

Today's **FARM**

A photograph of a man with a beard and a straw hat, wearing a plaid shirt, standing in a field of green plants. He is holding a small pile of potatoes in his right hand and a single large potato in his left hand, examining them. The background is a lush green field under a clear sky.

The title "Today's FARM" is overlaid on the image. "Today's" is written in a white, cursive, handwritten-style font. "FARM" is in large, bold, blue letters with a white outline. Below the main title is a red rectangular box containing the text "FALL 2022" in white, sans-serif capital letters.

A supplement of the **Journal Review**

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Veterans Shift to Farming

The USDA is turning to those who have served to shore up needs across the agricultural community — and getting started is easier than you think.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Like farmers, veterans have only succeeded by displaying a sturdy work ethic. Both professions also value service to a wider community, a willingness to adapt and learn, and a hearty nature. The USDA is strengthening this connection by seeking out veterans to help preserve rural communities, feed America and conserve the environment. One estimate put the number of military service personnel from these communities at about 1 million. Agriculture and agribusiness gives them a chance to re-purpose the military-instilled sense of discipline and passion to revitalize the United States' small farms. At the same time, farming offers a number of exciting job titles rolling into one: Entrepreneur, soil scientist, equipment-repair specialist, horticulturalist and conservationist, among others.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The USDA has partnered with organizations that offer veteran apprenticeships so they can quickly gain on-the-job expertise. These student farms offer real-world training opportunities, which can then translate into a new career path. Jobs are also directly offered at the USDA's Washington, D.C., headquarters and at more than 2,100 county offices across the United States. They'll also connect vets with financial and business-planning support once the training process is complete.

A GROWING NEED

Thousands of agriculture and agribusiness jobs are unfilled because there aren't enough potential workers with a knowledge base in renewable natural resources, food and the



environment, according to one study by Purdue University. This can create dangerous food-supply chain issues. The USDA offers special support programs for veterans who want to start or grow farm businesses in declining rural communities in the form of more than 40 grant, loan and technical-assistant programs. They'll still be serving our country, but in a whole new way.

OTHER HELPING HANDS

The Colorado-based Veterans to Farmers organization aims to assist vets in assimilating into life as private citizens through ag-focused education and training.

North Carolina's Veterans Healing Farm offers workshops on innovative ag techniques, while focusing a micro-community of new

friendships to bolster needed emotional and physical health. California's Farmer Veteran Coalition is bolstering the next generation of food leaders and farmers, while developing meaningful employment through collaborations between veteran and farming communities.

Margin protection crop insurance deadline nears

For the Journal Review

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — The USDA's Risk Management Agency reminds corn and soybean growers that the final date to apply for the Margin Protection insurance plan for the 2023 crop year is Sept. 30. This policy is available in select counties in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

Federal crop insurance is critical to the farm safety net. It helps producers and owners manage revenue risks and strengthens the rural economy.

Margin Protection is an area-based insurance plan that provides coverage against an unexpected decrease in operating margin (revenue less input costs), caused by reduced county yields, reduced commodity prices, increased prices of certain inputs, or any combination of these perils. Because Margin Protection is area-based (average for a county), an individual farm may have a decrease in its mar-

gin but not receive an indemnity or vice-versa.

You can buy Margin Protection and also buy a Yield Protection policy or a Revenue Protection policy (denoted as a base policy) on the same acreage.

To learn more about Margin Protection, please contact a crop insurance agent. There is also a national fact sheet on Margin Protection as well as Frequently Asked Questions on the RMA Website.

RMA is authorizing additional flexibilities due to coronavirus while continuing to support producers, working



through Approved Insurance Providers to deliver services, including processing policies, claims and agreements. RMA staff are working with AIPs and other customers by phone, mail and electronically to continue supporting crop insurance coverage for producers. On farmers.gov, you can find more information on USDA's response and relief for producers and use other tools and resources.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the RMA Agent Lo-

cator. Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at rma.usda.gov. If producers have additional questions, they can contact RMA's Regional Office in Springfield at 217-241-6600.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.



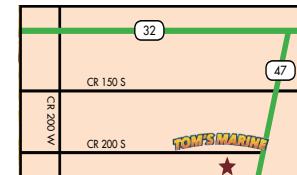
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Conserving Water

Agricultural water needs, along with more recent shortages and widespread droughts have put this incredibly important natural resource in the spotlight.

A PRESSING ISSUE

Farming accounts for some 40% of all of the country's freshwater withdrawals, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Globally, that number soars to some 70%. At the same time, some experts estimate that about two-thirds of our world population may be facing shortages by 2025. That's why farmers resource advocacy groups have increasingly pushed to make saving water a front-of-mind issue. Innovative new technology and conservation approaches have followed.

SCHEDULING

Timers can be employed to schedule watering during cooler parts of each day. Local county extension agents can provide details on the best times for irrigation in your area. There are also national resources to learn more about targeted watering. Software programs can now gather critical data about rainfall, area temperatures and humidity to aid farmers with recommendations on the optimal times for irrigation. Drip irrigation systems are also useful, since they deliver moisture to a plant's roots. That reduces the evaporation that always occurs with spray systems.

IDENTIFYING SPECIES

Some plants, including phreatophytes, consume more water than others. The presence of cottonwood, Russian olive, willows and tamarisk will draw significant resources away from nearby crops. They should be removed through mechanical means or the application of safe chemicals. At the same time, some crop species are naturally tolerant to drought, since they originate in arid regions. That includes olives, teary beans, Armenian cucumbers and orach.

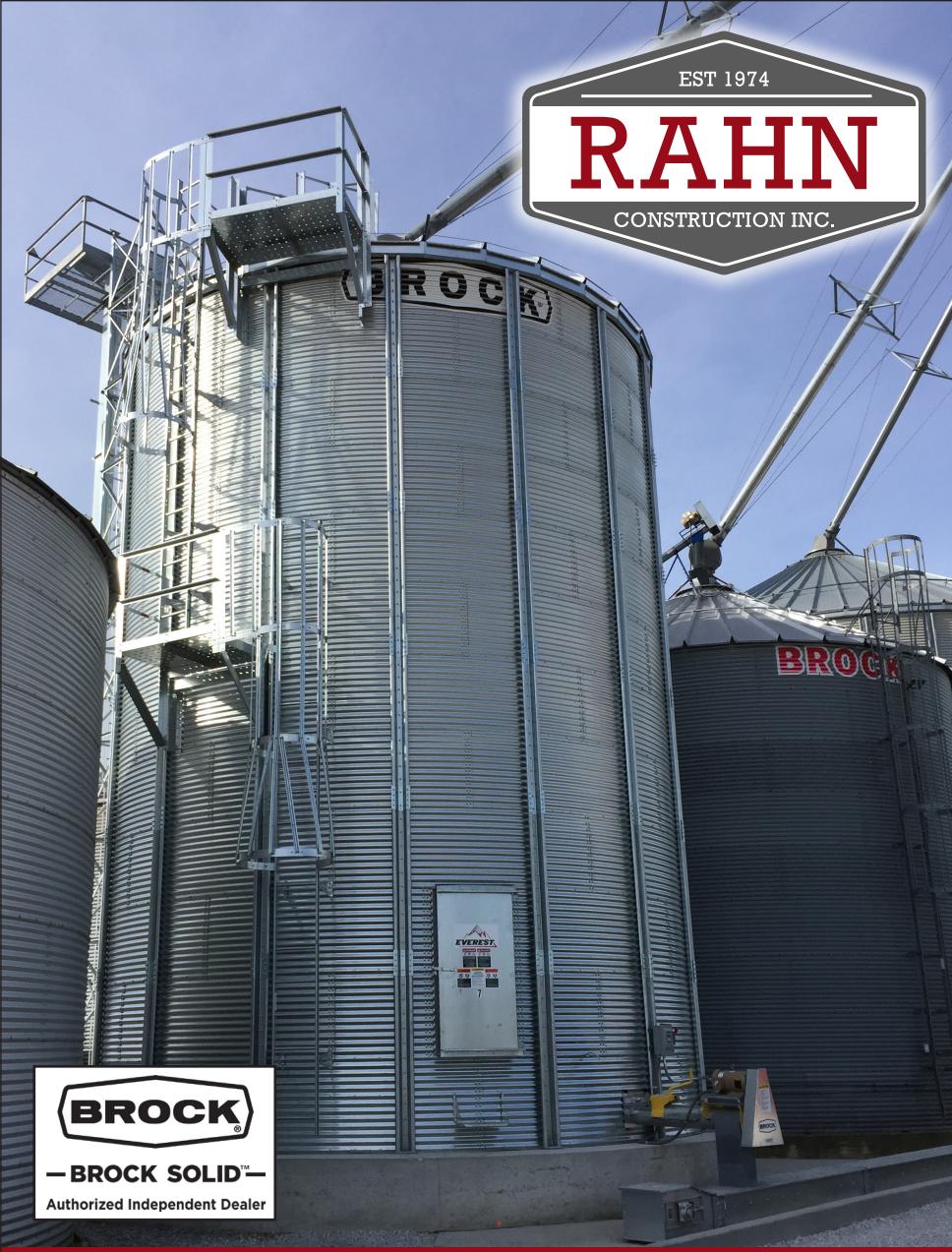
LEVELING

Leveling your land can create slopes that conserve water by reducing everyday runoff, while also allowing a more

uniform distribution of water. Technology makes it even easier, as farmers are now integrating a new laser-leveling method that reduces water use up to 30%, according to one study. Crop yields also increased by up to 20%.

COLLECTING

Various systems can be employed to collect and then reuse rainwater. Swales or trenches can redirect water to other needed areas, mitigate runoff, improve your soil quality and reduce erosion. Rain barrel systems takes advantage of gravity by collecting rain from roofs, making sustainability goals much easier to achieve. After the harvest, consider re-planting in ways that take advantage of your land's unique topographic features.



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Protect Cattle from the Cold

Brutal winters in the northeastern corridor or northern Plains get all the headlines, but trying conditions can impact animals in many other regions.

ACCLIMATION

The best practice for getting your cattle ready for winter involves acclimation. They should remain outside as summer becomes fall and then winter so that their coats can adjust to these changing conditions. As temps drop, they'll grow a thicker hair coat that will provide needed insulation for the seasons ahead.

PROTECTION

One of the most important things farmers can do for their livestock is provide protection from the elements. Temperatures below 18 degrees become unmanageable for cattle, even with their heavy coats. At that point, extension service agents warn, the animals can create a dangerous nutritional imbalance by expending too much energy while trying to stay warm. Wind, moisture and frigid temps can then lead to death without windbreaks or other barriers. Frostbite is also an issue, so ensure they have dry bedding. Calves have an increased risk of hypothermia, frostbite and death.

FEEDING

Cattle feedings should increase by 20% during cold-weather months, according to agricultural experts. That process should get underway before temps begin to drop, by providing additional hay or the required additional percentage of feed. But don't focus only on the amount or number of times livestock is fed. Some feeds have higher nutrient levels to help cattle reach the level of needed nourishment. When storms approach, place their feed behind the windbreak in order to encourage cattle to remain there.



WATER

Check water levels daily, since inadequate intake can lead to weight loss since cattle won't eat as much. They will attempt to eat snow if water is unavailable for long enough, but they can't consume enough of it to meet personal water needs.

OTHER DANGERS

Swales, creek bottoms and similar features on your land shouldn't be used as windbreaks. They make for a welcoming environment for drifting snow when there are high winds. Cattle might have difficult getting to

and accessing water; they could even be buried in snow.

Choose a spot where drifting is less of a danger. Use sand, grave or a tool to rough up surfaces where ice accumulates to ensure safe passage for both you and your livestock.

Record year for Indiana farms receiving historic homestead award

For the Journal Review

INDIANAPOLIS — Recognized for their families' longstanding commitment to agriculture, 106 Indiana family farms were presented the Hoosier Homestead Award today at the Indiana State Fair from Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Bruce Kettler.

"Recognizing and engaging Indiana's historic farming families with Hoosier Homestead awards at the Indiana State Fair is an honor for me each year," said Crouch, who is Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "The hard work, consistency and longstanding values within these families is inspira-

tional. These families and their farms are securing a strong future for many generations to come."

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.

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

"Since the formation of these farms, these families have provided for their communities, our state and the Indi-

ana agriculture industry. It is hard to put into words the value and impact these family farms have on Hoosier agriculture as a whole," Kettler said. "It is my utmost pleasure to recognize these record number of longstanding families for their hard work in providing the food, fuel and fiber necessary to sustain our state."

Since the program's inception in 1976, over 6,100 families have received the award. Often, a Hoosier Homestead farm is easily recognized because most recipients proudly display their awarded sign on their property.

For this ceremony four Indiana farms received the Bicentennial Award for 200 years of continuous ownership. They include, the Speer family farm from Jennings county,



the Hartman family farm from Parke county and the Layton Acres, Inc. family farm and the Logan family farm, both from Rush county.

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4 Challenges Facing Farmers Today

(Family Features) Modern farming looks substantially different than it did a generation or two ago. Unprecedented pressures and challenges, only exacerbated by the past couple of years, make it increasingly challenging for growers to produce healthy crops with strong yields that also maintain profitability.

"Farming has always been a balancing act, but today's growers are managing against multiple variables beyond their direct control," said Jeff Divan, director, sales agronomy at Sound Agriculture. "Fortunately, taking steps like increasing nutrient efficiency can help address some common challenges so growers can dedicate their attention to other in-season needs."

Divan points to four key areas where farmers can make changes that could positively affect their success and profitability:

CROP INPUT PRICES

Commodity prices are high and demand is ramping up, but those promising signs come at a (literal) cost. The cost of inputs is a leading concern for growers; in particular, input shortages, higher prices and supply chain issues are top challenges when it comes to mainstays needed for the growing season.

When possible, lining up chemicals early in the season is one proactive step against potential shortages. Basing calculations on data from past years is a starting point. In many parts of the country, for example, preemergence programs are increasingly important; the priority will be managing against waterhemp and other broad-leaves, as well as grasses.

HIGH FERTILIZER PRICES

Unforgiving prices and limited availability in the fertilizer market have some growers looking to new ways to protect their profits. With fertilizer prices high, many growers are considering managing nitrogen as a way to reduce costs, improve nutrient use efficiency and increase return on investment. A solution may lie in assets farmers already have. Getting



more nutrients from the soil can mean higher yields and a reduction in fertilizer.

Many nutrients applied to a field never make it to the crop, but a foliar-applied biochemistry like Source wakes up soil microbes and improves access to nitrogen and phosphorus. Once applied, it activates microbes in the root zone that fix atmospheric nitrogen and unlock phosphate. Crops get more nutrients at critical times throughout the season, reducing reliance on synthetic fertilizer without impacting yield. Improved nutrition also leads to healthier plants and increased yields. Use the product with no other changes to increase yield or add it while reducing synthetic nitrogen (up to 50 pounds per acre) to reduce fertilizer input costs.

CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS

Volatile spring weather creates challenging planting conditions for

farmers. While navigating environmental stressors has always been part of the job, changing weather patterns make a farmer's job more difficult. Spring planting is off to the slowest start in nine years, according to the USDA Crop Progress Report. Cold and wet weather has made it hard to get into fields and alters product usage and timing. Even as crops are quickly planted between rains, the cooler soil temperatures will still lead to delayed emergence.

Having a plan can help, however. Decide a strategy based on current conditions and be ready to adjust if things change. Working closely with ag retail partners can help farmers prepare for challenges that arise throughout the season and help adjust plans on the fly. In the long term, improving soil health can benefit soil structure by reducing erosion and increasing water filtration and retention. Consider adopting practices like reduced tillage and

cover crops, as well as maximizing biodiversity.

SUSTAINABLE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Managing nitrogen run-off is a practical endeavor in terms of both cost-efficiency and sustainability. When nutrients are applied to fields, a portion goes unused due to timing and weather events. In fact, 30-50% of nitrogen is lost to leaching, runoff, denitrification and volatilization.

Unused nitrogen and phosphorus lead to waste, but there are ways to help plants access more of these nutrients. With a use rate of just a few ounces per acre, Source helps get more nutrients out of the field, supporting ample yields with less fertilizer and the additional benefit of decreased runoff and environmental impact.

Find more advice to help overcome challenges in the field and beyond at sound.ag.

Ag robot demonstration successful

For the Journal Review

WHIN tech partner, Solinftec, is preparing to launch a new ag robot.

A few members of the WHIN team attended a demo of the robot on a commercial farm in Benton County.

Earlier this year, Solinftec secured \$60 million in growth investment funding to accelerate the launch and development of new disruptive technologies, such as Solix, and expand their offerings to small farmers.

Solix, the new ag robot, was also announced earlier this year and is being made possible in partnership with Illinois-based agricultural cooperative GROWMARK Inc. The robot will be able to autonomously scan and monitor fields and provide farmers and agronomists with a new level of data to further increase yields, avoid wasted inputs, and lower environmental impacts.

The Solix Sprayer robot will provide autonomous and sustainable spot-spray applications in grower's fields, the spray

robot is powered by four solar panels that control the drive system and the spray system while providing reports on crop populations, weed identification and densities, disease identification and thresholds, insect identification and thresholds, nutrient deficiency identification and densities, NDVI among other layers of maps for data analysis, and much more useful data to the grower virtually 24/7.

Solinftec's long-term goals are to not only help produce more food, but develop technology to help farmers lower environmental impacts. She says they also want to make technology accessible to small farmers.

WHIN is proud to be partnered with Solinftec and have their technology available to our Ag Alliance members.

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Creating a Succession Plan

No one expects the worst to happen, but if it does your farm or ranch could hang in the balance.

LOOKING AHEAD

Everyone's goal is work until you're ready to retire, then hand down an inheritance in an orderly fashion. Sometimes, injury or other issues change that timeline. In either case, it's best to have a plan in place so that you have some say in how succession unfolds. Consider how you'd like things to go on your farm or ranch over future generations, instead of seasons. Is there a family member who'd take the reins? Or perhaps someone who you've worked with who shares your unique philosophy toward the work? A succession plan ensures a smooth transition when you step down.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Evaluating potential heirs to your farm begins with asking a few critical questions, according to the Farm Bureau's financial services division. Are they as passionate about the specific business you've grown as you are? Will they be committed for the long haul? Is this person someone who you'll be comfortable with handing over management decisions and control? Creating a successful plan begins with picking the right person, and that means taking a moment for careful consideration.

TALK ABOUT IT

Discuss succession in both short-term and long-term ways, while developing and confirming new roles and responsibilities. Once you've decided to create a plan, it's important to have open and frank discussions with the family members and staff who will be directly impacted. A transition team may emerge from these discussions. You may also decide to create a longer timeline based on how prepared members of your team are to take over.



MAKING THE TRANSFER

The final succession plan should take into account your desire to remain a joint partner during a transitional period, or giving up ownership of your farm or ranch all at

once. Consult an experienced attorney when drawing up the paperwork, since passing down land carries tax responsibilities. You'll also have to consider what to do with the machinery and livestock. Selling, gifting or trading this property can have its own

tax implications.

In the end, executing this plan may mean collaborating with an accountant, an insurance agent and a financial planner, too. They'll help inform your decisions every step of the way.

Updates to crop insurance plans broaden access

For the Journal Review

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture is improving two of its most comprehensive risk management safety net programs, Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm, making them more accessible to America's agricultural producers. This includes doubling the maximum insurable revenue under WFRP, now \$17 million, more than tripling the size of farm operations eligible for Micro Farm, now \$350,000 and reducing paperwork requirements for WFRP. These improvements are in direct response to feedback from stakeholders as USDA's Risk Management Agency recognizes the important role these insurance options play for many producers, including specialty crop, organic

and direct market producers. "Listening to farmers and ranchers, learning about their needs and increasing access to resources are all priorities for us at RMA," said RMA Administrator Marcia Bunger. "Over the past year and a half, we have rolled out a number of improvements to WFRP, as well as introduced the new Micro Farm program, and through updates to Whole Farm Revenue Protection and Micro Farm, RMA can now help even more local food, direct market, specialty crop and organic producers protect their operations."

The WFRP program provides protection for all eligible commodities on a farm under one insurance policy. Now, producers can insure up to \$17 million in revenue (formerly \$8.5 million).

Other updates to WFRP include: Allowing a producer to report and self-certify yield at the beginning of the year for commodities without other insurance options in a way similar to those with individual crop policies. This will significantly reduce the amount of paperwork required to apply for WFRP.

Eliminating expense reporting to reduce paperwork burden. In place of expense reporting, WFRP will reduce the expected revenue of commodities a producer is unable to plant to 60%, similar to prevented planting for other programs.

These updates build on others recently made to WFRP, including expanded coverage and flexibilities for organic producers.

The Micro Farm program, offered

through WFRP, provides a risk management safety net for all eligible commodities on a farm under one insurance policy, but on a smaller scale. Now, producers with farm operations up to \$350,000 in approved revenue (formerly \$100,000) can get coverage. RMA introduced the new Micro Farm program in 2021 to better serve direct market and small-scale producers. While the program is well received and feedback has been largely positive, industry partners and small, diversified producers have informed RMA that the current limit is too low to meet the needs of many interested producers. In response, the FCIC approved the increase in size for eligible farm operations.

The updates to WFRP and Micro Farm take effect in crop year 2023.

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Putting Up Summer Crops

The season ends with bushels of food. Now it's time to put it all away for winter.

BEST RESULTS

If you want the very best results, your harvest should be canned as soon as possible — ideally on the very day it's picked. Tender young produce cans the best, because it retains more flavor. Can several times through the growing period to make the most of any extended harvest periods.

BENEFITS OF CANNING

In some cases, you'll eat your freshly picked crops immediately — either as fresh or as part of a prepared meal. Preserve the rest of your farm's produce so you can enjoy it all year round. The key is removing oxygen from the space that surrounds the food in jars or cans, so that molds, bacteria and yeasts won't grow. Your costs will be cut in half versus canned food from the store, according to the University of Georgia's National Center for Home Food Preservation.

DIFFERENT FORMS

Wash and peel your fresh-picked food before canning begins. Most produce should be hot packed, and many require an acidic additive like lemon juice. Higher-acid foods like berries, cucumbers and berries can be canned in a pressure canner or water bath. The cans are immersed in boiling water for a previously allotted time period. Water should be at least an inch above the tops of your jars, in order to force out oxygen and seal the lids. Water baths, however, don't work for foods with lower acidic content like peas, corn, carrots, onions and squash. Large pots with screw-on or clamp-on lids are used in pressure canning. It's actually the heat, not the pressure, that kills microorganisms to keep the food safe over the long winter months.



STORING TIPS

Once you've properly preserved your harvest, it's time to safely store it away for future meals. The space should be dry, cool and dark. Exposure to direct sunlight, as well as tem-

peratures of more than 95 degrees, will create quality or spoilage issues. Tell-tale signs include obvious bacteria growth in the jars, as well as swelling lids, bubbling within the jar and broken seals from internal pressure.

Foods may also change colors. Check for unusual odors when opening the jars, and look for mold that has a cotton-like appearance.

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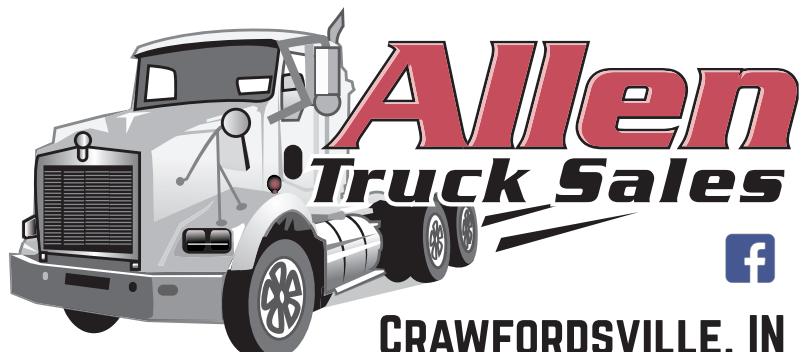
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Winterizing your Equipment

As the seasons turn, take a few moments to get ready for cooler temperatures by utilizing these key techniques.

The arrival of the offseason following a busy harvest doesn't mean there's nothing left to do.

Quite the opposite, in fact: Maintaining equipment during the cold months can save time and lots of money on potential repairs.

CHANGING FUEL

Those using No. 2 diesel for warmer months should switch to a more winter-friendly version. No. 2 offers more energy per gallon, but the No. 1 version of this fuel boasts a lower cloud point, so it gels at lower temps

than No. 2 diesel. Winterize systems that could be exposed to freezing temperatures, so that pumps aren't damaged.

USED OIL ANALYSIS

Your equipment works overtime to keep up with the demands of a farm or ranch's busiest season. Consider getting a used oil analysis to determine the extent of this wear and tear. Technicians will be able to detect trace elements in the oil sample that point to a number of issues. Get those things fixed before putting away your equipment, and you'll have a smoother spring.

MAINTAINING YOUR BATTERY

Much of your everyday machinery will be sitting idle over the winter, so it's important to disconnect any batteries that you can in order to avoid leaks. Elsewhere, check and replace any coolant that isn't designed to work at lower temperatures. Top off your fuel and oil tanks to guard against the build up of condensation.

GREASE MOVING PARTS

Once those potential issues have been addressed, move on to greasing up any the machine's moving parts. These elements can corrode over the

winter, when they'll be remaining still. A fresh dollop of grease will also make sure everything gets quickly moving again when it's time to plant.

CLEANING UP

Clean equipment to remove dirt and plant debris before temps fall too low. This material holds moisture, and can lead to rust that eats away at metal parts. Washed equipment also repels pests. Looks for broken welds, wear points, alignment issues, lubrication problems and loose fasteners. Winter will give you time to make repairs in an orderly fashion before things get hectic again in the spring. Tackle everything early, and you'll hit the ground running.

More than 40 states, territories to issue \$12.5B in USDA's child food benefits

Department seeks to reduce childhood hunger and combat food inflation

For the Journal Review

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has partnered with 42 states and territories across the country to provide summer food buying benefits to families with children. These states and territories will provide an estimated \$12.5 billion in temporary nutrition benefits to approximately 32 million children.

Summer hunger has always been an issue when schools close, but electronic benefit transfer, commonly known as EBT, is a proven way to help families bear food costs. These benefits are even more critical during times of inflation. The Biden Administration is doing everything it can to ensure all states are positioned to issue P-EBT benefits to families for the summer months when children are at a higher risk for food insecurity.

"Providing children with the food and nutrition they need to live healthy lives is a year-round mission, and we are proud to partner with many states and territories to provide food-buying benefits for this summer," said Cindy Long, administrator of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. "Our hope is that all states will adopt the program, ensuring that all children have access to the healthy food they need and deserve."

States and territories with USDA-approved plans to issue the benefits include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

USDA continues to actively as-



sist other states with their Summer P-EBT plans.

Children are eligible for this temporary nutrition benefit, known as Summer P-EBT, if they are eligible for free or reduced-price meals during the school year, or if they are under age six and live in a household receiving SNAP benefits. The benefits are loaded onto a debit-type card that can be used to purchase food. Families of eligible children typically receive \$391 per child for the summer, with higher rates for families in Alaska, Hawaii and U.S. territories.

There is strong evidence that providing families with summer child food benefits has positive impacts, such as:

- Decreasing by one-third the number of households with children who

do not always have enough to eat;

- Reaching children across diverse geographical areas – including difficult-to-reach rural populations; and
- Increasing consumption of nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy.

For more information about the program, visit the P-EBT webpage. Also see the Frequently Asked Questions and Summer P-EBT blog post.

Families seeking additional food assistance for children in their household can reach out to the USDA National Hunger Hotline, operated by Hunger Free America, which connects people with food assistance in their nearby communities. The hotline can be reached Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET. at 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479) (for

English) or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (1-877-842-6273) (for Spanish).

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service leverages its 15 nutrition assistance programs to ensure that children, low-income individuals, and families have opportunities for a better future through equitable access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food, while building a more resilient food system. Under the leadership of Secretary Tom Vilsack, FNS is fighting to end food and nutrition insecurity for all through programs such as SNAP, school meals and WIC. FNS also provides science-based nutrition recommendations through the co-development of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. To learn more, visit www.fns.usda.gov and follow @USDANutrition.



Changing food waste one grocery store trip at a time

For the Journal Review

If there was one weekly habit you could change to assist in reducing global food waste, would you consider adopting it?

Brenna Ellison, associate professor and undergraduate program coordinator of agricultural economics, said changing grocery shopping habits has been identified as one way to reduce household food waste, one of the most wasteful nodes within the supply chain. The change needed isn't to shop less, but rather to grocery shop more frequently.

Shopping more often for groceries, or maintaining a just-in-time (JIT) food inventory, allows households to meet immediate, short term needs for cooking instead of attempting to plan out one to two weeks' worth of meals with one large trip, Ellison explained. In a recent study she found that while con-

sumers generally were interested in ways they could reduce their waste at home, changing their regular consumer habits wasn't something they were interested in doing.

"What we found in our study was that the average person has no interest in going to the grocery store even one more time per week," Ellison said. "But if we had to put a dollar amount on it, the economic calculation we made is that if we ask the average person to add one extra shopping trip per week to their grocery routine, we would have to pay them \$24. That's the amount a person would need to be compensated with for them to be willing to change that habit."

Customers select produce from fully stocked bins at a local grocery store.

In addition to dollar amount, Ellison and her co-authors also considered how much household food waste would need to be reduced to convince consumers to add one extra grocery shopping trip

per week. For the average person, they would need to experience a 12-percentage point reduction in food waste at home to be willing to add one extra trip.

While the average consumer was unwilling to add more grocery shopping trips to their weekly routine, Ellison noted that there is significant diversity in grocery shopping preferences. One of the unexpected finds in her study, Ellison said, was that it was commonly men who didn't mind making the extra trip to the store during the week over women.

"If you think about the division of labor in a household, a lot of the time it is still women who are doing the grocery shopping, and they aren't really willing to do more of it," she said. "If we want to encourage extra trips to reduce waste, it may be that those who are currently not shopping or who are shopping less are more willing to get involved."

Ellison understands the JIT shopping approach may not be doable for everyone, and that's okay. Leaning into choices of fresh over frozen or canned produce can help cut back on waste as well, without eliminating the nutritional benefits of consumption.

One of the other major changes consumers can make in their weekly routines, Ellison said, is being honest with your cooking intentions and adding dining out, when the budget allows, into your meal planning.

"The advice I always give is to be realistic with your planning. Are you someone who doesn't want to cook a few times a week? If not, that's fine," she said. "Instead of buying food like you're going to cook every weeknight meal, give yourself some grace rather than allowing that food you thought you'd be in the mood to cook go to waste."

Designing Your Garden for Better Mental Health

(StatePoint) Gardening is not only a means for beautifying outdoor spaces and growing delicious foods. According to those who spend significant time in the yard, getting outside can also support your wellbeing.

"Gardening is good for the mind, it's good for the soul and it's good for the body," said legendary football coach, Vince Dooley. "I enjoy coming out to garden, and when I finish, I feel like I've done something, and I feel good."

Landscape architect Doug Scott of Redeem Your Ground recently visited Dooley in Athens, Ga. to discuss gardening and mental health. Here are some of the insights they shared:

HEALTH BENEFITS

- Active benefits: Gardening exercises the body and clears the mind. Studies show that increased outdoor exposure leads to fewer long-term health problems, helping improve cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, strength, and dexterity—all leading to better mental health.

Simply planting, growing, harvesting and maintaining plants gives you a direct emotional boost. Why? Gardening helps foster nurturing instincts and restores a sense of hope and purpose, ultimately improving self-esteem.

- Passive benefits: Don't have a green thumb? Don't worry. Scientific evidence proves that just being in nature has positive impacts on stress levels and brain chemistry. It can also lower blood pressure, increase concentration and improve mood. What's more, being outdoors offers a deeper sense of belonging and a new sense of purpose outside the daily grind.

DESIGNING YOUR GARDEN

Scott advises designing your garden to reflect how you want to live outside. He typically builds "rooms" connected by meandering paths for resting, unwinding, and feeling restored. However, your outdoor spaces don't always need to be quiet. They can encourage activity as well. If you enjoy company,

create gathering spaces. Or, if you have hobbies that can be done outdoors like exercising, painting or writing, you can set aside areas for them.

Finally, Scott recommends designing your garden to awaken your five senses. Here's how:

1. Sight: Choose calming colors, or those that bring you joy. The simple sight of a breathtaking array of plants or an arrangement of favorite flowers is bound to give your mental health a boost.

2. Taste: Growing your own food will provide you with an incredibly rewarding harvest. Not only will you be able to enhance meals with the fruits of your labor, you'll get the personal satisfaction of a job well done.

3. Hearing: Among the plants and flowers, add fixtures, such as wind chimes and water features, that'll produce soothing sounds. And with the new habitat you've created, you'll enjoy bird song, too!

4. Touch: From the light, feathery

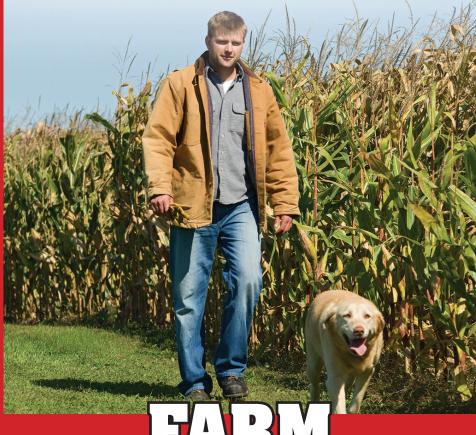
textures of petals to the rough surfaces of bark or bush stems, touch offers a deeper sense of connection to nature.

5. Smell: You may already use aromatherapy indoors. Take this concept outside by growing fragrant flowers and herbs, so you can literally "stop to smell the roses."

Scott and Dooley offer more insights in "Garden Therapy," a recent episode of "Done-In-A-Weekend Projects," an original series from lawn care equipment manufacturer, Exmark. To watch the video, visit Backyard Life, which is part of a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping homeowners make the most of outdoor spaces. There you can also download additional tips and view other Exmark Original Series videos.

By gardening, your mental health will be better off for it. Just be sure to start small, simple and stress-free.

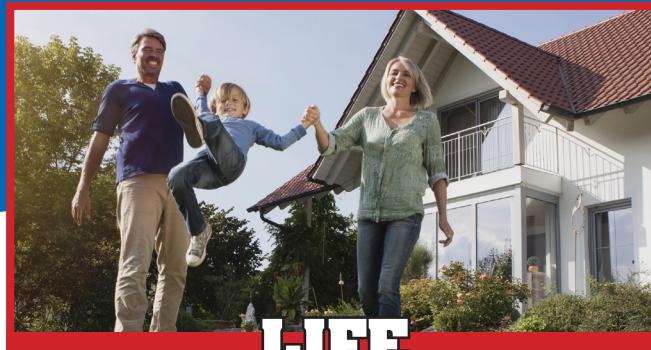
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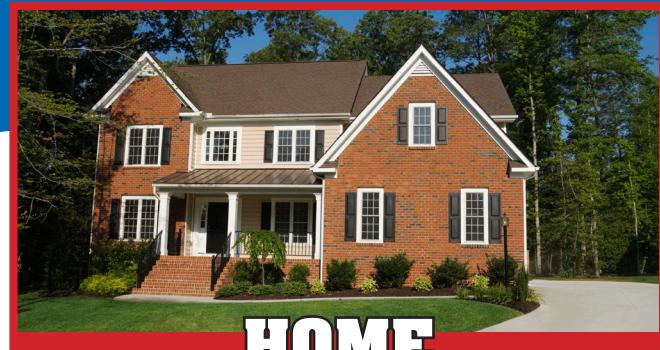
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GMOs Explained

(Family Features) Many consumers are curious to learn more about the purpose and safety of GMOs.

“GMO” is a common term used to describe foods made from organisms (plants, microorganisms and animals) that have been created using technology called genetic engineering. Genetic engineering allows scientists to copy a gene with a desired trait from one organism and put it into another.

PURPOSE OF GMOS

Humans have modified crops and animals to suit their needs and tastes for thousands of years. Crossbreeding, selective breeding and mutation breeding are examples of traditional ways to make these genetic changes, and they have been used to create crops like modern corn varieties and seedless watermelon. These methods often involve mixing all the genes from two different sources. For example, today's strawberries are a cross between a strawberry species native to North America and a strawberry species native to South America.

Modern technology allows scientists to use genetic engineering to take a specific beneficial gene, like insect resistance or drought tolerance, and transfer it into a plant without also transferring undesirable genes, which sometimes occurs in traditional plant breeding. The reasons for genetic modification today are similar to what they were thousands of years ago: higher crop yields, less crop loss, longer storage life, better appearance, better nutrition or a combination of these traits.

Some GMO plants have been modified to improve their nutritional value. An example is GMO soybeans with healthier oils – higher oleic acid – that can be used to replace oils containing trans fats. Scientists are continuing to look for new ways to develop foods with increased nutritional value and other useful traits.

SAFETY OF GMOS

Multiple agencies within the United States government work to regulate



GMOs, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Each agency plays a part in ensuring GMOs are safe for human, plant and animal health. For example, the FDA makes sure foods from the GMOs it regulates meet the same safety standards as the non-GMO version. The three agencies also monitor the impact of GMOs on the environment.

Research shows GMO foods currently on the market are no more likely to cause allergic reactions than non-GMO versions of the same foods. Most food allergies are caused by allergens found in just nine foods: peanuts, tree nuts,

milk, eggs, wheat, soy, sesame, shellfish and fish.

The way GMOs are created allows scientists to know precisely which new proteins are produced in a plant. Scientists perform tests to make sure these new proteins are not allergens. This type of testing, called allergenicity testing, is always part of the process for developing GMOs. As part of this testing, developers consider whether any substances added to the food have characteristics of allergens, such as whether they come from an allergenic source.

Learn more about GMOs and their impact on your health at fda.gov/feedyourmind.

UPDATED FOOD LABELING

Certain types of GMOs have a disclosure that lets you know if the food is a bioengineered food. Bioengineered food is the term that Congress used to describe certain types of GMOs when they passed the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard.

The Standard establishes requirements for labeling foods that humans eat that are or may be bioengineered and defines bioengineered foods as those that contain detectable genetic material that has been modified through certain lab techniques and cannot be created through conventional breeding or found in nature.

Purdue ag experts provide insights into global food, economic security crises

For the Journal Review

WEST LAFAYETTE — With the war in Ukraine entering its seventh month and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic still being experienced, growing challenges threaten the world's economic and food security.

Purdue University College of Agriculture experts in the areas of food and economic security and energy share their perspectives on these critical issues.

Gebisa Ejeta, World Food Prize laureate and professor of agronomy, is an expert in the areas of food security, international agriculture and global development. He has served at the highest levels of science and policy advisory, including as special adviser to the USAID administrator, science envoy of the U.S. State Department and as a member of the National Academy of Sciences Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources, the U. S. Board for International Agricultural Development and the UN Secretary's Scientific Advisory Board.

Ejeta emphasizes that combining the work of universities as generators of knowledge and discovery with that of private-sector producers and processors, through the power of markets and trade, is where a win-win can occur in addressing the inequities around the world, both within and between nations.

"The gap is growing. It is a gap in resources and in the knowledge base. For the betterment of humanity, we need to narrow these gaps," he says. "There are still abundant natural resources and a sufficient knowledge base to support more equitable economic opportunities to feed, nourish and shelter humanity. That is essential if we are to be able to feed humanity and keep our planet in perpetuity."

Michael Langemeier, professor of agricultural economics and associate director of Purdue's Center for

Commercial Agriculture, specializes in agricultural finance and farm management. He underscores concern for farmers when the margins by which they earn a living have been consistently shrinking.

"Agriculture can't be rushed and is a relatively slow process," he says. "The industry can't respond immediately to changing needs and demand. Farmer sentiment has been volatile since COVID. Supply chain issues from COVID have also not yet been resolved, which puts pressure on all businesses."

Jayson Lusk, distinguished professor and head of agricultural economics, is also the director of the Center for Food Demand Analysis and Sustainability. As he considers the past several years and looks ahead, he speculates about how the United States and the world will respond.

"Economic conditions and food supply disruptions are occurring that could lead to political instability in more countries across the globe. We aren't there yet, but there is reason to be concerned," Lusk says. "The agricultural system can't immediately increase supply. The hamburger you are eating today is the result of decisions made three years ago."

An agronomy associate professor who specializes in wheat breeding and genetics, Mohsen Mohammadi highlights the gap in productivity between research and growers' farms.

"International partnership is critical to bridge the gap from here to our full potential. We must open the doors and share our knowledge and innovations," he says.

Specifically addressing the potential losses with Ukrainian wheat exports, Mohammadi explains the possible impact.

"There is no other supply to substitute for the Ukrainian wheat. This season, the best thing everyone can do for global food security is to collect and facilitate the trade



of wheat to get it where it needs to go," he says.

Research professor Farzad Taheripour's research bridging energy and agriculture has become increasingly relevant with volatile gas prices and increasing environmental concerns.

"Right now, we have a contradiction of goals," Taheripour says. "We want to secure a supply of crude oil to maintain consumption of gasoline at lower prices, but for environmen-

tal concerns we also want to move away from petroleum products and increase use of cleaner sources of energy."

Taheripour also emphasizes that these issues are defined by policies across the globe.

"The recent increases in gas and crop prices suggest that we need to implement a set of well-defined policies to manage both the agricultural and energy market as these markets interact in various ways."

Invasive spotted lanternfly now in northern Indiana

For the Journal Review

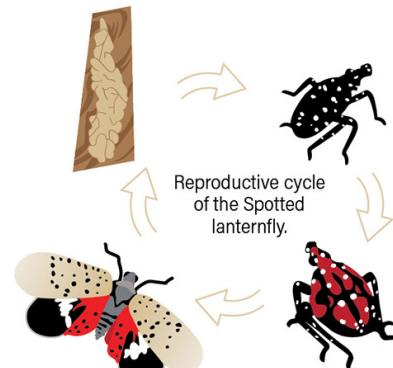
WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Seen in July in Indiana's Huntington County, the invasive spotted lanternfly has officially migrated to northern Indiana, just one year after its initial sighting in Switzerland County.

Cliff Sadof, professor of entomology and Purdue Extension fellow, said this migration poses a significant agricultural risk to wine grape growers and honeybee and walnut tree producers. While the spotted lanternfly feeds on over 100 different types of plants, Sadof said, the insect can reproduce only when feeding on walnut trees, grape vines or tree of heaven.

Elizabeth Long, Purdue University assistant professor of horticulture crop entomology, said one of the best defenses that wine grape growers can take against the spotted lanternfly is learning to identify the life stages of the insect and remaining vigilant inspecting for them.

"Several of the insecticides grape growers currently use for other insect pests will also knock down the spotted lanternfly, so there is no need to make additional sprays as a preventative at this time," Long said. "Looking to next season, the same strategy is needed. Keeping an eye out for spotted lanternfly hitchhikers and avoiding moving items that are likely to accidentally move insects along are key. Spotted lanternfly populations feeding on wine grape vines can severely reduce winter hardiness or kill the crop all together."

Brock Harpur, Purdue assistant professor of entomology, said bee keep-



ing equipment can also provide the perfect spot for spotted lanternflies to lay eggs, allowing the insect to travel around the state.

"It is imperative for beekeepers to keep a careful eye out for signs of the spotted lanternfly in their area and on their equipment," Harpur said. "Should the spotted lanternfly become established in all parts of Indiana, it is expected that honeydew, the secretion that spotted lanternfly leave behind, will become part of our late-summer honey harvest."

Bees make good use of any honeydew they collect, Harpur said, but that isn't desirable. If a colony does collect honeydew, a beekeeper may notice the honey has a smokey taste and smell and is less sweet than a typical honey. The honeydew tainted product has a darker brown color and a notable aftertaste.

Though the full-grown adults have beautiful coloring and patterns,



spotted lanternfly eggs resemble a splash of mud, making them easy to overlook on large vehicles traveling from state to state. Homeowners should, therefore, also remain vigilant in keeping populations in check, Sadof said, as the honeydew secretions from the insect are frequently spread across homes and structures and are

extremely difficult to remove when dried.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources asks all residents to search for and report spotted lanternfly sightings. Anyone spotting the insect should photograph it and send the image and location to DEPP@dnr.in.gov, or call 1-866-No-Exotic.





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Looking to Expand?

There are a variety of obstacles standing in the way when you look to buy land, but there are also programs meant to smooth the way.

BEFORE YOU BUY

You may already have your eye on a particular spot, or you may have stumbled into an investment opportunity through the USDA Farm Service Agency's online inventory of farm- or ranch-land property for purchase. Either way, it's important to evaluate the plot, your plan and your equipment in order to make the best decision when expanding your land. Farmers should closely analyze factors including irrigation availability, soil condition, location and area climate before buying, according to the Noble Research Institute. Familiarize yourself with the amount of land needed for specific crops. You'll also need a thorough inventory of equipment to determine if anything additional is needed.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Once you've gotten a handle on how it might work and what's needed, it's time to talk money. Government programs offer benefits specifically aimed at farmers who don't have liquid capital to buy land. The FSA's Direct Farm Ownership loans offer up to 100% financing for those looking to grow family farming operations, and extend or improve operations, as well as any projects meant to save acreage for future generations and increase productivity, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

BE READY TO NEGOTIATE

Consider hiring a real estate professional who is versed in agricultural deals, so you'll have a negotiating advantage. Obtain a property-boundary survey for any land you're thinking of buying, in order to avoid potential legal issues with neighboring farmers or ranchers that can derail your investment. An expert will be able to ensure



that the boundaries are confirmed. In some cases, the law is on the side of those who occupy, farm and control land over the long term — even if they don't actually own it. You don't want to be in court, rather than on a tractor.

CONSIDER LEASING

Renting land may be a better option if you see an opportunity but are cash strapped, or if you're just starting out. Look for more information through the Farm Bureau, the National Farmers

Union or the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Cooperative Extension program. Depending on your situation, there is also help available from Fruit and Vegetable Association, the Cattlemen's Association and Wheat Growers Association.



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