



College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences

## *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News*

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Editors: Nathan Johannig & Bronwyn Aly

*A newsletter to provide timely, research-based information that commercial fruit & vegetable growers can apply to benefit their farming operations.*

Address any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to the individual authors listed after each article or to its editors, Nathan Johannig, 618-687-1727, [njohann@illinois.edu](mailto:njohann@illinois.edu) or Bronwyn Aly 618-382-2662, [baly@illinois.edu](mailto:baly@illinois.edu). The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <http://ipm.illinois.edu/ifvn/>. To receive email notification of new postings of this newsletter, contact Nathan Johannig at the phone number or email address above.

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### *Upcoming Programs*

Check the **Illinois SARE calendar** for a full list of programs and links for registration.

<http://illinoissare.org/> and <http://illinoissare.org/calendar.php>

Also see the **University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Team's website** at:

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/smallfarm/> and the calendar of events at

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/units/calendar.cfm?UnitID=629>.

- **Managing Weeds in the Garden, Non-Chemically Webinar, Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. CST.** This webinar will discuss weed types in general and address various options of organically managing weeds in different situations. The webinar is free to participate but pre-registration is required. Find registration information at: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=17481>. Registration will close on December 12, 2017. For questions, or more information, contact James Theuri at 815-933-8337 or [jtheu50@illinois.edu](mailto:jtheu50@illinois.edu).
- **Growing Staple Crops for Local Markets, Tuesday, December 19, 2017 - 9:00 a.m. to NOON, Will County Extension Office, 100 Manhattan Dr., Joliet IL 60443.** The program will discuss small grains and staples that can grow in backyards or on a larger scale, addressing agronomy, challenges, marketing, and resources available for information. On-going work with beans, oilseeds, hazelnuts, Chinese chestnuts, open-pollinated corn and upland rice will be presented. Cost for participation is \$10 per person. Register online at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=17494> by December 15 to reserve your spot. If you need more information, call 815-933-8337 or email James Theuri at [jtheu50@illinois.edu](mailto:jtheu50@illinois.edu).
- **2018 Illiana Vegetable Growers Symposium, Thursday, January 4, 2018 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CST at Teibel's Restaurant, Schererville, IN.** The program is packed full of useful information for vegetable

farmers, including market gardeners. Topics include management of tomato bacterial canker, sprayers for controlling insects in sweet corn, new dicamba regulations, and updates on the federal food safety regulations. Afternoon sessions will offer tracks in marketing or production issues including cover crops and high tunnels. See the complete program and registration form at <http://tinyurl.com/ivgs2018>. For more information, contact Nikky Witkowski at Purdue Extension-Lake County: 219-755-3240 or [nikky@purdue.edu](mailto:nikky@purdue.edu).

- **2018 Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, & Organics Conference, Wednesday-Friday, January 10-12, 2018.** Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield, IL. To register visit <https://form.jotform.com/WebServ/confregistration> or contact Charlene Blary at 309-557-2107 or [cblary@ilfb.org](mailto:cblary@ilfb.org) at the Illinois Specialty Growers Association. For more information visit the [ISGA](#) website.
  - **Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course, Wednesday, January 31, 2018 8:00am – 5:00pm** Agronomy Research Center, 3268 W. Pleasant Hill Road, Carbondale, IL 62903 hosted by University of Illinois Extension and Southern Illinois University. For more information or to register visit <http://go.illinois.edu/PSACarbondale2018> or contact Laurie George at 618-242-0780 or [lgeorge@illinois.edu](mailto:lgeorge@illinois.edu)
  - **2018 Gateway Small Fruit & Vegetable Conference, Wednesday, February 7, 2018.** Regency Conference Center, O'Fallon, IL. Save the date; more details closer to the event. For more information contact Elizabeth Wahle at [wahle@illinois.edu](mailto:wahle@illinois.edu) or 618-344-4230.
  - **2018 Southern & Southwestern Illinois Commercial Tree Fruit Schools, Tuesday & Wednesday, February 13 & 14, 2018, Mt. Vernon & Hardin, IL.** Participants will have the opportunity to learn about insect management techniques, identification and control of apple and peach diseases, and identifying post-harvest food safety issues. Industry representatives will also be on hand to talk about their latest products and services.
    - **MT. VERNON SCHOOL (2/13/2018):** Cost for the school is \$40.00 per farm. Registration at the door will be \$50.00 per farm. The registration fee includes one (1) copy of the *2018 Midwest Spray Guide* per farm. Lunch is on your own.
    - **HARDIN SCHOOL (2/14/2018):** Cost for the school is \$40.00 per person. Orchards sending more than one employee will pay \$40.00 for the first person and \$30.00 for each additional person. Registration at the door will be \$50.00 per person. One (1) copy of the *2018 Midwest Spray Guide* will be given *per orchard*. Additional spray guides will be available for purchase. Lunch will be provided.
- Advance registration is required before February 5, 2018 at <http://go.illinois.edu/2018treefruit> or contact Laurie George, University of Illinois Extension Educator, at 618-242-0780 or [lgeorge@illinois.edu](mailto:lgeorge@illinois.edu).**
- **2018 Illinois Summer Horticulture Field Day, Thursday, June 7, 2018.** Annual Illinois State Horticulture Society annual summer field day will be hosted by Flamm's Orchard in Alto Pass, IL. Save the date; more details closer to event.

## News & Announcements

### Illinois Specialty Crops Conference

The Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference (ISCAOC) will be held January 10-12, 2018, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. The conference, which features nearly 100 speakers and 60 trade show exhibitors, will again host four concurrent preconference workshops, general sessions, and breakout sessions aimed at helping Illinois specialty growers cultivate their operations.

Wednesday, January 10, participants may attend one of the pre-conference workshops, including:

- High Tunnels
- Social Media and Marketing
- Growing and Marketing Pumpkins
- Legal and Labor Issues for Specialty Crop Growers

A special opportunity for farmers is scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, as The University of Illinois Extension will conduct a full Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Workshop. This workshop will satisfy the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule requirement stating, "At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration". Farms selling over \$500,000 in average annual produce sales must be in compliance by January 26, 2018. Deadline for registration for this event is December 21, 2017.

Thursday, January 11, the convention’s keynote speaker, Simon Huntley, Small Farm Central, will provide insight into ways farmers can focus on their consumers and promote stronger ties to your marketing efforts.

Participants also are invited to attend breakout sessions on Thursday, January 11 and Friday, January 12 featuring:

- Agritourism and Marketing
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Herbs
- Organic Foods
- Emerging Issues and Opportunities

Following Thursday’s breakout sessions, the annual banquet will include a keynote speech titled, “What Works on Our Farm” by Marty and Will Travis, Spence Farm, Fairbury, Illinois. Their farm is the oldest family farm in Livingston County and was settled in 1830. It is a working small family farm managed today by the seventh and eighth generations.

The 29th annual Apple Cider Contest and 16th annual Hard Cider Contest will again be held in conjunction with the conference, with winners being announced during Thursday evening’s banquet.

To receive registration materials or to obtain exhibitor information, please contact Charlene Blary at 309-557-2107 or [cblary@ilfb.org](mailto:cblary@ilfb.org). Conference registration will be offered online at <https://form.jotform.com/WebServ/confregistration>. A detailed conference agenda, registration, and cider contest information can be viewed at [specialtygrowers.org](http://specialtygrowers.org).

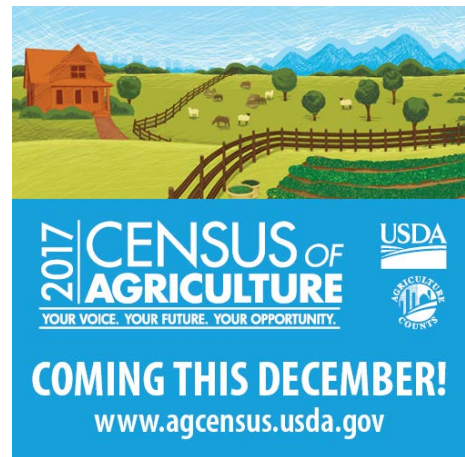
A block of rooms has been reserved at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at a rate of \$98 per night. Please call the hotel directly at 217-529-7777 and ask for the Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, and Organic Conference room block to make reservations at the conference rate.

## USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture

Fruit and vegetable growers in Illinois are well used to seeing surveys from the USDA’s National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS), but in the months ahead, you’ll also be seeing something equally important: The 2017 Census of Agriculture. Every farmer in America needs to be ready to respond as the Census is “Your Voice. Your Future. Your Opportunity.” But in particular, it’s important that Illinois fruit and vegetable growers respond to ensure that other farmers, legislators, and the people in your community can understand the tremendous positive impact that your work has on the country, and on the state of Illinois. Who better to tell your story, and the story of your farm and family, than you?

The 2012 Census gave us all key insights into fruit and vegetable agriculture. We learned that in just five years, national vegetable sales had grown 15 percent, and had become a \$16.9 billion industry! Fruit grew four percent in that time and 2012 fruit sales were \$25.9 billion. In addition to that increase, the Census also showed us that 97 percent of all U.S. farms are family-owned. Information like that can help commodity associations, check-off groups, and policy makers understand a situation much more fully than a simple increase in industry size. That’s information directly from the farmers and ranchers that responded to the 2012 Census of Agriculture.

The Census isn’t just about the numbers though. In addition to the standard crops and livestock information that the Census has always sought out, the USDA seeks to learn new things about the farmers that make up agriculture with every Census. The 2017 Census of Agriculture will focus on learning about farmers who are also veterans. Many new programs such as the Farmer Veteran Coalition’s Homegrown by Heroes aim to support veterans as they transition



from defending the nation to feeding it. Hard data from the Census will make sure that organizations like these are best able to direct their efforts and help the most people.

Feedback from farmers has helped the USDA to make the 2017 Census the fastest and most convenient in its 177-year history. Farmers who want the easiest experience should use the online response form which will automatically skip irrelevant questions and calculate totals, making this the preferred way to respond to the Census.

When you, or someone you know, receives the 2017 Census of Agriculture in December, make sure your voice is heard and respond immediately!

By: Matt Russell  
USDA-NASS Public Affairs  
Regional Director, Heartland

## **2018 Small Farms Winter Webinar Series**

Don't let the dropping temperatures get you down. Have you ever wanted to expand your small business to include Christmas Trees, goji berries, or ginger? Winter is also the perfect time to acquaint yourself with updates related to high tunnel production. Your fields and gardens may be snowed over, but it is the perfect time to develop your skills in small farming and local food production. University of Illinois Extension will once again be hosting the Small Farms Winter Webinar Series – featuring practical lunch-hour presentations on small farm enterprises and strategies you can use. Tune in right from your desk or laptop every Thursday at noon from January 18, 2018, through March 29, 2018

The Small Farms Winter Webinar Series has been around since 2011. Starting in 2015 the webinars are now archived on the team's state You-Tube page: <http://bit.ly/ILLocalFoodsYouTube> where they can be accessed indefinitely. Here, along with other webinars; lectures; vlogs; and the archived winter webinar series, the You Tube page has received over 60,000 views along with over 12,000 hours of view time. In 2017 the Local Foods and Small Farm team won a team excellence award for the production of the series.

In addition to the topics mentioned already, the Small Farms Winter Webinar Series will include presentations on heavy metal soil contamination, organic certification, creating community food systems, and native pollinators on your farm (See the list below for the full webinar schedule.) An Extension Educator or campus faculty member will present each webinar, timed to fit within your lunch hour, and recorded for future viewing if you have to miss the live session on the team's You-Tube channel mentioned above.

It's easy (and FREE!) to register for the Small Farms Winter Webinars. Sign up for as many as you want at <http://go.aces.illinois.edu/WinterWebinars>. We'll send you a webinar reminder, log-on instructions, and how to access the archived recording. If you do not have broadband internet capable of streaming video, call your local Extension office to see if they offer live viewing.

“Winter is the best time to invest in educationally opportunities on the small farm.” says Local Food Systems and Small Farms educator Zack Grant. He adds: “With all the face to face conferences and unpredictable road conditions, the Small Farms Winter Webinar Series creates peace of mind by bringing the educational experience to the comfort of your home or office.”

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact your local Extension office.

### ***2018 Small Farms Winter Webinar Schedule***

Jan. 18 - **Less Common Fruit Bearing Plants**, Elizabeth Wahle, *University of Illinois Extension Commercial Ag Educator (Fruits and Vegetables)*

Jan. 25 - **Updated High Tunnel Concepts**, Zack Grant, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Feb. 1 - **Introduction to Certified Organic Production**, Grant McCarty, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Feb. 8 - **Christmas Tree Production and Business Considerations**, Dave Shiley, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Feb. 15 - **An Update on the Grand Prairie Grain Guild: Developing Staple Crop Varieties and Associated Regional Food Grade Markets**, Bill Davison, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Feb. 22 - **Creating Community Food Production Systems**, Laurie George, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Mar. 1 - **Heavy metals in soils: identifying and acting on contamination**, Dr. Andrew Margenot, *University of Illinois Department of Crop Sciences, College of ACES*

Mar. 8 - **Native Pollinators on your Farm**, Doug Gucker, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Mar. 15 – **Small Acres Pastured Poultry**, James Theuri, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

Mar. 22 - **Growing Ginger, Turmeric, and Other Unique Crops**, Chris Enroth, *University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator*

Mar. 29 - **Tips for Modifying and Building Sprayers for Specialty Crops**, Nathan Johannning, *University of Illinois Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator*

## **Kane County Votes to Create a Regional Food Hub**

The Kane County Board announced that it selected Dream Hub/PKE Enterprises to operate a regional food hub in Kane County under the name of “**Dream Distributors**.”

For more information and more details on this story read the story on *Kane County Connects* at <http://kanecountyconnects.com/2017/11/kane-county-votes-to-create-regional-food-hub/>

Richard Hentschel (630-584-6166; [hentschel@illinois.edu](mailto:hentschel@illinois.edu))

## ***Regional Reports***

From southern Illinois... We have been in a more late fall/winter like pattern with highs bouncing from in the 50s down to 30s after a cold front swings through. We have had some cold mornings with morning lows down to 15° about a week ago. We are still very dry overall especially for this time of year so far; we have only gotten about ¾ of an inch of rain in December. With the cooler temperatures there still is moisture in the soil, but field conditions are still very good for doing any fall clean up or other field work without having to worry about any mud. With a dry fall, hopefully at some point we will get a shift in the weather pattern to get some much needed precipitation this winter to help replenish the moisture in the soil ahead of the next field season.

As I alluded to field work is still going on such as pulling up plastic mulch, late fall tillage, and winterizing equipment and irrigation (hopefully prior to that 15° on the winterizing). The larger apple growers are working on pruning while the weather has been decent. Plasticulture strawberries were covered with row cover about 10-14 days ago right before this most recent cold weather that has come through. Plants looked good going into winter. Make sure to monitor and/or bait for voles and mice on plasticulture strawberries or other winter crops. Keeping things mowed well around the edge of fields can also deter voles as they don't like crossing areas with limited cover for fear of hawks and other

predators. When baiting it is often better to be proactive especially focusing on field edges trying to prevent them from coming into an area.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing many of you at the Illinois Specialty Crops Conference in Springfield!

*Nathan Johanning (618-687-1727; [njohann@illinois.edu](mailto:njohann@illinois.edu))*

## ***Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management***

### **Food Safety: Are You Ready for FSMA?**

FSMA is the “Food Safety Modernization Act”, which is the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years. The U.S. Congress authorized the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take a preventive approach to food safety.

For most fruit and vegetable farmers in Illinois, the Produce Rule is of particular importance. The FSMA Produce Safety Rule sets the food safety standards for farms to follow in an effort to minimize the risks of microbiological contamination that may occur during the growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fresh produce.

The Food and Drug Administration has developed a very handy flowchart, titled “STANDARDS FOR PRODUCE SAFETY - Coverage and Exemptions/Exclusions for 21 PART 112”. This helps farmers determine whether they are covered or exempt from the Food Safety Modernization Act, Produce Rule requirements. I would recommend that all fruit and vegetable farmers look and determine their status; the flowchart is available at <http://bit.ly/2BAyLaB>.

Another part of FSMA is the farm recordkeeping. This is a BIG CHANGE even if your farm is found to be “exempt” from FSMA you will need to keep records. An “exempt” farm must keep records adequate to demonstrate that the farm satisfies the criteria for its qualified exemption. The FSMA Produce Rule recordkeeping begins in January 2018, whether you are a “covered” or “exempt” farm.

An example of how this would work would be a farm selling less than \$25000 in annual produce sales. This farm would qualify under FSMA to be “exempt”. However, this “exempt” farm must retain sales records to document that its annual produce sales are less than \$25000. These records must be retained long enough to document the qualified exempt status for the applicable year, based on the rolling three-year average.

The “Food Safety Modernization Act” is complicated. If you sell produce no matter the size of your operation, please consider sending someone from your farm to FSMA training to learn all its “ins and outs”. Upcoming FSMA trainings will be held on January 10, 2018 in Springfield at the Illinois Specialty Crop Conference and January 31 in Carbondale. To register for either one of these training, go to the University of Illinois Extension “Local Food Systems and Small Farms” webpage, <http://bit.ly/2hKfGF4>, or contact your local Extension office.

*Doug Gucker (217-877-6042; [dgucker@illinois.edu](mailto:dgucker@illinois.edu))*

## Managing Perennial Weeds and Trees

Now is also a good time to manage some perennial weeds and trees especially in perennial crops. Often trees such as mulberries, elms, maples, etc. tend to come up in undisturbed fields, and simply cutting them will only multiply the problem. Your best options are to dig them out, spray a herbicide on the base of the plant (referred to as a basal bark spray), or cut them off and then treat the fresh cut stump with a herbicide. In this picture you can see a mulberry tree that has been cut off and now has sent up many stems. I keep a quart squirt bottle with a herbicide mixed to treat problem perennials as needed. In this case we are spraying Crossbow herbicide (2,4-D plus triclopyr) mixed in diesel fuel as a carrier. Look for these active ingredients or other growth regulator herbicides as they are typically the most effective for these applications. The diesel carrier is labeled specifically for these stump and bark treatments as it helps the herbicide to penetrate the bark. As always make sure to read the label for specific use patterns for the herbicide you are using. Also, in this case we have added a little bit of spray dye to help us see where we have already sprayed. Early winter while the plants are still translocating nutrients down to the roots is a great time to make applications. Also, many of our sensitive crops are dormant, and this is as good of time as any to use these growth regulator herbicides. With a small volume directed spray you can work near sensitive crops with good safety, but make sure to be careful not to get spray on the trunks and stems of brambles, grapes, young fruit trees, etc. If close to a desired crop plant, adjust the sprayer to apply a small stream that can easily be controlled rather than a fine mist that can drift more easily. I have used these tactics for many years and while it takes some time, it is effective at managing these perennial weeds.

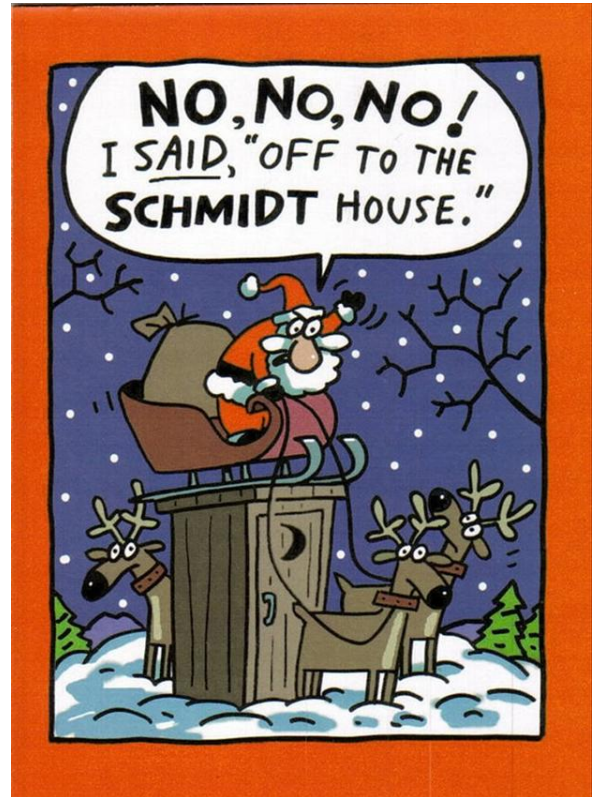


*Making a late-fall basal bark herbicide application to a multi-stemmed mulberry tree. Photo: N. Johannig*

*Nathan Johannig (618-687-1727; [njohann@illinois.edu](mailto:njohann@illinois.edu))*

*Less seriously...*

<http://www.dumpaday.com/funny-pictures/funny-christmas-pictures-30-pics-2/>





*University of Illinois Extension Educators and Specialists in Fruit and Vegetable Production and Pest Management*

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<b>LAURIE GEORGE</b> , Bond, Clinton, Jefferson, Marion, & Washington counties	618-548-1446	<a href="mailto:ljgeorge@illinois.edu">ljgeorge@illinois.edu</a>
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<b>Extension Educators – Commercial Agriculture</b>		
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