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AGRI NEWS

Southern Illinois News



February 2025



Illinois Department of Agriculture suspends poultry exhibition and sale events

SPRINGFIELD, IL - The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is issuing a 30-day suspension, effective today, February 11, 2025, on the exhibition or sale of poultry at swap meets, exhibitions, flea markets, and auction markets in response to the ongoing threat of H5N1 avian flu. The move is intended to reduce and prevent the spread of the disease, which has been detected in commercial and backyard flocks in Illinois.

“Prevention is our most effective tool to mitigate the spread of avian flu. By being proactive in biosecurity and limiting poultry movement and exposure, we are protecting the public as well as the poultry industry,” said Dr. Mark Ernst, IDOA State Veterinarian.



Avian flu is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and wild birds (especially waterfowl). Avian flu virus strains are extremely infectious, often fatal to chickens, and can spread rapidly from flock to flock.

Poultry flock

owners, managers, and veterinarians should report any unusual findings in domestic poultry, such as increase in mortality, decrease in water consumption, decrease in egg production, or respiratory signs, including coughing and sneezing, immediately to IDOA at 217-782-4944 or the United States Department of Agriculture

at 866-536-7593.

Everyone is reminded not to handle or attempt to capture wild waterfowl or other birds displaying signs of illness. Due to risk of infection to other animals, dogs, cats and other pets should be kept away from the carcasses of birds that may have died from avian flu.

“The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) strongly supports this precautionary move by the Department of Agriculture to reduce the spread of the H5N1 avian flu virus,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “At this point, Illinois has had no known human cases, and while the risk to the general population remains low, this action by IDOA will improve our preparedness

see POULTRY, page 5

Hike on 1000 Drips set for March 1st

The River to River Trail Society announces its 1st public hike of the 2025 spring hiking season on March 1st. Hiking: 1000 Drips (Pope County). This hike is free and open to the public. This will be a thru-hike approximately 4.4 miles in length, 3.5 hours hiking time. The leader of this hike can be reached at 618-384-1321 for more information. Hikers should meet at 10:00 am at Indian Kitchen Trailhead. This hike is intended for people in good health who have done some hiking. Hiking sticks and boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. Hikers should bring their own water and snacks. No dogs please. We will have plans to shuttle for this hike. There are creek beds which will need to be crossed. If it has rained prior to this hike the creek beds may contain water and the hikers’ shoes may become wet when crossing the creek beds. Rocks may have to be walked. For a map to

see HIKE, page 5

River to River Trail Society sets second hike

The River to River Trail Society announces its 2nd public hike of the 2025 spring hiking season on March 8th. Hiking: Grindstaff Hollow (Gallatin County). This hike is free and open to the public. This will be a moderate thru-hike approximately 4 miles in length, 4 hours hiking time. The leader of this hike can be reached at 618-499-9629 for more information. Hikers should meet at 10:00 am at High Knob Lookout Parking Area.

This hike is intended for people in good health

who have done some hiking. Hiking sticks and boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. Hikers should bring their own water and snacks. No dogs please. We will have to shuttle for this hike. Hikers will need to cross 1 stream for this hike and will need to be able to walk rocks to cross the stream. Hikers’ boots and or shoes may become wet.

There may be some slick rock on this hike. For a map to the meeting location at High Knob Lookout Parking area click this blue

link High Knob Lookout Parking area and a map will open up, and then click the Directions button and a driving map will be created which will allow you to plan your driving directions to the meeting area. Prior to participating in any hikes, the River to River Trail Society requests that all hikers read the 2023 Trail Society Waiver which can be found on the River to River website at the following link River to River Trail Society Information and then sign off on this waiver prior to the beginning of the hike.

A copy of the waiver will be at the High Knob Lookout meeting area for your signature.

For more information contact Sam Morales Board Member, River to River Trail Society at 618-384-1321.

- ### HEART HEALTHY RECIPES
- Sliced Fruit with Honey-Vanilla Yogurt Dip
 - Banana Bread
 - Grilled Chicken with Strawberry and Pineapple Salsa
 - Breakfast Skillet Ham Hash

Page 8



SUSTAINING THE FUTURE:

Farming for profit and the planet



Profiting from Carbon Farming – A farmer analyzing soil health with a dashboard displaying carbon credits, illustrating the financial benefits of eco-friendly practices.

Farming isn't just about growing crops—it's about preserving the land for future generations. Regenerative agriculture is leading the way, focusing on enhancing soil health and biodiversity through techniques like crop rotation, composting, and integrating livestock. These methods restore depleted soils, increase resilience to climate change, and improve yields—a win for both farmers and the environment. As consumer demand for sustainably sourced food rises, regenerative farming isn't just a best practice—it's a smart investment.

Another major shift is carbon farming, where eco-friendly practices aren't just good for the earth—they're also profitable. By implementing conservation tillage, agroforestry, and cover cropping,

farmers can sequester carbon in the soil and sell carbon credits to corporations looking to offset emissions. This emerging market offers new revenue streams, proving that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand. Those who adapt early will reap the financial rewards of a greener future.

Water scarcity is a growing challenge, making water management critical to modern farming success. Smart irrigation, rainwater harvesting, and drought-resistant crops are essential tools for addressing water shortages. Farmers who adopt these strategies reduce waste, lower costs, and ensure more reliable crop production, making their operations more resilient. At the same time, organic farming continues to gain traction, but with

unique challenges—higher costs, strict regulations, and market competition. Still, the premium prices and strong consumer demand make it a lucrative option for those willing to invest.

Finally, cover crops and no-till farming are transforming soil conservation by reducing erosion, improving water retention, and enhancing soil fertility. These practices boost long-term productivity while cutting input costs. As more farmers recognize the benefits, sustainability is no longer just an option—it's the foundation of modern agriculture.

The future of farming isn't just about growing more; it's about growing smarter, protecting resources, and securing long-term success.



Regenerative Agriculture in Action – A thriving farm with diverse crops, rich soil, and rotational grazing, showcasing sustainability and biodiversity.



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The benefits of using a professional auctioneer to sell your farm equipment and land



Farm Auction in Action – A crowd of bidders gathered around farm equipment, with an auctioneer leading the sale.

Selling farm equipment and land is a big decision, and getting the best return on your investment requires the right approach. While private sales and online listings may seem like viable options, working with a professional auctioneer ensures maximum exposure, competitive bidding, and a faster, more efficient sale. Whether you're retiring, upgrading equipment, or liquidating assets, a skilled auctioneer adds value by streamlining the process and maximizing your profits.

Maximizing Market Exposure and Buyer Competition

A professional auctioneer brings experience, marketing expertise, and a built-in network of qualified buyers. Unlike traditional sales, where negotiations can drag on for weeks, an auction creates urgency and excitement, encouraging buyers to act quickly. The auctioneer's ability to generate competitive bidding means sellers often receive higher-than-expected prices for their farm equipment and land. With advertising strategies that include online promotions, direct mail, and industry connections, your assets reach local, national, and even international buyers—ensuring the best possible return.

A Transparent and Fast Sales Process

Time is money in farming, and auctions offer a fast, hassle-free solution to selling valuable assets. Instead of negotiating with multiple buyers over weeks or months, an auction provides a definitive sale date and structured process. Buyers arrive prepared, knowing they must place their best bids in a competitive environment. The result? A fair, market-driven price with no haggling or delays. Auctioneers also handle all the paperwork, ensuring a smooth transaction from start to finish.

Trust, Expertise, and Professionalism

Farm auctions are more than just sales—they're events led by professionals who understand agriculture and equipment values. A skilled auctioneer assesses your inventory, determines realistic price expectations, and tailors the auction format to maximize returns. Whether it's a live, online, or hybrid auction, their expertise ensures buyers are engaged, confident, and willing

see *BENEFITS*, page 7

The Environmental and Economical Vegetation and Weed Management System.

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KILL WEEDS | **SAVE LEGUMES**

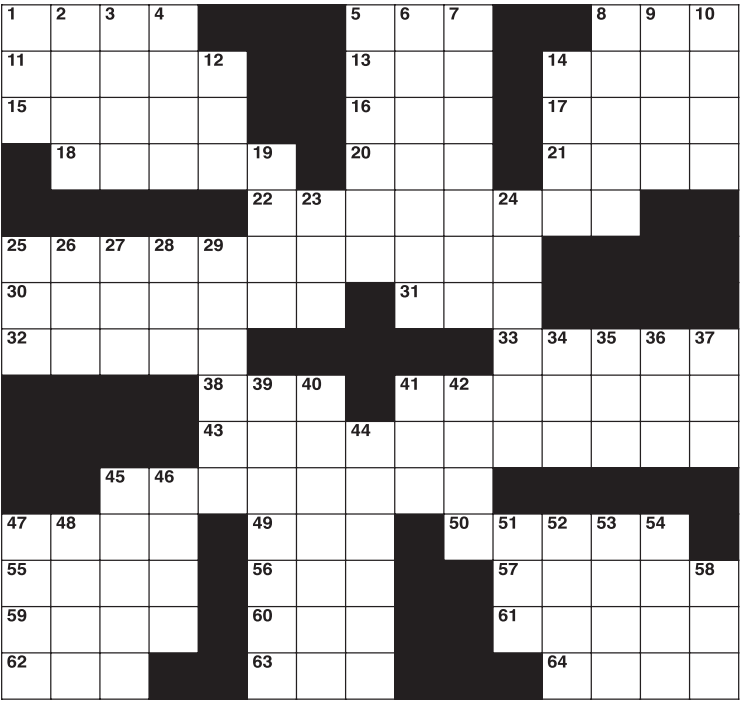


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Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

1. Golf scores

5. Shock therapy

8. Ballplayer's tool

11. Quench one's thirst

13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)

14. Every one of two or more things

15. Member of Muslim people

16. Play

17. Type of cheese

18. Type of lounge chair

20. ___ King Cole, musician

21. Fellows

22. North, Central and South

25. In an early way

30. Foes

31. Georgia rockers
32. Cryptocurrency

33. Narrow path along a slope

38. Disallow

41. Joyousness

43. Inaccessible

45. Evoke emotions

47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea

49. Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)

50. Sword

55. Actor Idris

56. Affirmative (slang)

57. Afflicted

59. One point north of northeast

60. Born of

61. Arabic name

62. Traumatic brain injury (abbr.)

63. Extremity

64. Post

CLUES DOWN

1. Pacific Standard Time

2. Protruding ridge on nematodes

3. Indian king

4. Type of milk

5. One who brings home the bacon

6. More comprehensible

7. Connected with sense of touch

8. Red mineral

9. Breezed through

10. Therefore

12. Supplement with difficulty

14. Early kingdom of Syria

19. Satisfy

23. They confuse doctors (abbr.)

24. Brass instrument

25. Domesticated animal

26. Ribonucleic acid

27. Snakelike fish

28. Woman (French)
29. Economically-minded aircraft

34. When you hope to get somewhere

35. Tease

36. Actress Gretchen

37. Midway between northeast and east

39. Inoffensive

40. Yellowish cotton cloth

41. Consume

42. Does not tell the truth

44. Improved something

45. Spiritual leader

46. Abba __, Israeli politician

47. Fix

48. Evergreen tree genus

51. Swiss river

52. Prejudice

53. Major C. European river

54. Long, narrow strap

58. Male parent



Coloring Fun

In a world where you can be anything... BE KIND! What will you do to show kindness to someone?

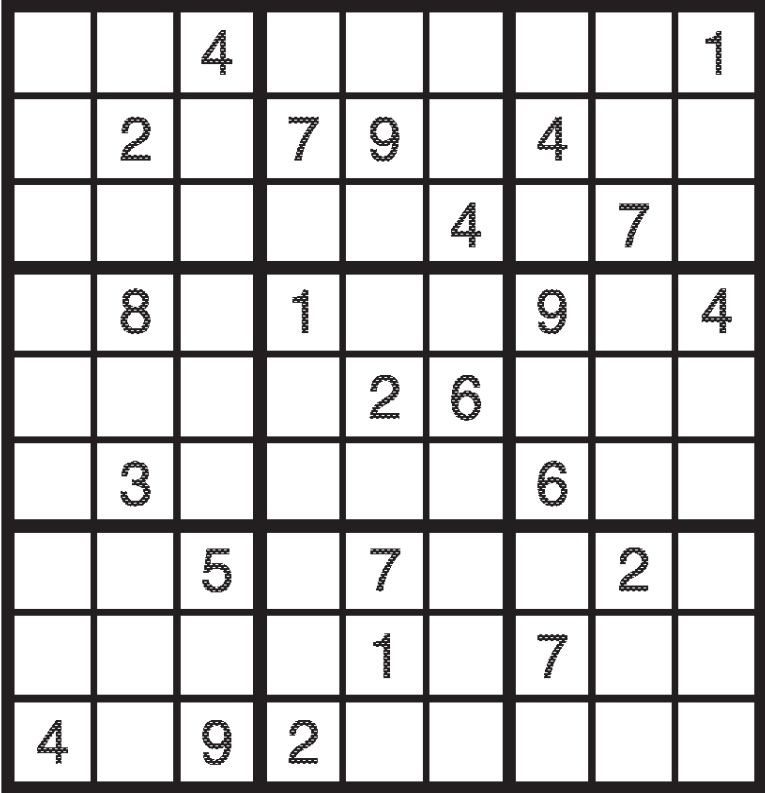


Sudoku Puzzle

How it Works:

Sudoku puzzles are fomatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Good Luck!



KINDNESS COUNTS!

Sudoku Answers

7	5	4	6	3	2	8	9	1
3	2	8	7	9	1	4	6	5
1	9	6	5	8	4	2	7	3
6	8	2	1	5	7	9	3	4
9	4	1	3	2	6	5	8	7
5	3	7	9	4	8	6	1	2
8	1	5	4	7	9	3	2	6
2	6	3	8	1	5	7	4	9
4	7	9	2	6	3	1	5	8

Guess Who?



I am a professional born in Arkansas on February 27, 1980. I come from a famous family of politicians, and at one point I lived in the White House. I hold Master's degrees from prominent schools and a Ph.D. from Oxford.

Answer: Chelsea Clinton

HIKE, from page one

the meeting location at Indian Kitchen Trailhead click this blue link Indian Kitchen Trailhead and a map will open up, and then click the Directions button and a driving map will be created which will

allow you to plan your driving directions to the meeting area. Prior to participating in any hikes, the River to River Trail Society requests that all hikers read the 2023 Trail Society Waiver which can be found on the River to River website at the

following link River to River Trail Society Information and then sign off on this waiver prior to the beginning of the hike. A copy of the waiver will be at the Indian Kitchen Trailhead meeting area for your signature.

POULTRY, from page one

by reducing the chance that a person comes in close contact with an infected bird or animal. IDPH continues to monitor human exposures very closely. We are committed to using every tool at our

disposal to enhance our preparation, communication, and education to help combat H5N1.” While avian flu has also been detected in dairy cattle, no cases have been confirmed in Illinois to date. Cattle generally have much lower mortality

rates than poultry and usually recover from the disease. For more information regarding avian flu, visit the USDA site at aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/hpai-detections

Red dirt country music pioneers Turnpike Troubadours to perform at Illinois State Fair

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Tahlequah, Oklahoma kings of Red Dirt music Turnpike Troubadours will perform at the Illinois State Fair Grandstand on Sunday, August 17. After releasing five genre-defining albums and building a fiercely loyal fanbase, Turnpike Troubadours took a three-year hiatus beginning in 2019 to find clarity amidst the noise of a red-hot career. After the break, the band returned more popular and stronger than ever with their sixth studio album, A Cat in the Rain. “Turnpike Troubadours perform a unique kind of music that we are

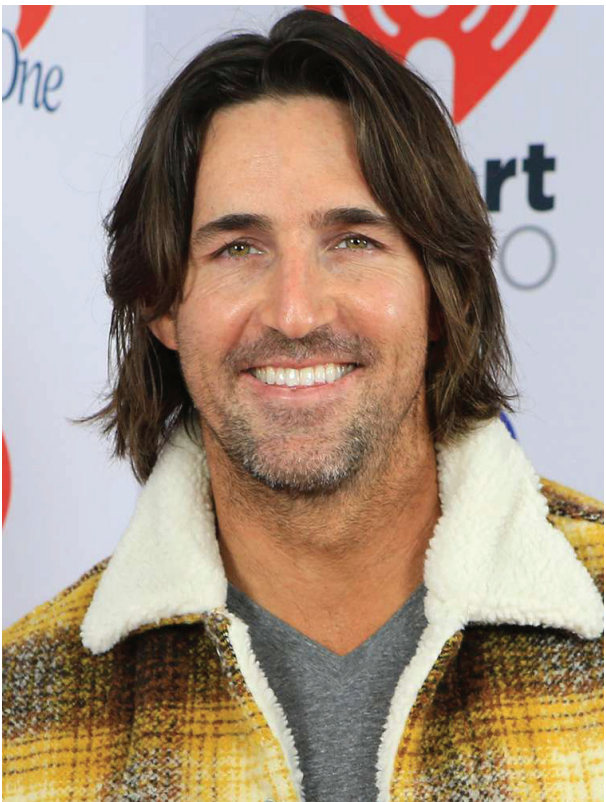
happy to have at the Illinois State Fair,” said Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Jerry Costello II. “This band will feel right at home here in central Illinois.” Turnpike Troubadours have racked up 1.5 billion streams globally and are selling out arenas and headlining festivals. “We are excited to bring the Turnpike Troubadours to the Grandstand Concert Series,” said Illinois State Fair Manager Rebecca Clark. “Whether you’ve followed them for years or just discovered their latest album, this Oklahoma group is better than ever — one of the most

beloved groups in Americana music.” Tickets for Turnpike Troubadours will go on sale Saturday, February 15 at 10 a.m. via Ticketmaster. Tier 3 - \$55 / Tier 2 - \$60 / Tier 1 – \$70 / Track - \$70 / Blue Ribbon Zone - \$125 *A \$30 Pre-Show Party ticket is offered as an additional upgrade for all paid concerts. Mark your calendars for the 2025 Illinois State Fair, August 7 through August 17 in Springfield. Stay up to date with all the latest news and announcements from the Illinois State Fair by connecting with us via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Country star Jake Owen to headline Du Quoin state Fair grandstand

DU QUOIN, IL – Jake Owen will take the stage at the Du Quoin State Fair Grandstand on Friday, August 29. The country music staple has 10 No.1 hit singles and more than 2.5 billion U.S. on-demand streams. “We are committed to a diverse lineup of Grandstand acts,” said Jerry Costello II, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. “Country artists are a crowd favorite in southern Illinois, and we are excited to bring Jake Owen to the Du Quoin State Fair.”

Owen is a country music mainstay with a career boasting a collection of gold and platinum records. The chart-topping superstar and ACM award winner is signed by his laid-back style and hit recordings such as “Barefoot Blue Jean Night,” “Beachin’,” “Anywhere With You,” “Alone With You” and “The One That Got Away.” The recording artist, powerhouse entertainer and actor



has released nine albums, headlined tours globally and appeared in the movie Our Friend (2019). Wrapping his 2024 performance schedule, Owen performed 30 show dates as a member of The Heartbreak on The Map Tour (with Dan + Shay). “Jake Owen gives his all during his performances, and the crowd responds

by singing along with their favorite hit songs,” said Du Quoin State Fair Manager Luke Davison. “This is going to be an iconic summer concert at the Du Quoin State Fair.” Tickets for the Jake Owen concert are now available via Ticketmaster. The Du Quoin State Fair runs from August 22 - September 1. To learn more, visit dsf.illinois.gov/.

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Du Quoin State Fair announces carnival wristband sale

Buy now and save on unlimited rides this summer

DU QUOIN, IL – Looking for a way to brighten dull winter days and create some excitement for summer? Look no further than the Du Quoin State Fair. Carnival wristbands, which offer one full day of unlimited rides, are on sale now through August 21, 2025, for only \$25. Once the fair begins on August 22, wristbands will sell for \$30 for weekdays

and \$35 for weekends. “The Du Quoin State Fair is a fun and affordable way to make memories with your family,” said Luke Davison, Du Quoin State Fair Manager. “Stock up now and treat the kids to unlimited rides and quality family time this summer.” Purchase Online: authenticgate.com/tickets/store/NAME/1185

Purchase In Person: Wristbands are now available for purchase in person at the Du Quoin State Fair administrative office (655 Executive Drive) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Questions? Please call (618) 542-1515. The 2025 Du Quoin State Fair will take place August 22 – September 1. For the latest news, visit dsf.illinois.gov/.

Caught off guard?

By Teresa LeNeave
Leneave2@comcast.net

A few years ago, I picked up a heavy box and somehow caught the bottom of it on my big toenail. The nail which was strong and healthy immediately gave way to the force of lifting and pulling at the same time. Instantly, the entire toenail popped off. Just like that, in an instant, there are so many unexpected things that catch us off guard. Things like stubbing your toe on a piece of furniture in the middle of the night. Things like a car accident that changes your life forever. Things like a diagnosis of fast-growing cancer or loss of income or loss of a

child. Life is like that. We can be devastated, and changed forever, by things that happen unexpectedly. And, because it was so unexpected, we're caught off guard. It throws us off balance. The scenario of my toenail reminds me of members of Christ's body who feel that they are off-balance; useless. My toenail may have seemed insignificant until it was gone. I soon learned, that though it was very small, it was very valuable. We read often in scripture where our body, metaphorically, is used as an example of our value in the church body. The smallest member, the

Bible says, is of upmost importance. Just like an unexpected event throws us off balance, physically, a stumped toe in the body of Christ throws us off balance, spiritually. What can we do when we're thrown off balance, spiritually? It's not our strength, but God's in us, that keeps us going. Though we can get bogged down by a devastating event, we must keep our eyes on what God has for our future. When we fall, or another Christian falls, God is not done with us. We're caught off guard, but not defeated. Whatever He has for you is of great value, to you and, to the of the body of Christ. Just because

the toenail falls off doesn't mean you don't want it to grow back. You need it. You want it. We need, and want, all people in church. As with jobs in a church, the small jobs are as important as the "big" jobs. In my opinion, a greeter in church is as important as the more well-known ministries. Why? Because it's often a neglected job. Especially, small churches fail to provide this very important position. A greeter is the face of the church. It's the first impression a person gets of your church. And this doesn't just apply to visitors' opinion of your church. A regular member may come into church after a long, painful, day and



the atmosphere they walk into when they come to church will determine the mood in which they hear and receive the preaching. A greeter's genuine smile and light conversation can change their whole perception of the service. When a person walks into the doors of your church they may be going through a life-threatening event and think no one cares, but a door greeter can reach out and make a

difference for that one small moment. When we're caught off guard by life's many potholes, we need each other. That's when we realize how valuable every member of the body is. Like my toenail I needed it back. I wanted it back. When you've been caught off guard by life, don't give up. Never give up. Eternity is coming. Being faithful will get us through the times we're caught off guard.



By Gary Miller
Outdoortruths.org

This winter has lingered longer than I wanted. I'm glad March is just around the corner. While that month is unpredictable, most likely there will be more warmer days than miserable ones. And I'm here for it. What is also just around the corner is turkey season. No matter what the weather brings, that first week of April will get me back in the woods. This year, it seems I've been more excited about chasing those toms than I have

been in the past. I'm actually excited to test my wits against theirs. I've hunted these birds for a few decades now and have gotten my fair share of gobblers. I've also missed too many to count. This is really what keeps all turkey hunters going back. It's the competition. If we always got our game, boredom would keep us home. But it's the uncertainty of the outcome that keeps us going back. And I love that. Over those years I have had to learn the art of talking turkey. I have tried to call these

birds using just about every type of call. And while I prefer the diaphragm (mouth) call, it is probably the one I'm most insecure with. I really don't think I'm very good at using it, but I do have success. I'm one of those guys who knows just enough to call in a few gobblers, but not enough to know every sound that I'm making. And I'm definitely not the person who would ever enter some calling competition. My fairly successful experiences are all I have to offer. But don't expect me to be able to explain the

Experience

intricacies of successful calling. You'll not be convinced. I think these same truths mark many Christians. It's the truth about what we feel about our ability to describe God or explain the intricacies of Christianity. We live in a world that is not only full of skeptics but is also full of easily attained information. This means that anytime we talk about our faith, there will likely be someone who brings up something like the possibilities of the existence of the prehistoric, prior to the antediluvi-

an period. Or describe the Trinity. Yeah, me too. What I am saying is this. Many times we remain quiet about our faith because we are afraid that questions will be asked for which we have no answers. The good news is this. While we may not be skilled theologians, we do have our own successful and wonderful experiences with God. And no one can debate them. Remember this. Experience always trumps information. While your friend may argue your views, they can only admire your experiences. So, don't

be afraid to share your faith. Just tell them what God has done for you. Your success will be more effective than your ability to call. Gary Miller
gary@outdoortruths.org
Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 21 years. He has also written five books which include compilations of his articles and a father/son devotional. He also speaks at wild-game dinners and men's events for churches and associations. Stay updated on Outdoor Truths each week by subscribing at Outdoor-truths.org

Love that cares enough to get involved

Dr. Billy Holland
billyhollandministries.com

We do not have to look very far to find someone that is struggling. Many are suffering from a crisis of health problems, their children, grieving over a loss, financial worries, marriage issues, and the list goes on. When difficult situations are presented, we become sympathetic, but how often do we consider that God may have brought these individuals to our attention so that we can not only pray but actually intervene and help in some tangible way? Instead of just discussing the suffering and having pity, with God's power we can help with what they are praying for. James chapter two talks about the difference between having faith without becoming involved and literally demonstrating our faith by our willingness to reach out and be a friend in need. Have you ever been discouraged or in trouble and you cried out for God to please send help? If someone responded, you knew they were a Godsend, right? But if no one came, we assumed the Lord convicted someone to inter-

vene, but they were probably busy and distracted or maybe they simply did not want to get involved. I believe this reveals more about what life is really about than we care to consider. Many are convinced they are free to live however they want and I can understand this point of view for a non-Christian. However, for those who are followers of God, the Bible clearly explains we are to take the responsibility to develop a new way of thinking. A renewed mind will rearrange our priorities from having a selfish attitude to being selfless. This transformation produces what we call spiritual discernment where the individual becomes more sensitive to God's presence. God is always speaking, but the question is are we close enough to Him to hear His voice? I thought we were to be developing the attributes and character of Jesus. I Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which is God's." Accepting the

life-changing gift of salvation includes the vow to let go of our rebellion and become focused on the two greatest commandments which is loving God with all of our heart and loving others as ourselves. The Bible refers to those who become God's children as instruments and vessels of honor, which means we are called to serve. God's plan for His children is to grow strong in spiritual awareness and be ready to respond when He calls, (which by the way there is much to do). He may be guiding and preparing us to present a Bible scripture with a friend at work or maybe write a letter to someone we are concerned about. There are so many opportunities all around us where we could bring encouragement, but will we? I'm sure you've had times when you could have used someone's kindness. To know that someone is thinking about us and cares enough to make an intentional effort to bless us gives us hope. We all want to feel loved and respected. Galatians chapter six talks about our deeds being like seeds and

that we reap according to what we sow. Applying this spiritual principle to our lives allows us to see how important it is to care about others in the same way we would like someone to care about us. If you need a miracle, become someone's miracle. If you desire to have more friends, go out of your way to be friendly. If you want to be loved, cast down fear and intimidation and show sincere love. Yes, God can arrange divine appointments but obeying is our freewill choice. Not only out of moral obligation but because we are filled with the compassion of Christ. Jesus told a parable in Luke chapter ten about a man who was attacked by thieves and left beside the road for dead. Two different men in the community came upon the situation (one of them a minister) and both ignored him. Then a Samaritan man found him and literally saved his life. The good Samaritan became the wounded man's miracle and presents the question from deep within our conscience; are we the type who passes by and looks the other way, or the one who stops and becomes involved?

PRECISION AGRICULTURE

Using GPS, AI, and IoT for optimized farming

As global demand for food production rises, the agricultural industry is turning to cutting-edge technology to increase efficiency and sustainability. Precision agriculture, integrating GPS, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT), is revolutionizing modern farming by optimizing resource use, reducing waste, and improving yields.

Precision agriculture employs GPS technology to enable real-time tracking and mapping of farm fields. Farmers can use GPS-guided tractors and drones to ensure precise planting, fertilization, and harvesting, reducing input costs and minimizing environmental impact. “By using GPS-driven equipment, farmers can eliminate overlapping applications and precisely manage every inch of their fields,” said Dr. Jones, an agricultural technology specialist.

AI-powered analytics further enhance decision-making in precision

agriculture. Machine learning algorithms analyze soil conditions, weather patterns, and crop health data, allowing farmers to make informed choices on irrigation, fertilization, and pest control. “AI systems can predict crop diseases before they become widespread, enabling proactive interventions and improving overall yields,” said Dr. Jones, a researcher in agricultural AI solutions.

IoT devices, such as smart sensors and automated irrigation systems, provide real-time field monitoring and management. These sensors measure moisture levels, temperature, and soil nutrients, transmitting data to a centralized platform accessible via mobile devices. “Farmers can receive instant alerts and make adjustments remotely, ensuring optimal growing conditions while conserving resources,” a precision agriculture consultant.

The integration of these technologies is paving the way for more sustainable and

profitable farming practices. As the industry embraces digital transformation, precision agriculture is expected to play a crucial role in meeting the world’s food demands while reducing environmental impact.

The initiative has several key objectives: Enhancing productivity and efficiency: Leveraging technology to maximize output while minimizing costs.

Improving environmental sustainability: Reducing chemical and water usage through precise application.

Supporting data-driven decision-making: Using AI and IoT for real-time farm management.

Encouraging widespread adoption: Promoting accessibility of precision agriculture tools to farmers of all scales.

With continued advancements in GPS, AI, and IoT, precision agriculture is set to redefine the future of farming, ensuring that agriculture remains both profitable and sustainable in an increasingly tech-driven world.

BENEFITS, from page 3

to bid competitively. Sellers also benefit from accurate appraisals, strategic lot organization, and expert guidance throughout the process.

A Winning Strategy for Farmers

At the end of the day, hiring a professional auctioneer takes the stress out of selling while maximizing your profits. Whether you’re selling a single piece of equipment or an entire farm operation, an auctioneer ensures your assets are sold efficiently, transparently, and for top dollar. With their

market knowledge, industry connections, and ability to create a high-energy bidding atmosphere, auctioneers turn your farm sale into

a winning event. When it’s time to sell, don’t leave money on the table—partner with a professional auctioneer and watch the bids roll in.



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1 mile South of Ottawa on SR 65 to Rd M West on M to Rd 11-J South to Rd M-10 West to Auction

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HEART HEALTH

Delicious Foods that’s Good for Your Heart

Sliced Fruit with Honey-Vanilla Yogurt Dip



INGREDIENTS
2 cups green or red grapes
2 medium bananas, sliced (about 2 cups)
1 medium red or green apple, cored and thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups fat-free, plain Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS
Arrange the grapes and banana and apple slices on a large plate or platter.
In a small bowl, stir together the yogurt, honey, and vanilla extract. Serve with the fruit.



Recipes from the American Heart Association. [recipes.heart.org/](https://www.heart.org/recipes)



Grilled Chicken with Strawberry and Pineapple Salsa

INGREDIENTS
Chicken
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 4 ounces each), all visible fat discarded
2 teaspoons salt-free steak seasoning blend
1/4 teaspoon salt
Salsa
1 teaspoon canola or corn oil
2 slices fresh pineapple, each 1/2 inch thick, patted dry
1 cup whole strawberries (about 5 ounces), diced
1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
3-4 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves
1-2 teaspoons sugar
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 medium lemon

DIRECTIONS
Preheat the grill on medium high. Brush a grill pan or grill rack with the oil. Heat the grill pan or rack on the grill for about 2 minutes, or until hot. Grill the pineapple for 2 minutes on each side. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool slightly, about 2 minutes, before chopping
Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, stir together the remaining salsa ingredients except the lemon. Grate 1 teaspoon lemon zest, reserving the lemon. Stir the zest and chopped pineapple into the strawberry mixture. Set aside.
Sprinkle both sides of the chicken with the seasoning blend and salt.
Grill for 5 minutes on each side, or until no longer pink in the center. Transfer to plates.
Squeeze the reserved lemon over the chicken. Serve with the salsa on the side.

Banana Bread



INGREDIENTS
Cooking spray
2 cups all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons stevia sweetener OR
18 stevia sweetener packets
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 medium semi-ripe bananas (mashed with a fork)
1 large egg
1/2 cup 100% orange juice
1/3 cup extra-light olive oil
1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

DIRECTIONS
Preheat the oven to 350°F.
Lightly spray two 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans with cooking spray.
In a large bowl, stir together the flour, stevia sweetener, baking powder, baking soda, and cinnamon until well blended.
In a medium bowl, stir together the bananas, egg, juice, and oil until well blended.
Pour into the flour mixture, stirring together just until moistened but no flour is visible. Stir in the walnuts. Pour the batter into the pans, about halfway full, smoothing the tops.
Bake for 40 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Transfer the pans to a cooling rack. Let cool completely.

Breakfast Skillet Ham Hash



INGREDIENTS
2 tsp. olive oil
1 large green bell pepper (diced)
1 large red bell pepper (diced)
1 medium onion (diced)
1/2 cup uncured lower-sodium, low-fat, diced ham (about 4 ounces), all visible fat discarded
3 cups frozen, fat-free southern-style diced hash brown potatoes, thawed
1/2 tsp. salt-free Cajun or Creole seasoning blend
2 Tbsp. chopped, fresh parsley
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

DIRECTIONS
In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the bell peppers and onion for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the onion is soft and the bell pepper is tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in the ham. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, or until heated through, stirring occasionally.
Stir in the hash browns and seasoning blend. Cook without stirring for 4 minutes, or until the bottom is golden brown. Stir (the golden-brown pieces will be redistributed). Cook without stirring for 4 minutes, or until the bottom is golden brown and the mixture is heated through.
Stir in the parsley, salt, and pepper.

HEART HEALTHY DIET PLAN:

FOODS TO INCLUDE

- Berries and Fruits
- Nuts and Seeds
- Nut Butter
- Legumes
- Whole Grains
- Poultry and Seafood
- Herbs and Spices
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil

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