Northeast Ohio Agri-Culture Newsletter

Your Weekly Agriculture Update for Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties

August 28, 2018

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Hello, Northeast Ohio Counties!

We had a great pond clinic last night at the former Buccaneer Campgrounds in Jefferson, Ohio with 47 in attendance. Thanks to Nathan Paskey and Suzanne Westlake from the Ashtabula Soil & Water Conservation District for all their hard work on this clinic.

A reminder to our beef producers that our beef industry update will be this Thursday at the Ashtabula County Extension office. Make sure to call the Ohio Beef Council to RSVP so we have plenty of food.

This is my final week in Ashtabula County. It looks like we have a great pool of applicants to choose from for my replacement. I would like to extend my heart-felt appreciation for such a great career here in Ashtabula. I am deeply humbled by the friendships which I have with many of you. This is not goodbye but rather “until we meet again.” Have a good and safe day!

David Marrison & Lee Beers
Extension Educators - Ag & Natural Resources
HARVEST SEASON OUTLOOK
By Jim Noel
Source: https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2018-28/harvest-season-outlook

Hot weather, possibly close to the hottest weather of the season is on tap over the next two weeks. This should help make corn stalks brown up fast. However, with that heat, high dewpoints or moisture will also accompany the hot weather. This means soil drying will be slower than you would normally expect with high temperatures due to a limit on the evapotranspiration rate. The hot weather will be fueled in part by tropical activity in the Pacific Ocean driving storms into the Pacific Northwest into western Canada and a big high pressure over the eastern U.S. Rainfall will likely continue at or above normal into the start of September before some drying occurs. We do not see any early freeze conditions this year.

September Harvest Outlook:
Temperatures: 2-4F above normal
Rainfall: Near normal (-0.5 to +0.5 inches)
Humidity levels: Above normal
Freeze Outlook: None
Field Conditions/Soil Moisture: 1-2 inches of extra moisture in soils so expect okay conditions for harvest except in lower areas that will likely remain wet.

October Harvest Outlook:
Temperatures: 1-3F above normal
Rainfall: Above (+0.5-+1.0 inches)
Humidity levels: Above normal
Freeze Outlook: About normal timing from Oct. 10-20 range
Field Conditions/Soil Moisture: 1-2 inches of extra moisture in the soils and with some rainy weather some challenges can be expected in harvest. Wettest conditions will be western half and northern areas driest east and southeast.

The next two weeks of rainfall can be seen on attached image. Normal is about 0.75 inches per week. Normal for two weeks is about 1.5 inches and the weather models suggest the rainfall will average 1.25 to 3+ inches over Ohio for the next two weeks. The biggest rain threats the next two weeks will be over parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa where rainfall could top a half foot and create real wet soil conditions in those areas.
**USDA Announces Details of Assistance for Farmers Impacted by Unjustified Retaliation**

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced on August 27 details regarding actions the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will take to assist farmers in response to trade damage from unjustified retaliation by foreign nations. President Donald J. Trump directed Secretary Perdue to craft a short-term relief strategy to protect agricultural producers while the Administration works on free, fair, and reciprocal trade deals to open more markets in the long run to help American farmers compete globally. As announced last month USDA will authorize up to $12 billion in programs, consistent with our World Trade Organization obligations.

“Early on, the President instructed me, as Secretary of Agriculture, to make sure our farmers did not bear the brunt of unfair retaliatory tariffs. After careful analysis by our team at USDA, we have formulated our strategy to mitigate the trade damages sustained by our farmers. Our farmers work hard, and are the most productive in the world, and we aim to protect them,” said Secretary Perdue.

These programs will assist agricultural producers to meet the costs of disrupted markets:

- USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer the Market Facilitation Program (MFP) to provide payments to corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean and wheat producers starting September 4, 2018. This is the first payment period. The second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by USDA.

- USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will administer a Food Purchase and Distribution Program to purchase up to $1.2 billion in commodities unfairly targeted by unjustified retaliation. USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will distribute these commodities through nutrition assistance programs such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and child nutrition programs.

- Through the Foreign Agricultural Service’s (FAS) Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP), $200 million will be made available to develop foreign markets for U.S. agricultural products. The program will help U.S. agricultural exporters identify and access new markets and help mitigate the adverse effects of other countries’ restrictions.

“President Trump has been standing up to China and other nations, sending the clear message that the United States will no longer tolerate their unfair trade practices, which include non-tariff trade barriers and the theft of intellectual property. In short, the President has taken action to benefit all sectors of the American economy – including agriculture – in the long run,” said Secretary Perdue. “It’s important to note all of this could go away tomorrow, if China and the other nations simply correct their behavior. But in the meantime, the programs we are
announcing today buys time for the President to strike long-lasting trade deals to benefit our entire economy."

**Background on Market Facilitation Program:**
MFP is established under the statutory authority of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and administered by FSA. For each commodity covered, the payment rate will be dependent upon the severity of the trade disruption and the period of adjustment to new trade patterns, based on each producer’s actual production.

Interested producers can apply after harvest is 100 percent complete and they can report their total 2018 production. Beginning September 4th of this year, MFP applications will be available online at [www.farmers.gov/MFP](http://www.farmers.gov/MFP). Producers will also be able to submit their MFP applications in person, by email, fax, or by mail.

Eligible applicants must have an ownership interest in the commodity, be actively engaged in farming, and have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than $900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the “Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation” regulations. On September 4, 2018, the first of two MFP payment periods will begin. The second payment period, if warranted, will be determined by the CCC.

**Market Facilitation Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Initial Payment Rate</th>
<th>Est. Initial Payment** (in $1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>$0.06 / lb.</td>
<td>$276,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>$0.01 / bu.</td>
<td>$96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy (milk)</td>
<td>$0.12 / cwt.</td>
<td>$127,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork (hogs)</td>
<td>$8.00 / head</td>
<td>$290,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>$1.65 / bu.</td>
<td>$3,629,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>$0.86 / bu.</td>
<td>$156,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>$0.14 / bu.</td>
<td>$119,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$4,696,300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Initial payment rate on 50% of production**

The initial MFP payment will be calculated by multiplying 50 percent of the producer’s total 2018 actual production by the applicable MFP rate. If CCC announces a second MFP payment period, the remaining 50 percent of the producer’s total 2018 actual production will be subject to the second MFP payment rate.
MFP payments are capped per person or legal entity at a combined $125,000 for dairy production or hogs. Payment for dairy production is based off the historical production reported for the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). For existing dairy operations, the production history is established using the highest annual milk production marketed during the full calendar years of 2011, 2012, and 2013. Dairy operations are also required to have been in operation on June 1, 2018 to be eligible for payments. Payment for hog operations will be based off the total number of head of live hogs owned on August 1, 2018.

MFP payments are also capped per person or legal entity at a combined $125,000 for corn, cotton, sorghum, soybeans and wheat. For more information on the MFP visit [www.farmers.gov/MFP](http://www.farmers.gov/MFP) or contact your local FSA office, which can be found at [www.farmers.gov](http://www.farmers.gov).

**Background on Food Purchase and Distribution Program:**

The amounts of commodities to be purchased are based on an economic analysis of the damage caused by unjustified tariffs imposed on the crops listed below. Their damages will be adjusted based on several factors and spread over several months in response to orders placed by states participating in the FNS nutrition assistance programs.

### Food Purchases

*Program details yet to be determined*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Target Amount (in $1,000s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>$93,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricots</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>$14,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberries</td>
<td>$1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranberries</td>
<td>$32,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>$84,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>$48,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazelnuts</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney Beans</td>
<td>$14,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemons/Limes</td>
<td>$3,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macadamia</td>
<td>$7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Beans</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranges (Fresh)</td>
<td>$55,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Juice</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut Butter</td>
<td>$12,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pears</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>$11,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecans</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pistachios</td>
<td>$85,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plums/Prunes</td>
<td>$18,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>$558,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>$44,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>$48,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Corn</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walnuts</td>
<td>$34,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,238,800</strong></td>
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Northeast Ohio Agriculture

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OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties
Products purchased will be distributed by FNS to participating states, for use in TEFAP and other USDA nutrition assistance programs.

**Purchasing:**
AMS will buy affected products in four phases. The materials purchased can be adjusted between phases to accommodate changes due to: growing conditions; product availability; market conditions; trade negotiation status; and program capacity. AMS will purchase known commodities first. By purchasing in phases, procurements for commodities that have been sourced in the past can be purchased more quickly and included in the first phase.

**Vendor Outreach:**
To expand the AMS vendor pool and the ability to purchase new and existing products, AMS will ramp up its vendor outreach and registration efforts. AMS has also developed flyers on how the process works and how to become a vendor for distribution to industry groups and interested parties. Additionally, AMS will continue to host a series of free webinars describing the steps required to become a vendor. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to submit questions to be answered during the webinar, or to be included in a Frequently Asked Questions document. Recorded webinars are available to review by potential vendors, and staff will host periodic Question and Answer teleconferences to better explain the process.

**Product Specifications:**
AMS maintains purchase specifications for a variety of commodities, which ensure recipients receive the high-quality product they expect. AMS in collaboration with FNS regularly develops and revises specifications for new and enhanced products based on program requirements and requests and will be prioritizing the development of those products impacted by unjustified retaliation. AMS will also work with industry groups to identify varieties and grades sold to China and other offshore markets such as premium apples, oranges, pears and other products. AMS will develop or revise specifications to facilitate the purchase of these premium varieties in forms that meet the needs of FNS nutrition assistance programs.

**Outlets:**
AMS purchases commodities for use in FNS programs such as the National School Lunch Program, TEFAP and other nutrition assistance programs. AMS is working closely with FNS to distribute products to State Agencies that participate in USDA nutrition assistance programs as well as exploring other outlets for distribution of products, as needed.

To the extent possible, FNS will identify items for distribution that are appropriate for each potential outlet. The products discussed in this plan will be distributed to States for use in the
network of food banks and food pantries that participate in TEFAP, elderly feeding programs such the Commodity Supplemental Foods Program, and tribes that operate the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. These outlets are in addition to child nutrition programs such as the National School Lunch Program, which may also benefit from these purchases.

**Distribution:**
AMS has coordinated with the Office of the Chief Economist, FNS, Industry, and other agency partners to determine necessary logistics for the purchase and distribution of each commodity including trucking, inspection and audit requirements, and agency staffing.

**Background on Agricultural Trade Promotion Program:**
The FAS will administer the ATP under authorities of the CCC. The ATP will provide cost-share assistance to eligible U.S. organizations for activities such as consumer advertising, public relations, point-of-sale demonstrations, participation in trade fairs and exhibits, market research, and technical assistance. Applications for the ATP will be accepted until November 2, 2018 or until funding is exhausted. Funding should be allocated to eligible participants in early 2019. The ATP is meant to help all sectors of U.S. agriculture, including fish and forest product producers, mainly through partnerships with non-profit national and regional organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural Trade Promotion Program</th>
<th>Est. Amount (in $1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag Products Total</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
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**Farm Science Review Tickets Available**
OSU Extension is pleased to announce that Advance tickets for the Farm Science Review are available at all Ohio State University Extension county offices for $7. This year’s Farm Science Review will be held at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center in London, Ohio on September 18-20, 2018. Tickets are $10 at the gate; however, presale tickets can be purchased at your local OSU Extension for $7 per ticket through Monday, September 17, 2018. Children 5 and under are admitted free. The review hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on September 18 & 19 and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on September 20.

Farm Science Review is known as Ohio’s premier agricultural event and typically attracts more than 130,000 farmers, growers, producers and agricultural enthusiasts from across the U.S. and Canada annually. Participants are able to peruse 4,000 product lines from roughly 620 commercial exhibitors and engage in over 180 educational workshops, presentations and demonstrations delivered by experts from OSU Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research.
Over the last few weeks, we have received samples with at least four different types of ear rots – Diplodia, Gibberella, Fusarium, and Trichoderma. Of these, Diplodia ear rot seems to be the most prevalent. Ear rots differ from each other in terms of the damage they cause (their symptoms), the toxins they produce, and the specific conditions under which they develop. Most are favored by wet, humid conditions during silk emergence (R1) and just prior to harvest. But they vary in their temperature requirements, with most being restricted my excessively warm conditions such as the 90+ F forecasted for the next several days. However, it should be noted that even when conditions are not optimum for ear rot development, mycotoxins may accumulate in infected ears.
A good first step for determining whether you have an ear rot problem is to walk fields between dough and black-layer, before plants start drying down, and observe the ears. The husks of affected ears usually appear partially or completely dead (dry and bleached), often with tinges of the color of the mycelium, spores, or spore-bearing structures of fungus causing the disease. Depending on the severity of the disease, the leaf attached to the base of the diseased ear (the ear leaf) may also die and droop, causing affected plants to stick out between healthy plants with normal, green ear leaves. Peel back the husk and examine suspect ears for typical ear rot symptoms. You can count the number of moldy ears out of ever 50 ears examined, at multiple locations across the field to determine the severity of the problem.

DIPLODIA EAR ROT: This is one of the most common ear diseases of corn in Ohio. The most characteristic symptom and the easiest way to tell Diplodia ear rot apart from other ear diseases such as Gibberella and Fusarium ear rots is the presence of white mycelium of the fungus growing over and between kernels, usually starting from the base of the ear. Under highly favorable weather conditions, entire ears may become colonized, turn grayish-brown in color and lightweight (mummified), with kernels, cobs, and ear leaves that are rotted and soft. Rotted kernels may germinate prematurely, particularly if the ears remain upright after physiological maturity. Corn is most susceptible to infection at and up to three weeks after R1. Wet conditions and moderate temperatures during this period favor infection and disease development, and the disease tends to be most severe in no-till or reduce-till fields of corn planted after corn. The greatest impact of this disease is grain yield and quality reduction. Mycotoxins have not been associated with this disease in US, although animals often refuse to consume moldy grain.

GIBBERELLA EAR ROT - When natural early-season infections occur via the silk, Gibberella ear rot typically develops as white to pink mold covering the tip to the upper half of the ear. However, infections may also occur at the base of the ear, causing the whitish-pink diseased kernels to develop from the base of the ear upwards. This is particularly true if ears dry down in an upright position and it rains during the weeks leading up to harvest. The Gibberella ear rot fungus may also infect via wounds made by birds or insects, which leads to the mold developing wherever the damage occurs. When severe, Gibberella ear rot is a major concern because the fungus produces several mycotoxins, including deoxynivalenol (vomitoxin), that are harmful to livestock. Once the ear is infected by the fungus, these mycotoxins may be present even if no visual symptoms of the disease are detected. Hogs are particularly sensitive to vomitoxin. Therefore the FDA advisory level for vomitoxin in corn to be fed to hogs is 5 ppm and this is not to exceed 20% of the diet.

FUSARIUM EAR ROT. Fusarium ear rot is especially common in fields with bird or insect damage to the ears. Affected ears usually have individual diseased kernels scattered over the ear or in small clusters (associated with insect damage) among healthy-looking kernels. The fungus appears as a whitish mold and infected kernels sometimes develop a brownish discoloration with light-colored streaks (called starburst). Several different Fusarium species are
associated with Fusarium ear rot, some of which produce toxins called Fumonisins. Horses are particularly sensitive to Fumonisins, but cattle and sheep are relatively insensitive.

TRICHODERMA EAR ROT – Abundant, thick, greenish mold growing on and between the kernels make Trichoderma ear rot very easy to distinguish from Diplodia, Fusarium, and Gibberella ear rots. However, other greenish ear rots such as Cladosporium, Penicillium and Aspergillus may sometimes be mistaken for Trichoderma ear rot. Like several of the other ear rots, diseased ears are commonly associated with bird, insect, or other types of damage. Another very characteristic feature of Trichoderma ear rots is sprouting (premature germination of the grain on the ear in the field). Although some species of Trichoderma may produce mycotoxins, these toxins are usually not found in Trichoderma-affected ears under our growing conditions.

**Beef Industry Update Slated for August 30 in Jefferson**

The Ohio Cattlemen’s Association, the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association and OSU Extension is pleased to be offering a Beef Industry Update on Thursday, August 30, 2018 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This meeting will be held in the downstairs meeting room at the Ashtabula County Extension office located at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson, Ohio.

This beef producer education event will feature speakers from Boehringer-Ingelheim, Heartland Bank and the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association. Learn health and financial management tips for your beef operation. Attendees will also learn more about beef policy and membership opportunities in the Cattlemen’s Association.

This event is free to all beef producers and industry personnel. A meal will be provided compliments of the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association. **Reservations are requested by calling the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association at 614-873-6736** or by emailing cattle@ohiocattle.org. More information can also be obtained by contacting the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

Special note: Attendees will also be able to purchase advanced tickets for the 2018 Ashtabula County Beef Banquet at this event. This year’s banquet will be held on October 27, 2018 at the
Lenox Community Center starting at 7:00 p.m. Each ticket is $25 per person for the prime rib dinner. Bring your checkbook to get your tickets. Only 200 will be sold!

**Don’t Forget to Rest Your Roots!**

By Ted Wiseman, OSU Extension Educator Perry County

Source: [http://u.osu.edu/beef/2018/08/22/good-management-practices-for-fall-grazing/#more-5674](http://u.osu.edu/beef/2018/08/22/good-management-practices-for-fall-grazing/#more-5674)

Fall pasture management is a critical period for pastures. For many of us we have had adequate rainfall up until recently and pastures have done well to this point. As we transition into late summer and early fall it is critical to pay close attention to your forages. Some pastures may be stockpiled, but those intended to be grazed this fall still need time to rest. It’s very tempting to use those forages that green up late in the fall. Management decisions made this fall will greatly impact forage growth next year.

During the fall, forages are doing a couple of things, such as root regeneration and forming new shoots or growing points. We only see the growing leaves of the plants; one must consider the other half of the plant which is below ground. During the growing season, the leaves are feeding the entire plant. If we remove too much of the leaves we are reducing the plant’s ability to produce carbohydrates through photosynthesis. These carbohydrates are stored, for the most part, in the crown of the plants compared to the roots.

During times of drought, plants will shed roots. Shorter roots reduce the ability to take in moisture and nutrients. Even with fertilizer applications shooter roots are less productive. Overgrazing results in shorter leaves reducing the plant’s rate of carbohydrate production. Carbohydrates are stored in the crown of the plants which is generally in the lower 3 to 4 inches of the plant for most cool-season pastures. This is why recommendations are to leave stubble heights no lower than 4 to 6 inches, either from grazing or by mowing. In the fall these crown tillers are brown or dormant often thought to be dead. These crowns not only provide nutrients for the new growth but provide physical protection from extreme weather conditions. Early fall is an ideal time to take soil samples. Based upon the results you can apply the recommended rates of lime or fertilizer. This will also help in root regeneration and regrowth.
Nitrogen application in the fall along with adequate moisture will increase pasture growth. Generally, no more than 40 to 50 pounds of nitrogen should be applied. Typically in our area, fertilizer applications should be made no later than the first of October. High nitrogen applications will keep the plants from starting the overwintering process. Too much nitrogen too late could result in winter damage due to the excessive growth reducing sugar concentrations in the stubble. Proline accumulation is what protects plant cells from winter damage or death. If not enough time is allowed or too much nitrogen is applied the plant does not have enough time for this process to occur.

Scouting pastures this time of year and giving plants enough time to store carbohydrates in the fall is critical for long-term productivity. So don’t be greedy and keep an eye on stubble height and use those soil test results to make economic decisions to make your pastures productive for many years.

**2018 Ashtabula County Beef Banquet Tickets**

OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association will be holding the 29th Ashtabula County Beef Banquet on Saturday, October 27 at the Lenox Community Center beginning at 7:00 p.m. Banquet activities will include a prime rib dinner; business meeting; election of two members to the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s board of directors; entertainment; door prizes; and fine fellowship.

Tickets for the banquet can be purchased from the Directors of the Cattlemen’s Association. Directors are: Bart Kanicki, Pierpont Township; David Nye, Hartsgrove Township; Zach Ward, Austinburg Township; Dr. Bryan Elliott, Cherry Valley Township and Garret Love, Linesville, PA. Tickets are $25 per person. Call the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008 for more information. Pre-reservations should be made by October 19, 2018. A program flyer can be found at: [http://go.osu.edu/ne-events](http://go.osu.edu/ne-events)

**Ohio Sheep Shearing School**

The Ohio Statewide Sheep Shearing School will be held Friday and Saturday, September 14-15, 2018 from 9 AM to 4 PM at the Dave Cable Farm (10491 Canal Rd. Hebron, OH 43025). Students will be taught the proper techniques for productive sheep shearing through first-hand experience. Class space is limited and registration is due by Tuesday, September 4. The cost to attend is $50 per student for both days combined and includes a boxed lunch. Call Roger High at 614-246-8299 to register. Registration form is attached.
West Nile Virus Confirmed in Ohio Horses
Mark Bruce, (614) 752-9817, mark.bruce@agri.ohio.gov

The Ohio Department of Agriculture recently confirmed the first positive cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Ohio horses for 2018. Two cases in Northeast Ohio have been confirmed and the animals had not been vaccinated. The spread of WNV in horses is preventable with proper vaccination and horse owners are urged to ensure their animal’s vaccine and boosters are up to date.

West Nile Virus is transmitted to horses via bites from infected mosquitoes. Clinical signs for WNV include flu-like symptoms, where the horse seems mildly anorexic and depressed. Changes in mentality, drowsiness, driving or pushing forward (often without control) and asymmetrical weakness may be observed. Mortality rate from WNV can be as high as 30-40 percent in horses. Infection with WNV does not always lead to signs of illness in people or animals. WNV is endemic in the United States and Ohio has reported positive cases in horses each of the last few years. There were 14 confirmed cases of WNV in Ohio in 2017.

“My message to horse owners is simple: vaccinate your animals and you can protect against West Nile Virus,” said State Veterinarian Dr. Tony Forshey. “Vaccines are a proven and effective prevention tool and I encourage all owners to talk to their veterinarian to learn how they can easily keep their animals healthy.”

In addition to vaccinations, horse owners should work to reduce the mosquito population and eliminate possible breeding areas. Recommendations include: removing stagnant water sources; keeping animals inside during the bugs’ feeding times, which are typically early in the morning and evening; and using mosquito repellents.

David’s Weekly News Column
For Publication in the Jefferson Gazette on August 29, 2018

Hello, Ashtabula County! Last week, I gave a peak into some of the memories I will be taking with me as I head south to Coshocton County. As promised, this week I would like share some observations and advice to our farmers as they look towards the future. Hopefully these will generate some food for thought.

Ag is Changing- Just as middle America is disappearing so too is the middle-sized farmer. In agriculture, we are either getting bigger or smaller. Not that I am a fan of this, but it is today’s reality. Being middle sized is becoming harder. In the past, farmers like my dad were able to make a decent living off of 200-300 acres. Now, this group of farmers has to have off-farm employment to make it work.
Farming is not a bell-curved industry anymore. Actually it is becoming more of an upside down bell-curve. Some producers are going small. Increasing their margin by retailing direct to the consumer and providing experiential opportunities to millennials and others.

Others are going big. Low margins are driving farms to larger economies of scale and consolidation. It has already happened in the poultry and swine sector. Dairy is already moving that way and it won’t be long for corn and soybean. In fact, there are more 2,500 plus acre farms in Ashtabula County now than ever before in our history.

What does this mean for farmers? First, it means you need to know where you fit and your expectations for the income needed from the farm. Have you had those crucial conversations with your family members about the future? You need to know where you are, to whom you are marketing, and have a good business plan. In short, you need to sharpen your pencil.

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Sharpen Your Pencil- As farmers, we expect volatility from the weather but who would have thought we would see such a decrease in commodity prices. We are in the middle of a trade war with China and a new farm bill is on the horizon. So what are some suggestions for not getting sick from the current volatility?

I think most farmers have a great handle on the variable costs of producing a crop such as seed, fertilizer, and fuel. Where I see vast differences between farmers is with respect to their fixed costs. How much does that piece of equipment and its repairs cost you each year? What are your land and labor expenses? More importantly, how do your fixed costs compare to others in the business?

Marketing also sets farmers apart. The key to surviving in this new normal is to distance ourselves from the bushels per acre or pounds of milk per cow mentality. Instead we need talk about cost of production and the net rate of return per bushel, gallon, or hundred weight. As my friend Ben Brown says “Be a price-enhancer, not a price-settler.”

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Get Out of Your Fence Row- Earlier this month, I heard a great speech by Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau President at the Ohio Farm Bureau’s “Cultivating a Cure for Cancer“ event in Canal Fulton. One of his points which resonated with me was the need for farmers to get involved outside of their fence rows.

So what did Zippy mean by this? As America gets further and further from the farm, so does their knowledge of farming. It is so important for all of us, not one or two, to share what goes on between our fence rows. Zippy cited the importance for farmers to not only help educate consumers but also become active in public policy.
I appreciate the work that the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau and the Ashtabula County Farmers Union do in advocating on our behalf. But, when it gets down to it, I see the same people advocating day in and day out. We need EVERY farmer advocating for agriculture. Whether it is in our church, in the local barbershop, on social media or at public policy meetings, it is imperative to share how we are being good stewards of our land, animals, and communities. If we don’t help shape public policy, someone who may or may not understand agriculture will.

Stepping outside the fence row also can be beneficial to your operation in a way that exposes you, the operation manager, to a knowledge base of peer farmers that also strive for the best information. Getting involved in local Extension meetings, county Farm Bureau or Farmers Union meetings, state commodity boards all increase immersive education.

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Keep the UNITY in Community- One of the wonderful aspects of farm life is that farmers appreciate and value what it means to be a community. Farmers have a bond with one another that transcends all understanding. One of the things I appreciate the most about farmers is their willingness to help one another. With all the stress in agriculture it is so important to keep connected with our neighbors, give each other a helping hand, and to be there for each other. We need Unity now more than ever.

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Stay tune for next week for my final column when I share some of my thoughts in general about life! To close, I would like to leave you with a quote from German Economist Klaus Schwab who stated, “Change can be frightening, and the temptation is often to resist it. But change almost always provides opportunities - to learn new things, to rethink tired processes, and to improve the way we work.” Have a good and safe day!

Upcoming Events

Northeast Ohio Beef Industry Update
August 30, 2018

Ashtabula County Master Gardener Recognition Banquet
October 15, 2018

Ashtabula County Beef Banquet
October 27, 2018

Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet
March 26, 2019
Pesticide Applicator Training Dates
Lake County “Early Bird” – November 8, 2018
Trumbull County – January 16, 2019
Geauga County – February 1, 2019
Ashtabula County – February 28, 2019
Geauga County “Last Chance” – March 28, 2019

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Beef Industry Update

HOSTED BY THE ASHTABULA COUNTY CATTLEMEN’S ASSOCIATION
FOR ASHTABULA & SURROUNDING COUNTIES

WHO: All beef producers

WHEN: Thursday, August 30
       6:30 p.m.

WHERE: OSU Extension Ashtabula County
       39 Wall Street
       Jefferson, Ohio 44047

Speakers for the Evening:
Representatives from Boehringer-Ingelheim, Heartland Bank & Ohio Cattlemen’s Association

OCA Membership & Policy Update

Producer Education Partner

To RSVP & for more information contact: 614-873-6736 or cattle@ohiocattle.org
 Invite you to join us as we honor and thank

David Morrison

for over 21 years as a great colleague, leader, educator, mentor, teacher and, best of all, friend.

Open Reception

Tuesday, August 28 7:30 - 9:00 PM
at Bissell Maple Farm 82 W. Ashtabula Street Jefferson, Ohio

He is jumping the fence to Coshocton County on August 30

Please bring your best story or memory of David on a 3x5" index sized card, sign it and drop it off at the reception. No gifts, please!
2018 Statewide Sheep Shearing School – September 14-15, 2018
Sponsored By: Ohio Sheep Improvement Association and OSU Extension

The Statewide Sheep Shearing School will be held Friday and Saturday, September 14-15, 2018 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Dave Cable Farm, 10491 Canal Rd., Hebron, OH 43025. **Class Minimum: 15 participants** and the cost is $50 per student, which must be returned with registration form by Tuesday September 4, 2018. As part of the registration fee, a box lunch and drinks will be provided each day of the school.

If you decide to register after that date or have further questions, please call Roger A. High at 614-246-8299.

Make checks payable to: **Ohio Sheep Improvement Association**. Return bottom portion of this form with payment by Monday April 2, 2018 to Ohio Sheep Improvement Association – Sheep Shearing School, c/o Roger A. High, 280 N. High St. P.O. Box 182383, Columbus, OH 43218. Applications will also be available at [ohiosheep.org](http://ohiosheep.org). Payment is nonrefundable after September 4, 2018.

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**2018 Sheep Shearing School Registration Form – September 14-15, 2018**

*Please print:*
Name ____________________________________________________________
Street Address ____________________________________________________________
City ____________________________ State ______ Zip ____________________________
Cellphone ____________________________ Email ____________________________

*Please provide a cell phone and an email if possible in case we would need to contact you prior to the school, in case of class cancellation or reminders about the school.*

*Shearing Experience (check one):*
Beginner ____________________________ Intermediate ____________________________ Advanced ____________________________

Right-Handed ____________________________ Left Handed ____________________________

*Payment of $50 per student is due with registration form. Make check payable to Ohio Sheep Improvement Association.*

**Disclaimer (must be signed):** By signing this form I am hereby releasing the Ohio Sheep Improvement Association and any of its members of any liability for injury or accident as a result of participating in the Sheep Shearing School.

Signature: ____________________________________________ Date ______________