Hello Northeast Ohio Counties!

Spring was in the air this weekend as we saw some warm weather and some not as welcomed spring showers. Planting season is getting closer and I know we are all getting prepared, but we’d like to remind you again to check out OSUE Ag Madness. All the webinars are recorded so if you are looking for educational opportunities or have run out of programs to watch on tv, check out Ag Madness!

Our offices are currently closed, but we are still here to answer any questions you have. Please email us or call the office and we will get you the information you’re looking for.

Stay safe and healthy!

Lee Beers
Trumbull County Extension Educator
Andrew Holden
Ashtabula County Extension Educator
Angie Arnold
Portage County Extension Educator
Join Us for Ag Madness!
By: Sam Custer
Source: https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2020-07/join-us-ag-madness

Did your conference get canceled? Looking to fill the void of the big basketball tournament? OSU Extension Agricultural and Natural Resources Educators are here to assist.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Madness: A Tournament of Education consists of 64 educational events broken into daily brackets. Each day, a virtual educational session will be held at 9:00 a.m., noon and 3:00 p.m. at no charge. All events are listed at https://go.osu.edu/agmadness. Brackets will change daily. Topics will cover a variety of agricultural subjects like hemp, pastures & grazing, fruit and vegetable production, farm management and more. When possible, live question and answer opportunities are included.

This week’s bracket includes Direct Marketing (March 31), Farm Management (April 1), Forages, Pastures and Grazing (April 2) and Agricultural Safety (April 3).

To meet the needs of our clientele amid COVID-19, we began this virtual programming on March 24 with a webinar for produce growers with assistance on operating amid COVID-19. We followed up with a food safety webinar for consumers that is still available for viewing.

The agriculture crisis website has also been updated to provide resources for the agriculture community. To access these resources, visit https://go.osu.edu/agcrisis. To find complete details on the educational opportunities throughout the Ag Madness tournament and to view replays of events already held, visit https://go.osu.edu/agmadness. The event will run through the end of April.

Challenging Conditions Remain into April
By: Jim Noel
Source: https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2020-07/challenging-conditions-remain-april
Temperatures and Rainfall: Temperatures will start the first 7 days of April 1-3 degrees F above normal. Rainfall will start April below normal about half of normal. That is some good news as the end of March (as forecast) was very wet. However, most indications are for the remainder of April after the first week, temperatures will be near normal and rainfall slightly above normal. This will put pressure on early spring planting in April. Evaporation and evapotranspiration will be held in check by closer to normal temperatures as we go through April. The May outlook calls for warmer than normal and a little wetter than normal but not as wet as last year.

Soil Moisture and Temperatures: Soil temperatures has come out of winter above normal due to heavy saturation and the mild winter. However, soil moisture remains in the top 1-10% wettest on record so it is wet. With excess moisture to get rid of in the soils, expect soil temperatures to trend quickly from above normal to near normal.

Freeze and Frost: The normal time for the last hard freeze typically ranges from about April 10-20 form south to north. Frost is not uncommon into very early May. All indications remain that about a normal last frost and freeze can be expected this spring.

Summary: Most indications have not changed from the outlooks this winter. The spring planting season overall looks a bit warmer and wetter than average but not quite as wet as 2019. Therefore, expect challenging conditions at least through April if not May.

The latest NOAA climate information can be found at: https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov

The lastest river and soil information can be found at: https://www.weather.gov/ohrfc/

The latest Water Resources Outlooks can be found at: https://www.weather.gov/ohrfc/WRO

Ashtabula County: Local Food Report March 31, 2020
By Julie Wayman, Local Food Coordinator, Ashtabula County OSU Extension

Every Spring, the Ashtabula Local Food Council, now in partnership with OSU Extension, updates the Ashtabula County Local Food Guide which was first published in 2016. The 2019 version of the Guide can be found online here: https://ashtabula.osu.edu/program-areas/community-development/local-foods
We are currently in the process of updating the Guide for 2020. In the meantime, we want to provide you with resources as to where you can find and buy local food along with updates on any new buying procedures in light of the Covid-19 crisis.

This list will be updated to accommodate new information as the season progresses and as local produce becomes more widely available. Every effort will be made to keep this list accurate. Please send updates and corrections to Local Food Coordinator, Julie Wayman, at wayman.31@osu.edu or by calling 440-624-1022.

It is our goal to have the updated Ashtabula County Local Food Guide published online by May 1st. We are excited by this opportunity to promote our local farms and local food. We encourage everyone to consider local farms first when considering where to purchase your food.

**Don’t Hurry into Hemp**

By: Brad Bergefurd & Bradford Sherman

Source: https://southcenters.osu.edu/newsletter/winter-2020-achievements-edition/dont-hurry-hemp

Although now legal to grow hemp in Ohio, farmers should be cautious of immediately investing a lot of time and money into this risky crop, warns Horticulture Specialist Brad Bergefurd of The Ohio State University. The passage of Senate Bill 57, signed into law in mid-December, decriminalized hemp and paved the way for the development of a new industry in the state. However, factors such as the high cost of planting and harvesting the crop, a potential for taking a total loss due to elevated tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) levels, and a market price in decline make it hard for experts such as Bergefurd to recommend to farmers.

“It was an interesting year to say the least, we sure learned a lot”, said Bergefurd. He along with co-worker and soil and water researcher Dr. Rafiq Islam were members of a special Hemp Task Force comprised of 25 Ohio State University researchers and Extension specialists within the College of Food Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

Bergefurd and Islam, together in 2019, led a field trial of the controversial crop at OSU South Centers in Piketon that was one of only two planting sites in southern Ohio.
They partnered with fellow agriculture and natural resources Extension educators David Dugan (Adams County) and James Morris (Brown County) to design, plant, maintain, and manage data collection and analysis on the pair of cannabidiol (or CBD hemp) plantings. The other site was located in an open field near the Acela CBD warehouse in Winchester, and represented the largest planting in all of Ohio at around an acre in size.

While 2019 marked the first time that hemp was legal to plant in Ohio since prior to World War II, Governor Mike DeWine did not sign the bill, permitting limited growth of the crops for research purposes, into law until August. This was extremely late in the year and the crop at Piketon suffered.

“Hemp is very photoperiod sensitive in that short days trigger the crop into a reproductive stage of growth,” explained Bergefurd. “With legalization not going into effect until August, this was way past the summer solstice, therefore with the shorter days, the hemp never vegetatively grew and remained short at Piketon, greatly reducing yields.”

However, the Winchester site was provided 24 hours of light each day, from planting through October, with the addition of portable lighting that lit up the entire field from dusk until dawn. This modified the plants' environment and tricked them into a vegetative stage of development, allowing for larger plant size and increased yield.

Hemp is an annual plant that looks and smells like marijuana, so you cannot visually tell a difference. Unlike marijuana, hemp is low in THC, the chemical that can trigger a “high.” Legal hemp in Ohio must have 0.3% THC or less, while marijuana plants have much more. Farmers in other states that have already legalized hemp years ago get paid by producing product that with a high percentage of CBD and low percentage of THC; any hemp higher than 0.3% THC is not allowed to be harvested or sold and is a total loss to the farmer.

Lab analysis of samples taken at Piketon and Winchester showed a high percentage of CBD, but also high percentages of THC. “These high THC results made us very uneasy, for if this was a farmer’s crop, it would be confiscated and not allowed to be sold”, said Bergefurd.

Research Associate Thom Harker, who performed the analysis of data, says there seems to be a correlation between the moisture content and the CBD and THC levels. “As the moisture goes down, the percentage of CBD oils go up,” explained Harker, “but unfortunately, THC levels rise also.”
In the Adams County plants, those with an average moisture of 44.5 percent were within the legal limits of THC, which was at .23 percent. However, when moisture levels dropped to an average of 13.4 percent, THC rose to .5 percent, making them unsellable. The same relationship between moisture and CBD/THC levels also held true for the smaller plants grown at Piketon.

As if the potential for a total loss on a crop was not bad enough, the costs associated with planting and harvesting the crop are also high. Preliminary results of the 2019 research indicate that hemp costs between $10,000 and $15,000 per acre to plant.

Also, hemp requires as much or more “hand and stoop” labor as tobacco, hops, or tomatoes. “This is not a crop that can be grown from a tractor seat”, added Bergefurd, “specialized planting equipment and drying facilities are also required.”

Bergefurd says the biggest takeaway from the 2019 season is that farmers MUST have a market lined up and a contract in hand, but that does not always guarantee a profitable crop, either. The price of CBD has dropped more than 50% in three months this season, and there is now a national oversupply of hemp, contributing to many of our neighboring farmers in Kentucky and West Virginia, despite having contracts with processors, not getting paid for their 2019 crop.

“The 2019 hemp season was one for learning and will help us to educate growers on what is required to be successful with this crop in the future,” Bergefurd said.

With no research funding available for hemp at the present time, CFAES administration graciously offset some of the preliminary research costs for 2019 through the purchasing of plants, and members of the task force shared specialty equipment and extra field supplies to get preliminary trials planted.

**Lee’s Monthly News Column**

Hello Trumbull County! Well, it’s been a wild ride the past couple of weeks, and I hope you are all making the best of the “stay at home” order. As some of you are aware, our physical office is closed, but everyone in our office is still working and available to assist you if you have any questions. You can call our main number (that is 330-638-6783) and as long as our computers are on, you’ll be connected to us wherever we are. You can also always contact me by email at beers.66@osu.edu. Even though we had to cancel or postpone most of our upcoming programs, OSU Extension is still offering virtual events at [https://go.osu.edu/agmadness](https://go.osu.edu/agmadness) every weekday at 9:00 AM, 12:00 noon, and 3:00 PM on a variety of topics. Be sure to check it out.
Many farmers are still plugging along with their routine spring activities – fixing equipment, preparing fertilizer programs, soil testing, and more. Although you may consider texting while the tractor is on autosteer “teleworking,” farmers can not phone in to most of their duties, like completing tillage, planting, and spraying crops. Not to mention all the needs of livestock who have to be milked, fed, and generally cared for, no matter what is going on the world. Although farmers must keep working through Covid-19, I find they’re generally very good at practicing social distancing. Tractor cabs don’t hold more than two people, folks tend to leave the shop when the work begins to avoid both “working words” and the occasional flying tool, and no one wants to be near a farmer after helping a cow give birth.

In a little over a month most farmers will be attempting to get their crops planted- if the weather permits. Predicting the weather is one of the most difficult things in the world because of the way we all plan our days around the weather, and I think our meteorologists are already very stressed. The weather patterns keep shifting, making long range forecasts extremely hard to predict accurately. Earlier this year it looked like March would have average rainfall and above average temperatures. While the temperature part was right, much of the state has already surpassed average rainfall, with more moisture on the way. Right now we should expect to see an extra 1.5” of rain above average for just the last two weeks of March. Like I said, forecasting is difficult this year, but it is expected that we will see a much wetter than normal April and May.

There are a few fundamentals that we need to remember heading into planting season, whether you are preparing 1,000 acres of corn or 1,000 square feet of garden.

1. Don’t till wet soil. You will be setting yourself up for compaction, poor seedbed prep, and a season of frustration as you deal with ruts. I know there are times when the clock starts to dictate when conditions are “good enough”, but wait for drier conditions if you can.

2. Don’t plant too early. Soil temperature plays a huge role in getting good seed germination, and unless you are growing cold season crops (peas, oats, etc.) you want to wait until the soil temperature reaches 50 degrees. Planting when it is cold might result in rotten seeds that don’t germinate, or- more likely- plant diseases that kill seedlings. Pathogens like *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* thrive in cold wet conditions.

3. Don’t plant in wet soils. Planting in wet soils causes compaction on the sides of the seed furrow that will limit root growth. Corn is very susceptible to this and you will see the roots follow the seed trench and not penetrate the compacted sides and bottom. After corn gets about 12” tall it will not be able to support itself, and will begin to fall over. This is aptly named floppy corn syndrome.

4. Don’t fertilize too early. Some nutrients, like potassium, you can apply without much concern that they will disappear before the crops need it. Nitrogen, on the other hand, is a little more finicky and if applied too soon will be washed
away in the water, go into the atmosphere, or generally not be available when the crops need it. It’s also very expensive, so don’t waste it.

5. Don’t skimp on the maintenance. In the last two years we have had extremely small windows to plant our crops. The last thing you want to do is have your tractor or planter break down during one of these windows, delaying progress for two weeks. Go over your planter one more time to find anything that looks like it could be an issue and get it fixed before heading to the field. You want to be ready to go without issues when you can.

I hope all the meteorologists are wrong (history is on my side) and that we have a dry spring (history is NOT on my side). Either way, farming goes on no matter what is going on in the world around us. If you see a farmer, give them a wave from your car, and buy an extra few gallons of milk to thank them.

Take care, and stay healthy!

*Lee Beers can be reached at beers.66@osu.edu or 330-638-6738*

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clients on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: [go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity](http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity).

**The Ag Law Harvest**

By: Ellen Essman, Senior Research Associate  
Source: [https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/tue-03312020-904am/ag-law-harvest](https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/tue-03312020-904am/ag-law-harvest)

Hello, readers! We hope you are all staying safe and healthy. Understandably, news related to agricultural law seems to have slowed down a little bit over the last few weeks as both the federal and state governments have focused mainly on addressing the unfolding COVID-19 outbreak. That being said, there have been a few notable ag law developments you might be interested in.

**Federal government extends the tax deadline.**  
The IRS [announced](https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/tue-03312020-904am/ag-law-harvest) on March 21 that the deadline for filing or paying 2019 federal income taxes will be extended to July 15, 2020.

**Ohio Coronavirus Legislation.**  
The Ohio General Assembly quickly passed House Bill 197 on Wednesday March 25, 2020. HB 197 originally just involved changes to tax laws, but amendments were added to address the current situation. Amendments that made it into the final bill include provisions for education—from allowing school districts to use distance learning to make up for instruction time, to waiving state testing. Other important amendments make it easier to receive unemployment, move the state tax filing deadline to July 15, extend absentee voting, allow recently graduated nurses to obtain temporary licenses, etc. Of particular note to those involved in agriculture, HB 197 extends the deadlines to renew licenses issued by state agencies and
political subdivisions. If you have a state license that is set to expire, you will have 90 days after the state of emergency is lifted to renew the license. HB 197 is available here. A list of all the amendments related to COVID-19 is available here.

Proposed changes to hunting and fishing permits in Ohio.
In non-COVID news, Ohio House Bill 559 was introduced on March 18. HB 559 would allow grandchildren to hunt or fish on their grandparents’ land without obtaining licenses or permits. In addition, the bill would give free hunting and fishing licenses or permits to partially disabled veterans. You can get information on the bill here.

EPA simplifies approach to pesticides and endangered species.
Earlier this month, the U.S. EPA released its “revised method” for determining whether pesticides should be registered for use. Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), federal agencies must consider whether an action (in this case, registration of a pesticide) will negatively impact federally listed endangered species. EPA is authorized to make decisions involving pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The revised method consists of a three-step process. First, EPA will consider whether use of the pesticide “may affect” or conversely, have no effect on the listed species. If no effect is found, EPA can register the pesticide. On the other hand, if EPA finds that the pesticide may affect the endangered species, it must examine whether the pesticide is “likely to adversely affect” the species. In this second step, if EPA decides that the pesticide may affect the endangered species, but is not “likely to adversely affect” the species, then the agency may register the pesticide with the blessing of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Conversely, if EPA finds that the pesticide is likely to adversely affect the species, it must move on to step three, where it must work with FWS or NMFS to more thoroughly examine whether an adverse effect will “jeopardize” the species’ existence or “destroy or adversely modify its designated critical habitat.” The revised method is meant to simplify, streamline, and add clarity to EPA’s decision-making.

EPA publishes rule on cyazofamid tolerances.
Continuing the EPA/pesticide theme, on March 18, EPA released the final rule for tolerances for residues of the fungicide cyazofamid in or on commodities including certain leafy greens, ginseng, and turnips.

Administration backs off RFS
In our last edition of the Ag Law Harvest, we mentioned that the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals had handed a win to biofuels groups by deciding that EPA did not have the authority to grant three waivers to two small refineries in 2017. By granting the waivers, the EPA allowed the refineries to ignore the Renewable Fuel Standard.
(RFS) and not incorporate biofuels in with their oil-based fuels. The Tenth Circuit decision overturned this action. The Trump administration has long defended EPA’s action, so that’s why it’s so surprising that the administration did not appeal the court’s decision by the March 25 deadline.

**Right to Farm statute protects contract hog operation.**

If you’re a regular reader of the blog, you may recall that many nuisance lawsuits have been filed regarding large hog operations in North Carolina. In *Lewis v. Murphy Brown, LLC*, plaintiff Paul Lewis, who lives near a farm where some of Murphy Brown’s hogs are raised, sued the company for nuisance and negligence, claiming that the defendant’s hogs made it impossible for him to enjoy the outdoors and caused him to suffer from several health issues. Murphy Brown moved to dismiss the complaint, arguing that the nuisance claim should be disqualified under North Carolina’s Right to Farm Act, and that the negligence claim should be barred by the statute of limitations. The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina made quick work of the negligence claim, agreeing with Murphy Brown that the statute of limitations had passed. North Carolina’s Right to Farm Act requires a plaintiff to show all of the following: that he is the legal possessor of the real property affected by the nuisance, that the real property is located within one-half mile of the source of the activity, and that the action is filed within one year of the establishment of the agricultural operation or within one year of the operation undergoing a fundamental change. Since the operation was established in 1995 and the suit was not brought until 2019, and no fundamental change occurred, the court determined that Lewis’s claim was barred by the Right to Farm Act. Since neither negligence or nuisance was found, the court agreed with Murphy Brown and dismissed the case.

**I missed Private Pesticide Applicator and Fertilizer Re-Certification...**

Many local Extension office have received farmer calls lately asking how the COVID-19 emergency will affect pesticide recertification. The "Stay at home" order began prior to the end of March 2020, leaving those remaining private pesticide and fertilizer training programs postponed or suspended for the moment. On a normal year, the 3-year private applicator recertification cycle ends on March 31. Additionally, Ohio Department of Agriculture’s new pesticide applicator...
testing program was also suspended for now. Among others, this will affect those who wish to mix, load or apply approved dicamba products (Xtendimax, FeXapan, Engenia or Tavium) to Xtend traited soybeans, as these products are now restricted use. With the signing of House Bill 197, Ohio’s COVID-19 emergency response legislation, the March 31, 2020 deadline for private pesticide applicators (farmers) and the May 31, 2020 deadline for agricultural fertilizer certificate holders to renew their license and get training has been extended.

The deadline is now 90 days after the state of emergency Executive Order ends or December 1, 2020, whichever comes first.

All in-person OSUE training events are cancelled or postponed through at least May 15. We will continue to update you as meetings are scheduled. You may continue to check these websites for more information: www.pested.osu.edu or https://agri.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/oda/divisions/plant-health/news-and...
Upcoming Events

**March 26, 2020 12PM – 4PM - CANCELLED**
Pesticide and Fertilizer Recertification - Portage Co.

**April 15, 2020 11:30AM - CANCELLED**
Trumbull Farmer Lunch Series – Cover Crops – A Farmer Discussion

**April 28, 2020 11AM - CANCELLED**
Dairy Calf and Heifer Nutrition
Trumbull County

**June 14th, 2020**
Dairy Banquet/ Ice Cream Social

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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.

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Agriculture and Natural Resources Madness

Tournament of Education

 Begins March 25

**Daily Brackets**

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Visit tournament website for schedule

**64 Events**

**Classic Reruns**

**OSU Extension is Open for Business**

Learn with us virtually!

Each day, three educational sessions will be presented relating to the “bracket” or subject. Brackets change daily and include topics like food safety, crisis management, home gardening, animal care, crop production, forestry, hemp and many more.

Events are presented virtually via webinars, social media, live events and watch parties. Links to all events are provided on the tournament website.

You can also find links to watch existing educational programs and find relevant resources as we prepare for the 2020 growing season amid COVID-19.

Brought to you by your OSU Extension educators, researchers, faculty, staff and partners.

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit cfaesdiversity.osu.edu. For an accessible format of this publication, visit cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility.
The census counts everyone in the United States. Census results help determine how more than $675 billion in Federal funding is distributed to each state to support vital programs across the country EVERY YEAR! These funds shape local health care, housing, education, transportation, employment, and more. Census data is safe, secure, and protected by law.

Help us shape Ashtabula County and participate in the 2020 Census!

Respond by ONE of the following three ways:

**RESPOND ONLINE**

Visit [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov) to fill out the online questionnaire. The following locations are also available to help you access the online form. Call 2-1-1 for location hours.

- Andover Public Library
- Ashtabula Center for Active Living
- Ashtabula County District Library
- Conneaut Public Library
- Geneva Public Library
- Grand Valley Public Library
- Harbor Topky Library
- Henderson Memorial Library
- Kingsville Public Library
- OhioMeansJobs
- Rock Creek Public Library

**RESPOND BY PHONE**

You can call the assistance center toll-free at 1-844-330-2020 (English) or 1-844-468-2020 (Spanish).

**RESPOND BY MAIL**

Starting mid-March, households will begin receiving an Invitation to Respond to the 2020 Census online/by phone. Follow up reminders will be sent. If you do not respond by mid-April, a paper questionnaire will be provided for you to respond by mail.

For more information visit [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov) or [www.ashtabulacounty.us/census](http://www.ashtabulacounty.us/census)