

Indiana Specialty Agriculture, Organics, And Small Farms

Resource Guide



Navigating the world of specialty agriculture and organics can be overwhelming. Indiana has a wealth of resources, agencies and individuals available to provide assistance and answers to many of the questions that organic and specialty crop farmers have, but it can be hard to know where to go, or even the questions to ask. This brochure was designed to provide an overview of many of the resources available to specialty crop and organic farmers, and the places to go to get more information.

State Level Assistance

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service

(CES): The Cooperative Extension Service is one of the nation's largest providers of scientific research-based information and education. Purdue Extension is a service tailored to meet the needs of Indiana. CES educators, specialists, and volunteers live and work in all 92 Indiana counties. CES provides the link between Land Grant research and Indiana citizens—practical solutions to local issues. www.ces.purdue.edu

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

(SARE): Since 1988, the SARE program has helped advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities through a nationwide research and education grants program. SARE's website has a wealth of documents, guides, resources, grant opportunities and links. <http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/in.htm>

Indiana State Department of Agriculture

(ISDA): ISDA supports growth in Indiana agriculture by serving as an advocate at the local, state, and federal level; defining and nurturing economic opportunity in the food, fuel and fiber sectors; and enhancing the stewardship of natural resources on agricultural land. Agri-tourism, local markets, regulations, economic development, promotion, and environmental stewardship are all areas of focus. www.in.gov/isda/

Indiana Department of Environmental

Management (IDEM): IDEM provides environmental oversight and technical assistance in communities and around the

state. The agency provides information to businesses, educators, citizens, and farmers about environmental quality. IDEM can help with regulations and permits needed when expanding, constructing, or operating your agri-business. www.in.gov/idem/

Indiana State Board of Animal Health

(BOAH): The BOAH mission is to enhance Indiana's economy by protecting Hoosiers' investment in animal agriculture, wildlife, horses and companion animals; and to maintain a vital link in a safe food supply through the state meat and poultry and dairy inspection programs. www.in.gov/boah

Indiana State Health Department:

Food Protection is the regulatory division responsible for inspections of food establishments on state property, manufacturing plants, processors, warehouses, packagers, and transporters of food products for distribution to another entity for resale or redistribution. They provide training and technical assistance to local health departments, consumers and businesses. ISHD also provides guidelines for farmers markets, food regulations, etc. www.in.gov/isdh/

Office of Community and Rural Affairs

(OCRA): OCRA works with local, state, and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to aid rural communities in shaping their visions for economic development. Financial assistance (grants), education, and training, plus other technical services are available. www.in.gov/ocra/



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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County Level Assistance

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD): Across Indiana, 92 SWCDs—one in every county—help Indiana residents to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources that encompass our state's 23 million acres. All share a single mission: to coordinate assistance from available sources—public and private, local, state and federal—in an effort to develop locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns. www.iaswcd.org

County Health Departments: Each county in Indiana maintains its own office. County health departments fall under the regulations of the State Health Department, but may also enforce stricter regulations for an individual county. Contact the local county health department for specific food handling, processing, retail regulations, along with local animal ordinances.

Federal Government

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): NRCS employees work in every county in Indiana, hand-in-hand with land users to conserve natural resources on private lands. NRCS is committed to providing high quality technical assistance, conservation planning and program information support to private land users. Together we can meet the challenges of managing Indiana's natural resources. NRCS—Helping People Help the Land. www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

Farm Service Agency (FSA): FSA administers a 'set-aside' program called the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to protect environmentally sensitive cropland, disaster programs, and guaranteed farm ownership (FO) and operating loans (OL) to eligible family-size farmers that can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed seed, and supplies. FSA loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. www.fsa.usda.gov

Rural Development (RD): RD offers technical and financial assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their operations. Available grant and loan opportunities include: Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) and Rural Cooperative Development Grants. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/oa/oaspec.htm> <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/in/>

Nongovernmental Organizations

Certifiers: The USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program (NOP) accredits private businesses, organizations, and state agencies to certify producers and handlers of agricultural products according to the NOP regulations. Visit the www.usda.gov website and click on Agriculture in the left-hand column, then Organic Certification for a complete list of NOP-accredited certifiers.

Farm Bureau (FB): The Indiana Farm Bureau is an advocate for farmers and through its policies and programs, promotes agriculture and improves the economic and social welfare of its member families. Banking services include mortgage loans and refinancing including loans for land, small farms and businesses. www.infarmbureau.org

Grower Groups: Nearly every crop (pumpkin, vegetables, fruit, nuts, corn) and type of livestock (sheep, cattle, alpaca, llama) has its own grower group. The group may be local in scope, or part of a regional or national organization. These groups connect new growers and experienced growers, marketing opportunities, education, mentorship, and support. Two example groups: Indiana Fruit Growers www.indianafruitgrowers.org and Indiana Vegetable Growers www.ivga.org. Contact your County Extension Service for others near you.

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&Ds): Regional RC&D Councils accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources and improve the level of economic activity and standard of living. RC&Ds work uniquely with public and private partnerships to build relationships carry out projects that meet locally identified resource needs. Each RC&D is a non-profit organization. <http://inleaguercd.org/partners.php>

Indiana Cooperative Development Center (ICDC): A non-profit organization committed to providing a range of innovative, results-oriented, and cost effective services to cooperatives and related organizations. ICDC can assist with strategic planning, marketing analysis, feasibility studies, business plans, and staff trainings. ICDC hosts workshops, trainings, and other events. <http://icdc.coop/>

This brochure was published by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service with help from:

- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Indiana Board of Animal Health
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana Farm Bureau
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- Indiana State Department of Agriculture
- Numerous Growers Groups and Associations
- Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
- Rural Entrepreneur Network (Hoosier Heartland RC&D)
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA Rural Development

