



Illinois

**Comprehensive farm risk management for healthier bodies, books, and businesses**

To build a successful specialty crop operation, farmers need to learn many skills. Not only must you understand best production methods, you also have to manage human risks, financial considerations and legal issues. It can place a sizable burden on an individual farmer, and act as a barrier to success. To help central Illinois farmers develop that skill set, **The Land Connection**, located in Champaign, Illinois, delivered a series of training sessions and resources in 2018-2019 to help them improve the economic viability of their operations.

The project reached hundreds of farmers who joined one or more of four workshops and two webinars that covered an array of subjects, from writing food safety

and workplace safety plans to improving financial record keeping to improving workplace productivity. A day-long Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day held at the PrairiErth Farm in Atlanta, Illinois, drew 231 participants. Attendees learned about principles and tools for precise mechanical weed control from farmers and researchers. They watched demonstrations of in-row cultivation tools, and cultivating tractors and a variety of weeding tools were on display. Workplace safety and food safety workshops were also held as part of the project.

The webinars included sessions focused on employee management and QuickBooks tutorials. Eight videos developed for the webinars and workshops, as well as five fact sheets and other educational material, have been uploaded to The Land Connection’s website ([thelandconnection.org](http://thelandconnection.org)), where project participants and other farmers can watch them and continue to learn.

Over 300 producers participated in four workshops and two webinars. Lorien, a farm partner on a 20-acre organic vegetable farm, attended the Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day and said that the event topped all research she had previously done on the subject. During the event, Lorien was able to see five different types of cultivators weeding on beds seeded for that purpose. The developers of the implements were there to explain how to use them and take questions. After attending the field day, Lorien was inspired to invest in a new system of finger weeders, which took their weed control efforts to new levels in 2019 and made it their cleanest year of weeds to date.



*“The networking was good and the wide range of demonstrations represented all of the industry. The keynote was fascinating. – Field Day Attendee*





**EXTENSION  
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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

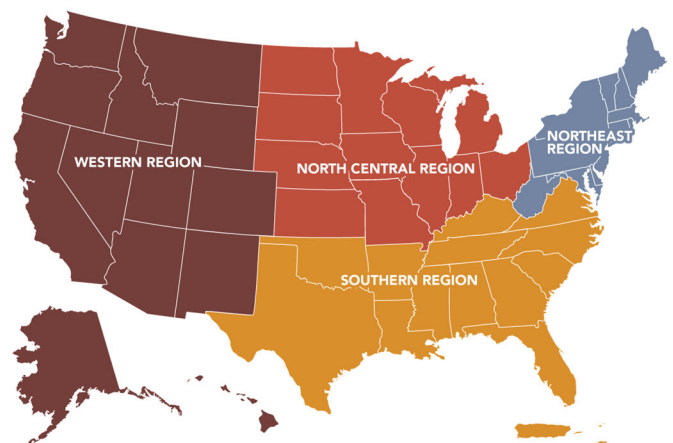
National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

## “Educating America’s farmers and ranchers to manage the unique risks of producing food for the world’s table.”

**Extension Risk Management Education (ERME)** is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website.  
<http://ExtensionRME.org>



### ERME REGIONAL CENTERS



**NORTH CENTRAL  
EXTENSION  
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EDUCATION**

University of Nebraska  
Dept. of Agricultural Economics  
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**NORTHEAST  
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**WESTERN  
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