

December 2025 — January 2026



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



There are many red fruits we may encounter in the late fall and winter in Indiana that add some color to the landscape, like those on this Winterberry plant (Farlee)

Red in Winter – What Are Those Red 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.

Nicholas Held, Extension Educator
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Community Development

Newsletter Highlights

Be a Tourist this
Holiday Season

Indiana Horticulture &
Small Farm Conference

Strategies to Future-
proof Farms

Purdue Top Farmer
Conference

Ag Engage Conference

SW IN Sprayer School

Grain Market Navigator
Program



Extension - Spencer County

Red (*cont.*)

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 verticillate*, 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 Extension Forester



Hawthorn fruit (Farlee)



Crabapple fruit (Farlee)



Multiflora rose fruit (Farlee)

Be a Tourist this Holiday Season

Before you started buying holiday decorations, Christmas tree growers were seven years ahead of you — the average time it takes to grow a tree.

To get beautiful foliage and good height, Christmas trees require year-round care, and to give buyers the full Christmas tree farm experience, growers must also be well versed in marketing and running a business.

Purdue Extension, which embodies Purdue University's commitment to share education and research across the state, helps growers succeed in Indiana's agritourism industry and supports success from seed to sale. (*continued on page 3*)

Tourism (*cont.*)

What is agritourism?

Agritourism can be defined as farms that welcome visitors to engage in agriculture-related activities. Popular Indiana examples include picking pumpkins, touring wineries and visiting Christmas tree farms.

Kyle Daniel, Extension nursery and landscape specialist, has noticed many growers making their farms into agritourism spots to respond to the public's growing interest.

Christmas tree farms have followed the same pattern, with an increasing number offering the chance to buy a real Christmas tree alongside non-agricultural products like ornaments and other seasonal decorations.

Putting the “agri-” in agritourism

The foundation for any agritourism spot is the product, whether that's an unprocessed product like strawberries or a processed product like maple syrup. Christmas tree growers rely on the cold-hardy Scotch pine, white pine and Canaan fir to drive sales. Most farms grow multiple varieties to suit a wide range of tastes, like good needle retention, sturdy branches or fragrant smell.

Once growers choose what to grow, they must maintain their crop, which requires decisions about irrigation and weed control. That's when Daniel enters the conversation.

Daniel has presented to the Indiana Christmas Tree Growers, where he shares best practices, like research on how applying herbicides at certain times can decrease production time.

“Small trials on farms are impactful to growers. One nursery I was working with changed their herbicide application, and it led to better rows of trees,” Daniel said.

Even though some factors like rainfall and temperature are out of growers' control, access to the latest research can increase the odds of a good year and a good experience for customers. “If I can help a grower sell a tree one year faster, that can knock 20% off the production time and make room for new trees. It's rewarding to help make a difference like that.”

Making a farm a “must see” destination

A good product is important, but often, other non-agri-activities bring people in the door. Extension viticulture specialist Miranda Purcell has seen this trend in the wine industry.



People want to go out, cut their own tree, drink hot chocolate and do other fun things. It adds value to the product,” Daniel said. “Doing that type of thing and getting out in nature is also beneficial for mental health.” (Purdue Agricultural Communications)

“A lot of wineries have started doing a concert series or events like trivia, canvas painting, flower arranging or cookie decorating,” Purcell said. “They get people in the door with some sort of activity and give them a glass of wine to enjoy while they're there. This type of scenario can even encourage people to try wine made from lesser-known varieties.” Christmas tree farms are innovating in similar ways.

Perhaps the biggest draw to agritourism like Christmas tree farms is the opportunity to make memories with loved ones. “Personally, my favorite thing is to watch my eight-year-old running around the trees trying to find the perfect one,” Daniel said with a smile. “Purdue Extension can give people the tools they need to make an agritourism operation thrive,” Purcell said. “We can provide with assistance on the agriculture side of things, the marketing side of things and the business side of things. It takes some work, but we can help growers bring it all together.”

—Olivia De Young, Purdue Agricultural Communications



Join us as we merge two popular Purdue Extension events into one dynamic conference
Designed for specialty crop growers and small farmers region wide, featuring premier educational sessions

Event Location: Hendricks County Fairgrounds
1900 E Main St. Danville, IN 46122



IHC



* Education * Trade Show * Poster Session * Social & Networking Event

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SFC

Workshop Offers Strategies to Future-proof Farms



Purdue Extension invites Indiana farmers and agricultural families to attend Farm Shield: Protecting Your Legacy From Life's Uncertainties. Farm Shield offers practical tools and expert insights for navigating the complex challenges of succession, estate planning and risk management at two regional locations:

- **Jan. 27, 2026, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., The Venue at Brookstone, 1201 W. Alto Road, Kokomo**
- **Jan. 28, 2026, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monroe Convention Center, 302 S. College Ave., Bloomington**

Speakers will discuss topics including estate and succession planning with a legal professional, managing financial responsibility, addressing family conflict, and preparing for the unexpected.

Farm Shield will feature Jolene Brown, professional speaker, author and farmer, who will deliver the keynote address, "There Is a Better Way: Navigating the Succession and Transition of Your Family Business." Brown brings humor, insight and decades of experience to help families move from conflict to clarity in their business transitions.

Registration for Farm Shield is \$40, which includes a catered lunch, program materials and postconference guidance from Purdue Extension educators. Visit <https://bit.ly/farmshield> for more information and registration information for both locations.

This initiative is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture under award number 2024-70027-42470.



Take part in one of the most successful and longest-running management programs geared specifically for farmers — the **Purdue Top Farmer Conference**, featuring faculty and staff experts from Purdue's Center for Commercial Agriculture. Surrounded by farm management, farm policy, agricultural finance and marketing experts, and a group of your peers, the conference will stimulate your thinking about agriculture's future and how you can position your farm to be successful in the years ahead.

Attend in-person or online

Friday, January 9, 2026 - Beck Agricultural Center, West Lafayette

Registration - \$150

For more info, see: ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/

2026 AG ENGAGE CONFERENCE



ZOE KENT
Keynote Speaker

FEBRUARY 19TH, 2026

MONROE CONVENTION CENTER
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

AG **ENGAGE**
CONFERENCE


Purdue University is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access University.

The annual **Ag Engage Conference** is designed to educate and uplift everyone involved in any aspect of the agricultural industry. Through pre-conference workshops, a keynote speaker, and breakout presentations, attendees will learn how to better manage risk, enhance their farms and agribusiness operations, and network with others throughout Indiana.

For more info, see: tinyurl.com/AgEngage2026

Contact Us!


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

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2026 SPRAYER SCHOOL

Agenda & Speakers

Sprayer Safety
- Mike Wilson

Weed Identification
- Valerie Clingerman

OISC Update, Environmental Concerns
- Aaron Kreider

Lunch (Included in Registration Fee)

Troubleshooting the Most Common Calls
- Gerald Chaplin

Drone Application
- Alex Helms

Tank Compatibility & Mixing
- Tommy Butts

**Training & Education Program
for Commercial Pesticide
Applicators & Farmers**

**30
JAN**

**8:30AM-
3:30 PM EST**

**Vincennes University
Agricultural Center**

Registration Fee
Checks must be received
by 1/21!

**\$50
PER**

**PARP, CCH & CCA Credits
Available
Lunch Included**

Register at this Link!
tinyurl.com/26SprayerSchool

Checks Payable to Purdue University
Mail to Purdue Extension Knox County
4259 N Purdue Rd Vincennes, IN 47591



**Vincennes University
Agricultural Center
4207 Purdue Rd
Vincennes, IN 47591**

**Contact Purdue Extension Knox County with
questions at 812-882-3509. Purdue University is
an equal access/equal opportunity university.**

Grain Market Navigator

Program Series



Overview:

Take the guesswork out of grain marketing with this hands-on program designed to help farmers sharpen their marketing knowledge and confidence. Through interactive sessions, participants will explore the fundamentals of grain marketing and gain practical tools to use on their own farms.

Registration & Information:

Price: \$40 In-Person, \$55 Virtual

To register for virtual or in-person, visit our website: <https://bit.ly/GrainMarkets>

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If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Jenna Nees prior to the meeting at 765-653-8411 or smith535@purdue.edu by February 3rd.

If you are in need of a translator please contact Jenna Nees prior to the meeting at 765-653-8411 or smith535@purdue.edu by February 3rd.

Join Us

In person or virtual option available!

FEBRUARY 17



Grain Marketing Lingo,
Basis, Cash vs. Future

FEBRUARY 24



Contracts 101

MARCH 3



Market Outlook

MARCH 10



Grain Buyer Panel

Location

Spencer County Youth &
Community Center
1101 E CR 800 N
Chrisney, IN 47611

5:30pm-7:30pm CST



Extension - Agriculture
and Natural Resources

THE SOIL SCOOP



Spencer County Soil and Water Conservation District

2026 ANNUAL MEETING

Join us January 26th at the Spencer Co. 4-H Center for the 83rd Annual Meeting!

Doors open at 5:30.

Main Speaker - Don Lamb (Director of ISDA)

Catering by Meyer.

Entrance fee:

\$5 Early Registration

\$10 Without RSVP

RSVP via:

Phone - (812) 649 - 9136

Email: spencercoswcd.in@gmail.com

NEW CWI GRANT FOR 2025-27

We have been awarded a CWI grant for 2025-2027!

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.

STRANGE BUT TRUE AG FACTS

The longest recorded flight of a chicken is 13 seconds.

Chickens aren't known for being good flyers. While they can fly short distances, it's unlikely to see one soaring above the treetops. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the longest recorded flight by a chicken is just 13 seconds. Even more interestingly, the longest recorded distance a chicken has flown is 301.5 feet.

(provided by FFA.org)

“

ADOPT THE PACE OF NATURE. HER SECRET IS PATIENCE.

-Emerson



December 4-H Newsletter



Scholarship Applications

Scholarship application are available online by visiting the [Indiana 4-H](#) website. These are for Sophomores- Seniors in high school. Applications may be submitted via 4Honline before the deadline and must be approved by the Extension Educator. You will not be able to begin the application if you are not **paid and approved** in 4HOnline.

There is a helpful video housed on the [Indiana 4-H scholarship page](#). I would recommend at least watching a little bit of it before filling out the applications. Please contact me if you intend to submit a scholarship application and would like me to review it before submission.

4-H Camp

4-H Camp will be June 1-3 at the Santa Claus Historic Campgrounds with camp counselors coming on June 1st. Camp Counselor applications will be collected through 4HOnline and all Freshman-Seniors will need to be registered and approved in 4HOnline to apply. Counselor applications will hopefully be available in February but I will send an update as we know more in January.

I am super excited this year that we will have Junior Counselors. The last several years our 7th & 8th graders haven't been able to attend camp. This year those registered and approved (notice a trend here) youth will be able to participate as Junior Counselors. More information will also come out in January about this opportunity, but if you are a 7th or 8th grader that has attended camp in the past and been counting down the days until you can be a counselor, mark your calendars this summer to be a Junior Counselor!

Camper applications will be available following the selection of camp counselor and will also be collected via 4HOnline. Payment can be mailed or dropped off at the Spencer County Office. Camp spaces will be limited this year so when you see registration is open, please register and register early. There will likely be a wait list before the deadline closes. Let's get ready to have a great time at 4-H Camp!

4-H Trips

Teen Leadership Weekend registrations are open in 4HOnline. The Teen Leadership Weekend is an exciting opportunity for 4-H members to build their leadership skills, connect with peers from across the state, and prepare to positively impact their communities. This conference is designed for youth in grades 7-12 who are ready to take their leadership journey to the next level. Participants engage in hands-on workshops, interactive team activities, and inspiring sessions led by experienced mentors and fellow 4-H members. With a focus on personal growth, teamwork, and service, the weekend empowers youth to step into leadership roles, develop practical skills, and create lasting memories! Don't miss this fun opportunity March 27-29.

T-shirt Design Contest

Design this year's 4-H Fair T-shirt! T-shirts must be a single sided, one color design. Artwork should include "Spencer County 4-H" and the year. Youth must be currently enrolled in the Spencer County 4-H program. Email your design to Jennifer at allen393@purdue.edu by January 31st to have your design included for the chance to win! Voting will take place at this year's Annual Pork Chop Dinner & Auction on February 28th where the winner will be selected.

Green Project Enrollment Packets

This year when you receive your 4-H materials after enrollment, your packet will look a little different. Everyone will receive a green envelope with a sticker on the front that has helpful links and info. Keep the folder handy for all your questions through the year.

Your folder includes: a refrigerator magnet with important dates, a list of the projects your child is registered for and project requirements, a manual (if moving to new division), dates for this year's Livestock Quality Assurance classes, QR codes where you can see the scorecards that your project will be judged on, a green record sheet, and any craft, foods, or woodworking cards that you should need.

If you add a project after you receive your folder please reach out to the office to ask for the books or materials you will need. Once folders are given we will not continue to keep track of what supplies you need as projects are dropped/added.

Please be patient with us as we are transitioning to putting these together this year. Hopefully this will help you and us be more organized and have everything early and in one central location. If something is missing from your folder, please reach out to me at allen393@purdue.edu or Kara at dilger@purdue.edu so we are able to get you what is missing early.

4-H Fair Bucks

If you have been waiting to try new 4-H projects, this is your year! This year we will be giving Spencer County 4-H Fair Bucks for Building Projects. If you receive a Grand Champion, Reserve Grand Champion, or Champion you will receive \$3, \$2, or \$1 for your project. These Fair Bucks can be spent during fair at the food booths. This is a great opportunity to try out a new project or for families that might not usually join us during the weekend to take advantage of some hard earned Fair Bucks and come back and join us for an evening of fun. More info will come out this spring about how to receive Fair Bucks, but start planning your projects and how you will win yours!



Livestock Quality Assurance Dates

Any youth exhibiting livestock is required to take the Indiana 4-H Livestock Quality Assurance Course. We have 3 courses offered in person in Spencer County this spring. If you are unable to attend one of our in person courses, you may attend a course at another county or take the online course at your own cost. Please make it a priority to attend one of the courses: February 24th, March 17th, and April 14th. Dates will have a max capacity so register early.

Pork Chop Dinner & Auction

The 4-H Pork Chop Dinner and Auction is our largest fundraiser for the year. Please save the date for Saturday, Feb. 28th for this year's dinner and auction. We will start asking for donations in the new year and tickets for dinner will be available for purchase. We would not be able to have such an amazing program with free 4-H trips, camp, and other amazing experiences without the financial support like we have at the dinner! Please plan to come eat with us and stay for the auction to support our amazing 4-H program!

4-H PORK CHOP DINNER & AUCTION SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28



Meal includes a pork chop, green beans, creek fries, roll, and dessert.

Tickets available at the Extension Office or with any 4-H Board Member. Come support our local 4-H youth!

1101 E. County Road 800 N. Chrisney, IN
(812) 362-8066

HEALTH & HUMAN SCIENCES

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

Beating the Winter Blues

Living in a region that fully experiences all four seasons has its benefits. The beauty of emerging spring, the joy of a cool pool on a hot summer day and the vibrance of a country drive on an autumn afternoon. Even winter can bring its own special spirit with the holidays and blanket of crisp white snow. But for many the long, dreary days can also evoke SAD - Seasonal Affective Disorder.

SAD is a type of depression related to changes in season. For many afflicted persons this begins in the fall and continues through the winter. Symptoms of SAD include changes in energy, appetite or sleep patterns, inability to concentrate, increased irritability, social withdrawal or a sense of sadness, anxiety or hopelessness.

As many as 20% of people in the US may be impacted by Seasonal Affective Disorder or a less severe version of the winter blues. SAD is most common among women, those who have a history of depression and those who live farther from the equator. A report last winter showed that Indiana ranked third in the number of Google searches made about the winter blues.

Whatever the cause, here are some things you can do to take care of yourself during the winter months. First, take care of your body. Try to stay on schedule. Eat regular balanced meals, maintain regular sleep patterns and stay active as much as possible. Studies show that those with mild depression find great benefit from regular exercise. Next, take care of your soul. Find a way to connect. Call a friend, volunteer, or join a club. It doesn't matter how you connect; what matters is that you have genuine interactions with another person.

Make time for activities you enjoy or start a new hobby. Whatever you do, be mindful and focus on that task and let go of the idea of multi-tasking. Lastly, seek help when needed. If symptoms are interfering with your ability to carry out daily activities and zapping your joy, talk to someone. That someone may be a trusted friend or it may be a medical provider or mental health professional.

The number one fact to know is that you are not alone. To learn more about managing depressive symptoms or how you can offer help to another person check out the resources at www.mhfirstaid.tools/diytools. If you need someone to talk to now, or if you are worried that someone may be in crisis: call, text or chat 988. You can also call 211 or visit 211.org to get connected with local resources. Remember, better to be safe than sorry. If you or someone you know is experiencing a medical emergency or are in an unsafe situation – call 911 right away. We are in this together and support is available.

-Tonya Short, Purdue Extension HHS Educator, Knox County

Bite by Bite: Nutrition for Life Podcast

Anywhere you look you can find a magic pill or formula promising to protect your health and transform your body in three easy steps. And, many of these claims do have (or at least started with) a speck of valid science. So, how to you cut through all the hype and separate truth from false marketing claims?

The truth is, it doesn't have to be that complicated! Join us as we explore and dissect different fads and trends to discover the real science behind food and nutrition.

Find us on Spotify, Apple podcasts and wherever you listen in.




Follow us on Facebook and Instagram
@BiteByBiteNutritionForLife








Freezing Pies

Unbaked

	Assemble your pie as directed. Place it in the freezer on a baking tray for 2-3 hours. Once frozen, wrap with 2-3 layers of plastic wrap and seal in a freezer bag. Consume within 3 months.
	Do not allow the pie to come to room temperature. Thawing of your pie is best done during baking.
	To bake: Cover the frozen pie with foil. Bake in a preheated 450F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 375F and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the foil, bake for 55-60 minutes or until the crust is golden & filling bubbling.

Pre-baked

	Assemble your pie and bake as directed. Allow the pie to cool completely.
	Place the pie in a freezer bag or double wrap in foil or plastic wrap. For best quality, consume within 4 months.
	To serve, bake the pie at 425F for about 15 minutes or until warmed through.

Note: These tips won't work for cream, custard or meringue pies. Those are best enjoyed fresh.

For more information, check out these resources:

<https://extension.psu.edu/freezing-pies-and-pie-fillings>; <https://www.bhg.com/recipes/how-to/bake/how-to-freeze-fruit-pies/>; <https://easyfreezing.com/freezing-pies-cooked-or-uncooked/>

Purdue Extension—Spencer County

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Spencer County 4-H
Pork Chop Dinner & Auction
February 28th, 2026
at Spencer County YCC