

# Celebrating local Agriculture

YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

National Ag Week: March 21-27, 2021

## Food Councils selected for Indiana Grown Grant

Indiana Grown awarded five organizations with a Food Council Development Grant in March. A food council is a community-based coalition created to build a stronger food system. Much of the work done by these regional organizations aligns with Indiana Grown's mission and benefits farmers and producers statewide.

"The awards announced today will help with the future success of food councils and the work they do for their communities," said Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch. "The Indiana Grown program has come so far in five years and its ability and willingness to give back to Hoosier communities speaks volumes. I cannot wait to see the tremendous impact made by these food councils."

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of their local food systems and are looking for ways to support it. Indiana Grown's goal in awarding these grants is to help regional food councils develop their infrastructure so Indiana farmers and producers have a greater market for their products, Indiana processors can utilize more

Indiana grown products and more consumers learn the importance of buying Indiana grown products.

According to Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Bruce Kettler grant awardees will demonstrate the major goals of Indiana Grown.

"This funding provided by Indiana Grown has the ability to increase market outlets for farmers and create new opportunities for community members to find locally grown food," Kettler said. "I am looking forward to working with each of these councils to increase food processing, production and supply in their areas."

Heather Tallman, Indiana Grown Program Director, said this grant program was made possible due to COVID-19 causing the cancellation of many annual Indiana Grown events, which allowed for the redistribution of the program's funds.

"Working with communities to increase access to the locally grown food market is one of my passions and something the Indiana Grown program does so

well," said Tallman. "I am excited to support these councils in their regional food systems to increase their outreach and growth for years to come."

**The selected award recipients are as follows:**

- Food and Growers Association, Award Amount: \$14,720, Food Council Location: Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Jackson, Ripley, Rush, Shelby and Union counties
- Indy Food Council, Award Amount: \$25,000, Food Council Location: Marion Co.
- Johnson County Food Council, Award Amount: \$10,342, Food Council Location: Johnson Co.
- Northeast Indiana Local Food Network, Inc., Award Amount: \$24,938, Food Council Location: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley counties
- NWI Food Council, Award Amount: \$25,000, Food Council Location: Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Newton, Porter, Pulaski and Starke counties

## Auction set for Saturday after acquisition of Michaela Farm



Michaela Farm is located at 3127 State Road 229 in Oldenburg.

An auction has been set for this Saturday, March 27, after the Sisters of St. Francis of Oldenburg announced Greenacres Foundation will acquire the approximately 250 acres, which is Michaela Farm.

Greenacres Foundation and Michaela Farm both promote caring for the land and all its inhabitants, having a similar passion for the environment and agricultural education.

It was noted that plans are to

continue with a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program and maintain the availability of garden-fresh produce through the Farm Store. The Sisters say they are thankful to all who have supported Michaela Farm, and they welcome Greenacres going forward.

Michaela Farm was founded by The Sisters of St. Francis Oldenburg in 1854 to provide food for the convent. The Farm provided upwards of 90% of the Convent's food until about 1964. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Sisters began to restore the farm as they built up a grass-fed "beefalo" herd, which was 5/8 beef cow and 3/8 bison. They brought back their fruit and vegetable gardens as well as a CSA to provide to the region.

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# South Ripley FFA, Kindergarten share some Farm Fun



SUBMITTED PHOTOS  
South Ripley's FFA students spent an afternoon with kindergarteners from SRES a few weeks ago, helping them learn the ABCs of Ag. Left, Skyler Peterson, Brooklyn Parker, Airabella Duffy, Grayson Begley pet a tortoise. Right, Teagon Scott pets a horse.



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**From left:** Podiatrist Dr. Amy Jelinek and Nurse Practitioner Loretta Bischoff

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The Versailles Republican



## Bill to address pesticide violations passes House committee

A bill authored by State Sen. Jean Leising (R-Oldenburg) that would address the enforcement of pesticide violations passed the House Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development unanimously this week.

Under current law, the state chemist may impose a civil penalty on individuals who misuse pesticides based off a schedule of civil penalties that the Indiana Pesticide Review Board created.

Senate Bill 227 would replace the schedule of civil

penalties with a comprehensive list of violations for which the state chemist may impose a civil penalty of \$250, \$500 or \$1,000, depending on severity of the violation. SB 227 would also grant the state chemist the ability to adjust a civil penalty by 20% for certain violations if the person responsible for the violation takes mitigating action. Low-level violations could only incur a fee if a warning has been issued to the violator within five years of the latest inci-

dent.

"The misuse of pesticides interferes with the work of Indiana farmers, who contribute billions of dollars to our state economy every year," Leising said. "Farmers' land needs protection from problems that could arise from pesticide misuse, and SB 227 would grant the state chemist the authority necessary to maintain fair regulatory measures."

SB 227 will now be considered by the full House of Representatives.

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Pictured: Gyrorake

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# The benefits of shopping farmers markets



Farmers markets have grown in popularity in recent years. Nowadays, consumers interested in farmers markets can likely find one near their homes whether those homes are in rural communities, the suburbs or bustling cities.

People who have never before shopped farmers markets may be curious as to why many people find them so appealing. The following are a handful of benefits of shopping farmers markets that might turn market novices into full-fledged devotees.

- Freshness: Many people

visit farmers markets because the fruits and vegetables sold at such markets seem to taste more fresh than those sold at chain grocery stores. People are not mistaken, as the produce available at farmers markets often comes from local farms, meaning there's no long-distance shipping necessary. Locally sourced foods need not be frozen en route to the market, meaning foods purchased there tend to taste especially fresh.

- In-season foods: Some grocery stores may sell fruits and vegetables even when those foods are out of sea-

son. Farmers markets only sell in-season fruits and vegetables. To grow fruits and vegetables out-of-season, farmers may need to rely on chemicals or other unnatural methods. No such means are necessary when farmers stick to growing foods in-season.

- Environmental benefits: According to the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture, food in the United States travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to consumers' plates. Such journeys burn natural resources, pollute the air and produce sizable amounts of trash that ultimately ends up in landfills and/or the world's oceans. Because food sold at farmers markets is locally sourced, considerably fewer natural resources are necessary to transport the food from farm to table, and the relatively short distances the food travels translates to less air pollution.

- Biodiversity: Many farmers market shoppers find unique foods not readily available at their local grocery stores. This is not only a great way to discover new and delicious foods, but also a way to promote biodiversity.

- Hormone-free animal products: Farmers markets do not exclusively sell fruits and vegetables. Many farmers markets also are great places to find meats, cheeses and eggs. Animal products sold at farmers markets are typically antibiotic- and hormone-free, which is both more humane to the animals and healthier than animal products produced with hormones or antibiotics.

Farmers markets are more accessible than ever, and the benefits to shopping such markets are endless.



People who have never before shopped farmers markets may be curious as to why many people find them so appealing. There are several local farmers markets to check out this Spring/Summer/Fall in and around Ripley County.



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