by Purdue faculty members Michael R. Langemeier, Department of Agricultural Economics; Shaun Castell, Dan Quinn, and Tony Vyn, Department of Agronomy; and Bill Johnson, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University.

A companion spreadsheet tool to examine gross revenue, costs, and earnings for crop enterprises is available at <https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2023/09/crop-budget-spreadsheet/>. Users 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.



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"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. Non-financial 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/>

National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed each year in the U.S. from September 15 – October 15 to celebrate the achievements, histories, traditions, and cultural diversity of Hispanic/Latino Americans. For more information, visit <https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/hispanic-heritage-month/>

Feed Your Family Healthfully on a Limited Budget

When resources are tight, many families must choose between paying household bills or buying food. Poor nutrition can impair health and immunity, lower productivity, and hinder development and learning.

If a limited budget makes it difficult for you to buy food, there is help for you and your family.

Find Out About SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides help for those in need. Eligible families can buy fruit, vegetables, bread, cereal, meat, fish, poultry and milk with this monthly benefit. Plus, grocery, convenience and specialty stores accept the SNAP debit card. And, some stores provide special discounts if you purchase fruits and vegetables with your SNAP card. SNAP also offers resources on stretching your food dollars. For example, the “SNAP Challenge” is a 6-week guide to eating on a SNAP budget. Online information includes grocery lists, recipes and cost estimates for dozens of recipes. Even if you don’t qualify for SNAP, this resource can help you prepare healthy, easy meals on a budget.

Look into the Local Food Bank

Food banks receive surplus foods from national sources, as well as local donations from charities, church groups and individuals. Some distribute prepared boxes with a variety of foods. Others allow you to walk through the warehouse and fill a box yourself. Food banks are a good source for staples such as rice, pasta and canned goods.

Visit Your Local Farmers Market

If your neighborhood doesn't have a supermarket, check out other options for buying fresh produce. For example, farmers markets are sprouting up in many underserved neighborhoods. These markets provide fresh, locally grown produce that you often can purchase with SNAP dollars. And there's another perk: Many states will give double dollars for SNAP participants who use farmers markets. So, \$10 in SNAP benefits will get you \$20 in produce.

Or, plant a simple garden. Even if you live in an apartment, you and your kids can grow your own vegetables. Plant your family's favorite veggies in a clean clay or plastic pot, trashcan, bucket or another container and place it on a porch, balcony, windowsill or sunny spot.

Food Sharing

Many families and friends use informal food sharing to stretch their budgets. For gardeners and farmers, it may mean exchanging crops. Or, suburbanites might split the cost of foods bought in bulk at discount grocery stores. Another option is to exchange cooked meals once or twice a week, which also saves you meal prep time a day or two a week!

Check Out WIC – If the Kids are Age Five or Under

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. This program provides services for low-income, pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women. WIC also serves infants and children up to age 5 who are at risk for poor nutrition.

If you're eligible, you'll receive:

- Foods to help meet the nutrition needs of yourself and your young children. For example, iron-fortified cereal, whole-wheat bread, eggs, milk, cheese, beans, peanut butter, canned fish, fruits and vegetables and vitamin C-rich fruit juice.
- Foods for young children such as baby food, iron-fortified infant cereals and iron-fortified infant formulas.
- Referrals to healthcare providers.
- Education about nutrition education and breastfeeding.

Give Your Kids a Head Start

Head Start is a program for preschoolers. Eligible 3 and 4-year old children attend Head Start to help get them ready for school. And, typically, kids can eat breakfast and lunch at this preschool program. In addition to giving your child two nutritious meals, it also helps stretch the family's food budget.

Take Advantage of School Meals

Depending on your family's income level, your child may qualify for free or reduced cost meals at school. Overall, school meal programs may provide breakfast, lunch, snacks and even dinners. Specific offerings for school meals vary by district. School meals are healthier than ever – many districts now serve lean meat, low-fat dairy, whole grains and fruits and vegetables. For children with parents who work shifts during the evening meal, after-school meal programs provide many children with a nutritious dinner. And, when school isn't in session, the Summer Food Service Program provides nutritious meals to fill the void.

Learn More

Check out the links below for additional information about these programs.

- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- [Feeding American \(nationwide network of food banks\)](#)
- [National Farmers Market Directory](#)
- [WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children](#)
- [Head Start](#)
- [National School Breakfast Program](#)
- [National School Lunch Program](#)
- [After School Meal Program](#)
- [Summer Food Service Program](#)

Reference: <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning/food-security-and-sustainability/feed-your-family-healthfully-on-a-limited-budget>

Tips for a Healthy Halloween Party

Halloween is a fun day full of costumes, imagination and, of course, tons of candy. Here are some tips to make your at-home party fun and healthy.

Remember Balance

Keep in mind, Halloween is just one day a year, and it's what kids eat every day that has the most impact on their nutrition and health. Instead of making candy and sweet treats off-limits, serve healthy snacks first, and bring out the sweet treats later when the kids have already filled up on more nutritious foods. One idea is to choose orange foods for the healthy options, such as carrots or baked sweet potato fries. Try adding green guacamole "slime" for a dose of heart-healthy unsaturated fat.

For a heartier choice, try black and orange tortilla roll-ups made by layering lean roast beef and low-fat provolone or mozzarella cheese on a sun-dried tomato tortilla. (For a veggie option, use refried black beans instead of roast beef.)

For those special sweet treats that you do allow, provide small portions. Choose fun-size — instead of full-size — candies, miniature cupcakes or muffins, and smaller cookies and brownies (think 2 inches). Serve each child rather than leaving treats out on a table in order to regulate how many servings each child consumes.

Make Your Own Healthier Treats

Make your own treats that have some nutritional value by including a source of fruits, vegetables nuts or whole grains. Try popcorn tossed with cinnamon and sugar or chocolate-covered fresh fruit as healthier alternatives to candy. Go for pumpkin treats, such as fiber-packed cinnamon-roasted pumpkin seeds or vitamin A-rich pumpkin chocolate chip mini muffins.

Limit Leftover Candy

When the fun of Halloween is over and kids are left with lots of candy, encourage mindful enjoyment of the treats without restrictive deprivation. Try putting the candy away in a place that is out of sight and you may find that the kids forget about it after a few days. You also can mix leftover candy with whole-grain cereal, nuts and a few pretzels to make a homemade trail mix for snacks.

Make this Halloween an opportunity to teach your child to enjoy special treats, in moderation, as part of an overall healthy diet.

Reference:

<https://www.eatright.org/food/cultural-cuisines-and-traditions/holidays-and-celebrations/tips-for-a-healthy-halloween-party>



October–November 4-H Newsletter 2023

A New 4-H Year

4-H Enrollment is OPEN! You can register by going to v2.4honline.com. You will use the same username and password as used previously (contact the office for assistance) and you will need to select the club you will attend. You are not stuck to the club that you chose or the projects that you select in the beginning. You may visit other clubs and drop or add any project until May 15th. Changes to the handbook have been received and I hope to have that out in the next month or so. If you are attending club meetings you will need to be registered in 4HOnline.

All communication will be sent through 4-H Online for project workshops, camp, fair, livestock updates, Pork Chop Dinner, club info...anything and everything you need to know. Please register early so you receive all important communication for the year. The last page of the newsletter contains important dates for 4-H to keep in mind. Please review these dates carefully as we have some new things coming up and some dates that have changed. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

4-H Open House

Sunday, November 5th from 3:30-5 PM we will be having a 4-H open house at the Spencer County Youth & Community Center. Clubs will have their meeting schedules available with examples of previous projects on display. We will also have hot dogs and chili for the family. This is a great time to get excited about the new 4-H year and see old friends. We also look forward to meeting new friends so please help us spread the word!

RSVP's are not required but appreciated for an accurate count on food. Please email Patty at pcocheno@purdue.edu or call the office at (812) 362-8066 to RSVP. This is a great time to invite a friend or family member that isn't involved in 4-H !

4-H Camp

Please mark your calendars for June 3-5 for our annual 4-H Camp. We will continue to camp at the Historic Santa Claus Campground. Counselor Applications will be released by the end of the year with camper applications starting at the beginning of 2024.

This is a great way to kick off the summer, so please mark your calendars and plan to join us if you are a current 3rd-6th grader.

Leaders Meeting

Future leaders meeting dates will be October 16, January 22, and March 4. Please make sure and re-enroll as a leader in 4HOnline by November 1st. The process should take 50 minutes or less. If you need assistance the office is happy to help. Club schedules with meeting dates need to be turned into the office and Jennifer and Patty will work on putting schedules together and publishing them to the website. If you need flyers sent to schools, please contact Jennifer.

Important Dates

Please mark your calendars with these important dates:

-  **October 16:** 4-H Club Leader Meeting
-  **November 5:** 4-H Open House
-  **December 20-January 2 :** Extension Office Closed
-  **January 22-** Leader Meeting 6 PM
-  **February 24 :** 4-H Pork Chop Dinner Fundraiser
-  **March 4 :** Leaders Meeting 6 PM
-  **April 8 :** Solar Eclipse
-  **June 10:** Leader Meeting 6 PM
-  **June 3-5 :** 4-H Camp
-  **June 17 :** Project Check-in
-  **June 21-24 :** 4-H Fair



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UAV Program Prepares Potential Pilots

In recent years, the role of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in agricultural production has become more defined and the technology more accessible to producers. To help producers learn how to make the most of this technology, Purdue Extension's UAV Program covers topics related to the operation of UAVs as well as prepares participants to take the FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Test required for commercial or hobby UAV use. Spencer County offered this two-day program this spring with nine participants. All participants reported increased awareness of legal issues, safety protocols, and troubleshooting techniques as well as a better understanding of applications associated with UAV technology. Following the program, four participants took and passed the FAA test, with an average score of 93 percent.

3rd Graders Learn Financial Skills

Assessments of our community needs indicate that financial education is a high priority for children and adults alike. Purdue Extension has provided financial education opportunities this year in partnership with both North and South Spencer School Corporation as well as St. Bernard's in Rockport. Captain Cash is an interactive education program designed to teach basic financial management skills to students. Over four classroom

sessions, students focus on earning, saving, spending, and borrowing money. They learn common vocabulary words and basic economic concepts through games and activities that meet Indiana academic standards for math and social studies. One student shared, "I loved Captain Cash and now I can be smart about money. I wish it didn't have to end!"

Summer Meals Continue to Help Community

For seven summers, Purdue Extension has been part of the planning team for summer meals in the North Spencer School district. Due to summer construction at David Turnham and Chrisney Elementaries that prevented their use as summer meal sites, Purdue Extension worked with the school corporation to develop an alternative plan to prevent the cancellation of the program. This resulted in a partnership with Lincoln Heritage Public Library in which meals would be prepared at Heritage Hills High School and transported to the Dale and Chrisney library branches for distribution. In addition to lunch, a grab and go breakfast was served for children to take home and eat the next day. In all, these efforts resulted in a successful summer meal program serving 2,347 breakfasts and 2,346 lunches.

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

Purdue Extension—Spencer County

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4-H Enrollment Opens October 1

Link: <https://v2.4honline.com/>

Concerns?? Contact our Extension Office



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