

National Ag Week: March 21-27, 2021



Explore a career in agriculture



The agricultural industry provides a variety of opportunities to professionals interested in this often misunderstood field.

According to the employment resource AGCareers.com, more than 250 career profiles are available to people interested in a career in agriculture. And while jobs in agriculture may not be as prevalent as they were a few centuries ago, when 72 percent of the workforce was

employed in farm occupations in the United States, agriculture remains a booming industry that greatly affects the nation's economy. Today, one in 12 American jobs wdepends on agriculture, according to the career resource Payscale.

The following are some potential professions for those considering careers in agriculture.

- Agricultural business manager: This person oversees

the business operations of a farm by providing organization and leadership during the production process. He or she contacts creditors, selects seeds, buys new equipment, and ensures the distribution of product.

- Agricultural lawyer: Attorneys who specialize in agriculture deal with water and environmental issues, represent agricultural labor in disputes, ensure proper marketing techniques are followed, handle real estate and land use issues, and much more.

- Animal control officer: These officers enforce local and regional laws that

pertain to the treatment and care of animals. They patrol for distressed animals and ensure cruelty-free practices are adhered to.

- Grain buyer: Grain buyers build relationships with producers so they can purchase grain for their particular companies. They negotiate purchase agreements, source grain supplies and issue purchase orders.

- Poultry hatchery manager: Hatchery managers oversee all of the aspects involved in poultry hatching. These can include management of personnel, handling and sorting of eggs, maintenance of equipment, coordination of pick-ups and deliveries, and overseeing quality control.

- Soil scientist: Among the many tasks they might perform, scientists in the field of agriculture test soil samples for minerals and contaminants. By studying the soil, scientists can recommend which crops the land can support, how much livestock can feed in an area and the implications of agriculture on the area as it pertains to managing natural resources.

A career in agriculture presents many exciting opportunities in a number of different applications. It's a vast industry that utilizes professionals with an array of skillsets.

B'ville FFA student to compete at State

Batesville High School FFA member Kaitlyn Sarringhaus participated and won in the District XII FFA Leadership Contest. She will now represent Batesville FFA at the State Convention set for June 14-17, 2021.

Kaitlyn will be given an agricultural topic at the competition. She will have 30 minutes to research and then an hour to write a persuasive essay.

The Batesville high school student will compete against 11 competitors.



Kaitlyn Sarringhaus

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 pen-

alty 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 incident.

"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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Milan FFA makes their mark



Madison Cavins is pictured with her plant science demonstration.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Milan FFA members competed in district leadership contest at East Central High School. They competed in animal science demonstration, plant science demonstration, prepared public speaking, extemporaneous public speaking, food science demonstration, job interview, scrapbook and FFA creed. Pictured from left are: Stephanie Hartman, Michelle Hoffrogge, Chloe Hunter, Madison Cavins, Emily Mutter, Jocelyn Allen and Rachel Henson.

USDA extends application deadline for the Quality Loss Adjustment Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending the deadline from March 5 to April 9 for agricultural producers to apply for the Quality Loss Adjustment (QLA) Program because of recent winter storms and some clarifications to program rules. This program assists producers, including those here in Indiana who suffered crop quality losses due to qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disasters.

“Because of recent winter storms and some program updates, we want to provide five additional weeks for producers to apply for the

program,” said Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator of the Farm Service Agency (FSA). “I want to make sure eligible producers have the opportunity to apply and to work with our team members to help with any questions. We recently clarified policy to ensure producers who sold grain to the feed market due to quality issues are adequately compensated.”

About the Program

The QLA program assists producers whose eligible crops suffered quality losses due to qualifying drought, excessive moisture, flooding, hurricanes, snowstorms, tor-

nadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, or wildfires.

Eligible crops include those for which federal crop insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage is available, except for grazed crops and value loss crops, such as honey, maple sap, aquaculture, floriculture, mushrooms, ginseng root, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, and turfgrass sod. Additionally, crops that were sold or fed to livestock or that are in storage may be eligible.

Assistance is available in counties that received a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or Secretarial Disaster Designation, or for drought, a county rated by the U.S. Drought monitor as having a D3 (extreme drought) or higher. Producers in counties that did not receive a qualifying declaration or designation may still apply but must also provide supporting documentation.

FSA will issue payments once the application period ends. If the total amount of calculated QLA payments exceeds available program funding, payments will be prorated.

More Information

FSA began accepting applications on January 6 and has received more than 8,100 applications so far.

To apply, contact your local USDA Service Center. Additional information is also available at farmers.gov/quality-loss. Producers can also obtain one-on-one support with applications by calling 877-508-8364.

While USDA offices are currently closed to visitors because of the pandemic, Service Center staff continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. To conduct business, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Additionally, more information related to USDA’s response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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The role of technology in agriculture



Technology has left a significant footprint in every industry, and the agricultural sector is no exception.

When asked to think of industries that utilize technology in unique ways, few people may immediately think of agriculture. But technology has left a significant footprint in every industry, and the agricultural sector is no exception.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture notes that modern farms operate a lot differently than the farms of yesteryear. Dramatic changes have taken place within the agricultural industry over the last few decades, helping farming operations become more efficient and profitable as well as safer and more eco-friendly.

Robots, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial images, and GPS technologies

are now routinely employed within the agricultural industry. The NIFA notes that the value of such technologies cannot be understated. Thanks to the technologies at their disposals, farmers no longer have to uniformly apply water, fertilizer and pesticides to their farms. Technology now allows them to use only the minimum amounts required as they zero in on individual plants and target specific areas of their farms. The NIFA notes that the utilization of these technologies produces some very real benefits, including:

- Higher crop productivity
- Reduced impact on natural ecosystems
- Less runoff of chemicals into rivers and groundwater

• Increased worker safety
Safer, more efficient and more eco-friendly operations can only make the agricultural industry more successful in the decades to come. That's especially notable as the world continues to confront climate change and how it might affect the food supply.

Though few may recognize the role of technology in modern farming, there's no denying the impact that various technologies have already had on the agricultural industry. And that impact figures to become even more profound in the decades to come.

Specialty crop growers eligible for federal funding

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is currently seeking project proposals from Indiana's specialty crop industry to present for funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The proposals must enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Indiana, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, horticulture and nursery crops.

"Indiana is a thriving home to many agricultural endeavors, which includes producing a variety of outstanding specialty crops," said Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch. "This funding opportunity will allow our specialty crop industry the ability to advance through research, market development, and education and training."

The USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program offers federal funding annually to

the state departments of agriculture to support their specialty crop industries. The allocation amount for Indiana is unknown at this time.

Applicants can include non-profit and for-profit organizations, governments and public or private colleges and universities. ISDA encourages applicants to develop projects focused on issues such as enhancing food safety, pest and disease control, developing organic and sustainable production practices, and developing local and regional food systems.

Funding will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, or provide a profit to a single organization, institution or individual. Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact on enhancing the competitiveness of eligible

specialty crops.

ISDA's funding priority will focus on three main areas:

- Funding Area I: Market Enhancement
- Funding Area II: Access, Education and Training
- Funding Area III: Research

"It is more important now than ever to leverage these financial opportunities, and I want to encourage all eligible businesses or organizations to apply," said Bruce Kettler, Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director. "These dollars will go a long way in ensuring Indiana's robust specialty crop sector remains thriving for years to come."

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. ET on March 25, 2021, and proposals must be submitted online through the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Grants Management System.

Longstanding farm families presented Hoosier Homestead Awards

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch and Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Bruce Kettler presented 51 Hoosier Homestead Awards to families on March 5 at the Indiana State Museum in recognition of their commitment to Indiana agriculture.

To be named a Hoosier Homestead, farms must be owned by the same family for more than 100 consecutive years, and consist of 20 acres or more, or produce more than \$1,000 in agricultural products per year.

"For generations, each of the families honored today have been committed to Indiana, to agriculture and to their families," Crouch said. "The past year has been challenging in many ways but our agriculture industry remains strong. Hoosier farmers are a big reason why Indiana remains the 10th largest farming state. I was grateful to have the opportunity to present this award to these historic farming families."

lies."

Families are eligible for three different distinctions of the Hoosier Homestead Award, based on the age of the farm. They can receive the Centennial Award for 100 years, Sesquicentennial Award for 150 years or Bicentennial Award for 200 years of ownership.

Since the program's inception in 1976, more than 5,800 families have received the award.

Two families were recognized with the Bicentennial Award during the ceremony; the Weinantz farm from Bar-

tholomew County was established in 1820 and the Hall farm from Orange County was established in 1818.

"The Hoosier Homestead program is a testament to the resiliency of our Indiana agriculture industry," Kettler said. "Each of these families have played a significant role in the heritage of our state and I am certain their legacy will continue for years to come."

For a list of this year's Hoosier Homestead Award recipients, go to the Indiana Department of Agriculture's website - www.in.gov/isda.



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Updated Indiana Dairy Strategy available

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture unveiled a new Indiana Dairy Strategy this year, which focuses on dairy business expansion, development and attraction to our great Hoosier state. Indiana Dairy Strategy 2.0 is an update to the previous dairy strategy released in 2015.

“This updated dairy strategy highlights our strengths as an agriculture focused state along with our unprecedented business climate,” said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch. “We want to encourage processors and dairy businesses to think of Indiana when realizing expansion or adding an

additional location is on the horizon.”

America’s dairy farmers are critical to agriculture, not just in Indiana, but around the world. Dairy products provide a rich source of protein and other vital nutrients at an affordable cost for consumers and it is readily available in almost all grocery stores. While the coronavirus pandemic did cause some disruptions for the dairy industry, this strategy focuses on data pre-COVID-19.

“Our dairy industry is crucial for our state and we are incredibly thankful for our Hoosier farmers and processors,” said Bruce Kettler,

Indiana State Department of Agriculture director. “Our dairy farmers are committed to their profession and we are proud to support them on the state level and will continue to do everything we can to increase milk processing in our state and add value to our dairy products.”

The Indiana Dairy Strategy 2.0 was developed to better understand our current dairy industry environment and its strengths. It also gives an overview of the data trends the industry has seen play out over the past few years. A goal of the dairy strategy was to find new ways to strengthen our

dairy industry and work with our current processors to increase milk outlets.

“The dairy industry is something I have been a part of all my life, and it is an industry that teaches me something new each day,” said Doug Leman, executive director of the Indiana Dairy Producers. “This updated strategy is a big step forward in making more opportunities available for Hoosier dairy farmers.”

Some highlights of the dairy strategy are as follows

- Indiana produces a net surplus of 3.5 million pounds of milk each day
- Indiana producers and



farmers have made strides around sustainability and work each day to reduce ecological impact

• A key asset in growing Indiana’s dairy sector is the state’s advantage of critical

infrastructure

• Indiana has a positive regulatory and tax environment for dairy producers and processors

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