

INDIANA AGRICULTURE INSIDER

Indiana races into June Dairy Month

While May finishes in Victory Lane with a glass of cold milk, dairy farmers in Indiana gear up for June Dairy Month. These two great traditions that celebrate our dairy farmers both started in the 1930s. Indianapolis 500 legend Louie Meyer asked for buttermilk after winning his second race in 1933. It sparked a tradition that's been part of Victory Lane since 1956.



Each year the winning driver receives the famous bottle of milk from an Indiana dairy farmer. This year, interestingly, it had a special, unique

connection to ISDA. Former ISDA Director and dairy farmer, Joe Kelsay, was honored with handing the milk bottle to the winning driver. Rookie Milk Person, Kim Minich, handed milk bottles to the winning team owner and chief engineer. Both of these Indiana dairy farmers are also members of the Indiana Grown initiative, which supports locally grown and produced products.

The annual celebration of dairy products started in 1937 as National Milk Month as a way to help stabilize dairy demand during periods of peak production. It's since developed into National Dairy Month to promote all dairy products, including cheese, yogurt and ice cream.



Dairy farming and processing is important to the Indiana economy, contributing more than \$800 million annually, according to the American Dairy Association Indiana. There are more than 1,200 dairy farms in Indiana and 97% of them are family owned. Indiana is the 14th largest milk producing state, accounting for approximately 2% of total U.S. milk production.

To kick off this year's celebration, the American Dairy Association Indiana and Indiana Grown will be celebrating World Milk Day on June 1. Representatives will be handing out free milk starting at 11 a.m. to the first 200 participants at the Kroger at 5718 Crawfordsville Road in Indianapolis.

Indiana's Dairy Cows - By the Numbers:

- 200,000: the number of glasses of milk the average cow will produce in their lifetime
- 186,000: approximate number of dairy cows in Indiana
- 90: pounds of food an adult dairy cow will eat in a day.
- 4 billion: pounds of milk Indiana's dairy cows will produce each year.

Cover crops thrive in tough farm economy

While Indiana might be well-known for basketball or as the Crossroads of America, the Hoosier state continues to move forward in other areas and set trends nationally. We have one of the best pro-growth business climates in the Midwest, one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, and we're one of only a handful of states left that has maintained the highly coveted triple-A credit rating. As Indiana continues to add to its list of accolades, we're starting to emerge as a leader in yet another area: conservation.



For the second year in a row, Hoosier farmers planted over 1 million acres of cover crops, which according to Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist

with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), makes Indiana the leading state in the Midwest, if not the nation. In fact, farmers planted nearly ten times more cover crops in 2016 than in 2011 – a significant increase in just five years' time.

This data comes from the recently released Conservation Transect Report, which is a collaborative effort between NRCS, ISDA, Indiana's 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Earth Team Volunteers and other members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership. Working together, the group collects data on tillage methods, plant cover, residue, etc. to help document a more complete story of conservation efforts in Indiana. The survey uses GPS technology and provides a statistically reliable method, and then uses USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service data on crops for estimating farm management and related annual trends.

The cover crop assessment to the survey was introduced in 2011 to give Hoosiers a more accurate representation of Indiana's conservation efforts due to their many



benefits, like increasing organic matter and improving infiltration. They also prevent nutrient leaching by capturing excess nutrients and sediment, which is especially important since Indiana has been known to receive as much as 40 inches of rain in a year.

In addition to cover crops, the transect also analyzes fall tillage and residue trends. Fields not tilled in the fall have crop residues to protect the soil from fall, winter and spring rains, which further limits sediment and nutrient losses. The 2016 report shows that Indiana farmers left their crop residues undisturbed this past fall as follows:

- 67 percent of soybean acres
- 58 percent of corn acres
- 50 percent of small grain acres
- 31 percent of specialty crop acres

The ICP believes the no-till and cover crop acres represented in the transect data are at a much higher and sustainable quality because many farmers are using multiple conservation practices as part of a total soil health management system. A systems approach means using practices like adaptive nutrient management, integrated weed and pest management, crop rotations, precision technology and prescriptive buffers that work together with cover crops and no-till to improve soil function.

Ultimately, this data shows that Indiana farmers are planting cover crops as part of their management decisions – voluntarily – and that conservation continues to be a priority for them. ISDA maintains tillage transect reports dating back to 1990 on our website at www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm.

KEY DATES

- June 14
Indiana Grown Commission meeting - Indianapolis
- June 19-22
Indiana FFA State Convention - West Lafayette

IMPORTANT UPDATES

A research group at Indiana University needs your help to spread the word about a survey they're conducting to learn how farm owners are thinking about future opportunities for their land, and how that compares to people who are looking for a farm of their own.

Funded by USDA-SARE, the survey will collect responses from people across a 12-state region who either own farm land or would like to own farm land. All responses will be anonymous and confidential.

If you wish to take the survey, please, click [here](#).

IN THE NEWS

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HOOSIER EATS RECIPE VIDEO

BACON & BLUE COLESLAW

