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**Thank you to our Women in Ag Foundation Sponsors!**



*Sleet, Snow nor Ice Keep Women Away from Conference*

The 2007 Midwest Women in Agriculture was a huge success in February despite a visit from Mother Nature. Approximately 180 women, speakers and the planning committee safely journeyed to Conner Prairie for the 6th annual conference. Thankfully, everyone arrived safely despite the conditions. A special thank you goes to Advisory Committee and all the ladies who volunteered to help us as moderators for the sessions. We appreciated your willingness to make the conference a success.

Here is just a glimpse of what attendees thought of the conference this year:

*"I enjoyed the Women in Ag Conference because I met two ladies who have small acreage and wanting information on farming. They enjoyed the conference. One has*

*e-mailed me about selling her wool. This conference is a great networking opportunity. I enjoyed the speakers and purchased their books. I have enjoyed reading their stories. I am in the middle of Bull dust in My Bra and have found it very enjoyable." - Darlene Decker, Purdue Extension Educator & Farm Wife*

*"This was my first WIA conference and it was thrilling. Wow, information was in abundance. Each speaker presented their material with enthusiasm and an obvious love for a life within agriculture.*

*It would be impossible for me to prioritize everything, but what I remember without checking my pages (and pages) of notes is:*

- 1. the camaraderie and support of all those present;*
- 2. the encouragement for those of us who are new to this way of life;*
- 3. the organization and availability of the materials post-conference;*
- 4. the presentation of resources available to farming families and*



*communities;*

- 5. the understanding that farming is a way of life for the dedicated;*
- 6. the awareness that farming families are the foundation of our country; they work and sacrifice to support us all.*

*I would like to thank each individual who was involved in the planning and execution of the conference. Next year will be here before we know it and I can't wait!*

Roxa Deaton

Please mark your calendars for 2008. We look forward to seeing you!

*2008 Looks to be Exciting Year for Women in Ag*

The Purdue Women in Ag team is looking forward to a very busy and rewarding 2008 for women in agriculture programming. In addition to the Women in Ag Conference and Annie's

Project, the state committee received two grants from the North Central Risk Management Education Center.

In January 2008 watch for the opportunity to have an expanded 4-6 week session on commodity grain

marketing education. This is in response to your request for more in depth training.

In late March regional workshops on human resource management and estate planning will be offered in day long sessions around the state.

## Minimize human-related risks on the farm

**T**ragedies occur and can be detrimental to a farm operation, but too often farmers neglect risk management because it requires thinking about events that are both unfortunate and unexpected, said Dr. George Patrick, a Purdue University expert.

Many things can happen to friends of friends, community members and neighbors. But what happens when a death, disability or divorce hits home? Will the farm continue operating? How will it affect loved ones?

Contingency planning includes identifying risks and finding solutions, cross training personnel, and paying self-employment taxes.

The first step is to identify those events that are not likely to occur but, if they do, could have significant adverse consequences for the farm operation. The next step is to take those identified events and develop an action plan to reduce risks and deal with them if they occur. It is crucial to follow through after the planning stage, Patrick said.

**A**nnie's Project classes have been offered throughout Indiana this winter. Over 50 farm women have participated in the program. Here are some recent comments: "I believe this is a very useful class for farm women of all ages."

"In some instances, contingency planning may cause us to make some fairly dramatic changes in the way things are organized," he said.

Another key step for many farm businesses is to provide cross training for all employees and others involved in the operation. Cross training is the process of informing and teaching others about the daily tasks and responsibilities of a specific position. The training process also makes people aware of what others on the farm are doing and what needs to be done on a regular basis.

"For example, the owner of a crop farm was paralyzed in an accident. The owner also was the one responsible for operating the planter. So when planting season comes, no one involved in the operation is familiar with the machinery used or planting preferences," Patrick said. "Cross training would have prevented this problem and allowed the crops to be planted on time.

A death or disability within most farm operations often leaves the family with little or no income.

By paying self-employment

"That had a project like this been available twenty years ago, life on the farm would have gone smoother."

If you are interested in participating in Annie's Project, please contact Kelly Easterday at [keasterday@purdue.edu](mailto:keasterday@purdue.edu) or 574-372-2340. We continue to work to get more locations

taxes, the farm operator could qualify for disability coverage and survivor benefits under the Social Security system. But in reality, some farmers do not pay enough self-employment tax to qualify for disability coverage or survivor benefits.

"The self-employment tax is what the individual that works for themselves pays into the Social Security system," Patrick said. "In order to be covered for death and disability, you have to be paying in on a regular basis, essentially 50 percent of the time in recent years.

In addition to death or disability, farmers also should plan in case of a divorce.

Arrangements such as a prenuptial agreement can be made. This can restrict a non-farming spouse's access to the farm assets if a divorce were to occur, Patrick said.

"We all assume the older generation is going to die first, but what happens when our assumptions are wrong?" he said. "A death or disability has the potential to halt the daily business of a farm. The impact is minimized when there has been some planning for the unexpected."

involved to meet the need of women around the state.

Howard County will be offering the program starting in late August.

*For more information:*  
Contact your local Extension Office and ask for publication, EC-736—*Planning for the Unexpected: Human Resource Risk and Contingency Planning*  
It is also available online at:  
<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/agecon.htm>

**2007 Annie's Project Class Offerings**



## Winamac Native Earns Indiana Women in Agriculture Award

After a devastating farm accident, most families are happy just to keep the family farm afloat. However in the case of Indiana's first Women in Agriculture award winner, simply maintaining the operation was not enough.

Sue Alexander of Winamac, Ind., was honored Aug. 16 at the Indiana State Fair for her important role in helping to run and expand the family farm after an accident paralyzed her husband, Tim, in 1993.

She was recognized by the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service and Indiana AgriNews, the sponsors of the award that was created to honor women who have excelled and played an important role in Indiana agriculture.

The Alexanders together manage 3,200 acres of farmland. At the time of the accident, the farm consisted of 1,800 acres when Tim was left a quadriplegic following a fall from the top of a grain bin.

Rather than quit farming, the Alexanders decided to continue the operation with Sue assuming many of the physical tasks that Tim could no longer handle. The average day for this mother of three includes moving

farm equipment, sweeping grain bins, arranging for bank loans or loading a planter.

In addition, she sees to the needs of her husband and family, and volunteers in the community.

"We are all inspired by what you and Tim have done for agriculture and your community of Winamac," said Randy Woodson, Glenn W. Sample Dean of Agriculture, who honored her with a handmade wooden clock.

While she was the one receiving the award, Alexander said she couldn't have done so without the help of her family and the farm's invaluable two hired hands.

"Sue is a typical farmwife working on the farm," said Stacy Herr, Purdue Extension educator and award coordinator. "We chose to recognize her as she epitomizes the achievements of many women in agriculture across the state of Indiana."

Sue Alexander, a graduate of



**Randy Woodson, Purdue's Glenn W. Sample Dean of Agriculture, presents Sue Alexander of Winamac, Ind., a handmade wooden clock after she was named the first Indiana Women in Agriculture award winner on Aug. 16 at the Indiana State Fair. Alexander was honored for her role in helping to run and expand the family farm after an accident paralyzed her husband, Tim, in 1993. (Indiana AgriNews**

Purdue University with a degree in farm business management, is also active in the 4-H program, the Pulaski County Community Foundation Board, the school improvement committee at Winamac High School, the Pulaski County YMCA program committee and other local events.

Women eligible for the award could participate in production agriculture, agribusiness or entrepreneurial agriculture enterprises. All nominees had to reside in Indiana and be part of an agriculture enterprise or agribusiness that operates in Indiana.



### 2007 Applications

*Applications for the Achievement and new for this year—Leadership Awards will be available from your local county Extension Office or at the Women in Ag website. They are due June 1.*

## Welcome to Our New Advisory Committee Member

The Purdue Women in Agriculture Team Lydia Wolheter, Wolcottville to the Advisory Committee. Lydia is a 2006 Purdue University graduate and was raised on a livestock farm in Steuben and was in 4-H for ten years with lambs, horses, pigs and started calf projects. She was also actively involved in the FFA program in high school competing in many leadership competitions. Agriculture and the farming industry have always been in her blood. She married her husband Neal this past

August and they farm with his father R.D. Wolheter. They operate a crop farm (Foxwood Farms Inc.) in LaGrange consisting of corn, soybeans, and wheat. Lydia assists her husband with the financial aspect and also run errands for them. She also has a full time off the farm job selling office furniture at One Eleven Design in Fort Wayne, IN.



for the committee. They have been very instrumental in the success of the Women in Ag Conference.

Other Advisory Committee members are: Lynn Lambert, Starke County; Susann Wendell, Franklin County, and Jamie Spencer, Jasper County. Thank you to all of you for your service to the committee.

The Advisory Committee meets with the State Committee once a year to provide input on educational programming and direction



## You May be A Farmer If.....

- Your dog rides in your truck more than your wife.
- You convince your wife that an overnight, out-of-state trip for equipment parts is a vacation.
- You wear specific hats to farm sales, livestock auctions, customer appreciation suppers, and vacations.
- You have ever had to wash off in the backyard with a garden hose before your wife would let you in the house.
- You've never thrown away a 5-gallon bucket.
- You have used baling wire to attach a license plate.
- You have used a chain saw to remodel your house.
- You can remember the fertilizer rate, seed population, herbicide rate and yields on a farm you rented 10 years ago, but cannot recall your wife's birthday.
- You have fibbed to a mechanic about how often you greased a piece of equipment.
- You have used a velvet leaf plant as toilet paper.
- You have driven off the road while examining your neighbors crops.
- You have borrowed gravel from the county road to fill potholes in your driveway.



## 2007 Indiana Farm Sustainability Tour

The Indiana Farm Sustainability tours will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. the third Thursday of each month with the exception of August. Due to the Indiana State Fair, the tour will be the fourth Thursday of August.

During each of the tours, participants will have the chance to interact with the farm and facility owners and operators and to learn about their experiences, management styles and how they make important decisions. The tours vary from month to month and focus on topics such as business structure, keeping the family involved, agritourism and niche marketing. The tours also include a specialist from Purdue who will discuss the topic of the day and be available to answer questions. Not only will participants have the chance to speak with specialists and farm owners, but they will also have the opportunity to learn about available resources and network with others who are

interested in diversifying their farms or rural enterprises.

Future tour dates are:

\* June 21; "Urban Fringe Marketing: Meeting the Needs of the Urban Consumer"; Tuttle's Orchard and Farm Market of Greenfield.

\* July 19; "Organic Production & Marketing" Bloomingfoods, Stranger's Hill Organic Farm and Bloomington Farmers' Market, all of Bloomington.

\* Aug. 23; "Agritourism: Enhancing the Visitor's Experience"; Traders Point Creamery of Zionsville.

\* Sept. 20; "Family Farming: Keeping the Family in the Family Farm"; Swiss Connection Cheese of Clay City and Moody Meats of Ladoga.

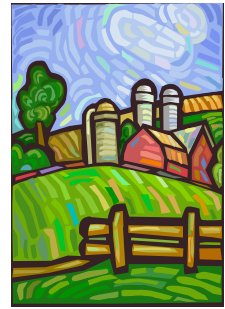
\* Oct. 18; "Specialty-Marketing Partnerships"; Birky Family Farms, Valparaiso Farmers' Market and Crème de la Crop CSA, all of Valparaiso.

\* Nov. 15; "Food Trends, a Look at Consumer Food Expectations and How We Can Meet Them"; Purdue Food Science facilities of West Lafayette.

For more information and to register, visit <http://www.conf.purdue.edu/farmtours>. Each tour is \$15 per person, which includes lunch, refreshments and materials. Individuals have the option to register for all of the tours or to select one or two at a time. Registration is due seven days prior to a tour.

The 2007 Indiana Farm Sustainability Tours are sponsored by the Purdue Small Farms Team, the Purdue New Ventures Team, Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE).

For questions and more information, please contact Jerry Nelson, New Ventures Extension educator and tour coordinator, at (812) 886-9582 or [jnelson@purdue.edu](mailto:jnelson@purdue.edu)



### More conference comments

"This conference was such a wonderful opportunity for women to network and learn from a wide variety of guest speakers. The highlight of the program for me personally was Rebecca Long Chaney's presentation. Her story took us all on an amazing journey and shared the message that sometimes the most wonderful things in life are found by letting go of the every day and embracing the unknown – a lesson we can all learn from."

Jerene Gilliam

## Purdue Women in Agriculture

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We're on the web!

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## Dealing with Clutter Website

If you haven't seen your desktop in months or your closets are an avalanche waiting to happen or you're oppressed by "junk" of various sorts, University of Illinois Extension has just the website you need--*Dealing with Clutter*.

"Dealing with Clutter" is part of the Urban Extension Programs Resource site (<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/>) and can be found on it under the "Home and Money" section or reached directly at: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/clutter/>.

The new site is designed to help people who feel overwhelmed by "stuff" and the decision about

keeping or tossing it.

Karen Chan, a consumer and family economics educator based in Cook County's Countryside Center, developed the new site.

The decision to put a form of the program on the web seemed natural and has already proved to be correct. Launched in mid-October, the site generated nearly 4,000 "hits" in the last two weeks of that month.

After "re-thinking, organizing, and paring down" her organizing program, Chan has produced a site she believes will prove helpful to those seeking a way to get control of the clutter in their lives.

"The website has two broad approaches," she explained. "First, we are trying to teach some general principles that people can use to get organized. Second, we provide specifics about handling different types of clutter, such as financial records, kitchen items, clothing, and kids' toys."

One unique feature of the new site, she added, is a section on barriers people encounter in trying to get organized.

