

Purdue Extension
**Greene County Agriculture &
 Natural Resource Newsletter**

Important Upcoming Dates:

Saturday,
 January 28
 Indiana Beef Cattle Association
 Convention
 Indianapolis, Indiana

Wed.-Thurs.,
 February 22-23
 Midwest Women in Ag
 Conference
 Plymouth, Indiana

Thurs-Sat.,
 March 2-4
 Small Farm Conference
 Hendricks County Fairgrounds

Wednesday,
 March 8
 Southern Indiana Grazing
 Conference
 Odon, Indiana

Purdue Lambing School



The Lambing School is conducted as an educational event for new, beginning or veteran sheep or goat producers to familiarize them with lambing or kidding procedures. The program will cover the critical production phases of late gestation, lactation, and care of newborns. Topics will include: nutrition, reproduction, health considerations, lambing barn obstetrics and necessary management practices. The Lambing School is designed for maximum "hands-on" experience and informal questions and discussion. This program will be held on February 4, 2017 from 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM at the Sheep Unit in the Purdue Animal Sciences Research and Education Center (6203 W 750 N, West Lafayette, IN). For further information, please contact Kiersti Cunningham (kcunningham@purdue.edu).

Midwest Women in Ag Conference

The 16th Annual Women in Ag Conference will be held at the Swan Lake Resort in Plymouth, IN February 22-23, 2017. Keynote speakers and presentations will include Dr. Paige Pratt: Family Farm Transitions - The Good, The Bad, and the In-Laws and Laura Daniels: Using Baler Twine & Barn Lime to Live a Life of Purpose. A variety of topics will be covered during break-out sessions. Cost for the event is \$90 before February 8 and \$140 after February 8.

A pre-conference program titled: Using the Farm Financial Suite to Make Decisions During Tight Margins is being offered from 12:30 - 4:00 PM on Tuesday, February 21 at the same location with a fee of \$15 for conference attendees and \$30 for non-attendees. For more information on both programs visit: <https://ag.purdue.edu/Extension/wia/Pages/default.aspx> or contact the Extension Office at 812-659-2122.

Southern Indiana Grazing Conference



The Daviess Co. SWCD is hosting their annual grazing conference on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, in Odon, IN. The cost of the one-day event is \$35.00 if paid on or before February 17 (after will be \$45.00 and registration at the door will be \$50). Speakers will include: Teddy Gentry, Joshua Dukart, and Darin Williams. For more information, contact the SWCD office at 812-254-4780 ext. 3 or visit www.daviesscoswcd.org.

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Young Ladies of Ag Career Showcase

A Career Showcase is planned for youth ladies interested in agriculture, business, and STEM careers. The showcase is limited to the first 200 young ladies registered. The cost is \$10 per lady. The program will be held at Purdue Beck Ag Center (4540 US 52 W., West Lafayette, IN). Pre-registration is required by Wednesday, January 25. For more information about the showcase visit:

<https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/WIA/Pages/default.aspx>.

Indiana Beef Cattle Association Convention

The 2017 IBCA Convention will be held on Saturday, January 28 at the Rodeway Hotel & Convention Center in Indianapolis, IN. Along with the annual business meeting, awards presentation and tradeshow, there will be 2 educational programs. The programs will include: Priority of U.S. Beef Industry Issues - Colin Woodall, NCBA and Betterment of the U.S. Beef Industry - Tracy Bruner, 2016 NCBA President. The evening will conclude with dinner and a COWsino Night. For more information or to register visit:

www.indianabeef.org.

Young Ladies of Ag Forum

Along with the Midwest Women in Ag Conference, a Young Ladies of Ag Forum is planned. The forum will take place at the Swan Lake Resort in Plymouth, IN from 4:00-8:00 PM. The forum is limited to 100 young ladies and is \$10 each. Registration is required by Wednesday, February 15. For more information about the forum visit:

<https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/WIA/Pages/default.aspx>.

National Farm Machinery Show

The National Farm Machinery Show will be held February 15-18, 2017, at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, KY. For more information visit: <http://www.farmmachineryshow.org/>

Small Farm Conference

The 2017 Indiana Small Farm Conference will be March 2-4 at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds in Danville, IN. Topics will include hops, managing woods, marketing, starting a small farm, food safety for fruit & vegetable growers and a farm tour focused on Indianapolis Urban Agriculture. For more information or to register visit: www.ag.purdue.edu/smallfarms.

Butterfly Milkweed Named 2017 Perennial of the Year!

The Perennial Plant Association has named butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), as its 2017 Perennial Plant of the Year. With much focus on pollinator habitat these days, butterfly milkweed is a terrific selection. Butterfly milkweed flowers play host to a wide range of butterflies, and milkweed foliage is the food source for monarch butterfly caterpillars.



Bees, wasps and other insects are also frequent visitors.

Butterfly milkweed is native to much of the continental United States and is hardy to U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 4-9. This species thrives best in full sun and well-drained soil and is drought tolerant. Plants reach about 2-3 feet tall with a similar spread. The bright orange/reddish-yellow flower clusters bloom throughout much of the summer. Elongated seed pods develop from the flowers and ripen to release numerous seeds with long silky hairs that aid seed dispersal. Pods should be cut back before they open to prevent unwanted selfseeding.

The Perennial Plant Association selects a different perennial plant each year to promote throughout the nursery and gardening industry. PPA members nominate plants based on several criteria, including low maintenance needs, adaptability to a wide range of climates, pest and disease resistance, wide availability, multiple seasons of interest and ease of propagation. A selection committee then narrows the field to three or four choices from which the members cast their votes. For more information on the Perennial of the Year program, see <http://www.perennialplant.org/>.

Previous PPA Perennial Plant of the Year winners:

- 2016 *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' (windflower)
- 2015 *Geranium* 'Biokova' (dwarf cranesbill, hardy geranium)
- 2014 *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind' (tall switch grass)
- 2013 *Polygonatum odoratum* var. *variegatum* (Solomon's seal)
- 2012 *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost' (Siberian bugloss)
- 2011 *Amsonia hubrichtii* (blue star)
- 2010 *Baptisia australis* (blue false indigo)
- 2009 *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (Japanese forest grass)
- 2008 *Geranium* 'Rozanne' (cranesbill, hardy geranium)
- 2007 *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' (catmint)
- 2006 *Dianthus* 'Feuerhexe' (aka 'Firewitch') (cheddar pink)
- 2005 *Helleborus x hybridus* (hellebore, Lenten rose)
- 2004 *Athyrium niponicum* var. *pictum* (Japanese painted fern)
- 2003 *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Becky' (shasta daisy)
- 2002 *Phlox paniculata* 'David' (garden phlox)
- 2001 *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' (feather reed grass)
- 2000 *Scabiosa* 'Butterfly Blue' (pincushion flower)
- 1999 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' (black-eyed Susan)
- 1998 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus' (purple coneflower)
- 1997 *Salvia x sylvestris* 'Mainacht' (aka 'May Night') (wood sage)
- 1996 *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red' (beardtongue)
- 1995 *Perovskia atriplicifolia* (Russian sage)
- 1994 *Astilbe* 'Sprite' (dwarf astilbe)
- 1993 *Veronica* 'Sunny Border Blue' (speedwell)
- 1992 *Coreopsis verticillata* 'Moonbeam' (threadleaf coreopsis)
- 1991 *Heuchera micrantha* var. *diversifolia* 'Palace Purple' (coral bells)
- 1990 *Phlox stolonifera* (creeping phlox)

Source: B. Rosie Lerner; Purdue Consumer Horticulture Specialist

Coming Reductions in Farmland Assessments for Property Taxes

The Indiana General Assembly revised the farmland assessment formula during its 2016 session. Let's figure out what that might do to farmland assessments and property taxes. The assessment of farmland starts with a "base rate," calculated with a capitalization formula. Measures of farm income per acre are divided by a capitalization rate to get the land's capitalized value. Corn and soybean prices rose and interest rates fell from 2007 through 2012. When commodity prices rise, income goes up. When interest rates fall, the capitalization rate goes down. A rising numerator and a falling denominator caused the base rate of farmland to jump from \$880 per acre in 2007 to \$2,050 in 2015. As a result, agricultural property taxes increased by more than 60 percent, while property taxes overall fell 4 percent. Rising taxes could be paid out of rising farm incomes, but starting in 2012, corn and bean prices began to fall. So did farm incomes. But the base rate formula used six years of data with a four-year lag. The base rate for taxes in 2015 used data through 2011. Falling prices wouldn't even enter the formula until 2016. Projections showed the base rate topping \$3,000 for taxes in 2018. Farmland owners were looking at half-a-decade of lower incomes and higher property taxes. The legislature took action. First, it reduced the four-year lag to two years.

Now the base rate for 2017 would be calculated with data from 2010 to 2015. The \$2,990 base rate projected for 2019 with a four-year lag would now be set in 2017 with a two-year lag. That's a 46 percent hike from the \$2,050 base rate this year — not the solution that agriculture was looking for. That leads to the second reform of the base rate formula. The base rate calculated with six years of actual data and a two-year lag is now the "preliminary" base rate. If the preliminary rate is a lot different from the existing base rate, then the formula takes steps to stabilize the change. If the increase is more than 10 percent, then the actual capitalization rates in the formula are replaced with 8 percent. If the decrease is more than 10 percent, the capitalization rate is 6 percent. If the preliminary base rate is within 10 percent of the existing base rate, then 7 percent is used. The big increase in the preliminary base rate for 2017 means that the formula used a capitalization rate of 8 percent. The actual capitalization rates ranged from 4.7 to 6 percent, so using 8 percent reduced the final base rate to \$1,960, a 4 percent decline from 2016. Farmland property taxes may not drop in 2017 (if local tax rates increase) but they'll stop their spectacular rise. We acquired some 10-year forecasts of farm data from the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri. The forecasts settle at \$4 per bushel for corn, \$10 per bushel for beans, with trend increases in yields and costs.

We projected the capitalization rate using the Congressional Budget Office's long-term interest rate forecast, and came up with a gradual increase from the current 4.7 to 6.5 percent. Run these numbers through the new formula, and for taxes in 2018, we get a preliminary base rate of \$2,820, way higher than the \$1,960 in 2017. The 8 percent capitalization rate will be used for the final calculation, which projects at \$1,770. That would be 10 percent drop in the base rate. Farmland tax bills would decrease in most places. Projected interest rates remain unusually low throughout the 10-year forecast, which means the preliminary base rate remains high. The 8 percent capitalization rates continue to be used in the final calculation. In our projections, the final base rate bottoms out at \$1,070 in 2021, then rises gradually to around \$1,300 in the mid-2020s. Property taxes for farmland owners would fall a lot from what they are now. Lower total assessed values mean higher property tax rates, especially in rural areas, where farmland is so important. Rural homeowners and businesses would see their taxes rise with the base rate reduction. Some rural local governments would lose revenue to the property tax caps. But after years of rapid tax bill increases, farmland owners should begin to see relief, starting soon.

Source: Larry DeBoer, Purdue Professor Ag. Economics

Extension Training Helps Growers Meet Produce Safety Rule Requirements

Purdue Extension will provide training sessions statewide to help fruit and vegetable growers meet the requirements of the Produce Safety Rule included in the Food Safety Modernization Act. FSMA's Produce Safety Rule establishes minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables grown for human consumption. Though the compliance deadline is looming for large-scale producers, this rule will eventually impact most growers. Amanda Deering, trainer and clinical assistant professor in the Department of Food Science, encourages all growers to attend the training to make sure their fresh fruits and vegetables are safe for consumers. "Purdue Extension uses the only training curriculum recognized by the FDA and covers best practices applicable to growers of all sizes," says Deering.

Each daylong training session covers seven modules:

- Introduction to produce safety
- Worker health, hygiene and training
- Soil amendments
- Wildlife, domesticated animals and land use
- Agricultural water
- Post-harvest handling and sanitation
- Developing a farm food safety plan

The first training session will be offered at the 2017 Indiana Horticultural Congress & Trade Show, Jan. 10-12 at the Indianapolis Marriott East, 7202 E. 21st St. Cost is \$75, which includes the cost of training, certification (\$35), and lunch.

Upon completion of training, growers will complete the documentation required to receive certification from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), which will be sent by mail. Future training sessions include:

- Wednesday, Jan. 18: Harrison County
- Monday, Feb. 6: Lake County
- Friday, Feb. 10: LaGrange County
- Thursday, March 2: Indiana Small Farm Conference
- Wednesday, March 22: Wayne County

For updated information on future training sessions, visit: www.SafeProduceIN.com.

Source: Cheri Frederick, Purdue Ag. Communications

For additional information, please visit our website at:
www.extension.purdue.edu/greene



You can also find the Greene County Purdue Extension Office on
Social Media!



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