It is National Ag Day today! I know I am very thankful for the hard work of our county, state and nation’s farmers! Thank you to each of you for your hard work in producing the food we eat. Dr. John Patterson sent me a link to an article from Dan Glickman who talks about today's election. I agree that it would be nice for our candidates to talk about how they will keep agriculture moving forward in the future. I hope each of you exercise your right to vote! We had a great miscanthus bus tour last Friday with 61 attendees. It was a great chance to see the equipment which is used to harvest this crop and how it is being transformed into two bio-based products. We also have a nice crowd pre-registered for tomorrow’s Northeast Ohio Winter Grape School at Grand River Cellars in Madison. Have a great week and be safe on Saint Patrick’s Day.

David Marrison, Ashtabula County Ag & NR Educator

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Farm Program Payments Revisited: Farmers May Choose Between County of Administration or Geographic County Location
By: Chris Bruynis, OSU Extension Educator, Ross County

Farmers with the administration of their farms consolidated at one FSA office may want to examine their 2014 and 2015 ARC-CO payment calculations. Original 2014 ARC-CO payments were calculated on the average yields for the administrative FSA office county, regardless of where the land was physically located. Recently FSA announced that farmers could elect to have the 2014 and/or the 2015 ARC-CO payments calculated on the county in which the land is physically located. For some farms this would be financially beneficial and needs to be requested by April 15, 2016.

FSA has calculated the results for the 2014 payments and for the farms where this election is beneficial, farmers simply need to sign the forms at their local FSA office. This will only affect farmers with land in more than one county. I have created some visual maps for farmers to reference for the 2014 payments received in October of 2015. These maps give a quick visual for ARC-CO corn, soybean, and wheat payments by county with payments rounded to the nearest dollar. Farmers can quickly look to see if the land in a neighboring county, that is not their administrative county, had a significantly different payment. Based on this information, they can decide if they want to elect to be paid based on the farm land’s county. **NOTE: SEE THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER**

National Agriculture Day is Today, March 15, 2016
By Emily Adams, Coshocton County ANR Educator

There seems to a day to celebrate just about everything imaginable. National Peanut Butter Day. National Plant a Flower Day. Even National Fill Our Staplers Day. Really, I didn’t make that one up! One day that is certainly worth taking time to acknowledge is National Agriculture Day on March 15. This year’s theme for the day is “Agriculture: Stewards of a Healthy Plant.” According to the US Department of Agriculture latest census information, there are 915 million acres of farmland here in the US. Since there are about 2.3 billion acres in our country, that means that roughly 40% of our land is used for agricultural purposes like cropland and pasture.

Farmers take their role seriously to be good stewards of the land and ensure that their farming practices are sustainable. Nearly 97 percent of the 2.1 million farms in the US are family-owned operations. One out of every seven jobs in Ohio is associated with agriculture. That includes the food processing industry, which is a huge part of our state’s economy. Ohio remains the number one producer of Swiss Cheese, number two egg producer and we rank third in processing tomatoes. And that is a good thing since we make more ketchup here than any other state. And locally we are certainly proud to be bacon central, producing a majority of the bacon that is consumed throughout the entire country.

How can you celebrate National Agriculture Day? I think a good way to start is to be thankful. We certainly take for granted the abundant food supply that is available to so many of us. If you know a farmer, tell them that you appreciate their hard work to ensure that you and your family have food to eat. Remember to be thankful for your next meal and those in the agriculture industry who work to provide it for you. “When it comes to life the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.” -Gilbert K. Chesterton
Consumers are more interested than ever before in food production and policies, but you wouldn’t know it from listening to our presidential candidates on the stump and in debates. We think the perfect opportunity is approaching with the Ohio primary falling on National Agriculture Day.

Many eyes will be on Ohio – one of the most agriculturally diverse states in the nation – as voters head to the polls. Ohioans have a big stake in the future of our food and agriculture system. One Ohio resident out of every seven works in food and agriculture, helping to generate $105 billion in annual economic activity statewide. That’s worth the acknowledgement of those hoping to become our next president.

So, what should the candidates say? There is a long list of issues that urgently need to be addressed. The candidates could pick from an array of critical topics. I and my fellow co-chairs of AGree, a bipartisan policy group driving positive change in the nation’s food and agriculture system, have outlined, in straightforward terms, a set of recommendations in our Presidential Call to Action, which we have delivered to all the campaigns.

Consider for a moment concerns about the health of Ohio’s land and water, from algal blooms in Lake Erie to nitrates in the Columbus water supply. Sound agricultural policies and programs can help to overcome these challenges. Conservation programs could be bolstered by the creation of new models that encourage producer-led, watershed-scale efforts that involve the supply chain. The U.S. agricultural research system could play a stronger role in finding solutions to these and countless other challenges if it was better focused and fine-tuned, as outlined in our recommendations.

With skyrocketing interest in health and diet, candidates should take note that federal food and agricultural policies can make a dramatic difference on this front, too. No one should be satisfied when nearly 17 percent of Ohio households face food insecurity. With 86 million American adults at risk for type 2 diabetes, a disease that cost $245 billion in 2012, we have an obligation to act. Did you know that an estimated one in 10 Ohioans have diabetes? And that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the state? These realities bring into focus the importance of improving federal food and nutrition programs.

The divisive issues surrounding immigration are politically difficult, but also must be addressed. Some aspects of food production are very labor-intensive and right now, agriculture is hamstrung by an unreliable labor supply. We can and must address labor shortages and support fruit and vegetable producers and dairy farms – as well as all of the states’ producers who supply healthy food for Ohio families.

We, at AGree, believe the need for reform is real and the time is now. Don’t take our word for it; more than 2,000 of the brightest minds in U.S. food and agriculture contributed to our recommendations. We are Republicans and Democrats united by a common interest in strengthening a sector critical to our nation’s economy and the health of all citizens.

Our next president will face many challenges and many demands. We don’t expect candidates to declare food and agriculture as the top issue in 2017. Instead, we join with many voters in Ohio and across the nation who are hungry for some acknowledgement from candidates that food and agriculture impact our nation’s health, from national security to the environment to our overall prosperity. National Ag Day -- Ohio primary day March 15 -- presents a perfect opportunity for candidates to send a signal that they understand this importance and the need for transformational changes. The future health and well-being of our nation depend on it.
Dan Glickman is the former U.S. secretary of agriculture and co-chair of AGree, a food and agriculture policy group that has issued a "Presidential Call to Action" to the candidates.

**Calculate Cover Crop Costs**

By Ben Potter


If you haven’t planted cover crops yet, you naturally need to know what it’s going to cost before you do. As the cliché goes, there’s an app for that. Well, more technically speaking, it’s a spreadsheet. Developed by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the free Cover Crop Economic Decision Support Tool helps farmers and others determine the immediate costs and benefits of cover crops on their operation.

“This tool offers a partial budget analysis,” according to NRCS state conservationist Ivan Dozier. “It focuses only on operational changes farmers make – actual costs and benefits farmers see when they add in cover crops. We focus on benefits and costs we can easily express in dollars.”

The tool measures factors such as seed/establishment costs, erosion reductions, grazing opportunities, soil fertility levels, nutrient credits and more. Users enter “what-if” scenarios into the tool to compare various short- and long-term benefits of adding cover crops. “Our hope is that answers to some of the big economic questions will help more farmers give this conservation option a try,” Dozier says. “Cover crops are a good trend, and one that can actually pay off.” The tool displays results both numerically or graphically. It is available to download here: [http://1.usa.gov/225TjyR](http://1.usa.gov/225TjyR).

**Outreach Meetings for FSA & NRCS Programs Scheduled for April 6, 2016**

By Darlene K Costilow

The Ashtabula, Geauga & Lake County Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service are joining together in an effort to inform underserved customers about programs that our offices offer. To ensure maximum participation in USDA programs and services for underserved customers, USDA Outreach works with its partners and customers to eliminate any barriers.

Representatives from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will be presenting an overview of the programs and services each agency provides. We will be holding an informal meeting about our offices and programs at the following locations and times:

- April 6, 2016 at 10:00 am at the OSU Extension Office; 39 Wall Street Jefferson, OH
- April 6, 2016 at 2:00 pm at the OSU Extension Office; 14269 Claridon Troy Rd, Burton, OH

There is no cost to attend the meetings but reservations are required to insure adequate materials are available. Please call 440-437-5888 option 3 by April 1, 2016 to make reservations. We look forward to meeting you!
Cranberry Compound May Help Prevent Urinary Tract Infections
By Rosalie Marion Bliss
Source: http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2016/160308.htm

A new cranberry bioactive component that has the potential to control urinary tract infections (UTIs) has been identified by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientists and collaborators. The bioactive component, referred to as SSGG fraction, is found in cranberry juice and is purified from enzyme-treated cranberry pulp. SSGG was found to inhibit Escherichia coli—the most common bacterial cause of UTIs—from sticking to human cells in laboratory tests.

The work was led by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) plant physiologist Arland Hotchkiss with colleagues at the Eastern Regional Research Center in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, in collaboration with university and private-sector researchers. The work was supported by an agreement with Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc. based in Lakeview, Massachusetts.

UTIs are the second most common type of infection in humans, leading to more than 8 million doctors’ visits annually. UTIs are treated with antibiotics, but natural substances that help prevent UTIs could be useful because antibiotics can lead to bacterial resistance. In cranberries, the researchers studied the structure of plant compounds called “xyloglucan oligosaccharides” and identified the SSGG type that has the potential to help control UTIs. A study reporting the findings was published in the May 2015 issue of Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry.

ARS and Ocean Spray representatives have a recently approved patent describing how to produce cranberry xyloglucan oligosaccharides that have antiadhesive activity. In laboratory experiments using test tubes and cell cultures, the researchers tested cranberry xyloglucan SSGG oligosaccharide’s ability to interfere with the attachment of specific bacterial strains to urinary tract cells. They found that xyloglucan oligosaccharides inhibited the adhesion of E. coli strains to human bladder epithelial cells and human colonic epithelial cells. Studies into possible benefits of cranberry compounds for mitigating UTIs have thus far been conducted using laboratory vessels. The efficacy of cranberry xyloglucan SSGG oligosaccharides can now be tested in human clinical trials.

Read more about this work in the March 2016 issue of AgResearch at: http://agresearchmag.ars.usda.gov/2016/mar/cranberry/

Spring Weather Forecast
By Ben Potter, AgWeb.com
Source: http://www.agweb.com/article/march-into-spring-naa-ben-potter/

March is supposed to come in like a lion, but it will probably make a gentler entrance in 2016—with a few exceptions—if the weather prognosticators are correct.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) March through May 2016 outlook, for example, calls for warmer-than-average weather across the northern U.S., with a cooler-than-average pocket in the Southwest. As for precipitation, the eastern Corn Belt could experience drier conditions during this time, with a wetter West as El Niño hangs on.

Just how long it hangs on is a topic of great interest among weather enthusiasts. El Niño could shift to moderate intensity by early spring and weak intensity by late spring, according to Kyle Tapley, senior agricultural meteorologist for MDA Weather Services. After that, there’s a fast transition to La Niña.
"There is still a large spread in the model solutions for summer and fall," Tapley says. "While the vast majority of models show at least negative/neutral ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation) conditions by mid- to late-summer, several now show full-fledged La Niña conditions by summer."

NOAA says the overall chance of a La Niña event increases to 40% from August through October 2016. This could be significant because La Niña tends to bring “less favorable” growing conditions across North America during summer months. For example, hotter, drier weather.

Mark York with Weather Analytics says they are also predicting a wetter and warmer spring and have their fingers crossed it happens, for the sake of the winter wheat crop. That’s because large sections of the Midwest and Great Plains had zero snow cover for most of the winter, exposing the crop to potentially damaging low temperatures.

“We may expect to see lots of rain in March and April in the Midwest and Southern Plains,” he says. “If it plays out that way, it would spell a pretty good crop for hard red winter wheat.” While a warm spring with decent moisture could cause planting delays, York isn’t too concerned it will. “There will be some pockets of trouble, but it shouldn’t be widespread,” he says.

Before planters roll, don’t count out the possibility of one last late-winter snowstorm, adds Paul Pastelok, long-range meteorologist for AccuWeather. “There could be a last surge of winter before we see the transition into spring,” he says. “For the Northeast [in particular], there’s still an opportunity for some snow in March, although there’s a higher chance we’ll see a cold snap rather than a big snowstorm.” April will bring the greatest opportunity for severe weather in the Midwest, Central and Southern Plains and Mississippi Valley, Pastelok says.

Historical climatologist Evelyn Browning Garriss says a paper published in the journal Nature Geoscience in 2015 suggests positive weather news for farmers and ranchers, particularly in the Great Plains or Midwest. “According to their research, the warm Tropical Pacific waters alter weather patterns as far north as the U.S.,” she explains. “In springtime, El Niños reduce the number of tornadoes and hailstorms in key agricultural parts of the U.S.”

Typically, springtime El Niños bring more total rainfall but fewer severe weather events into Texas and the Great Plains. The eastern Corn Belt and Ohio Valley also see fewer destructive storms but experience drier weather overall on average. Conversely, cold tropical Pacific La Niñas can increase the number of severe weather events, including tornadoes and hailstorms, Browning Garriss says.

“When storms hit, they tend to be unusually strong—remember the floods this past May and snows from December,” she says. “However, if history repeats itself, this spring farmers and ranchers might have to endure some nice weather.”

Currently, NOAA is predicting the Northern Hemisphere will return to ENSO-neutral conditions by late spring or early summer. By the May through July time window, the Climate Prediction Center (CPC) and International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate and Society has forecast probabilities as follows:
- 10% chance for La Niña
- 46% chance for ENSO-neutral
- 44% chance for El Niño

Don’t like current conditions? CPC and IRI say you usually don’t have to wait long for change. Individual El Niño and La Niña events typically last nine to 12 months (although
A Perfect Storm is Brewing in South America

Weather Analytics doesn’t just have an eye on U.S. weather this spring, says Mark York with the company. It’s important to keep close watch on South American weather, particularly Brazil and Argentina. “South America should see some pretty mild weather to finish their season,” York says. Favorable weather, a strong dollar and good shipping conditions would form a “perfect storm” of soybean exports from Brazil. “Brazil can only store about 75% of its soybean harvest, so the other 25% has to go to port,” he says.

El Niño in 2 Minutes
You know El Niño has a significant influence on agriculture, but you might not understand exactly what it is. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has developed a two-minute instructional video on its new website to explain why NOAA scientists, such as Ned Gardiner, refer to the warm water phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) as “the most influential climate pattern used in seasonal forecasting.”

NOAA recently consolidated all of its information about ENSO onto a single website landing page. Learn more about how El Niño and La Niña impact weather worldwide, get daily weather briefings and read the ENSO blog for expert insights at www.climate.gov/enso.

Bids Being Taken for Brillion Grass Seeder by SWCD
The Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District is offering a 1992 Brillion Grass Seeder Model SS-10 for sale by sealed bid. The Brillion Grass Seeder is being offered “AS IS” with no warranty. Sealed bids are due to the Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District, 39 Wall Street, Jefferson, Ohio 44047 by 4:30 p.m. on April 19, 2016. The bids will be opened at the regularly scheduled monthly board of supervisors meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on April 19, 2016. Equipment can be seen at District Office parking lot at 39 Wall St., Jefferson beginning on Friday, April 1st or by visiting the District’s website at “ashtabulaswcd.org”. The Brillion Grass Seeder will be sold to the highest bidder, except that the supervisors may reject all bids and hold another sale. A minimum bid has been set at $3,000. More information can be obtained by contacting the Ashtabula County Soil & Water Conservation District at 40-576-4946 or ashtabulaswcd@gmail.com

Private Pesticide Applicator Test Preparation Class to be Held on April 1, 2016 in Cortland
OSU Extension in Northeast Ohio will provide a training session to help farmers prepare for the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Private Pesticide Applicator’s Exam. Training will focus on CORE (safety) material but additional study materials will be offered for other categories.

This class will be held on Friday, April 1, 2016 at the Trumbull County Agriculture and Family Education Center located at 520 West Main Street in Cortland, OH 44410. The registration fee for this program is $35 per person which includes CORE training materials, handouts, and light refreshments. Make checks payable to The Ohio State University. Mail this registration form and registration fee to Lee Beers ANR Extension Educator, OSU Extension Trumbull County, 520 West Main St., Cortland, OH 44410. To order study materials for additional categories call 330-638-6783. Pre-registration is requested. Call 330-638-6783 or visit trumbull.osu.edu for more information.
Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet to be held on Saturday, March 19, 2016
OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Dairy Service Unit are pleased to announce the 66th Annual Dairy banquet will be held at the Lenox Community Center on Saturday, March 19 and will begin promptly at 8 p.m. The banquet program will consist of the crowning of the 2016 Dairy Princess; the presentation of production and 4-H awards; and the election of two members to the Dairy Service Unit Board. Tickets are $15 per person and can be purchased from Dairy Service Unit Board members, Tom Coltman of Wayne, Joel Baldwin of Sheffield; Jason Brinker of Rock Creek; Matt Springer of Lenox; Lisa Kalas of Jefferson; and from David Marrison at the Ashtabula County Extension office at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson. Pre-sale tickets are required this year. Please purchase your ticket by March 11, 2016. For more information about this program contact the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Show to be held on Saturday, April 16, 2016
The Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association will be sponsoring the 19th Annual Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Jackpot Show on Saturday, April 16 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds in Jefferson, Ohio. This good old fashion jackpot show will start promptly at noon. The show is open to all youth under the age of 21 and will begin promptly at noon. An entry fee of $25 per head if pre-registered by April 7, 2016 and $30 per head thereafter. Cash prizes will be awarded to individual class winners and to the Champion Steer, Reserve Champion Steer, Champion Heifer, and Reserve Champion Heifer. In addition to the open show, a Showmanship class and an Ashtabula County Class will be held. Local residents are encouraged to come out and watch this show. A registration flyer can be found at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events. More information about this program can be obtained by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008 or by emailing David Marrison at marrison.2@osu.edu.

Ashtabula County Master Gardeners’ Spring Gardening Program at Local Libraries in March
Spring is right around the corner and the Ashtabula County Master Gardeners would like to invite you to join them at libraries across Ashtabula County during the week of March 19-29, 2016. Join teams of the Master Gardener Volunteers to learn more about Strawberries in the Home Garden; Pumpkins & Gourds; Native Shrubs for Year-Round Color; and Hot Buttons in the Global Garden. This program is free and will be offered at each library across the county.

On Saturday, March 19, the Master Gardeners will be offering this program at the Andover Public Library and the Rock Creek Public Library from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and at the Ashtabula Public Library from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. On Monday, March 21, the program will be held at the Henderson Memorial Library in Jefferson from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. and on Tuesday, March 22, the program will be offered at the Conneaut Public Library from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Then on Wednesday, March 23, the program will be held at the Kingsville Public Library from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. On Thursday, March 24, the program will be given at the Harbor-Topky Memorial Library from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and on Saturday March 26, the gardening program will be offered at the Grand Valley Library from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Then to complete the series, the program will be presented at the Geneva Public Library on Tuesday, March 29 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

These programs are free however space is limited. Please call your local library to reserve your spot! A program flyer can be accessed at: http://ashtabula.osu.edu/program-areas/master-gardener-volunteers/upcoming-educational-programs. This flyer includes the phone numbers for the libraries. More information can also be received by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at: 440-576-9008 for more details.

Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Applications Being Taken
OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Committee are pleased to announce the scholarship committee will be presenting a minimum of ten scholarships for the 2016-2017 school year to Ashtabula County students enrolled in either an accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute.
Scholarships awarded this year will include: two $1,000 Ashtabula County Holstein Club, two $1,000 Western Reserve Farm Cooperative, $1,000 Allan C Jerome Memorial, $1,000 Lester C. Marrison Memorial, $1,000 Service-Jerome, $1,000 Harold & Dick Springer Memorial, $500 Lautanen Family 4-H, $500 Jim Baird Memorial, and at least one scholarship worth $1,000 from the committee itself.

Both graduate and undergraduate students who are studying agriculture, natural resources, home economics, and environmental sciences are strongly encouraged to apply. The scholarships are for a one year period. Prior recipients of a scholarship may apply. Those receiving scholarships from this fund in any two previous years are not eligible. Application forms with complete instructions for applying are now available and can be received by stopping in at the Extension Office or by calling 440-576-9008. Applications can be accessed at: http://go.osu.edu/agscholarship. The application deadline is May 1 and no late applications will be considered.

Ashtabula County Beef Scholarships Applications Available
OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association are pleased to announce they will be awarding two youth beef scholarships for the 2016-2017 school year. One $1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a deserving 2016 High School Senior who will be attending an accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute in 2016-2017. In addition, one $500 scholarship will be awarded to a current College Student who is currently attending an accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute.

Applicants must be resident of Ashtabula County. The first preference by the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association is the scholarships be awarded to deserving students who have been involved in the beef industry as a youth. Examples of this could include: working on a family beef operation; involved with a beef project through 4-H or FFA; or works on a local beef farm. The second preference for the scholarship recipients would be awarded to students who are currently or will be studying a beef related field in accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute. Previous winners of the $1,000 High School Senior Scholarship are eligible to apply for the $500 College Scholarship. However, the $500 college scholarship can only be received once by a student during their college career.

Applications must be received by the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association by May 1, 2016 for consideration for the scholarship. No late applications will be considered. The application can be obtained at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events Additional information can be obtained by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

Brant’s Apple Orchard to Award 2016 Youth Scholarship
Brant’s Apple Orchard has announced it will be offering a college scholarship to a deserving Ashtabula County Senior Student who will be attending an accredited full four-year college or an accredited two-year technical institute in 2016-2017. The student must be resident of Ashtabula County. Approximately $500 in scholarships will be awarded. The first preference would be given to a student pursuing a career that is agriculturally related. Brant’s Apple Orchard must receive applications by May 1, 2016 for consideration for the scholarship. The application can be obtained at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events Please mail your application packet to: Brant’s Apple Orchard Scholarship Application 411 Woodside Avenue Jefferson, Ohio 44047.

John F. Wilson Memorial Scholarship Fund Applications Being Taken
The John F. Wilson Memorial Scholarship Fund is established to provide financial assistance to students seeking to enter college and pursue a course of study in a natural resource field in the memory of John F. Wilson. John F. Wilson served as the first District Conservationist for the Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District after being established in 1949. John dedicated twenty-eight years of his life to assisting the agricultural and urban communities with their conservation needs until his retirement in 1978. The Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District will annually award $500 scholarships to high school graduates pursuing or college students majoring in a natural
Scholarship Applicants must be a resident of Ashtabula County and have a cumulative high school grade point average of 3.00 or better. College applicants must be maintaining a grade point average. Candidates will be evaluated on academic achievement, involvement in community activities and course of study. More information about this scholarship can be obtained by contacting the Ashtabula County Soil & Water Conservation District at 40-576-4946 or ashtabulaswcd@gmail.com

Upcoming 2016 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

2016 Northeast Ohio Winter Grape School
March 16, 2016 at Grand River Cellars

2016 Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet
Saturday, March 19, 2016 at the Lenox Community Center

2016 Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Show
Saturday, April 16, 2016 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds

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. Please tell your friends and neighbors to sign up for the list. CONTACT: marrison.2@osu.edu

Readers can subscribe electronically to this newsletter by sending an e-mail message to: marrison.2@osu.edu. If you would like to opt-out of receiving this newsletter, please e-mail marrison.2@osu.edu with the words: UNSUBSCRIBE
Farm Program Payments Revisited: Farmers May Choose Between County of Administration or Geographic County Location.

By: Chris Bruynis, OSU Extension Educator, Ross County

Farmers with the administration of their farms consolidated at one FSA office may want to examine their 2014 and 2015 ARC-CO payment calculations. Original 2014 ARC-CO payments were calculated on the average yields for the administrative FSA office county, regardless of where the land was physically located. Recently FSA announced that farmers could elect to have the 2014 and/or the 2015 ARC-CO payments calculated on the county in which the land is physically located. For some farms this would be financially beneficial and needs to be requested by April 15, 2016. FSA has calculated the results for the 2014 payments and for the farms where this election is beneficial, farmers simply need to sign the forms at their local FSA office. This will only affect farmers with land in more than one county.

I have created some visual maps for farmers to reference for the 2014 payments received in October of 2015. These maps give a quick visual for ARC-CO corn, soybean, and wheat payments by county with payments rounded to the nearest dollar. Farmers can quickly look to see if the land in a neighboring county, that is not their administrative county, had a significantly different payment. Based on this information, they can decide if they want to elect to be paid based on the farm land’s county. For 2014 this decision is very easy since payment rates are known (check with your local FSA office to determine exact payment changes). Here is an example.

**Example 1:** Fisher Farms have land in Ross and Pike Counties. Their original 2014 ARC-CO payment which was received in October 2015 was based on Ross County payment rates. They can now elect to have the land in Pike County be based on Pike County payment rates. Examining the maps below, he would give up $2 per acre on the corn base but gain $32 per acre on the soybean base. There was no payment in either county for wheat base acres. Depending on the number of base acres of corn and soybeans, this could be a beneficial decision to make.

The prices listed on the maps for both 2014 and 2015 are estimated for the actual payment rate per acre. However, if farmers want to estimate ARC-CO payments for their farm, they would need to make two adjustments. First the program pays on 85% of the base acres, one would need to multiply the amount by 85% to adjust for this reduction. Secondly there would need to be an adjustment for sequestration created by congress. In 2014 it sequestration equaled a 6.8% reduction and is anticipated to be a 7.3 percent reduction for 2015. Example: Farm payment, based on the maps, would be $1000. Eighty-five percent of this would be $850. Subtracting the sequestration amount of 6.8% would leave an estimated payment of $792. I would exercise caution in using the calculated amount as a guarantee income for 2016, but it would provide a close estimation if all the assumptions hold true in this example.
The decision for the 2015 crop year is a little more challenging since all the data is currently not available. I have estimated the payments for the three main Ohio crops based on National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) yield data from 2015. This will be a close estimation; however, historically FSA yields run a few bushels per acre less. In reality, using a slightly higher yield will overestimate the 2015 crop revenue, and underestimate the potential ARC-CO payments. The other piece of information that is necessary to properly calculate the 2015 ARC-CO payments in the 2015 Market Year Average (MYA) price for each crop. Farm Services Agency releases an estimation of the MYA prices each month and the February 9th release has $3.60 corn, $8.80 soybeans, and $5.00 wheat. At the current estimated corn and soybean MYA, most counties will come close to reaching maximum ARC-CO payments, so I also included (in parentheses) estimated payments for $3.80 MYA corn and $9.20 MYA soybean prices. With the higher MYA prices, actual farm revenue increased, lowering the ARC-CO payments in several counties. ARC-CO estimated payments for counties with only one number listed were unaffected by the change in MYA prices. Here are couple examples using the maps below.

Example 2: Estadt Farms have land in both Ross and Pickaway Counties and they have Ross County FSA office as their administrative county. If they elect to have the ARC-CO payments for land in Pickaway County based on the Pickaway County’s revenue guarantee, crop yields, etc. for 2015, they would gain $12 per corn base acre, $58 per soybean base acre, and $29 per wheat base acre. However, if Pickaway was their administrative county, they would not want to elect to have their Ross County land ARC-CO payments based on Ross County.

Example 3: Londo farms have land in both Marion and Union Counties and have Marion County FSA as their administrative office. They need to determine if electing to have the Union County land ARC-CO payments based on Union County data would be beneficial. Looking at the maps and using the current MYA price estimates, they would lose $5 per corn base acre, lose $20 per soybean base acre, and gain $23 per wheat base acre (assuming all three crops were enrolled in ARC-CO). In this example, there would need to be significant wheat base acres to even consider making the change. If the farm was administered in Union County, having the Marion County land ARC-CO payments based on Marion County data would be quite advantageous.

Farmers with land in more than one county have until April 15th to make the independent decisions for 2014 and 2015’s ARC-CO payments. This does not affect farms enrolled in ARC-Individual or the PLC program. The 2015 estimates are based on current best information provided by Farm Services Agency and the National Agricultural Statistics Service. These numbers can change in the coming months and these are provided as a guide. Please use your own judgement and assumptions when making the determination for the 2015 ARC-CO payment county decision.

For the remaining years of this Farm Program (2016-2018), farmers will need to separate land in different counties into their own farm number if they want to capture the different payment calculations. The deadline to make that change will be later this fall. Additional information regarding that selection will be released later in the summer.
Estimated payments based on $8.80 MYA Prices
Payments in parentheses are based on $9.20 MYA Prices
Estimated payments based on $5.00 MYA Prices