

ANR UPDATE

BARN & FIELD

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UPCOMING EVENTS

* Ag Lending Workshop

Nov 18, 2025 (10–11:30am)

Join us for a program about Ag Lending and what you can do to better your chances.

* Commercial PARP

Jan. 29, 2026 (8:30am–3:30pm)

Join us for another PARP credit program. This will be for commercial applicators.

* Beef Basics

Feb. 10–Mar. 31 (tues. 6–8pm)

Topics: Marketing, handling, facility design, repro & calving, forages, and more.

* Cattle Reproduction

Jan. 13, 2026 (11am–4pm)

Topics on hormones involved in reproduction, synchronization protocols, genetics, and calving.

* Paper Licensing Exam

Jan. 7, 2026 (9 am –noon)

Intended for the plain clothed community and those without computers for core & cat 14 licensing.

* Commercial Applicator Training Hold Date 1/29/26

Contact Mark or Kathryn for more information or to register for a program!



Happy, healthy cows!!!

Mortality Composting:

A successful pile depends on creating the right environment for microbes, which need proper moisture, oxygen, particle size, carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio, pH, and temperature to do their job. An effective pile should be aerobic, have little to no odor, and break down carcasses quickly. The compost must reach 110–160°F for proper decomposition. Moisture should stay between 50–65%, while oxygen levels remain 5–10%—closer to 10% as temperature increases. Pile design matters. The base should be porous to allow airflow and absorb liquids. High-carbon materials include sawdust, hay, shavings, or leaves; high-nitrogen options include animal bedding, corn stover, or cotton gin trash.

Aim for a starting C:N ratio of 20–30:1 and pH between 5.5–8.2. The cap layer should be fine material, such as sawdust or straw, to contain odor and heat.

The pile's center should include more than just carcasses—materials like animal bedding mixed with silage (moisture 44–60%, C:N 35–38:1) help balance texture and nutrients. Once built, it's difficult to add moisture, so adjustments must happen during construction or turning.

Monitor pile temperatures daily with multiple at least 5 readings from both outer and inner zones. A well-built pile should reach 140 degrees easily, have no odor or pests, and efficiently decompose mortalities.

Message from the educators

We're here to help with any ag-related questions and want to know what your farm needs most. Whether it's tools to get started, ideas to grow, or ways to improve, your input guides the programs we offer. Give us a call, share your thoughts, or even invite us out for a farm visit—we'd love to hear from you!



Extension - Elkhart County

Trailer Basics Bootcamp

recently hosted a Trailer Backing Basics program with 11 participants in attendance. During the session, attendees learned what to check on their personal trailers before hitting the road and gained hands-on experience in safely backing up a trailer. For the final hour and a half, each person had the chance to practice their skills while receiving tips and

guidance from trainers Mark Evans, Jeff Lorenz, and myself. One younger participant summed up the day perfectly, saying, "Thank you for this opportunity. I never would've had the chance to learn this at home." She started out nervous but finished with confidence in her ability to maneuver a trailer safely—exactly the kind of growth this program aims to inspire.

"To be a farmer is to be a student forever, for each day brings something new."

—John Connell

ANR Program Showcase



Stem Fest – Learning about livestock feed!



Bull Test – Feldun Ag Center



Trailer Backing Training



Cover Crop Demo Crop Tech



BQA Training – Fulton



Forage display



Stem Fest – Planting Cover Crops

Services & Items

The Elkhart County Extension Office offers a range of tools and services for local farmers and homeowners. Below is a list of what we provide and rent out:

Soil probes

Soil test sample pouches

Manure testing packages

Forage testing information

Hay bale probe

Pork Quality Assurance certification & site visits

Beef Quality Assurance Certification

Pullerbear

"We herd sheep, we drive cattle, we lead people. Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way."

—George S. Patton

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