

Ag Day draws experts to Ivy Tech

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Ivy Tech Community College will host its fourth annual Agriculture Day today at its Marion campus. "Ivy Tech acts as a bridge between high school, further college education and industry. We bring those partners together to explore how we can work as a unit," said Clair Berger, chair of the school's agriculture program. "It's an exciting project."

Berger said she expects about 50 to come to the event, which features panels from 9:30 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. For the first time, topics for panels ranging from using global positioning technology to precision-spray fields to using alternative energy in the home were decided by students from the school's Ag Club.

"We wanted to include a lot of the topics that are hot right now, including alternative energy," said Ivy Tech sophomore Keri Breauchy, who serves as chair of the Ag Day Committee. "I didn't grow up on a farm; I just fell in love with (agriculture). We wanted a broad range of topics to attract people like me who aren't familiar with agriculture. It's a good mix."

Berger said topics were put roughly on to two tracks: sustainability and traditional agriculture. Keynote speaker Mike Guebert, a professor of earth and environmental sciences at Taylor University, straddles that line.

"I'm speaking about research being done at Taylor for five years on water quality in Grant County," he said. "We're studying the middle Mississinewa River watershed. It's like going to the doctor to get a diagnosis on the chemical, biological and physical state of the water. We'll give (Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District) a report so they can get land owners involved and improve the quality."

Guebert's speech will run concurrently with a trade show at which local businesses and agriculture experts will share ideas. Lunch will be catered as well.

Breauchy is especially excited for the last panel of the day, an agricultural outlook with Scott Green from Central States and Ryan Smith from Central Indiana Ethanol.

"It could be anything and everything. I'm excited because there's no set thing to talk about," she said. "For these great ag minds to be in one place will be amazing."