



Sustainable agriculture isn't an option. It's a necessity.

Dear HEC Supporter,

World Soil Day, observed on December 5th each year, is dedicated to raising awareness about the vital importance of soil health and advocating for sustainable soil management. This global event emphasizes the crucial role that healthy soils play in food security, ecosystem services, and climate resilience.

By focusing on the need to protect and nurture our soils, World Soil Day encourages individuals, communities, and policymakers to adopt practices that enhance soil health and prevent degradation. [World Soil Day](#) seeks to ensure that soils remain fertile and productive for future generations.

Read on for this month's newsletter, full of exciting events, an HEC hosted webinar, and timely blogs for the season.

## Soil Health: Why is it important?

In 1986, the Indiana Association of Professional Soil Scientists (IAPSC) voted to designate Miami as the state soil. [Miami soil](#) drains moderately well and is known for its fertility, making it great for growing corn and soybeans. Nearly 795,000 acres of Miami soil mapped in the state of Indiana. It's no wonder that we are one of the highest-ranking states for agricultural production! Keeping this in mind, it is important that we do our best to protect this vital natural resource.

Soil health is influenced by a variety of factors that work together to enhance productivity and water retention while reducing erosion and pollution. Read about four key principles to keep in mind while working to build healthier soil in our latest guest post by HEC supporter, John Luc.

[Read the blog](#)





## A Greener Christmas Tree?

Approximately 75% of US households, or 94 million homes, decorate a tree for the holidays each year. So, is a real or artificial tree the more sustainable choice? Although neither is impact-free, live trees are the better choice for the environment. Learn more about your options and the pros and cons in our blog.

[Read the blog](#)



## HEC in the News

### **Federal prosecutors sue Evansville-area farmers, alleging Clean Water Act violations**

The federal government sued four Southern Indiana farmers this month, accusing them of violating provisions of the Clean Water Act by unlawfully discharging soil, gravel and other debris into small creeks over a span of years and ignoring the government's requests for information.

HEC's Sustainable Agriculture Director, Toby Days, weighs in to contextualize the lawsuit.

[Read the article](#)



**Support HEC & Help Us Win First Place!**



We're in the middle of the inaugural [Indianapolis Gives](#) contest at Hoosier Environmental Council, and we could use your help! When you give between now and December 12th, not only will your donation be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Efroymsen Family Fund—up to \$125,000—but it also allows us to compete for \$75,000 in cash prizes from Indianapolis Monthly and Lilly Foundation.

Your support today helps us continue vital work across Indiana. Please consider making a donation today to maximize these special opportunities to fund our environmental work throughout our state.

[Donate Now](#)



The banner features a central text area with 'Indianapolis MONTHLY gives' in large blue font, '2024 CHALLENGE' in a green bar, and 'PRESENTED BY Lilly A MEDICINE COMPANY' in red script. Below this, it says 'Donate now December 2-December 12'. The banner is flanked by decorative borders of colorful geometric shapes and small photos of people and a dog.

## Upcoming Events & Workshops

### PFAS - Forever Chemicals: Everywhere, everyday & what they mean for you!

A webinar examining risks, regulations, and resilience. Join experts from Purdue's Institute for a Sustainable Future & Hoosier Environmental Council to learn:

- How we use and encounter PFAS in our daily lives
- Health risks of PFAS exposure
- Indiana PFAS levels and impacts
- State and federal PFAS policy

**THURS. DEC 12. | 11-12:15 ET**

 **PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY

Institute for a Sustainable Future

 **Hoosier**  
Environmental  
Council

### PFAS - FOREVER CHEMICALS:



[Register Now](#)



**Dec 14-15:** [Indiana CCA Conference](#), Indianapolis, IN

**January 10:** [Top Farmer Conference](#), Purdue's Beck Agricultural Center, West Lafayette, IN (8am-4pm)

**January 16:** [The Promise of Urban Agriculture: Courses for Growers and Planners](#), Virtual - Zoom (1-2pm)

**January 7-10:** [National No-Tillage Conference](#), Louisville, KY (8am-4pm)

**January 9-February 27 (Every Thursday):** [Beginning Farmer Program](#), Virtual - Zoom (7-8:30pm)

**January 21/28, February 4/11:** [Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Midwestern Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series](#) (6-9pm)

**January 24/25:** [Veterans IN Farming Conference](#), Monroe Conference Center, Bloomington, IN (8am-6pm)

**January 26:** [IASWCD 2025 Conference](#), The Westin, Indianapolis, IN (Times vary each day)

### [2025 CCSI/SARE Trainings](#)

- **February 25:** CCSI-SARE Intro to Soil Health, Virtual
- **April 1/8/15/22:** CCSI-SARE Fundamentals of Soil Health (SERIES), Hybrid Virtual & West Lafayette, IN
- **June 9-12:** CCSI-SARE Soil Health & Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff
- **TBD:** CCSI-SARE-NWF Engaging New Audiences



## Media We're Consuming

- [Post-Election Briefing: The Road Ahead for Anti-Monopoly Food and Agriculture Policy](#) - With the 2024 election now decided, Farm Action and Farm Action Fund held a briefing on the road ahead for anti-monopoly food and agriculture policy in both the White House and Congress. Farmer-led organizations reviewed the implications of election results and presented our policy roadmap for the incoming Trump-Vance administration.
- [Farm to Food Assistance: A Model for Values-Based, Equity-Centered Approaches to Transforming the Food System](#) (Wallace Center) - A new report makes the case for how local food in food assistance programs can be transformative. The report profiles ten organizations implementing innovative, equity-centered Farm to Food Assistance programs and a set of recommendations for funders, USDA, practitioners and advocates.

There will be a national webinar on the report's findings on Wednesday, December 18 (4-5 EST). [Register here](#).

- [Free Urban Agriculture Training Courses](#) - The Cornell Small Farms Program worked with Realizing the Promise of Urban Agriculture (RPUA), to create training and educational resources for multiple audiences engaged in urban agriculture.

## Green Businesses

The following HEC Green businesses are supporters of sustainable agriculture, through their missions, products, and/or services.



**THE REJOICING VINE**

[The Rejoicing Vine](#)



[Eco Logic](#)



[Greenscape Geeks](#)



[Back to Earth Works](#)



[KG Acres](#)



[Blue Fox Farms/  
Strand Nursery](#)

Wild Moon  
ACRES

[Wild Moon Acres](#)



[Earth Mama  
Compost](#)

Please support HEC's End of Year Campaign with [a gift of support](#). Your donation will be matched by the Efroymsen Family Fund, up to \$125,000 total if received by December 31st!

[Support Our Work](#)

STAY CONNECTED

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Hoosier Environmental Council  
3951 N. Meridian St  
Suite 100  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
United States

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