

News Article

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Purdue Extension – a reliable information source

Information. With the internet, there is plenty of it available these days. So, with all this information available, how does a person sort out reliable information from misinformation?

According to Buckminster Fuller's "Knowledge Doubling Curve," until 1900 the total amount of human knowledge had doubled roughly every century. Around 2013, that figure was estimated to be somewhere in the neighborhood of every 12-13 months, and it was estimated by IBM to eventually be about every 12 hours. I don't know what the facts are at this moment – after all, I found this information on the internet.

I'm reminded of the television commercial that shows a girl speaking to a friend and she said she found her new boyfriend on the internet. "He's a French model," she said. Just then, the guy comes walking up and says in the most obvious middle-American dialect, "Bonjour."

Where can we find reliable information? There are probably a number of answers to that question, but if a question involves science, family or youth, my suggestion is to start with Purdue Extension.

What is Purdue Extension, anyway? Well, I plan to answer that question more fully in coming weeks. For now, just think of us as your local connection to Purdue University research. I would suggest that it is reliable information.

In short, research is conducted at Purdue University, and Purdue Extension helps local residents access and understand that research as it relates to their lives and livelihoods.

On a practical level, let's say you want to know the going rate for custom farm operations, you have cockroaches in the house, or you want to know proper canning methods. Purdue Extension has research-based information and publications that can help you make a more informed decision as you move forward or deal with the situation. If it's a question we don't immediately have access to through our extensive library of information, we can consult a specialist at Purdue to shed more light on the issue. If Purdue doesn't have the breadth of information we need, sometimes we can gain additional reliable information from neighboring land-grant institutions within USDA's Cooperative Extension System.

In short, Purdue Extension "extends" the research-based knowledge of the university to local people.

Many times local residents have called the Purdue Extension office because they just needed a place to start. That's okay, too. Sometimes, rather than answering the full extent of your question, it is appropriate for us to refer your question to another institution or professional, such as it may be with legal or specific health-related issues.

If you want a quick suggestion for doing internet searches that have a greater likelihood of producing research-based answers to these types of questions, add "edu" or "Purdue" in the search bar after your key words.

So, you have questions, we have answers. Give your local Purdue Extension office a call. In Whitley County, the number is 260-244-7615.

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