Hello Northeast Ohio Counties!

I hope everyone was able to enjoy the great weather we had over the weekend. It is a wonderful time of year, the greening pastures, budding trees, and spring flowers bring hope and optimism after a dreary winter.

Though we are enjoying the start of ‘April flowers’, the first article in today’s letter warns of expected April showers, along with everything else to expect from what is predicted to be a crazy month of weather.

Don’t forget to sign up for the Spring Botany School on the 11th and read about the Local Food Summit that is being held April 26th, sign up today!

Stay safe and have a great week!

Lee Beers
Trumbull County Extension Educator

Andrew Holden
Ashtabula County Extension Educator
**Spring Roller Coaster Ride Coming**

By Jim Noel, NOAA  
Source: https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2019-08/spring-roller-coaster-ride-coming

It is spring and with it often comes wild swings. This is what we expect for the rest of April 2019.

A parade of storms will begin later this Thursday into Friday and follow every 3-5 days. This will cause 2-3 inches of rain on average for Ohio the next two weeks as shown in the attached graphic. Normal rainfall is now almost 1 inch per week. Hence, slightly above normal rainfall is expected. The one exception could be northern and northwest Ohio where it is possible to see less rainfall depending on the exact storm tracks.

We are also fast approaching our end of the freeze season typically in mid April up to around the 20th for much of the state. Some places in the north it can be late April. Right now, everything looks like a normal end to the freeze season. We do see the possibility of another freeze this weekend on Sunday AM especially north of I-70. A few more could happen into the next week or two before coming to an end.

Temperatures are expected to overall be slightly above normal for the rest the rest of April but with wild swings. This should help bring 2-4 inch soil temperatures into the normal range, possibly a degree or so above normal. The exception would be northern Ohio where above normal ice levels this past winter on the Great Lakes will keep water temperatures on the Lakes lagging and may keep air temperatures closer to normal there.

With all the storms lined up, we do expect a windy April as well. Winds of 30-40 mph with gust to 50 mph can not be ruled out Thursday or Friday this week with
storm number one. 30-40 mph winds will also be possible with the storm later Sunday into next Monday and can not be ruled out with the third storm later next week.

After a wetter April indications are for a warmer and not as wet May with the possibility of normal or even a bit below normal rainfall.

Early indications for the summer growing season are normal or slightly above normal temperatures and possibly a bit wetter than normal though June could be a bit drier.

https://www.weather.gov/ohrfc/SeasonalBriefing

Other early indications give the possibility of another wet harvest season.

2018 County Yield Estimates Available
By Bruce Clevenger

The 2018 Ohio county estimates for crop yields were recently published by the USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service. This annual report provides a look back to the previous production year and give an average of planted and harvested acres as well as the county yield in bushels per acre and a total estimated production for the county. The report additionally groups counties into nine reporting districts and provides an overall state yield estimate for corn and soybean. Ohio county estimates for the 2018 wheat crop were released back in December of 2018.

Western Ohio continues to lead the state in both corn and soybean yields and production. The counties leading the corn yield estimates were Greene, Clinton and Auglaize Counties reporting 214, 213 and 210 bushels per acre, respectively. The State corn yield estimate for Ohio is 187 bushels per acre with a total production estimate at 6.17 million bushels. The counties leading the soybean yield estimates for 2018 were Mercer, Auglaize, and Van Wert Counties reporting 67.5, 66.3 and 65.7 bushels per acre, respectively. The State soybean yield estimate for Ohio is 58.0 bushels per acre with a total production estimate at 2.88 million bushels.

The Ohio county estimates are valuable to farmers, crop insurance, economists, and USDA. Revisions to this data can be given at a later date by USDA. The complete data can be viewed online in the searchable Quick Stats or the County Estimates reports. Corn data is available from 75 Ohio counties whereas soybean
data is available from 72 Ohio counties. All the current data is available online at: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Ohio/](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Ohio/) or questions can be directed to the Ohio Field Office at 8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068 or call 614-728-2100.

**Study shows dairy farmers can improve water quality, increase forage production**

By Penn State  
Source: [https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190402164529.htm](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190402164529.htm)

Dairy farmers in the Northeast can improve water quality and boost the profitability of their operations by changing the timing and method of applying manure to their fields in the fall, along with planting rye as a cover crop between corn crops -- or by double-cropping rye and corn, according to Penn State researchers.

Dairy farmers in the Northeast can improve water quality and boost the profitability of their operations by changing the timing and method of applying manure to their fields in the fall, along with planting rye as a cover crop between corn crops -- or by double-cropping rye and corn, according to Penn State researchers.

In a two-year study at Penn State's Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, researchers compared the effects on nitrogen conservation of three field-management options that could be implemented by farmers, to determine whether new strategies would yield environmental and crop-production benefits.

In a "three-factor factorial experiment," researchers compared injecting manure into the soil versus broadcasting it on the surface; planting rye as a winter cover crop versus allowing the rye to grow longer in the spring and harvesting it as forage; and applying manure before the cover crop is planted in September -- after the harvest of corn for silage -- versus waiting until November to apply the manure into the established rye crop.

The results indicate that dairy farmers can take advantage of win-win opportunities, according to Heather Karsten, associate professor of crop production ecology.
incorporating a few changes into their operations, they can produce more feed for their cattle and reduce the amount of nitrogen lost from their fields.

Karsten, whose research group in the College of Agricultural Sciences conducted the study, pointed out that the research is rooted in both practical and environmental considerations: Dairy farmers typically are limited to six months of manure storage, requiring them to apply manure spring through fall. But in the fall, there is a higher risk of water quality impairment if manure is applied to bare ground and can be washed into streams by precipitation.

"Fall manure applications are of particular concern in the Chesapeake Bay drainage, where agricultural sources have been identified as a primary contributor of phosphorus and nitrogen to the bay, causing hypoxic conditions that threaten aquatic organisms, and overall water quality," Karsten said. "To comply with total maximum daily load limits set for the bay by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, farmers must reduce runoff of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment."

Findings of the research, recently published in Agronomy Journal, suggest that the best environmental and economic outcomes can be achieved together.

According to lead researcher Rachel Milliron, a master's degree student when the study was conducted, now a Penn State Extension educator specializing in agronomy, the research identified multiple strategies that farmers can use to produce forage with fall manure and protect water quality. She explained that two practices and combinations of the practices consistently rose to the top -- harvesting the rye for forage compared to terminating for cover and injecting manure versus surface broadcasting.

Allowing rye to grow 10 to 11 days longer in spring resulted in three- to four-fold greater rye biomass for forage, and two- to three-fold more manure nitrogen in the rye biomass that is removed in the forage. Despite delayed planting of the subsequent corn crop, the double-crop rye forage/corn silage system also produced more total forage -- rye forage and corn silage -- than the rye cover/corn silage system when the manure was applied in September.

When manure is left on the soil surface, nitrogen can be lost as volatilized ammonia gas, but manure injection can conserve this nitrogen in the soil. The researchers found that injecting manure versus surface broadcasting in September conserved manure nitrogen to produce more subsequent corn silage after a rye cover crop. When the rye was harvested for forage, September manure injection also increased rye forage yield and nitrogen in the rye, and produced more total forage -- rye forage and corn silage. However, to make the best-case scenario work, dairy farmers must have access to and be able to afford manure-injection equipment. And -- as with all strategies related to farming -- weather can foil the best-laid plans for nitrogen conservation, Karsten.
warned. The double-crop, field-management strategy includes tight windows for farmers to harvest one crop and plant the next one.

"So, a lot of rain at critical harvest times can make muddy fields inaccessible, and could prohibit the double-cropping strategy," she said. "However, with the growing seasons lengthening, we believe this strategy can be a real asset to Northeast dairy farmers."

**The next weapon against corn aflatoxin**
By American Society of Agronomy
Source: https://www.morningagclips.com/the-next-weapon-against-corn-aflatoxin/

It's not fun when a fungus contaminates crops. Safe native fungi, however, show promise in the fight against toxic fungal contamination.

The fungus *Aspergillus flavus* can infect several crops, including corn. Some varieties, or strains, of *A. flavus* produce aflatoxins. Aflatoxin contamination costs U.S. farmers billions of dollars every year. Worse, aflatoxins are harmful for humans and animals.

To reduce aflatoxin contamination of crops, farmers use safe commercial strains of *A. flavus*. These biocontrol strains do not produce aflatoxins. When applied to crops, the biocontrol strains outcompete the harmful aflatoxin-producing fungi. That reliably reduces levels of aflatoxins in the harvest, transport, and storage stages. However, commercial strains may not be the only answer. A new study shows that using safe, native strains of *A. flavus* can be as effective, or even more effective, than commercial strains.

“Using native *A. flavus* strains could have many advantages,” says Ignazio Carbone, lead author of the new study. “Native strains may be better adapted to the soil type and weather conditions. Therefore, they may perform better in the field compared to non-native strains.” Carbone is a researcher at North Carolina State University.
Moreover, using commercial strains can have some disadvantages. They usually need to be reapplied each year, at a cost of $20 per acre. Also, the application has to be done aerially or manually. “That can deter farmers from using commercial strains,” Carbone explains.

Native strains, on the other hand, occur naturally in growing areas. They may be more persistent in the soil and not need to be reapplied every year.

Carbone and colleagues tested native strains of *A. flavus* that produce no or low levels of aflatoxin. They also tested commercial strains. Both reduced crop aflatoxin levels. Corn for human consumption can have maximum aflatoxin levels of 20 parts per billion, per FDA regulation. Untreated crops had aflatoxin levels above 35 parts per billion.

Native and commercial strains reduced aflatoxin levels to lower than 10 parts per billion. Unexpectedly, the study also showed that certain combinations of native strains are more effective than commercial strains in reducing aflatoxin levels. That’s because the combinations take advantage of fungal biology: their mating types are compatible, allowing them to reproduce and sustain their population.

When the researchers applied native strains of compatible mating types to the test plots, aflatoxin levels were reduced to less than 2 parts per billion in some cases. This was a better outcome than any commercial strain.

“Our results suggest that using native strains could lead to sustained reductions of aflatoxin levels. Using native strains could be very cost-effective for farmers over the long term,” says Carbone.

Although this study was conducted in North Carolina, Carbone anticipates the approach can work in other areas. A preliminary experiment in Texas also showed that paired native strains reduced aflatoxin levels more efficiently compared to a single commercial strain.

“We need to continue testing this approach in cornfields across different states,” says Carbone. “We also need to monitor aflatoxin levels over several growing seasons.” Future field trials may include testing current commercial strains plus a compatible mating partner strain. Different combinations of native strains may also be tested, says Carbone.

Can this approach go beyond aflatoxin? Carbone is optimistic. “Fungal toxins pose a continual threat to food safety. Our approach can potentially be applied to other toxin-producing fungi as well.”
Cross-boundary solutions for wicked weeds

By: Texas A&M AgriLife Communications
Source: https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190408161627.htm

Weed species continue to spread and management costs continue to mount, in spite of best management practices and efforts by research and extension personnel who promote them to land managers, said Dr. Muthu Bagavathiannan, Texas A&M AgriLife Research weed scientist in the Texas A&M soil and crop sciences department, College Station.

The issue is weeds aren't just a problem for the landowner where they grow, Bagavathiannan said. They are collectively everyone’s problem because they don't recognize property lines, and that is how they must be managed.

Jointly with Dr. Sonia Graham, a social scientist at the University of New South Wales, Australia, doing a research fellowship at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, Bagavathiannan led a team of 15 researchers representing entities around the world in a study that looks at weed control through a cross-boundary lens.

The team recently published their findings, Considering Weed Management as a Social Dilemma Bridges Individual and Collective Interests, in the journal Nature Plants.

The paper, they say, is a call to action for scholars and practitioners to broaden their conceptualization and approaches to weed management problems, beginning with evaluating the "public good" characteristics of specific weed management challenges and applying context-specific design principles to realize successful and sustainable weed management.

"The public-goods lens highlights the broader social vision required for successful weed management," Graham said. "Public goods like weed management are best achieved with the help of many people living and working across landscapes. We need to make the most of the diverse interests, knowledge and skill sets of those involved in managing weeds."

Agricultural and natural landscapes worldwide are affected by weeds, but management techniques have primarily been developed for individual landowners. The practices rarely look at how control from a collective perspective would improve overall weed management outcomes.
"We suggest that a major limitation of current best management practices is an underappreciation for the complex, multi-scale and collective nature of the weed problem," he said. "We believe practices will be more effective if they are complemented by landscape-scale design principles that encourage cross-boundary coordination and cooperation."

Graham added that the team framed the landscape-scale weed management issue as a social dilemma, where trade-offs occur between individual and collective interests. Combining perspectives from biologists and social scientists, the team applied a transdisciplinary systems approach to four pressing landscape-scale weed management challenges:

- **Plant biosecurity** -- The protection of plant resources from alien pests is a key policy and regulatory tool governments use to limit intentional or accidental spread of weeds, locally and globally. Plant biosecurity includes quarantine, inspection of freight at ports and certified treatment schemes such as bulk fumigation of certain types of cargo. Some governments fail to make these necessary investments to protect global biodiversity.

- **Weed seed contamination** -- Weeds, especially those closely related to crops, are common contaminants of crop seeds and can spread through equipment sharing. For example, weedy rice is a noxious weed that threatens global rice production. Due to its propensity for seed shattering and long seed dormancy, weedy rice is an efficient invader that can cause up to 80 percent yield loss in rice and substantially reduce marketable grain quality.

- **Herbicide susceptibility** -- Herbicide-resistant weeds are proliferating exponentially, threatening farm productivity and profitability. At least 60 countries have reported herbicide-resistant weeds, including about 500 species-herbicide group combinations. Treating herbicide-resistant weeds costs around $4 billion annually in the U.S. alone.

- **Weed biological control** -- Classic weed biological control employs host-specific arthropods or pathogens from a weed's native environment to reduce weed populations in invaded systems. These strategies can have high benefit-to-cost ratios due to long-lasting, low-input costs, and provide management options where other tools are unavailable or impractical.

Bagavathiannan said that across these challenges, the public goods nature of weeds requires active contributions and development of shared goals, and approaches must respect the unique perspectives and diverse capacities of contributors.
“Achieving such an agreement requires good working relationships, or at least shared values, where contributors are willing to transparently demonstrate their efforts and contribute shared resources to help those who are least able to contribute,” he said.

Describing their findings, Graham outlined four new principles for landscape-scale weed management: clearly articulate shared goals and secure commitments from contributors; establish good working relationships and shared values among contributors; make individual contributions transparent; and generate pooled resources to support weakest-link problems or address asymmetries in the public good.

“These principles emphasize the importance of recognizing the cross-boundary nature of different weed management challenges and embracing the appropriate cross-boundary solutions,” said contributor Dr. Alexander Metcalf, a professor of human dimensions at the University of Montana.

**Trumbull County Cover Crop Demonstration Program**

Trumbull Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is sponsoring a Cover Crop Demonstration Program for Trumbull County cropland. Any farmer or grower with a minimum of 1 acre to plant, who is interested in trying cover crops after a low-residue crop should consider applying. Eligible applicants will have a Conservation Plan developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) to include a mix appropriate to the site and operation. Trumbull SWCD will pay $50/ac up to a contract total of $250. Applicants must also be willing to host a potential cover crop field day to demonstrate a part of the process. If you or someone you know within Trumbull County is interested, please contact the Trumbull County SWCD or USDA-NRCS office at 330-637-2056 x3. Applications must be accompanied with a map of the field to be included. All completed applications must be received by April 30th to be considered. USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer, Provider, and Lender.

**Wildlife and Woodland Management Field Day**

The ODNR Division of Wildlife, ODNR Division of Forestry, and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Portage Soil and Water Conservation Service (PSWCD) will be offering an afternoon field day to discuss and demonstrate options for wildlife and forestry management for private landowners. Various aspects of wildlife habitat, forest management / timber harvesting and conservation practices will be covered. The event will be held on an active conservation club that will be implementing many wildlife and forestry conservation practices with assistance from NRCS.
The event is scheduled for Friday May 3rd, 2019 1:00 pm-5:00 pm at The Izaak Walton League - 9634 Newton Falls Rd. Newton Falls, Ohio. Event is FREE. Please register by calling: 330-297-7633 x3 or online: http://www.portageswcd.org/register/woodland

Appropriate footwear & attire will be necessary as we will be hiking in woodlands and fields. Please use protective clothing and spray for ticks and mosquitoes. If you need special accommodations, please call 330-297-7633 x3.

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer, Provider, and Lender

**Spring Botany School to be held on April 11th 1-5 p.m.**

Ashtabula County Ohio State University Extension along with The Ashtabula County Master Gardeners invite you to come learn at our Spring Botany School. The topic for the day is *Plant Families: A Botanical Focus* taught by Garrett Ormiston & Patricia Fox from the Botany Department at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. You will learn hands-on how to identify plants based on their shared botanical characteristics. Refreshments will be served and 4 CE’s for master gardeners will be given. We will be referring to "Botany in a Day: The Pattern Method of Plant Identification" by Thomas Eipel and using "Newcomb's Wildflower Guide" by Lawrence Newcomb. A few copies of each will be available for purchase.

The cost is $15.00 (Checks payable to OSU Extension Ashtabula), it is asked that you register by April 9th.

More information or to sign up: Please contact Andrew Holden at Holden.155@osu.edu or 440-576-9008. Please see flyer below or by visiting: https://ashtabula.osu.edu/sites/ashtabula/files/imce/Botany%20Flyer%2001.pdf
**Ashtabula County 2019 Plat Book**

Who owns Ashtabula County? Thousands of people have a piece of it, and they are listed in the new plat book published by the Ashtabula County 4-H and OSU Extension with Mapping Solutions. The 2019 book is available for purchase for $25.00 + tax at the County Extension Office located at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson. Premium wall maps are also available. For more information contact their office at (440) 576-9008.

This 136-page spiral-bound book features township and range maps of Ashtabula County. These maps include the property boundaries for all rural parcels within the township, the name of the owner and the number of acres owned. Also, there is a handy landowner index for easy cross referencing.

In this new edition, you will find information regarding the Ashtabula Extension and 4-H programs, a Watersheds Map, and a County Road Map with Road Index as well as Municipal Maps of Andover, Jefferson, Orwell, and North Kingsville. We have again included the Index of the Initialed Parcels for your easy reference. And, as an added bonus there is an explanation of the public land survey system. Mapping Solutions is the publisher.

This information is valuable to anyone with a need to know who owns land in Ashtabula County. Prospective or adjoining property owners, hunters, foresters, timber and petroleum industry personnel, emergency services and many others would be interested in having a copy.

Now available….2 digital versions of the Ashtabula County landowner maps.

1. SmartMap for your smart phone or tablet. A SmartMap allows you to view your location on the map and track real-time movement with the device GPS, you can measure distances and areas as well as add points of interest, photos, position and label names to the map and much more.

2. eBook for your tablet, laptop or PC. This is a digital version of the plat book.

Visit mappingsolutionsGIS.com for these products.
Applications Being Accepted for Summer Master Gardener Training Program

The Ashtabula County Extension office is taking applications from Ashtabula County residents for the 2019 Summer Ashtabula & Lake County Master Gardener training program. If you have a strong interest in gardening and enjoy helping others, you are invited to apply to become an Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener volunteer for Ashtabula County.

To become an OSU Extension Master Garden volunteer, you must attend 11 training sessions held from Mid-June through August 2019 and volunteer 50 hours of horticultural service to the community through Extension educational programming after the training. Such service could include teaching adults and youth about gardening, planting and maintaining Extension demonstration gardens, answering gardening questions from the public, judging flower and vegetable projects at local fairs, or assisting community garden participants.

As a benefit of becoming a Master Gardener, you will increase your knowledge and understanding of such varied horticultural topics as best cultural practices for growing flowers and vegetables, house plant care, plant disease, lawn care, and insect pest identification and control and much, much more. Course topics include: history of OSU Extension, plant physiology, soils, composting, fertilizers, herbs, houseplants, plant propagation, plant pathology, diagnostics, entomology, integrated pest management, vegetables, lawns, woody ornamentals, fruits, landscape maintenance, and making effective presentations.

The dates for this year’s training program are: June 13, 20, & 27; July 11, 18, & 25; and August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29. This program is taught in conjunction with the Lake County Master Gardener program. Five of the sessions will be taught at the Ashtabula County Extension Office in Jefferson and five will be taught in Lake County. All courses will be taught from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. There is a $210 course fee that covers course materials, refreshments, and speaker travel costs. Registration is limited and all applications are due by April 15, 2019. Interviews for the class will be held on the third week of May, 2019. Please call the Ashtabula County Extension Office at 440-576-9008 or Email Andrew Holden at Holden.155@osu.edu for more information or for a complete application packet.
Local Food Summit to be Held April 26th

You’re invited to the 2019 Local Food Summit. Where health, sustainability, and economically vitality connect.

Friday, April 26, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Ashtabula Towne Square.

Professionals: Will learn about the social, economic, and environmental impacts of our area food system. Attendees will learn hear from a cross-section of industry leaders including the Ashtabula Food Council, area farmers and producers, as well as Food Hub professionals. This day will empower participates to take ownership and pride in our regions food shed. Resources will be made available to support farmers markets, farmers, producers, as well as the tools needed to become a more informed consumer of our regions products. We all can get involved, the Local Foods Summit aims to make it easy! Register at: http://go.osu.edu/2019foodsummit

Youth Grades 4-6: Each SNAP-Ed eligible school is invited to send up to ten youth and two adults to explore health and wellness from OSU’s SNAP-Ed teachers, and work with Master Gardeners to start seeds for starting or expanding a classroom garden. Each classroom will leave with a starter kit for incorporating a garden into the school curriculum. A lot of opportunity will be available for Q & A. Email averill.10@osu.edu to register.

For information, contact Dan Brown, Local Foods Coordinator at brown.7116@osu.edu or 440-576-9008

Upcoming Events

Spring Botany School
Ashtabula County - April 11

Master Gardener Applications Due
Ashtabula and Lake Co. – April 15

2019 Local Food Summit
Ashtabula Towne Square – April 26
FERTILIZER CERTIFICATION APPLICATOR TRAINING

Do you apply fertilizer to 50 acres or more for crops that are primarily for sale? If so, you are required by Ohio law to attend a training session or take a test to become certified. The Geauga County OSU Extension office is offering a training session (no test) that will meet all certification requirements. **Pre-Registration is required a week in advance.** Cost for this training session is $35/person and includes training materials, and handouts. To register, complete the registration form below and mail with check payable to OSU Extension.

**Wednesday**

**April 10, 2019**

**1:00pm – 4:00pm**

**$35.00pp**

OSU Extension, Geauga County Patterson Center
14269 Claridon Troy Road
Burton, OH 44021

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**2019 FERTILIZER CERTIFICATION APPLICATOR TRAINING REGISTRATION FORM**

Complete the below information and send with payment made payable to
OSU Extension, P.O. Box 387, Burton, OH 44021

Name:__________________________________________

Address:________________________________________

Phone:__________________________________________ Email:________________________________________

Number Attending:___________________________ X $35/person = __________________ Enclosed

Please make checks payable to OSU Extension

gaeuga.osu.edu
LOCAL FOOD SUMMIT

Where health, sustainability, and economic vitality connect.

APRIL 26, 2019
9:00 AM- 1:00 PM

ASHTABULA TOWNE SQUARE

Youth Grades 4-6: Each SNAP-Ed eligible school is invited to send up to ten youth and two adults to explore health and wellness from OSU’s SNAP-Ed teachers, and work with Master Gardeners to start seeds for starting or expanding a classroom garden. Each classroom will leave with a starter kit for incorporating a garden into the school curriculum. A lot of opportunity will be available for Q & A.

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For information, contact Dan Brown, Local Foods Coordinator at brown.7116@osu.edu or 440-576-9008