Hello Northeast Ohio Counties!

Merry Christmas! I know it’s a day late, but I was spending yesterday with my family, as I hope you were as well. I got a little sidetracked and forgot to send out the newsletter. We have a shorter newsletter this week, but we’ll be back in full swing after the New Year.

I saw a few combines running before our wet weather, and there are a bunch of soybeans still around the area. Soybeans still in the field are a common sight around most of Ohio because of the wet weather. 2018 was the 3rd wettest on record for Ohio.

Happy New Year!

Lee Beers                        Andrew Holden
Trumbull County Extension Educator Ashtabula County Extension Educator
Raindrops Kept Falling on Our Heads
By Alayna DeMartini
Source: https://cfaes.osu.edu/news/articles/raindrops-kept-falling-our-heads

The soggy truth? Ohio had a really wet year. After an exceptionally rainy fall in Ohio, the state is on track to have its third wettest year ever, said Aaron Wilson, climate specialist with Ohio State University Extension and the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center. OSU Extension is the outreach arm of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

Early September the remnants of Hurricane Gordon moved across Ohio triggering upward of 8 inches of rain in southern Ohio. While October rainfall was closer to average, in November, umbrellas came out again – and often.

With a high rainfall count heading into winter, even if December winds up with average or even below average rain, total rainfall for 2018 likely will be the third highest on record, Wilson said.

"Ohio is not an anomaly," he said. "It fits the trend toward increased precipitation that we've seen across the Midwest and the Northeast."

Temperatures are getting warmer, and a higher amount of water vapor is in the atmosphere, leading to increased precipitation, Wilson said.

"We're seeing more intense rainfall events and more overall annual precipitation," he said. Autumn's wet weather kept farmers' combines inside. Showers led to delays in harvesting corn and soybeans, which is typically wrapped up by early November yet was still in process last week in some parts of the state.

Neither corn nor soybeans can be harvested easily when they're wet. If they are, they need to be dried before they're stored or sold, which takes additional time and expense.
“There was a window to harvest, but the window closed and it didn’t really open again for a lot of farmers,” said Laura Lindsey, a soybean specialist with OSU Extension.

Some farmers had to wait until the ground was frozen to harvest.

“At this point, the frozen soil is preferable to wet soil,” Lindsey said.

During the last week of November, about a half million acres of soybeans still had to be harvested across the state, which typically grows 5 million acres of soybeans annually, Lindsey said.

“There were guys who were harvesting last week,” she said.

The longer mature soybeans stay in the field, the higher the risk of pods breaking off and falling to the ground or succumbing to a pest.

Even soybeans that were harvested on time had some problems with quality, and those quality problems will affect the seed for next year’s crop, Lindsey said. Stink bugs pierced some pods to reach the seeds, and other soybean pods opened up prematurely, which led to some losses.

Even so, farmers are paid based on their yield, not the quality of their crop, unless their crop is severely damaged. So even if there were some damaged soybeans, that likely won’t affect a farmer’s bottom line, Lindsey said.

However, the poor quality of some soybeans will affect the quality of seed that comes from them. Whatever seed growers buy, they need to be sure not to overlook the percentage of seeds that are expected to germinate. If the percentage of germination is slightly lower than usual — say, 90 percent rather than 95 percent — a grower will want to compensate by planting more of that seed.

The average yields of both soybeans and corn are projected to beat the state’s previous record highs. Soybeans, which are estimated to average 60 bushels per acre, are expected to top last year’s average by 19 percent, and the 190 bushel-per-acre average for Ohio corn is up 11 percent from 2017’s average, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This year’s high yields are largely because most Ohio farmers were able to plant at the ideal time, in late April and early May, Lindsey said. For soybeans, the No. 1 factor influencing yields across the Midwest is the planting date, she said.
The one region of the state that planted later was north-central Ohio, where soybeans went in the ground in June. “That’s because they got a lot of rain,” she said.

**2018 Forage Performance Trials Available**

By Mark Sulc  

The 2018 Ohio Forage Performance Trials Report is available online at [https://u.osu.edu/perf/](https://u.osu.edu/perf/). The report summarizes forage yield data collected from forage variety trials in Ohio during 2018, including commercial varieties of alfalfa planted from 2015 to 2017 (3 trials), annual ryegrass planted in September 2017 (1 trial) and cover crops planted in September 2017 (1 trial). The trials summarize yield performance of 34 alfalfa varieties and 11 annual ryegrass varieties. The cover crop trial summarizes stand establishment and ground cover development in the fall after a mid-September seeding in 2017 and winter injury, ground cover and spring biomass production in the spring 2018 of 22 cover crop varieties including rape, turnip, annual ryegrass, radish, Balansa clover, winter pea, and hairy vetch.

**It Is a Matter of Trust**  
By John Grimes OSU Extension Beef Coordinator  
Source: [http://u.osu.edu/beef/2018/12/19/it-is-a-matter-of-trust/](http://u.osu.edu/beef/2018/12/19/it-is-a-matter-of-trust/)

Over the past week or so, two of the largest buyers of beef in the U.S. have placed stronger requirements for the beef they will purchase in the future. McDonald’s and Wendy’s have both announced major policies that no doubt have their customers and societal pressures in mind. These policies will surely have an impact on all facets of the beef industry.

McDonald’s has announced that they will be collaborating with suppliers and beef producers to measure and understand the current usage of antibiotics in their top 10 beef sourcing markets. They will establish reduction targets for medically important antibiotics for these markets by the end of 2020. Starting in 2022, McDonald’s will be reporting progress against antibiotic reduction targets across our top 10 beef sourcing markets.
McDonald’s stated overall approach to responsible use of antibiotics focuses on refining their selection and administration and reducing their use. They express the desire to ultimately replace antibiotics with long-term solutions to prevent diseases and protect animal health and welfare. McDonald’s recognizes the need to treat animals when necessary.

Not to be outdone, Wendy’s came out with a new policy of their own relating to sustainability initiatives. Wendy’s announced that they have partnered with the Progressive Beef program that focuses on best practices and third-party verification. This program will be implemented in a significant part of the Wendy’s beef supply starting in 2019 and it is expected to be adopted with at least 50% of the supply in 2021.

The program focuses on three core areas including cattle care, food safety and antibiotic use and environmental sustainability. USDA-approved auditors will verify each of these core areas. Wendy’s outlined each of these areas in greater detail:

Cattle care: Providing a safe, humane environment for cattle through staff training on management practices and hands-on veterinary care.

Food safety and antibiotic use: Responsibly using antibiotics under the supervision of a veterinarian and with thorough record-keeping, strictly adhering to withdrawal times, utilizing HACCP principles and ensuring a clean and safe environment for the animals.

Environmental sustainability: Responsibly utilizing natural resources while investing in the people who care for the cattle and the local communities through staff training and certification.

These announcements by McDonald’s and Wendy’s are the latest examples of external influences placed upon the livestock industry and in particular the beef industry. You may recall that as of January 1, 2017, the Food and Drug Administration requires that all medically

Changes on the horizon suggest that simply having the best PRODUCT is no longer enough, merely telling the best STORY is no longer enough, and delivering great CUSTOMER SATISFACTION is no longer enough. We must also elevate consumer TRUST.
important antibiotics to be used in feed or water for food animal species require a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) or a prescription.

The Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program certainly impacted the beef industry in 2018. Wendy’s previously established a goal to source 100% of its beef from BQA certified sources and reached that goal a year ahead of schedule in 2018. Wendy’s stance on BQA prompted the packers Cargill, National, and Tyson to require sourcing a large percentage or all of their fed cattle supply from BQA-certified feedyards beginning Jan. 1, 2019. Beef producers in Ohio responded to these corporate decisions as evidenced by over 4,000 individuals obtaining their BQA certification thus far in 2018.

Societal pressures are placing a growing list of demands on the beef industry. Consumers of beef expect us to judiciously use our natural resources, protect the environment, and deliver a safe, wholesome product that tastes great. These demands start at the retail sales level and work their way through the entire supply chain until it ultimately reaches the producer on the farm. The U.S. beef industry is the most efficient producer of high quality beef in the world. However, we must be honest enough with ourselves to recognize that there is always room for improvement in how we conduct our business.

I realize beef producers have had a wide variety of reactions to outside influences that impact how they are expected to manage cattle and produce beef. Emotions have ranged from anger to skepticism to confusion to acceptance. We cannot afford the luxury of assuming these societal demands are a temporary fad. Change is a reality and we should be proactive in dealing with the situation. Individuals and cattle organizations should work with the industry infrastructure and consumers alike to bridge knowledge gaps and find workable solutions to consumer concerns.

At the recent Angus Convention held in Columbus, representatives of Certified Angus Beef provided some interesting insights on dealing with today’s consumer. They presented “3 Scary Facts” that all facets of the beef industry should keep in mind. They are:

• Simply having the best PRODUCT is not enough.
• Merely telling the best STORY is not enough.
• Delivering great CUSTOMER SATISFACTION is not enough.

They pointed out that the Certified Angus Beef brand’s success moving forward will continue to come down to their effectiveness in elevating consumer TRUST. This is sound advice that can benefit all aspects of the beef industry!
Here's our gathering of ag law news you may want to know:

We have a **Farm Bill**. After months of waiting, the United States Congress has passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, known as the Farm Bill. Members of Congress have been working for months trying to reconcile a House version and a Senate version in what is known as a Conference Committee. On Monday, December 10th, the Conference Committee submitted a report to members of Congress. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate approved the report by bipartisan majorities within a matter of days. The bill will become law once signed by President Trump, which analysts expect him to do by the end of this week.

The Ohio Ag Law Blog will explore some of the major provisions that will affect Ohio from a legal perspective, rather than restate what other news outlets and other sources have already said about the Farm Bill. First up will be a blog post about what the Farm Bill means for hemp in Ohio, so stay tuned for an in-depth analysis.

**Syngenta settlement approved by federal judge.** As previously reported in the Ohio Ag Law Blog [here](https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/wed-12192018-954am/ohio-agricultural-law-blog-ag-law-harvest) and [here](https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/wed-12192018-954am/ohio-agricultural-law-blog-ag-law-harvest), the major multi-year class action lawsuit against Syngenta for failing to receive import approval from China before selling its Viptera and Duracade seeds in the United States has been settled for $1.51 billion. On December 7th, Judge John Lungstrum of the U.S. District Court for the District Kansas issued a final order granting the settlement. In the order, the court overruled a number of objections from class members who opposed the settlement. It also awarded one third of the settlement amount to the plaintiffs’ attorneys as attorney fees, valued at $503,333,333.33. The next step could involve appeals by those opposed to the settlement. According to a statement posted by one of the co-lead counsels for the plaintiffs, payments to eligible parties could begin as early as the second quarter of 2019, depending upon whether any appeals are filed.

**Lawsuit centered on definition of “natural” allowed to proceed in California.** Sanderson Farms labels its chicken products as “100% Natural.” However, the environmental groups Friends of the Earth and the Center for Food Safety have alleged that Sanderson Farms’ labeling is misleading, false, and unfair to competition. The lawsuit hinges around Sanderson Farms’ use of antibiotics in light of its “100% natural claims,” as the plaintiffs have argued that the reasonable consumer would believe “100% natural” to mean that the chickens were antibiotic free. Sanderson Farms has repeatedly countered that its chickens were cleared of any antibiotics before processing.
Sanderson Farms has asked Judge Richard Seeborg of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California to dismiss the case multiple times. Each time the court has either allowed the plaintiffs to amend their complaint or rejected Sanderson Farms’ motions. The most recent denial came days after Sanderson Farms issued a press release announcing that it would no longer routinely use antibiotics considered medically important for humans by March 1, 2019. The judge’s denial of the motion to dismiss does not mean that the plaintiffs are correct, it only means that the plaintiffs have presented enough facts for the case to continue.

The controversy stems from labeling and consumer expectations. We previously talked about the “what is meat” and “what is milk” debates in a previous blog post, and this issue is not much different. Again there is a word that has not been thoroughly regulated by a governing entity such that companies have used it to mean different things. As more labeling questions arise, the Ohio Ag Law Blog will keep you posted on trends and updates.

**Trumbull County Farmer Lunch Series**

OSU Extension Trumbull County, Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the NRCS have combined efforts to offer a farmer lunch seminar series that will cover a variety of topics relevant to NE Ohio. Each program will start with lunch at 11:30A.M. sponsored by the Trumbull County Holstein Club followed by a 1-hour presentation. Cost for individual programs is $10/person. If you would like to register for all four programs, the cost is $35/person.

Tuesday, January 8, 2019 - Beef Quality Assurance
- Haley Shoemaker, OSU Extension Mahoning County
- The Ohio Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program ensures that both beef and dairy cattle are raised in a manner that results in a wholesome beef product for our consumers. This program helps producers gain market access and keep their cattle desirable to the buyer in the stands.

*Wednesday, February 20, 2019 – NE Ohio Agronomy School in Bristolville, OH*

Tuesday, March 5, 2019 – Climate Impacts for Ohio Agriculture
- Aaron Wilson, OSU Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center
- Our changing climate has already influenced how Ohio farmers operate. Learn how predicted climate changes will continue to drive changes in Ohio agriculture. CCA credits available.

Tuesday, April 2, 2019 – Tillage Affects on Soil Health
• Steve Culman, Assistant Professor, State Specialist in Soil Fertility
• New tillage technologies are arriving each year, but are they hurting your soil health? Learn how tillage, and other practices can improve or hurt your soils health. CCA credits available.

Upcoming Events

Trumbull County Farmer Lunch
January 8, 2019 – Beef Quality Assurance
March 5, 2019 – Climate Impacts for Ohio Agriculture
April 4, 2019 – Tillage and Soil Health

Northeast Ohio Agronomy School
February 20, 2019 – Bristolville Community Center

Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet
March 26, 2019

Pesticide Applicator Training Dates
Trumbull County – January 16, 2019
Geauga County – February 1, 2019
Ashtabula County – February 28, 2019
Geauga County “Last Chance” – March 28, 2019

New Pesticide Applicator Training
Geauga County – February 12, 2019
Trumbull County – March 12, 2019

New Fertilizer Certification Training
Trumbull County – February 23, 2019  9A.M. to 12P.M
Central Ohio Precision Ag Symposium
January 16, 2019 - All Occasions Catering 6986 Waldo-Delaware Rd., Waldo Ohio 9 a.m. to 4 p.m

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CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity.
The Ohio Beef Quality Assurance program ensures that both beef and dairy cattle are raised in a manner that results in a wholesome beef product for our consumers. In doing so, this program helps producers gain market access and keep their cattle desirable to the buyer in the stands. Many end users of beef are now requiring their meat to be BQA certified. This program will certify all participants. Cost for this training is $7/person with pre-registration or $10/person at the door. Catered hot lunch, handouts, and other materials are included in the cost. We would like to thank Bloomfield Livestock Auction for their sponsorship of this program. Pre-registration is requested by January 4, 2019 to ensure accurate count for lunch.

To register for the Trumbull Farmer Lunch program on January 8, 2019 please complete the form below and mail with payment to OSU Extension Trumbull County, 520 West Main St, Cortland, OH 44410. Please make checks out to OSU Extension. For questions or more information call 330-638-6783, or email beers.66@osu.edu.

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
City and State: ___________________________ Zip Code: ___________________________
Phone: ___________________________ Email: ________________________________
Number of Attendees: ___________________________ x $7 each = Total Enclosed ________________
Questions For Speakers

Due to the complex and important topics to be discussed at the meetings, we are asking participants to pre-submit questions. There will be time for questions at the meetings, too. Pre-submitting questions will make sure that the speakers cover the information on the questions you have.

(Be specific and give details in your questions.)

1. ________________________________
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4. ________________________________
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You can submit more details or questions on separate paper if needed.

Meet the Speakers

Mr. Tom McCrumm, Tom and his wife Judy operate South Face Farm, a 2,000 tap operation in Ashfield MA, plus buying sap from another 3,000 taps. For 30 years, they served over 3,000 meals annually at their sugarhouse restaurant open 6 weekends during the maple season. They market their syrup locally and globally. Tom is also an avid collector of antique sap spouts and syrup tins.

Mr. Dan Milo, is a Food Safety Supervisor with the Ohio Department of Agriculture Division of Food Safety and a hobby maple producer in Northeast Ohio. Dan has been working for the benefit of Ohio maple producers at ODA for many years.

Mr. David Apsley, Dave is a Natural Resource Specialist for OSU Extension. He has more than 30 years of professional experience in forestry and natural resources education, management, and research.

Dr. Gary Graham, State Maple Syrup Specialist for Ohio State University Extension and County Educator in Agriculture and Natural Resources in Holmes County.

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Ohio Maple Days is a statewide program sponsored by the Ohio Maple Program, Dr. Gary Graham and OSU Extension and Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center.
To: All Interested Maple Producers & Enthusiasts

It’s time once again to make plans and you are cordially invited to participate in the Winter 2018 Ohio Maple Days Workshops in Morrow County January 18, or Holmes County January 19, or Geauga County January 20.

As is our custom, essentially the same program will be offered at all three locations.

Pre-registration is required to ensure enough materials are made for the meetings

Topics To Be Covered:

Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and Ohio Department of Ag Updates: The Food Safety Modernization Act contains a mandatory requirement for many food manufacturers, which includes maple syrup producers, to register their operation. There have been many changes in the past few years and there are even more changes to take place in the next year or two. Every maple producer, no matter operation size, needs to hear what is happening, as their future as maple producers depends on it.

Maple Marketing is More Than Filling a Jug: If you want to achieve the highest return for your maple syrup then just putting your syrup in a jug is not enough. Once in the jug you have to market it, by making the connection from the syrup within the jug to you the producer. Building the story of how it’s made and who is making it are all critical for consumers to become invested in you and your products.

Tubing Help for Any Size Operation: Tubing has done more to revolutionize the maple industry and create growth more than any other piece of equipment. Tubing has made the collection process easier on the maple producer and on the sugarbush due to less time spent in the woods with heavy equipment. Tubing systems are easily adapted to any size maple operation. Looking back and forward to the newest technology, helpful hints will be presented to aid any size operation.

Sugarbush/Woodland Management Tips that Pay: Your woodlands are a valuable resource. Learn how a professional forester can help you develop a woodland management plan to increase the benefits that you receive from your woodland. This session will focus on using crown touching release and other crop tree management concepts to improve the health and productivity of your sugarbush.

Maple Nuggets: Every year there are lots of important happenings, things, and news to share with maple producers. These items will be addressed during this session as well as any questions submitted with the registration forms and not already answered by the speakers.

Testing of Hydrometers: Hydrometers are vital in every sugaring operation, so be sure they remain accurate. The papers can shift and readings will be off, which could run into finishing too low of density and syrup could mold or ferment. If finished with too high of density, the syrup will crystallize. Bring your hydrometers with you to the meetings for testing; that way you know going into the 2018 season you will be finishing your syrup at the proper density and proper color grade. Refractometers will also be tested, so bring them to the meeting.

Sincerely, Dr. Gary W. Graham, Ohio State University Extension Specialist, Natural Resources

Notice: After 11 years at the same price, the registration fee is being increased to cover the rising costs of food, rental space, and materials.