While the weather may feel like November it is still a Merry Christmas Week in Northeast, Ohio! I hope each of you have a happy holiday season. We have been busy week of Farm Bill programs last week in Trumbull and Portage counties with lots of great questions. If you have land enrolled in the federal farm program, make sure to take time to schedule one of these meetings on your calendar. This week’s newsletter has details of the upcoming Farm Bill programs in January as well as information on our Pesticide Re-certification and Fertilizer Certification programs. Be watching for next week’s newsletter for information about our February 2 Northeast Ohio Agronomy School—it is a power packed line-up of speakers. Have a great holiday week!

David Marrison, AG Educator

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NAP Buy-Up Coverage Available – Provides Greater Protection for Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Growers

Source: Steven Maurer, FSA State Executive Director.

Recently USDA announced the opportunity for fruit, vegetable and specialty crop growers to receive greater protection through the FSA’s Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) buy-up program. The new options, created by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, and energy crops.

Previously, the program offered coverage at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production. Producers can now choose higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. The expanded protection will be especially helpful to beginning and traditionally underserved producers, as well as farmers with limited resources, who will receive fee waivers and premium reductions for expanded coverage. More crops are now eligible for the program, including expanded aquaculture production practices, and sweet and biomass sorghum. For the first time, a range of crops used to produce bioenergy will be eligible as well.
To help producers learn more about the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program and how it can help them, USDA, in partnership with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, created an online resource. The Web tool, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap, allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for coverage. It also gives them an opportunity to explore a variety of options and levels to determine the best protection level for their operation.

Because the 2015 application closing dates for some crops have already passed before FSA made the buy-up coverage available, this provides producers with an opportunity to obtain buy-up coverage for those crops for the 2015 crop year by submitting an application for coverage requesting buy-up coverage and paying the service fee, even if the producer did not previously obtain CAT-level coverage and pay the service fee for the crop, by January 14, 2015. For instance, the application and service fee deadline for the 2015 NAP coverage was November 20, 2014 on Apples, Asparagus, Blueberries, Caneberries, Cherries, Chestnuts, Forage for Hay and Pasture, Grapes, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Strawberries, Honey and Maple Sap for Ohio. Since this deadline has passed, producers interested in obtaining additional buy-up coverage must submit an application for buy-up coverage and pay the service fee by January 14, 2015. For questions or to learn more about the NAP buy-up coverage, visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/nap or contact your local FSA Office for additional information.

**Natural Resources Program Sign-up Now Available for Ohio Farmers and Forest Land Owners**
For more information contact: Christina Coulon, NRCS, 614-255-2471

COLUMBUS, OH, Dec. 9, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting new applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) from Ohio farmers and non-industrial private forest land owners who want to improve the natural resources on their land. Applications received by Friday, January 16, 2015, will be considered for funding this fiscal year.

A conservation plan created by the NRCS local conservationist and the EQIP applicant provides a foundation for the EQIP application. The conservation plan includes the natural resource concerns on the land under consideration, the conservation practices that will improve or enhance natural resources on that land, the schedule for carrying out the conservation practices in the plan, and the cost of the conservation practices.

For example, soil erosion caused by water leaving a bare field may negatively impact both soil and water quality. A conservation plan addressing these natural resource concerns documents the location and extent of this concern and the conservation practice or practices the farmer chooses to put in place to improve soil and water quality. Several conservation practices used together as a management system provide more environmental benefits than a single conservation practice. In this example, the farmer may elect to use a no-till planting system to minimize soil erosion, plant a cover crop to improve soil quality, and use drainage water management structures to control sub-surface drainage and improve water quality.

Ohio NRCS received reduced funding for EQIP this year which will intensify the competition for application selection. Since EQIP is a voluntary program, an applicant may select to do as much or as little as they chose to address their natural resource issues. However, applications with multiple conservation practices provide a greater environmental benefit, increasing an application’s chance for selection. EQIP applications with conservation plans containing multiple conservation practices used in a system will outcompete applications without robust conservation plans.

Applications for EQIP submitted by entities, such as farmers applying as a corporation, must register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), a process that can take up to three weeks. Information about CCR requirements,
including obtaining a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number, is posted on the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill.

For more information about EQIP or other technical or financial assistance programs offered by NRCS, please contact your local service center: http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs

**Farm Bill Programs to be Held Northeast Ohio**

OSU Extension in Northeast Ohio will be collaborating with our local Farm Service Agency offices to offer meetings to discuss the crop side of the 2014 Farm Bill. Specific details will be presented on the Yield Update (landowner decision), base re-allocation (landowner decision) and program choice between PLC, ARC-County and ARC-Individual (farmer decision). There is no cost to attend these workshops but pre-registration is requested. The following dates have been established (thus far). Producers and landowners can choose the program which fits their schedule the best.

**Tuesday, January 6, 2015**
Ashtabula County Extension Office
39 Wall Street
Jefferson, Ohio 44047
10:00 to 12:00 noon
To reserve call: (440) 437-6330

**Thursday, January 8, 2015**
Geauga County Extension Office
14269 Claridon-Troy Road
Burton, Ohio 44021
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
To reserve call: (440) 437-6330

**Tuesday, January 13, 2015**
Lorain County Farm Service Agency
42110 Russia Road
Elyria, Ohio 44035
2:00 to 4:00 p.m. or 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Call 440-326-5830 to register

**Wednesday, January 14, 2015**
Trumbull County AG Center
520 West Main Street
Cortland, Ohio 44410
Call for program time
To reserve call: (330) 637-2046 ext 109

**Thursday, January 15, 2015**
Akron University- Medina
Medina County University Center (of Akron University)
6300 West Technology Lane
Medina, Ohio 44256
10:00 to 12:00 p.m. or 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Call 330-722-2628 to register
Private Pesticide Applicator Re-Certification Session & Commercial Fertilizer Application Certification Sessions to be held across Northeast Ohio in 2015

Does your Private Pesticide Applicator’s License expire on March 31, 2015? If so, OSU Extension in Northeast Ohio has planned four pesticide re-certification sessions for producers. These sessions will be held on January 16 at the Williamsfield Community Center, January 30 at the Geauga County Extension office, February 9 at the Trumbull County Extension office and February 26 at the Perry Community Center.

Each of these sessions will offer 3 credits for pesticide re-certification for CORE and All Categories (1-7). Private Pesticide Applicators are encouraged to choose the session which best fits their schedule the best. Additionally, a special session will be held during the same day and location for private pesticide applicators who would like to complete their Commercial Fertilizer Application Certification. Due to Ohio’s new legislation, any producer who applies commercial fertilizer to 50 or more acres must be certified by no later than September 30, 2017. Attend this session to complete your certification. This session is open only to current licensed private pesticide applicators who wish to become certified.

The times and locations for each of the sessions are:

Friday, January 16, 2015 at the Williamsfield Community Center in Williamsfield, Ohio.
Private Pesticide from 9:00 to 12:00 noon & Fertilizer Applicator Certification from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Friday, January 30, 2015 at the Geauga County Extension office in Burton, Ohio.
Private Pesticide from 9:00 to 12:00 noon & Fertilizer Applicator Certification from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Monday, February 9, 2015 at the Trumbull County Extension office in Cortland, Ohio.
Private Pesticide from 9:00 to 12:00 noon & Fertilizer Applicator Certification from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 26, 2015 at the Perry Community Center in Perry, Ohio.
Fertilizer Applicator Certification from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. & Private Pesticide from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The registration fee is $35/per person for the private pesticide applicator re-certification. There is no fee for the fertilizer certification session. A hearty farmer’s lunch and refreshments will be provided for attendees for a fee $15/person. Pre-registration is required eight days prior to the session date. An additional late registration fee of $25 per person will be added for any late registration. Make checks payable to OSU Extension and mail to OSU Extension-Geauga County, PO Box 387, Burton, Ohio 44021. More information can be obtained by calling the Geauga County Extension office 440-834-4656.
Preparation Class for Private Pesticide Applicator License Test to be held on February 10 in Burton, Ohio
OSU Extension in Northeast Ohio will be providing a training session to help farmers prepare for the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Private Pesticide Applicator’s Exam. This class is not required but is a great opportunity for applicators to learn what they will need to study for the test. This class will be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. This session will be held in Burton, Ohio at the Geauga County Extension office. The registration fee for this program is $35/person. Call the Geauga County Extension office at 440-834-4656 to register or for more information.

Private & Commercial Pesticide Applicator Testing to be held by Ohio Department of Agriculture During Winter of 2015
Are you looking to take obtain your private or commercial pesticide license or wish to add an additional category to your existing license? The Ohio Department of Agriculture will be holding testing clinics during the winter of 2015 in Northeast Ohio. Pre-registration is required for each location and can be made by calling the ODA at 1-800-282-1955 (press 3 then 1). Study material can be found at: http://pested.osu.edu/privatestudy.html

Ashtabula County
Date: March 25 (beginning at 10:00 a.m.)
Location: OSU Extension Office
Basement Meeting Room
39 Wall Street
Jefferson, Ohio 44047
For Directions Call 440-576-9008

Geauga County
Dates: February 18, March 18, April 15, and May 20 (all beginning at 10:00 a.m.)
Location: Geauga County Extension Office
Patterson Center Basement
P.O. Box 387
14269 Claridon-Troy Road
Burton, OH 44021-0387
For Directions Call 440-834-4656

Trumbull County
Date: April 1 (beginning at 10:00 a.m.)
Location: Trumbull County Extension Office
520 West Main Street, Suite #1
Cortland, OH 44410
For Directions Call 330-638-6783

2015 Ohio Grape & Wine Conference to be held on February 16-17, 2015 in Dublin, Ohio
The Ohio Grape & Wine Conference (OGWC) will take place on February 16-17, 2015, at the newly-renovated Crowne Plaza Hotel & Conference Center in Dublin. The conference is jointly organized by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee (OGIC), Ohio State University Extension, Department of Horticulture and Crop Science Viticulture and Enology Programs at OSU-OARDC and the Ohio Wine Producers Association (OWPA).

The 2015 conference consists of both general and concurrent sessions covering a wide range of interesting topics for grape growers and winemakers. We are pleased to announce our featured speakers in both enology and viticulture with Tom Payette; Consulting Winemaker, Rapidan, Virginia; Lisa Van de Water, Founder and International Director
of Vinotec Napa; Chris Stamp, Owner/Winemaker at Lakewood Vineyards, Watkins Glen, New York; and Dr. Paolo Sabbatini; Associate Professor of Viticulture, Michigan State University.

Monday morning will begin with a special half-day workshop in both viticulture and enology covering “A Year in the Life of a Grape in Viticulture and A Year in the Life of a Wine.” This workshop will focus on special practices and procedures in both the vineyard - from planting to harvest and harvest to bottling in enology. The Conference continues Monday afternoon with excellent presentations in the general session from several of our featured speakers, in addition to OGIC and OWPA. Tuesday will consist of both grower and winemaker breakfasts, as well as full-day concurrent sessions with technical presentations in both viticulture and enology.

Full 2-day registration at a low rate of $210, with a discounted rate provided for more than 2 individuals attending from one establishment or family. Full registration includes access to the pre-conference viticulture and enology workshops, all technical sessions and trade show. Social events and meals are also included: box lunch, Ohio Wine reception, and banquet on Monday; continental breakfast, grazing lunch and afternoon break on Tuesday. You are also entitled to a conference packet and flash drive with Power Point presentations provided at registration. More information about the conference can be found at: http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/grapeweb/images/OGEN20141218(37).pdf

A Time for Reflection for the Beef Industry
By John Grimes, Extension Beef Coordinator

The holiday season is upon us as Christmas and New Years are rapidly approaching. While many of us can get caught up in holiday get-togethers and shopping for a perfect gift for that special someone, it is important that we remember the real reason for the Christmas and celebrate it in a manner appropriate for your family and beliefs. The New Year's holiday gives us an opportunity to reflect on the events of the past year and enjoy the possibilities that lay ahead in 2015.

The end of 2014 also gives beef producers a chance to reflect on the impact of the past year on their operations and what can be improved upon in the coming year. This year will undoubtedly be remembered as a historically positive year for sales of all classes of beef cattle. Prices for beef cattle reached levels that could not be reasonably anticipated. I hope you were able to capitalize on the current cattle economy as much as possible this year.

Many have questioned about how long these exciting times will last for the beef industry. Nobody can be certain how long these historically high prices will last. We certainly can't become complacent and assume that it is always going to be easy to sell animals at these price levels. My advice is to do what you can to take full advantage of the current situation and to make improvements that can carry you forward for years to come.

Take some time to analyze your current beef production enterprise and look for areas improvement. Just because you are selling animals for record high doesn't mean that you are not leaving money on the table. I understand that the average cow-calf operation in Ohio numbers less than 17 cows and many producers also have an off-farm job. However, cattle are simply too valuable of an asset not to treat this enterprise with an appropriate level of management to improve profitability.

Consider some of the following management decisions as potential moves that can make an immediate impact on your herd's productivity.
You can't take advantage of historically high prices for beef cattle if you don't have the animals to sell. Use the proven management practices that can help you to improve conception rates, minimize calving difficulties, and increase the percentage of calf crop weaned.

Cull open or any other unproductive animals with issues relating to disposition, udders, structure, performance, etc. Replace them by purchasing younger, bred females.

Evaluate the genetics in your herd to determine if they are allowing you to meet your production goals. Utilize the breeds and genetics within a breed that will help you achieve your goals. If you are falling short of these goals, don't be afraid to make changes.

Are there management practices not being implemented in your operation because of a lack of equipment or facilities? Improving facilities can improve the quality of life for our animals and simplify daily chores for the producer.

Forages are the single most important feedstuff consumed by beef cattle. Increase forage quality and quantity produced from pasture and hay fields in order to maximize the pounds of beef produced per acre in your operation. Minimize feeding and storage losses associated with this valuable product.

2014 certainly was an exciting year for beef cattle producers. As good as this year has been, challenge yourself to make improvements in your operation to make 2015 even better with your beef enterprise.

Forage and Feed Sampling
By Rory Lewandowski, Extension Educator Wayne County

Winter weather results in higher energy requirements for livestock. In the case of ruminant livestock a major portion of the diet is typically composed of forages. Forage nutrient content is affected by a number of factors, the major one being maturity at harvest, but also species composition, moisture content at harvest, and handling of the forage during the harvest and storage period. While most of our grain crops such as corn, soybeans, wheat, oats and barley have a fairly consistent quality and a narrow range of quality variance, forages can vary widely in nutritional quality. So while I can probably use book values for the nutritional content of corn no matter where it comes from, all first cut alfalfa hay or orchardgrass hay is not equal. To really know the nutrient content of forages, they should be sampled and sent to a lab for chemical analysis.

Recently I had an opportunity to attend a ruminant nutrition workshop sponsored by Rock River Lab. Dr. Bill Weiss, dairy and ruminant nutrition researcher at OARDC, was one of the presenters. His topic involved dairy cow diet composition variance and sampling. The focus was on forages, in particular haylage, corn silage and total mixed rations (TMR) that contain large portions of forage. One of the questions asked was; if a forage is resampled, for example corn silage or haylage from a bunker silo, and the result is different from a previous sample result, is that feedstuff really different or is the sample different? Research indicates that the largest variance between samples is likely to be due to sampling variance. In other words, how the sample is taken matters.

It is important to keep in mind that the small amounts of forage sent into the lab for analysis needs to accurately represent tons of forage. Accuracy and the confidence in the test results is improved when a number of subsamples is taken, combined and mixed together, and then a representative sample from that mixture sent into the lab. The actual process or technique used to gather a sample varies depending upon the forage to be sampled. Here are some general thumb rules to guide forage sampling:

- For dry hay, always use a forage probe to gather samples. Grabbing and pulling a sample from a hay bale will not provide you with a representative sample and test results will not accurately reflect the nutrient content of the bale.
- Sample lots of hay separately. A lot of hay could be defined as hay of similar species content, harvested at a similar maturity and ideally from the same field and/or from fields harvested on the same day or within a
couple of day span. First cutting hay in particular can have large changes in forage quality within even a 2 to 3 day span.

- For small square bales, sample at least 20 separate bales within a lot. Use the forage probe to sample from the end of the bale, between the twine. Medium and large square/rectangular bales have a more uniform distribution of leaves and stems compared to small square bales so they can be sampled anywhere on the bale sides or ends. For large round bales, sample at least 8 to 10 bales per lot of hay. Sample on the curved side of the bale, inserting the forage probe perpendicular to the side of the bale. In all cases, if more samples can be taken and combined, this can increase the accuracy and reliability of the forage test results.

- Sampling ensiled forages such as haylage or corn silage: Taking hand grab samples from the face of the bunker silos is NOT recommended due to safety concerns. Use a loader bucket or face shaver to create a pile of silage on the floor of the bunker. If this forage is not going to be fed in a total mixed ration (TMR) then collect 5 to 8 samples. Using some type of scoop is better than using a hand grab sample, but if a hand grab sample is used, do so with your hand upturned to mimic a scoop. Combine samples into a 5 gallon pail, mix thoroughly and take a representative sample for analysis using a scoop.

- Sampling baleage or silage bags: Hand samples can safely be taken from the face of haylage or corn silage in bags. The best method is to knock down or remove the amount that would normally be fed and collect 4 to 5 scoop samples from that pile and then collect another 4 to 5 scoop samples from the newly exposed face. Combine all these subsamples into a bucket, mix thoroughly and then collect a representative sample to send in for analysis. Another way to sample wrapped baleage or forage in silo bags is to take at least 8 to 10 core samples at various locations, punching through the plastic. Holes must be taped shut after sampling. Core samples should be placed in a bucket, mixed and then a representative sample collected and sent for analysis.

- Sampling a TMR: At the nutrition workshop I mentioned at the beginning of this article, Bill Weiss presented results of his research work that had focused on TMR sampling and variance in sample results. Dr. Weiss told participants that there is large sampling variance with TMR rations and taking a single sample and sending it in for analysis is a waste of time and money. The way to decrease variance and increase the reliability of TMR analysis is to mix thoroughly, take smaller subsamples and send in duplicate samples to the lab. When results come back, average the lab results and use that figure.

All forages are not equal and forage quality book values are really not useful for on-farm ration balancing. Testing forages is the only way to be able to match and adjust forage rations to livestock nutrient needs. Proper sampling will increase the accuracy and reliability of test results.

**10 Reasons Santa is a Farmer**

Finally, I would like to share again this year the ten reasons why Santa could be a part time farmer. After all, he has the same MO – that is investigation talk for Method of Operation – as a farmer.

1. Just like a farmer, he works all year on a commodity, and at the end of the year he gives it all away and starts all over again for next year.
2. He has to keep his livestock in good shape to see him through the year and get the job done.
3. He knows how to get by with the same equipment season after season.
4. His job and final delivery depend greatly on the weather, He works outside even in the worst of weather conditions.
5. He’s good with kids. Kids love animals, and both Santa and farmers have the market cornered on providing lovable and cuddly animals.
6. Both Santa and farmers love the colors red and green. Farmers especially like farm equipment in these colors.
7. Santa and farmers both work late hours, enjoy good food, frequent the malls annually, and have the public perception that they can perform miracles with little or no return. Both cover a lot of ground in a hurry when the
pressure is on.
8. Both have the ability to ho – or is it hoe? – during tough times.
9. And when you really think about it, Santa does wear boots somewhat like a farmer.
10. and finally.....both help to take care of the needs of the whole world.

2015 Winter Extension Program Dates
The following programs have been scheduled for Northeast Ohio farmers this upcoming winter. Complete registration flyers can be found at: [http://ashtabula.osu.edu/program-areas/agriculture-and-natural-resources/upcoming-educational-programs-deadlines](http://ashtabula.osu.edu/program-areas/agriculture-and-natural-resources/upcoming-educational-programs-deadlines)

Northeast Ohio Farm Bill Training Sessions
January 6, 2015 at the Ashtabula County Extension Office
January 8, 2015 at the Geauga County Extension Office
January 13, 2015 at the Lorain County FSA Office
January 14, 2015 at the Trumbull County Ag Center
January 15, 2015 in Medina County
January 16, 2015 at the Portage County Ag Center
January 20, 2015 at the Trumbull County Ag Center

Northeast Ohio Pesticide Recertification & Fertilizer Certification Sessions
January 16, 2015 at the Williamsfield Community Center
January 30, 2015 at the Geauga County Extension Office
February 9, 2015 at the Trumbull County Extension Office
February 26, 2015 at the Perry Community Center

Northeast Ohio Agronomy School
February 2, 2015 at Williamsfield Community Center

Northeast Ohio Winter Grape School
March 10, 2015 at the Geneva Lodge & Conference Center

2015 Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet
Saturday, March 21, 2015 at the Lenox Community Center

2015 Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Show
Saturday, April 18 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds

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PLEASE SHARE...this newsletter with farmers or others who are interested in agricultural topics in Ashtabula & Trumbull Counties. Past issues can be located at: [https://go.osu.edu/ag-news](https://go.osu.edu/ag-news). Please tell your friends and neighbors to sign up for the list. CONTACT: marrison.2@osu.edu

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