



# AGRICULTURE INSIDER

Monthly Newsletter

INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



## ABOUT

Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch serves as Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and oversees the IN State Dept. of Agriculture



## DIVISIONS

Economic Development  
Public Affairs  
Indiana FFA Association  
Soil Conservation  
Grain Buyers



## VISION

Indiana agriculture will be a global leader in innovation and commercialization for food, fuel and fiber production



## HIGHLIGHTS

### **Local soil and water districts awarded over \$2.3 million for water quality initiatives**

The [Indiana State Department of Agriculture](#) and the [State Soil Conservation Board](#) awarded \$2,313,287 in matching grant funds to 26 projects within soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and soil health organizations through the [Clean Water Indiana](#) program.

The Clean Water Indiana program is administered by the state's soil conservation board. The program, led by ISDA, provides financial assistance to landowners and conservation groups that are working to reduce runoff from non-point sources of water pollution, whether it's on agricultural land, urban areas or eroding streambanks.

Once received, districts can use the funds to partner with other counties or address specific needs within their jurisdiction. Some examples include participating in a cost share program, hiring staff, providing technical assistance, implementing cover crop incentive programs or increasing watershed capacity.



*Click below to read more and find a list of funded projects.*

[READ MORE](#)



## **Indiana remains a top agricultural state according to new census**

According to the newly released [agricultural census data](#) from The [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)'s National Agricultural Statistics Service](#), Indiana remains a top agricultural state, with agricultural products valued at over \$18 billion.

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Even small plots of land - whether rural or urban - growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year. The Census of Agriculture, taken only once every five years, looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures.



*Click below to read the full release and find further data.*

[READ MORE](#)



## **Federal grant funds available for specialty crop industry**

The [Indiana State Department of Agriculture](#) (ISDA), is seeking project proposals from Indiana's specialty crop sector for funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program](#).

The USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program offers federal funding annually to state departments of agriculture to support their specialty crop industries. This year, Indiana will be allocating \$471,000.00 to selected projects. Eligible projects must enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Indiana, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, horticulture and nursery crops.

Applications are due by 12:00 p.m. ET on March 22, 2024.



*Click below to read the full release.*

[READ MORE](#)



## **Indiana officials celebrate National FFA Week**

In honor of [National FFA Week](#), the seven Indiana FFA State Officers, and dozens of FFA members, met in the Statehouse to receive a proclamation and resolution declaring Feb. 17-24 Indiana FFA Week.

Gov. Eric Holcomb [signed a proclamation](#) to name the week National FFA Week in recognition of all the work the [Indiana FFA Organization](#), agriculture educators and FFA advisors do to cultivate the next generation of agriculturists for the state.

The [Indiana FFA Association](#) also received a [Senate Concurrent Resolution](#) highlighting the impact of the FFA Organization, which is preparing more than 14,000 members in 90 of Indiana's 92 counties for the over 250 unique careers in the food, fiber and natural resource sectors. The resolution was led by Sen. Jean Leising, Senate District 42 and Rep. Michael Aylesworth, House District 11.





*Click below to read the full release.*

[READ MORE](#)



### **Thum to lead Soil Conservation Division**

Jennifer Thum has been promoted to Soil Conservation Director for the [Indiana State Department of Agriculture](#) (ISDA). Thum has worked for the department for over a decade and was most recently deputy soil conservation director.

In her previous role with ISDA, Thum secured over \$50 million in funding for soil conservation projects. She also oversaw the Western Lake Erie Basin Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Kankakee Regional Conservation Partnership Program, a team of six staff and the upcoming iCover project.



*[Click here](#) to read the full release.*



## Indiana Grown Symposium welcomes all

[Indiana Grown](#), the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's local marketing initiative, will be hosting a day-long conference focused on educational seminars for Indiana Grown members, Indiana agritourism operators and food based businesses.



Attendees will have the opportunity to speak with and learn from industry professionals on a multitude of topics, such as social media, farm finances, operator liabilities, hiring and training employees, succession planning, event planning, zoning and insurance, building relationships with distributors, determining your product pricing and more. There will also be a panel discussion and a trade show opportunity for attendees to meet with vendors.

The event is March 19, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds. Registration is \$45 and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Interested businesses and Indiana Grown members can register for the event at [indianagrown.org](http://indianagrown.org).

[Click here](#) to read the full release.



## Attention Indiana food, agriculture, forestry and related employers

[Purdue University Extension 4-H Youth Development Program](#) is seeking information from **food, agriculture, forestry and related employers** in Indiana. If you are an owner, producer, or employer in one of the industries listed above and have at least 2 or more employees, your responses to the survey below may make an impact on the future! This 10-minute survey is designed to gather information about current workforce needs, job growth, recruitment and retention practices, skills and training needs, and how businesses are adopting technology and automation.

[Click here](#) to take the survey.



## ISDA Director Lamb joins U.S. ag trade mission to Cuba

Earlier this month, ISDA Director Don Lamb joined the [National Association of State Departments of Agriculture \(NASDA\)](#) on a trade mission to Havana, Cuba. The goal in visiting Cuba was to identify and address trade barriers for U.S. agricultural products, gain a better understanding of trade rules and regulations as well as the political and economic environment to strengthen the United States' trade relationship with Cuba.

While in-country, delegates met with government officials as well as industry and private sector leaders to learn more about how the U.S. and Cuba can collaborate in the future on agricultural trade. The delegation consisted of 13 people including other state department of agriculture directors, secretaries and commissioners.



[Click here](#) to read the full release.



## New Indiana pavilion at 2024 Sweets & Snacks Expo announced

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) announced they are hosting an Indiana pavilion at the 2024 Sweets and Snacks Expo from May 14 – 16, 2024 at the Indianapolis Convention Center. Indiana snack and confectionery companies are invited to exhibit in this pavilion alongside fellow Indiana companies.

The pavilion was created to highlight Indiana companies on the exposition show floor through amplifying brand presence and providing a competitive advantage for exhibitors. Companies exhibiting

in the Indiana pavilion will receive a 10' x 10' booth at the discounted National Confectioners Association member rate. Only snack and confectionary companies are eligible.

[Click here](#) to learn more and read the full release.

## Indiana trade mission to Indonesia

Earlier this month, ISDA International Trade Director Drew Sherman joined a trade mission organized by the Indiana Soybean Alliance to pursue opportunities to bring value-added and specialty soybean varieties to Indonesia. Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world and is a leading consumer of soybeans in products like tempeh and tofu. While in Jakarta, the Indiana delegation met with importers of soybeans, government officials, and Foreign Agricultural Service staff to identify opportunities for Indiana exporters.

"Indonesia is already one of Indiana's largest agricultural export markets, but it is also one of the fastest growing. Indonesia imports about 2.5 million metric tons of soybeans each year, and an expanding middle class means the demand for protein-rich diets will continue to grow," says Sherman.



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## NEWS RELEASES

**Feb. 1: Indiana Grown announces grant funds for members interested in tradeshow exhibition**

Find the full release [here](#)

**Feb. 5: New Indiana pavilion at 2024 Sweets & Snacks Expo announced**

Find the full release [here](#)

**Feb. 7: Indiana Grown Symposium welcomes all**

Find the full release [here](#)

**Feb. 8: Local soil and water districts awarded over \$2.3 Million for water quality initiatives**

Find the full release [here](#)

**Feb. 12: Thum to lead Soil Conservation Division**

Find the full release [here](#)



**Feb. 13: Indiana remains a top agricultural state according to new census**

*Find the full release [here](#)*

**Feb. 15: Federal grant funds available for specialty crop industry**

*Find the full release [here](#)*

**Feb. 20: Indiana officials celebrate National FFA Week**

*Find the full release [here](#)*

**Feb. 26: ISDA Director Lamb joins U.S. ag trade mission to Cuba**

*Find the full release [here](#)*



## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI)**

*Find more information [here](#)*

**Indiana Specialty Crop Block Grant**

*Find more information [here](#)*

**Cover Crop Premium Discount Program**

*Find more information [here](#)*

**Farm Storage Facility Loan Program**

*Find more information [here](#)*

**Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement  
Guaranteed Loans & Grants**

*Find more information [here](#)*



## KEY DATES

**Mar. 19, 2024 | National Ag Day**

*Find more information [here](#)*



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ABOUT ISDA



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