

News Article

By: John E. Woodmansee, Extension Educator, Agriculture/Natural Resources

E-mail: jwoodman@purdue.edu Phone: 260-244-7615 Web: www.extension.purdue.edu/whitley

Date: December 28, 2020

Please use by: January 7, 2021

Purdue Resources for Diversified Farming and Food Systems

According to the last U.S. Census of Agriculture (2017), 42% of farms nationwide are less than 50 acres. In Indiana, that number is 46%, and in Whitley County, 48%.

As a significant part of the overall agricultural picture, nearly half of all farms, Purdue also recognizes this segment of agriculture. In an effort to coordinate several initiatives of Purdue Extension to serve this audience, we have now consolidated these efforts under one website “umbrella,” so to speak, so that visitors can access information in a one-stop-shop.

Purdue Extension has coined the name “Diversified Farming and Food Systems” for this over-arching umbrella of initiatives. Access the website at: <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/>. The site features five initiatives: Small Farms, Urban Agriculture, Organic Agriculture, Local Food, and Beginning Farmers. Note that some of these initiatives deal with diversified farming with no regard to size.

Resources for Small Farms are at: <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/smallfarms/>. The Purdue Small Farm Team organizes the annual Indiana Small Farm Conference, has business management resources, and crop and animal production resources for smaller-scale production methods. Note that the Annual Indiana Small Farm Conference is scheduled as a virtual training March 4-6, 2021. Find additional information at <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/smallfarms/small-farm-conference-2021/>.

Urban Agriculture is at: <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/urbanag/>. Urban agriculture involves utilizing urban sites for food production to help meet the growing demand for local food. It improves food access in some food insecure areas, and helps boost fruit and vegetable consumption. Community gardens are just one example of urban agriculture.

The Organic Agriculture resources may be accessed at: <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/organicag/>. Their resources are concentrated on insect, weed, and disease management, along with related organic agriculture news and information. In recent years, some larger farmers have converted a portion of their acres to certified organic grain production to take advantage of price premiums. Additionally, Northeast Purdue Agricultural Center (NEPAC) in Whitley County is converting a 30-acre field to organic grain production for research, demonstration and extension outreach.

The Local Food Program can be accessed directly at: <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/localfood/>. Local Foods Extension programs include: rebuilding your local food system, economic viability of shared-use kitchens, food council development, urban agriculture certificate, food summits, Market Basket 360, and Indiana Harvest (farm to school).

Beginning Farmers may find information at: <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/beginningfarmers/>. Of course, beginning farmers are just as the name implies – farmers just starting out with little or no experience. Facing a steep learning curve, this audience benefits from many types of resources – farmer-to-farmer contacts, farm tours, agency contacts, Extension programs and resource libraries.

Purdue Extension in Whitley County will be assisting with a beginning farmer state-wide virtual training Jan. 21-Mar. 4. Go to <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/whitley/article/39832> for more information, plus a link to register.