# October — November 2025



**Extension - Spencer County** 

# **Our Mission**

We deliver practical, researchbased 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



Combine fires can be devastating, often resulting in the total loss of a vehicle and causing hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property damage, says Purdue University farm safety expert Bill Field. (Andrew Winger/Winger Farms)

# Take Steps Now to Prevent Combine Fires

Combine fires cost farmers millions of dollars in damages every harvest, and even worse, result in injuries and deaths. The current dry conditions, and forecasts for more hot, dry weather in the next couple weeks make it likely we'll see plenty of combine and field fires this fall. As Harvest '25 ramps up, be proactive and prevent or at least reduce the chance of combine fires before they happen!!

Farmers should regularly inspect their combines' machinery, fuel lines and electrical systems during harvest season to prevent fires, a Purdue Extension safety specialist says.

Harvest season brings a unique combination of risk factors that increases the risk of combine fires, said Bill Field, professor of agricultural and biological engineering.

Dust kicked up during field operations and dry plant material from crops can clog or wrap around machinery, causing it to overheat. Other common hazards are electrical malfunctions, sparks from hitting rocks, loose or slipping belts and leaks in fuel or hydraulic lines.

Worn bearings or seals and blocked exhaust systems can cause overheating and sparks. Inspecting equipment at the end of the day can help prevent overheated components from catching fire during the night, Field said, and a hand-held thermal camera can help detect hot areas before they ignite. (continued on page 2)

Nicholas Held, Extension Educator Agriculture & Natural Resources Community Development

# Newsletter Highlights

Putting the Garden to Bed

Grain Samples for Mycotoxins

Purdue Crop Cost & Return Guide

**Indiana Farmland Prices** 

Newburgh Fire Resources



**Extension - Spencer County** 

# Fire (cont.)

Some components of the combine's electrical systems are also at higher risk of overheating, particularly parts like starter motors and heating and cooling systems that draw a heavy electrical load.

"Fuses that blow regularly should be considered an important warning sign that a circuit is overheating somewhere," Field said.

"Every fire involves three elements – an ignition source, fuel and oxygen. Removing one or more of these elements will prevent fire, so as you examine the combine, other agricultural machinery or a building, consider the potential for each element and where they are likely to come together to form a fire."

In case a fire does start, farmers should always have a cellphone or two-way radio with them in the cab. Also, combines and other large units should have at least two 20-pound, type ABC fire extinguishers installed, with one of those in the cab or just outside the door, Field recommended. These extinguishers should be inspected regularly to make sure they are fully pressurized, the lock pin is intact, tamper seals are unbroken and the tank is still full. The first use of the fire extinguisher should be to ensure the operator is able to escape safely. Only when the operator is safely clear of the machine should he or she attempt to put out the fire.

A second line of defense is to have a tractor and disc on standby to create a firebreak around the combine, Field added. This can help keep the flames from spreading across the field or to neighboring properties. When tilling a firebreak, the operator should never put themselves or their machine at risk of being caught in the fire!

Since insulated cabs may prevent operators from noticing smoke or flames until it is too late, combine fires can start without warning and quickly grow out of control, Field said.

"Even small leaks in a fuel or hydraulic system can cause a small fire to become a large one in seconds," Field said. "For example, a leak causing diesel fuel to be sprayed into the engine compartment of a tractor or combine can cause the compartment temperature to go from a normal operating temperature to over 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit in seconds. Fires of that intensity are almost impossible to extinguish before the machine is destroyed."

In addition to damaging or destroying the combine, other consequences may include crop loss, field fires spreading to adjoining properties, and operator injury or death.

"Ultimately, the only good fire is a contained one that keeps us warm," said Field. "Keeping it that way in the field should be part of every farmer's management plan this fall."

-Ed Sheldon. Purdue Agricultural Safety & Health, Agricultural & Biological Engineering

# Five Things to Avoid When Putting your Garden to Bed



Fall garden clean up is beneficial but should not be started too early (Purdue Agricultural Communications)

As tree leaves flourish into bright fall colors, home gardens are fading into collections of brown leaves and stems. Just because the growing season is ending, however, doesn't mean that the work is over. Karen Mitchell, consumer horticulture Extension specialist, offers a few tips to set your garden and lawn up for another successful year.

### 1. Don't start cleaning up too early

It can be tempting to start wrapping up your garden at the first sign of cool weather, but it may still have another month or two of potential growth. "This is the last burst of garden activity before dormancy begins," Mitchell explains. Cooler weather can be a great time to plant trees or herbaceous perennials, like serviceberry or coneflowers. "This isn't the time to lock up the shed; it's a great time to plant."

### 2. Don't clear out all the dead plants and leaves

Many people think they must remove every leaf and dead stem to prime their garden for next spring. (continued on page 3)

# Garden (cont.)

In Mitchell's experience, clearing out all plant debris often causes more harm than good. "All plant and insect populations have this ebb and flow. When we remove every little leaf, we might find that the pests out compete beneficial insects. There is research that backs up weeds and leaf litter harbor insects and disease, but dead plants also harbor some of our beneficial insects that will fight other pests," Mitchell says. Dead flower stems, for example, give pollinators a place to overwinter, and flower seed heads, like those on coneflowers or rudbeckia, feed birds and other wildlife. Fallen leaves offer similar benefits. I like to recommend a balanced approach; tidy as needed. You can leave the leaves in the garden bed as long as there's no disease — but remove them from your lawn. Or you can use the leaves and spent perennials as mulch around trees. It can be difficult to get past the aesthetics of it, but I try to challenge people to look past the dead material and see the life it's supporting."

### 3. Don't avoid fertilizing.

"This is actually a good time of year to fertilize if you are looking for that green, lush, weed-free lawn," Mitchell explains. "One way to reduce chemical inputs, like herbicides, is by making sure you have a healthy lawn." Healthier grass outcompetes weeds more easily, so giving your lawn a little boost now will create stronger, better grass come spring.

### 4. Don't stop weeding.

Weeds keep growing late into fall, and cool weather doesn't deter them. Giving up on weeding too early can be a recipe for disaster next growing season. "My graduate work was in weed science, and so I have a lot of respect for weeds and how adaptable they are," Mitchell says. "I've found pigweed — that you've been pulling out of your garden all season — will still germinate right now. Cold weather signals that plant that it's going to die soon, so it will quickly flower and produce seed even when it's only four inches tall. You really don't want weeds to go to seed at any time of the year. Weeds are extremely adaptable, and that's what makes them so successful."

### 5. Don't forget to plan ahead for next year.

Late fall, around October, is the perfect time to plant spring flowering bulbs. "In September, you should step back and evaluate your garden, take an inventory. If you don't have a lot blooming right now, or if things are starting to die out, use that as an opportunity and think about what you could plant in the next month to fill in those gaps."

-Olivia De Young, Purdue Agricultural Communications

# **Grain Samples Needed!**

In Indiana, five ear rots can lead to mycotoxin production in corn. They include Aspergillus ear rot, Gibberella ear rot, Fusarium ear rot, and Penicillium ear rot. They can cause the production of five different mycotoxins in association with the different ear rot: Aflatoxin (Aspergillus), Deoxynivalenol or as also called DON/vomitoxin and Zearalenone (Gibberella); Fumonisins (Fusarium), and Ochratoxin (Penicillium and sometimes Aspergillus).

Due to increased reports of mycotoxin contamination in corn in the last few years we will again be conducting a survey of Indiana grain for mycotoxin testing and collecting data for forecasting model validation in 2025. If you have fields of concern and want to participate, please reach out to Darcy Telenko at <a href="mailto:dtelenko@purdue.edu">dtelenko@purdue.edu</a> to get more information and sample protocol.

This project is supported by the Indiana Corn Marketing Council (ICMC).



# **Corn Mycotoxin FAQs**

cropprotectionnetwork.org/publications/mycotoxin-faqs

# 2026 Crop Cost & Return Guide Now Available

The Purdue Crop Cost and Return Guide offers farmers a resource to project financials for the coming crop year. These are the updated September 2025 crop budget estimations for 2026; prepared by Purdue faculty members Michael R. Langemeier, Department of Agricultural Economics; Shaun Castell and Dan Quinn, Department of Agronomy; and Tommy Butz, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University.

The PDF version along with a companion spreadsheet can be found on the Purdue Center for Commercial Agriculture's webisite at ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/

# Indiana Farmland Prices Continue Record High Trend

Indiana farmland prices have continued their trend of record highs in 2025, according to the latest Purdue Farmland Values and Cash Rents Survey results. The survey is conducted out of the Purdue University Department of Agricultural Economics and produced through the cooperation of numerous professionals knowledgeable about Indiana's farmland market. These professionals provide an estimate of the market value for bare poor-, average- and top-quality farmland in December 2024, June 2025 and a forecast for December 2025.

"Farmland prices increased modestly in 2025 at the state-level and across the northern two-thirds of the state," said Todd Kuethe, the Schrader Endowed Chair in Farmland Economics at Purdue and the survey's author. "However, farmland prices declined by varying degrees in the southern third of the state." Both the southwest and southeast regions experienced declines between 4.6% and 11.3%, depending on quality grade.

Kuethe also noted that respondents expect a modest increase in farmland prices through the rest of 2025 for most of the state, though prices are anticipated to continue to decline in the southwest and southeast regions. Additionally, land transitioning out of agricultural production declined in value slightly by 5.3%. Statewide cash rents saw minimal changes, with some variation across regions, reflecting broader trends in land values.

The Department of Agricultural Economics conducts the Purdue Farmland Value and Cash Rents Survey each June, and it is published in the quarterly publication Purdue Agricultural Economics Report.

# 2025 Indiana Farmland and Cash Rent Value Survey Results

A copy of the 2025 report, along with a link to a podcast covering report highlights can be found at:

ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/topic/farmland



On September 6, a major fire at a manufacturing facility in Newburgh, Indiana produced heavy smoke and ash, raising concerns about health, animals and the environment. PurdueExtension is assisting with response and providing relevant, timely, research-supported information. Find resources and updates from:

### **Indiana PREPared**

inprepared.org

### **US Environmental Protection Agency**

epa.gov

### Warrick Co. EMA

<u>facebook.com/WarrickCountyEmergencyManagementAgency</u>

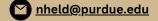


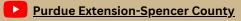
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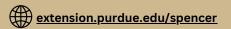
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HERBICIDE BASICS AND HERBICIDES FOR HABITAT MANAGEMENT

**SPEAKERS:** 

# MATT KRAUSHAR

INDIANA DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

# JARRED BROOKE

PURDUE FNR EXTENSION





# OCT 23 · 11:00 AM EDT

Join us for a webinar covering how herbicides can be used to manage habitat for wildlife. From modes-of-action to species-specific recommendations, this webinar will cover herbicide basics and provide you with targeted applications to help control problematic plants and improve wildlife habitat.

This webinar is a partnership with Purdue FNR Extension, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, and USDA - NRCS.

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SCAN OR CLICK THIS QR CODE TO REGISTER:



OR REGISTER AT HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/R7X45WAS



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Extension - Forestry and Natural Resources





# **MarketReady Producer Training**







November 20, 2025 • 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. CT Willard Public Library – Archives and Gallery Room 21 N. First Ave., **Evansville**, Indiana Lunch will be included.

**Cost: \$50** 

Registration deadline is November 11, 2025 at 12:00 PM.

MarketReady is a program that helps local food producers prepare for selling to wholesale markets. The program focuses on business skills needed to meet the expectations of potential buyers. Producers will learn about product quality, food safety, insurance/managing risks, marketing and more. The program will include a panel of wholesale buyers.



Secure your spot today! Registration is limited to the first 30 participants. https://cvent.me/QA804Q



If you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out.

Sarah Hanson - **sspeedy@purdue.edu** or **765-543-1230**Amanda Bradshaw-Burks - **bradshaa@purdue.edu** or **812-435-5287** 

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If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Sarah Hanson prior to the meeting at 765-543-1230 and sspeedy@purdue.edu by November 11, 2025. For special dietary needs contact Sarah Hanson at 765-543-1230 and sspeedy@purdue.edu by November 11, 2025.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Sarah Hanson prior to the meeting at 765-543-1230 and sspeedy@purdue.edu by November 11, 2025.



Subscribe to our Diversified Farming and Food Systems newsletter to find out about other programs that support small farms in Indiana **puext.in/DFFS\_Newsletter** 

# THE SOIL SCOP



Spencer County Soil and Water Conservation District

# SOIL HEALTH DAY

Join us November 20<sup>th</sup> at the Spencer Co. 4-H Center (9-3 CDT) for the 2025 Soil Health Day!

**Speakers Include:** 

Ray McCormick - Cover crops and Gandy seed box, modifying equipment for efficiency.

Phil Needham - Residue Management

Rodney Rulon - ROI looking deeper at your farm budget

Barry Fisher - Getting started with cover crops, managing problems, equipment choices

RSVP by November 1<sup>st</sup> via the Spencer Co. SWCD. jessica.deller@in.nacdnet.net (812) 649-9136

\$10 fee to cover the cost of a meal catered by Meyer

# NEW CWI GRANT FOR 2025

We have been awarded a CWI grant for 2025!

This grant includes HUAPS, cover crops, internal fencing, and a watering facility.

First time grant recipients are prioritized, then it will become first come first served in application acceptance. Must follow NRCS guidelines that require a resource concern evaluation before acceptance.

To request an application, contact the Spencer Co. SWCD office.

(812) 649-9136

Thank you for your continued interest in this conservation practice.

# FREE COVER CROP SEEDS FOR GARDEN

Interested in spreading some cover crop across your garden this fall?

Come to the Spencer Co. SWCD office to pick up a FREE bag!



WE ARE ALL
CHILDREN OF ONE
GREAT MOTHER,
NATURE.

-Charles Dickens

# October-November 4-H Newsletter

# A New 4-H Year

October is an exciting time in the world of 4-H-- ENROLLMENT TIME! Enrollment will begin October 1st by going to v2.4honline.com. You will use the same username and password as used previously (contact the office for assistance). You will select the projects you think your child might take this year, but you will have until May 15th to drop or add projects. You will not pick the specific level of the project until we enter these into Fair Entry in May.

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, October 26th from 3-5 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 ice cream sundaes provided by the Spencer County 4-H Association and the Junior Leaders will have an activity for youth. RSVP's are not required but appreciated for an accurate count on food. Please email Kara at kdilger@purdue.edu or call the office at (812) 362-8066 to RSVP. This is a great time to invite a friend that isn't involved in 4-H!

# 4-H Camp

Save the date! Camp will be held at the Santa Claus Campground June 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> for youth grades 3-6. Camp Counselors will arrive May 31<sup>st</sup> and stay overnight. Please keep an eye on your email if you are interested in attending 4-H Camp as a counselor or camper.

# Leaders Meeting

Our first leader meeting will be October 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. If you are unable to attend please reach out to Jennifer. Please make sure and reenroll as a leader in 4HOnline by November 1st. The process should take about 50 minutes and if you need assistance the office is happy to help. Club schedules should be turned into the office and Jennifer and Kara will work on putting schedules together and publishing them to the website. If you need flyers sent to schools, please contact Jennifer.

# 4-H Trips

4-H'ers in 7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades are able to apply for trips that take place each year, usually in the summer, and are sponsored by the 4-H Association. Dates for all of the trips have not been released yet, but 4-H Round Up will likely happen June 10-12, 2026 and 4-H Academy will happen June 22-24, 2026.

Applications to have the 4-H Association sponsor the cost of the trip will go out in November so please keep an eye on your email. These are fun trips that provide youth with an opportunity to stay on Purdue's campus and attend activities that are of interest to them. Look for more information to come soon.

# Fair Dates and Project Check-in

Fair dates are June 26-29. Project check-in will be June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please keep an eye on your email for places to help during the fair and set-up the weekend before. We are always looking for new volunteers to help the process go more smoothly. If you are interested in helping please reach out to Jennifer at allen393@purdue.edu

# **Important Dates**

Please mark your calendars with these important dates:

October 26: 4-H Open House

February 28: 4-H Pork Chop Dinner Fundraiser

**June 1-3**: 4-H Camp

June 10-12 : 4-H Round Up

June 22 : Project Check-in

**June 22-24**: 4-H Academy

**June 26-29** : 4-H Fair



# SPENCER COUNTY 4-H OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>
3:00-5:00 PM
Spencer County Youth &
Community Center



**36** Online Enrollment Help

Meet the Staff & 4-H Board Volunteers

Join us for an Ice Cream Sundae & Learn About 4-H Youth Development activities



# **HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES**

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

# Thank you, Perry and Spencer Counties

Some chapters in life are harder to close than others, and this is certainly one of them. I want to share that I will be leaving my role with Purdue Extension to take a new position with Kentucky State University Extension. This opportunity will allow me to be closer to home and better meet the needs of my family during this season. While I am grateful for what's ahead, I will miss the people, organizations, and exciting work happening here in Perry and Spencer Counties more than words can express.

Looking back, I am humbled by all we have accomplished together. Whether it was working through health coalitions, teaching nutrition classes, encouraging balance and movement through exercise programs, or helping schools incorporate best practices into physical education classrooms, I have loved seeing our community take steps toward healthier living. Each effort—big or small—has made a difference, and I am thankful to have been a part of it.

I am also proud of the strides we've taken in raising awareness around mental health and providing families with financial education. These topics can sometimes be hard to talk about, but our community has shown courage and openness in addressing them. Watching people gain confidence, knowledge, and hope has been one of the most rewarding parts of my work. Through it all, what has stood out most to me is the strength, kindness, and resilience of this community. You welcomed me warmly, partnered with me enthusiastically, and reminded me often why this work matters. The friendships I've gained and the lessons I've learned here will stay with me always, both personally and professionally.

As I begin this new chapter, please know that plans are being made to continue Extension services in Perry and Spencer Counties. Things may look a little different at times, but the commitment to serving you remains strong. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the Extension office with your questions, needs, or ideas. Thank you for allowing me to walk alongside you—it has been one of the greatest joys of my career.



Megan Jaspersen
Health and Human
Sciences Educator
Purdue Extension

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**Extension** 



# How to Identify Credible Sources of Health Information in the Digital Age

### Christina Sciarrillo, MS, RD

GraduateStudent,DepartmentofNutritional Sciences

Sam Emerson, PhD

Department of Nutritional Sciences

Janice Hermann, RD, PhD

**Extension Nutrition Specialist** 

Finding credible health information can be hard. The internet has so much information and it can be hard to know what is valid. It is important to know how to tell if information is unbiased and factual.

Below are factors that will help to identify credible sources of information:

### **Language and Presentation**

- The language should not be dramatic or emotional, but
- rather factual and straightforward. The claims should not
- be "too good to be true." The platform should be professional. o Free of offensive language, images or criticizing topics without evidence to support claims.

### **Time**

· The sources used to support claims should be current (less than 10 years ago). New research may have come up that disproves claims. Sometimes there is no new research on a topic. In this case, older sources may be still credible.

### **Evidence**

- The author should provide evidence to support any claim being made. There should be a list where references are provided. The gold standard for evidence is scientific journal articles. These are reviewed by experts in the field (peer-reviewed).
- · A personal story about one experience is not good quality. This is not acceptable recommendations for a diverse population.

### Bias

Biased sources will slant information. These sources try to change the mind of the reader instead of presenting facts. Biased sources may use strong and emotional words, like "everyone knows" or "people say."

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets are also available on our website at: extension.okstate.edu

- · Truthful information is presented in an unbiased way. Information on both sides of a debate are presented. That way, the reader can then make an informed decision.
- If the source is trying to sell something, it is often biased.

### **Expertise**

- The author should have schooling and formal training in the topic:
  - o Nutrition advice should be provided by a registered
  - o Medical advice should be provided by a medical doctor.
- Read about the author and their education.
  - o If their background is not provided or related to the subject, they are not a reliable source.
  - o If their background is not provided, search for them on Google to find out more information.

# **What Is Confirmation Bias** and Why Is It Important?

Confirmation bias is also called "cherry-picking" evidence. It is choosing information that confirms the readers' beliefs without looking at the other side of the story. This may result in biased decision making.

It is a partial decision-making process. This leads to avoiding quality evidence that may be right, but that contradicts the readers' beliefs.

Cherry-picking can be risky and lead to misinformation. It can lead to confidence in a topic, despite evidence against it. This is why picking credible sources of information is important.

### **Websites As Sources**

MoreReliable - Informativewebsites(.edu,.govor.mil)

- Unbiased.
- Factual information.
- Reviewed by expert in the field or run by a board or editors.
- Run usually by educational bodies or the government.
- Verification to create one is required.

### Less Reliable - Advocacy websites (.com, .net or .org)

- · Tend to be biased.
- No verification is required, so anyone can create one.
- Meant to sway public opinion.
- · Tend to be non-profit groups.
- However, some societies may provide credible information
  - o American Heart Association and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics are examples.

### Less Reliable - Blogs

- Not a reliable source. Biased.
- Tend to be written by those who lack formal background
- in the subject. Tend to present information in a one-sided
- fashion leading to misrepresentation. Usually selling a
- product. No verification required, so anyone can create
- one. Not fact-checked or reviewed by experts in the field.
- However, some blogs are written by experts in the field.
- Review the authors background information to find out.

### Social Media

- The information offered will likely be biased. This means that it will be based on things the reader likes or agrees with (no matter how correct or true it is).
- Anyone can publish on social media, therefore it is not fact-checked. Websites are created for several purposes. Sometimes they are created to market a product, educate, entertain or to

try and convince the reader of something. Knowing the type of site can help to determine the source of the information. There are always exceptions. There may be credible sites that do not provide credible information. There also may be noncredible sites that do provide credible information.

# Peer-Reviewed Scientific Literature: The Gold Standard

Peer-review means that articles are written by experts in a field. These articles are reviewed by other experts (peers) before being published. This process ensures high-quality and unbiased information.

Peer-reviewed scientific literature is like an online databank. It contains a pool of journals and all scientific evidence. Use PubMed, GoogleScholar or ScienceDirect to find peerreviewed scientific journal articles. These sites provide credible sources of information. They are commonly used by healthcare professionals and scientists.

### References

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# **Apple Slaw**

# Ingredients:

1 c sliced apples with peel
2 c shredded cabbage
1/4 c red onion, chopped
1 c green bell pepper
chopped
6 or 8 oz container apple
turnover nonfat yogurt sugar
free
2 T orange juice

Kitchen Equipment
Needed:
Medium size bowl
Cutting board
Knife
Serving spoon
Plastic wrap or bowl
cover

## Directions:

- Combine all ingredients in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Stir well.
- 2. Cover and refrigerate till ready to serve.

Serving size: 1/2 cup Number of servings: 8

Dash of connamon

Actual ingredients analyzed (if different from

above) yogurt - used 6 oz.



# **Purdue Extension—Spencer County**

1101 E CR 800 N Chrisney, IN 47611



4-H Open House Sunday October 26th 3:00-5:00 @ Spencer Co. YCC