

EXTENSION
SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Anita Wilkinson

Communications
Coordinatoraswilkin@illinois.edu

Chelsea Harbach is the new commercial ag educator working out of the Northwestern Illinois Agriculture Research and Demonstration Center near Monmouth. Her research and direct education will be utilized within the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit as well as state-wide.

Chelsea Harbach becomes commercial agriculture educator at research center

The Northwestern Illinois Agriculture Research and Demonstration Center, located outside of Monmouth, Illinois is a 320-acre University of Illinois facility. Chelsea Harbach is the new U of I Extension commercial agriculture educator who will be conducting research at this site, as well as providing education and presenting programs at a state and regional level. She is the first stop for Extension clients in Fulton, Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell counties who have questions about or need resources for crops topics.

“With a background in plant pathology, I plan to do as much work with plant diseases as possible, especially plant-parasitic nematodes,” explained Harbach.

University of Illinois Crop Science department is home to Harbach’s undergraduate studies and master’s degree. She completed her Ph.D. at Iowa State University in the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology, where her research focused on cover crop effects on soybean cyst nematode population densities.

Since starting in August, Chelsea has joined Extension educator Emerson Nafziger with his efforts to obtain harvest yield and moisture data through the Delayed Planting Impact Study. Additionally, she is working to build partnerships within the agriculture industry to conduct seed treatment and fungicide trials at the research center. Other research plans include cover crop and inter-cropping systems, as well as industrial hemp production in the areas of grain, fiber, and CBD (cannabidiol).

During her time at U of I as a graduate student, Harbach interned as a diagnostician in the University of Illinois Plant Clinic. “As part of integrating plant pathology into my work, I plan to work with the horticulture core education and Master Gardener training sessions to teach plant pathology lessons where needed,” Harbach mentioned.

Another big piece of Harbach’s educational reach is through the online blog called “Hill and Furrow”, <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/hill-and-furrow>. She writes updates that address current agriculture topics and shares insights from university research. She is also utilizing Twitter as an educational tool, @chelseaharbach.



“I am so happy to be back in Illinois, serving with University of Illinois. I bleed orange and blue,” Harbach said. She grew up on the family farm in Jo Daviess County and has strong roots in agriculture. “Serving in Extension has been a career goal of mine and I’m looking forward to creating programs that will benefit the farmers as well as the agricultural industry of Illinois.”