

### **RITA in Action: Life at Porter Farm**

At the western edge of Hendricks County lies a small homestead with a farmstand full of fresh eggs and produce. The land, once belonging to veteran farmer Harold Porter, was made into an “incubator farm” in 2019. With the help of owner Steve Stamper, veteran farmer Sara Creech, and the Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District, Porter Farm now provides an opportunity for veterans to live and learn on the farm without financial risk.

In addition to serving as an incubator farm, Porter Farm is also a great example for implementing conservation practices on small or urban farms. Every year, the farm hosts workshops for the public to learn about livestock fencing, soil testing, whole farm conservation planning, and more. When walking around the farm, attendees can see practices in action, including a hoop house, pollinator garden, heavy use area pads (HUAPs), and dripline irrigation.

The Resilient Indiana Program has been able to provide assistance in installing some of these practices. As part of my duties at Hendricks County SWCD, I spent a day with Sara Creech and the SWCD Staff to installing drip line irrigation in the farm’s raised beds. More recently, I have been helping the county to prepare for the first native plant sale at Porter Farm. All of the plants available to sell will be grown from seed. So far, they have planted thousands of native seeds in preparation for the event.

This year, Porter Farm will host more workshops and continue to implement conservation practices on the land. Thanks to the farm, landowners and producers have a place to learn about conservation and soil health. Additionally, the farm will allow more veterans to have a chance to start their farming careers.

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