Northeast Ohio Agri-Culture Newsletter

Your Weekly Agriculture Update for
Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties

March 20, 2018

Robin Christensen, Portage County Extension Educator, working hard to get Shiitake mushrooms started.

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Hello, Northeast Ohio Counties!

What a beautiful weekend we had last weekend! Despite a little snow in the forecast the sun should continue this week for at least a few days.

Based on the number of people attending the field pea meeting last week, and the malting barley meeting this Thursday, there is a definite interest in “alternative” crops in our area. We will be working to bring you more information in the coming months on both crops to help you make good management decisions.

David Marrison
Extension Educator
Ag & Natural Resources
Ashtabula County

Lee Beers
Extension Educator
Ag & Natural Resources
Trumbull County
The dairy economy is extremely difficult today and there is no definitive answer as to when it might improve. I have talked and sat around the kitchen table with a number of families who are concerned about their situation and future. Times are not easy and the decisions that need made are difficult and filled with emotion. While it will not solve the problem, understand you are not alone and most of your peers are facing the same difficult decisions.

There are a number of potential options to consider when analyzing farm financial records and looking at ways to trim expenses. There is no 'recipe' for solving each situation because each farm is unique. Below are some things I've talked with farm families about when exploring options.

**Communication** - is always important and becomes more critical when finances are tight. Open communication must occur between and with:
- Business partners & spouses
- Lender
- Veterinarian, nutritionist, suppliers, etc.
- Items such as new equipment purchases vs. repairing existing equipment, knowing your financial situation, developing a plan to stay or get current with your expenses, are examples of items to communicate.

**Present Situation** - Start by knowing where you are today. Regardless of the system you use to track farm income and expenses, analyze the numbers you have. Do you know your cost of production? Has your farm historically been profitable or have you struggled for a long period of time to be profitable? What’s holding you back from achieving consistent profitability? Have you analyzed the profitability of individual enterprises that make up your farm?

**Potential Options** - Every farm is different and each situation is unique when it comes to evaluating options. Factors such as the number of cows, number of family and employees, level of milk production, debt, number and type of crop acres, among others, make it impossible to give a 'recipe' that will be appropriate for each farm. Based on my discussions with families, below are thoughts on possible options.

- Evaluate areas for potential cost savings.
  - Talk to your nutritionist. Ask questions about ration ingredients, their purpose and cost. Can you remove something from a ration without negatively
impacting animal health or milk production? Can you adjust the dry cow diet or management to reduce expenses without a negative result?

- Can changes be made in your cropping program? Are you soil testing? If so, are you following the recommendations? Lime is sometimes the first crop input to be reduced, but I caution you in doing so. A pH imbalance can result in poor nutrient uptake and reduced yields. OSU Extension has conducted a number of on-farm research studies you may find useful when looking to reduce costs. Consult your OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator for more information.

- Talk to your lender
  - Explain your situation, goals, and ask about options. Can you stretch any of your debt over a longer period? What is your plan to pay the debt? How will it cash flow?

- Sell scrap and/or unused equipment
  - This is a one-time cash infusion that will not help over the long-term.

- Sell timber/coal/other minerals
  - Selling timber or other resources provides cash for the immediate term, but does little to help in the long-term. In the case of timber, depending upon a number of factors, it may 20 or more years before another harvest can occur.

- Sell livestock
  - Again, this gives some cash, but you can’t keep selling the cows that are producing milk. However, you should eliminate from the herd those cows that are poor producers, have health issues, are difficult breeders, etc.

- Sell land
  - Is there some acreage that you don’t need, is poor quality, or doesn’t yield well? Depending upon your level of debt, this may be a viable option worth consideration. Can you retain enough acres to continue with a different venture?

- Off farm employment
  - You or your spouse may need to explore potential off farm employment. The extra income can help lessen the burden on the farm and reduce stress.

- Sell the farm
  - It isn’t what you want to do, but may be your only option.

**Consider Implications of Your Decisions** - This list of potential options is not exhaustive, but is meant to serve as a starting point for discussion. Some options may not be viable, while others may be worth giving consideration. Regardless of the decision you make, keep in mind there may be tax or legal implications for which you must prepare. Make certain you contact professionals in these areas who can answer questions and provide direction.
Seek Outside Advice - Don’t be afraid to ask for help. There are plenty of people, including family, clergy, friends, OSU Extension professionals, licensed therapists, and counselors, willing to listen, provide support, and assist you. The decisions to be made are often filled with much emotion. While understandable, allowing emotions to drive your decision making can result in poor outcomes. Seek the advice of an outside party to help you and your family evaluate options and arrive at a decision that best suits everyone.

(Note: This article was originally published in Farm & Dairy on March 16, 2018)

Sponsors for 2018 AG Day Sought
On May 11, 2018 nearly 1,100 members of the class of 2029 will be descending on the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds to participate in Ashtabula County’s “Ag Day.” Coordinated by OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, the primary goal of this event is to educate first graders on where their food comes from and to showcase the different types of agricultural commodities which are being produced in Ashtabula County.

Ashtabula County’s Ag Day program has become a community supported effort as over 300 volunteers and donors help to make this day a reality for the students. The cost of hosting this event is nearly $20,000 (both monetary and in-kind) and without the support of many this program would not be possible. We are asking you to considering becoming a donor for the 2018 Ag Day. We are once again offering 5 levels of sponsorship:

- Platinum Sponsorship - $1,000 and over
- Gold Sponsorship - $500 to $999
- Silver Sponsorship - $250 to $499
- Bronze Sponsorship - $100 to $249
- Friends of Ag Day - $1 to $99

Our target date for sponsorships is April 1, 2018 – especially for our Platinum and Gold Sponsorships. We are asking all Ashtabula County farms, agribusinesses, and supporters of Ashtabula County Agriculture to consider making a donation to help us educate our youth about agriculture. Your gift to this program is 100% tax deductible. A sponsorship letter is included with this newsletter. If you are interested in volunteering at this year’s program or would like to be a sponsor, please contact Abbey Averill at 440-576-9008.
Managing Mud
By: Victor Shelton, NRCS State Agronomist/Grazing Specialist

It wasn’t too long ago that you were hearing that some parts of the state were actually still in drought status. I believe it is safe to say, without even looking it up, that that is no longer a problem. Instead, completely thawed and very soggy ground is prevalent.

It’s been a few years since I’ve seen this wet of an early spring. In fact, maybe about twenty years. We are quite often still blessed with some free “concrete” this time of year. As much as I like the warmer days right now, I probably wouldn’t turn down some frozen ground to reduce mud and the impact of very saturated ground. One guy told me that if it were just a hair warmer, he might go barefoot since he was tired of getting his boots stuck in the mud.

If you are not prepared for such wet weather, then it can be quite frustrating. Mud is certainly worse around feeding, watering, and other concentrated areas. One of the best solutions for these concentrated areas is to install a conservation practice called a Heavy Use Area Protection (HUAP), e.g., feed and watering pads. HUAPs are fairly simple to construct and better yet, very economical. Retired NRCS technician Mary Lee Smith recently noted that HUAP’s were the best thing since sliced bread; just a fantastic practice!

You start by leveling the area to remove excess organic matter and manure, and also top soil if necessary to get a firm foundation to build on. Geo-textile fabric is the first layer, then crushed limestone, which is usually #53’s and applied 6 to 8 inches deep depending on the site and conditions. Follow by topping with a couple inches of lime. The lime makes it easier to scrape and/or clean later and a little lime spread out on the field or pasture certainly won’t hurt anything. The lime actually packs down very well when it’s dry. Tractor tires or hooves can also do a good

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job of packing while still under dry conditions, so it’s best to build during the summer, long before you would need it.

These pads supply a firm well-drained area for feeding hay in rings, silage in bunkers and for areas around watering tanks and existing feed bunks. Similar designs can also be used for concentrated walking areas and lanes. If you happen to be on softer or consistently wet soils, then a layer of #2 lime stone may be needed underneath for a firmer base over the geo-textile fabric. HUAPs are available for cost-share through some NRCS and conservation district programs; contact your local USDA field office for more information.

Due to drier conditions in parts of Indiana last August and September, stockpiled forage, additional hay cuttings, and fall annuals were just not what they should have been. This lack of sufficient growth reduced fall and early winter grazing days and root growth. That growth is important because it not only provides some valuable forage to graze, but good top growth means good root growth. The combination of the two is stabilizing when grazed under wetter conditions. The less growth present above and below the ground, the more potential damage to a field when livestock are present.

Truthfully, once the frost layer breaks through and conditions are wet like they are right now, you are usually better off having animals off the pasture and in a sacrifice area, especially if you are working with soils with fragipans. Soils with fragipans (a thin and very heavy layer of pure clay) tend to hold the water more at the surface level, keeping the top layer very wet and more likely to be damaged by livestock. It is better to sacrifice a small area than a whole field that might require totally replanting afterwards.

I have seen some poorly chosen sites utilized for sacrifice areas that have been left in a horrible disturbed condition. When areas such as creek bottoms, woods and erodible sloping ground are used as a sacrifice area, water quality is almost always adversely affected. Try to choose a stable site that is suitable for these areas and rotate them if possible and provide a grass filter between the site and any water bodies. Sometimes, these sacrifice areas can be paddock(s) that you plan to renovate anyway. Ideally, plant a cover-crop such as oats, sorghum-sudan or millet on the area after excess manure is collected and spread appropriately where needed. These areas can then be grazed later in the year.

In the southern part of Indiana, we are getting some early green growth already. This is certainly a delightful attraction for grazing livestock and also for producers who are already running short on hay. It is ever so tempting to just open the gates and let them have at it. Keep in mind, most pastures are under a little more pressure than usual due to the lack of normal growth last fall. They really need some extra rest prior to turnout this year.
So, here is how to answer the real question of “when do I start grazing?” Preferably, you want to start grazing when the plants are about 6 to 8 inches tall (tall cool-season forages such as fescues and orchardgrass) and the ground is dry enough to support the weight of the livestock without causing damage to the forage base. On some soils, especially ones that tend to be wet, the forages may be closer to 10 inches or more before conditions will allow for grazing with no damage to plant roots and crowns or cause additional compaction. The more residue left from the previous year and consequently the more root base, the earlier you can usually graze without damage, which is basically the same concept for grazing stockpiled forages on non-frozen ground all winter.

In a well-managed, rotated grazing system you can start grazing fairly early as long as you use some control…animal control. Don’t leave it up to the cow, you have to manage her! Starting early and making sure to maintain stop grazing heights for the forages is really the critical issue, but it also helps to keep the forages from getting too far ahead of you before you graze them. Fields with more rest and more residue would be ready earlier and tighter grazed fields will be ready later.

If you are dealing with wet conditions and less residue then you would be better off waiting until forages are at least 6 to 8 inches to provide better, thicker growth to hold up the weight of the grazing animals. I would still promote grazing for short periods, keeping the animals moving and never grazing closer than 3-4 inches, whenever possible.

Recently, in a small group the question was asked why ignorance and apathy was such a problem today. One young guy quickly remarked, “I don’t know, and I don’t care.” Don’t let that be you. When we harvest forages by grazing livestock, we are harvesting energy from the sun and converting it to useful products through livestock. Remember, we must manage that solar panel. Keep on grazing!

**Last Chance Fertilizer and Pesticide Recertification**

Do you still need to obtain recertification for your Pesticide Applicators License or Fertilizer Applicator Certification? OSU Extension is offering a last chance recertification session on March 29th at the Trumbull County Ag Center in Cortland, OH. Fertilizer Applicator recertification will be 5-6p.m. and will cost $10, followed by Pesticide Applicator Training from 6-9p.m. and will cost $45. Come for one or both to stay certified for another three years.
You can register online with a credit card at this link, [http://www.cvent.com/d/vgq7jg](http://www.cvent.com/d/vgq7jg), or if you prefer to pay at the door please call 330-638-6783 to register over the phone. We are only able to accept cash or check for payment at the door. Materials may be limited so please register in advance to reserve your spot.

**Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Applications Being Taken**

OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Committee are pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for a minimum of fourteen scholarships for the 2018-2019 school year to Ashtabula County students enrolled in either an accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute.

The Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Fund was founded on April 29, 1952 by a group of prominent countians to promote interest in the study of agriculture, family and consumer science, environmental sciences or natural resources in an accredited full four-year college or an accredited two-year technical institute. This fund awards scholarships to students (both graduate and undergraduate students) attending an accredited four-year college or two year technical school. Each year the general scholarship fund awards two to three $1,000 scholarships. The committee also works with local organizations and farm families to offer additional scholarships.

Both graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged to apply for the scholarships which they meet the eligibility requirements. The scholarships are for a one year period. A student may apply and be awarded a scholarship in three years from the scholarship fund.

Application forms with complete instructions for applying are now available and can be received by stopping in at the Ashtabula County Extension Office or by calling 440-576-9008. Applications can be accessed at: [http://go.osu.edu/agscholarship](http://go.osu.edu/agscholarship). The application deadline is May 1 and no late applications will be considered. More information can also be obtained by emailing [ashtabulacountyagscholarship@gmail.com](mailto:ashtabulacountyagscholarship@gmail.com)

**Farm Bureau CAUV Meetings**

Two CAUV informational meetings will be held by the Ashtabula and Trumbull County Farm Bureaus. Ashtabula County Farm Bureau will host on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at the Expo building at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds. The meeting will begin at 7 pm with registration
starting at 6:30 PM. Guest speakers will be Leah Curtis, Policy Counsel with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and Ashtabula County Auditor, Roger Corlett.

Trumbull County Farm Bureau will hold a CAUV meeting on Wednesday, March 21, 2018, in the cafeteria at the Trumbull County Career and Technical Center (TCTC), beginning at 7 PM with registration starting at 6:30. Guest speakers will be Leah Curtis, Policy Counsel with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and Trumbull County Auditor, Adrian Biviano.

This is a “free” event for Farm Bureau members; *Our Ohio* Supporters will be $10; Non-members will be $25. The $25 fee signs you up as an *Our Ohio* Supporter. Supporters receive a subscription to *Our Ohio* magazine and special invitations to food, farm and gardening events, opportunities to network, plus access to a variety of educational workshops at a reduced or free rate depending on the event.

**Earn a chance to win!**
You’ll be entered into a drawing for a $100 gift card and a free 1-year membership when:
- You bring a non-member friend and they join Farm Bureau
- You are NOT a member and you join Farm Bureau
- You upgrade from an *Our Ohio* Supporter to a full Farm Bureau membership
- You renew your membership early.

**Seating is limited!!** Register by March 13th, with the Farm Bureau office at 440.426.2195 or email: nefarmbu@fairpoint.net.

**Workers’ Compensation Group Safety Meeting**
The Northeast Counties Farm Bureau will be hosting a Workers’ Compensation Safety Meeting on March 27 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Saint Mary’s Church located at 103 N Maple Street in Orwell, Ohio from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

This meeting is being held for the OFBF Workers’ Compensation Group Rating Program members and others who would be interested in the safety presentation. Tentative Topics are: Tractor & Equipment Safety; Fire Prevention and Stress Management. A very important aspect of reducing Workers’ Compensation premiums is to reduce the number of claims/accidents within the group. This can be accomplished by each member doing his or her own part to ensure a safe work environment.

There is no registration fee for Farm Bureau members with all others at $10 per person. Reservations are required by March 23 by calling 440-426-2195.
Origin Malts Malting Barley Grower Meeting in Trumbull County on March 22, 2018

Join Origin Malts and Malting Seed Producers for an informational meeting on March 22nd at the Trumbull County Ag Center, 520 West Main St, Cortland, OH 44410 from 12-4p.m. During this meeting, you will learn all about how to grow malting barley for an industrial sized malting facility. All growers interested in contracting acres for the 2018 fall planting season are encouraged to attend.

Topics to be covered:
- About Origin Malts
- Malting Barley Agronomy & Best Practices
- Specialty Contract Expectations
- Economics of Growing Malting Barley

Lunch will be provided. Important documents and materials will also be provided to attendees by email before the event. Please RSVP your attendance, providing your email address through the free ticket process on Eventbrite.

You can register for this meeting at this link: [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/origin-malts-malting-barley-grower-meeting-trumbull-county-tickets-43613978584?aff=affiliate1](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/origin-malts-malting-barley-grower-meeting-trumbull-county-tickets-43613978584?aff=affiliate1)

OSU Extension to Host 5th Annual East Ohio Women in Agriculture Conference

Ohio State University (OSU) Extension will host the 5th Annual East Ohio Women in Agriculture Conference. The conference is planned for Friday, April 6 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. at the RG Drage Career Technical Center, 2800 Richville Drive SE in Massillon. All women and young women (high school age) who are interested, involved in, or want to become involved with food, agricultural, or natural resources production or small business are encouraged to attend. Interested individuals can register for the conference on-line at [go.osu.edu/eowia2018](http://go.osu.edu/eowia2018). Cost of the conference is $55 for adult participants and $30 for students. Conference fee includes conference participation, continental breakfast, lunch and conference handouts. A special discount is available for those women and students who also plan to attend the Northeast Ohio Small Farm Conference on Saturday, April 7. Deadline for registration is Friday, March 23. For more information contact the OSU Extension Holmes County Office at 330-674-3015.
2018 NE Ohio Living Your Small Farm Dream Conference

The 2018 NE Ohio Living Your Small Farm Dream conference will be held on Saturday, April 7 at the RG Drage Career Center, located at 2800 Richville Drive SW in Massillon Ohio. The conference provides education and topics of interest for small farm and rural landowners. Participants will walk away from the conference with knowledge and ideas of how to improve existing enterprises or marketing opportunities. For those who have some acreage but don't yet know what to do with it, the conference is an opportunity to consider possibilities, gather information and make contacts.

Conference registration is $60/person or, if attending the Women in Agriculture Conference at the same location on April 6, plus the Small Farm Conference on April 7; $100 for a combined registration. Student discounts are $30 for attending the small farm conference alone or $50 if attending both the Women in Agriculture and the Small Farm conference. Pre-registration for both the Small Farm conference and the Women in Agriculture conference is due March 23. On-line registration is available at go.osu.edu/NESSmallFarmReg. A Living the Small Farm Dream conference brochure that lists session topics and presentation times along with a mail-in registration form, and a document with descriptions of all the presentation topics is available at go.osu.edu/NEOHSmallFarms.

68th Annual Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet to be held on Saturday, March 24

OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Dairy Service Unit are pleased to announce the 68th Annual Dairy banquet will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2018 at the Jefferson Community Center located at 111 East Jefferson, Street in Jefferson, Ohio beginning promptly at 7 p.m.

The banquet program will consist of the crowning of the 2018 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; Lindsey Gray of New Lyme, 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 by March 18, 2018. For more information about this program contact the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

2018-2019 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 2018-2019 school year. One $1,000 scholarship will be
awarded to a deserving 2018 High School Senior who will be attending an accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute in 2018-2019. 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. Applications must be received by the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association by Monday, April 16, 2018 by 4:30 p.m. 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.

**Getting Started in Community Gardening Workshop Slated for March 24, 2018**

The Master Gardeners will be hosting a “Getting Started in Community Gardening” workshop on Saturday, March 24, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Ashtabula County Extension office. Join the Ashtabula County Master Gardeners to learn how to get started in community gardening. This two hour introductory class is designed to give you the information you will need to design, plan and organize a sustainable community garden.

During this workshop, the Master Gardeners will discuss what community gardening is, how to develop a leadership team, how to define a vision for the garden and how to find a suitable garden location. They will also discuss how to develop the procedural practices for the shared garden space. Pre-registration is required by March 19, 2018. Registration fee is $10.00/per person. Registration includes refreshments and program handouts. If you have any questions please call 440-576-9008.

**Hydrangea School to be Held on April 26, 2018**

The Ashtabula County Extension office is pleased to be offering a Hydrangea School on Thursday, April 26, 2018 at the Ashtabula County Extension Office located at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson, Ohio from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Join OSU Extension Educator Eric Barrett to discover the world of hydrangeas. Learn about types, care, pruning and bloom times. You’ll receive a quick reference chart to take to the garden center and a hydrangea plant to take home. The registration fee for this workshop is $30 per person. Please make checks payable to OSU Extension. Registration includes handouts, light refreshments and a hydrangea plant to take home for your landscape. Please mail completed registration form to OSU Extension, 39 Wall Street, Jefferson, Ohio 44047. Due to space limitations, this program will be limited to the first 50 registrants. First come, first served basis. For questions, please call 440-576-9008. A registration flyer can also be obtained at: flyer can be found at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events.
David’s Weekly News Column
For Publication in the Jefferson Gazette on March 21 & Ashtabula County Star Beacon on March 25

Hello Ashtabula County!  March has been a month packed full of educational programs.  Last week, we held a fertilizer certification session for local crop farmers and then had a sold out crowd for our hands-on shiitake mushroom program.  Over fifty farmers also attended a program sponsored by Colebrook Elevator to learn about growing field pea. Field pea is our newest crop in Ashtabula County.  After being grown here, the field pea is shipped to the Ainsworth Pet Food plant in Meadville, PA and used for specialty dog food blends.  The rest of March and first part of April will continue to be busy with Extension programs.  Today, I would like to share details on three upcoming programs.

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The OSU Extension offices in Northeast Ohio are collaborating to host the 5th Annual East Ohio Women in Agriculture Conference on Friday, April 6, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at the RG Drage Career Technical Center located at 2800 Richville Drive SE in Massillon, Ohio.  This conference will be well worth the trip for any female who is interested in or involved in food, agricultural, or natural resources production.  Participants will be able to choose from 5 break-out sessions and also hear a keynote address by Rose Hartschuh, a farm wife, mother, “agvocate” and recent winner of the American Farm Bureau Excellence in Agriculture award.

The fee for the conference is $55 for adult participants and $30 for students.  The fee includes conference participation, continental breakfast, lunch and conference handouts.  A special discount is available for those women and students who also plan to attend the Northeast Ohio Small Farm Conference on Saturday, April 7. The registration deadline is Friday, March 23.

Interested individuals can register for the conference on-line at go.osu.edu/eowia2018 and complete session details can be found on our website at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events  For more information contact the OSU Extension Holmes County Office at 330-674-3015.

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The 2018 Northeast Ohio Living Your Small Farm Dream Conference will be also be held at the RG Drage Career Center on Saturday, April 7, 2018.  This conference provides education and topics of interest for small farm and rural landowners.  Participants will walk away from the conference with knowledge and ideas of how to improve existing enterprises or marketing opportunities.  For those who have some acreage but do not yet know what to do with it, the conference is an opportunity to consider possibilities, gather information and make contacts.

The conference registration is $60/person.  A special two for one registration of $100 is being offered for any individual who attends both the East Ohio Women in Ag Conference and the Northeast Ohio Living Your Small Farm Dream conference.  A student discount of $30 is also being offered for the small farm conference alone or $50 if attending both programs.  Pre-
registration for both the Small Farm conference and the Women in Agriculture conference is due March 23. On-line registration is available at go.osu.edu/NESmallFarmReg. A Living the Small Farm Dream conference brochure that lists session topics and presentation times along with a mail-in registration form, and a document with descriptions of all the presentation topics is available at go.osu.edu/NEOHSmallFarms.

Here locally, the Ashtabula County Extension office is pleased to be offering a Hydrangea School on Thursday, April 26, 2018 at the Ashtabula County Extension Office located at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson, Ohio from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Join OSU Extension Educator Eric Barrett to discover the world of hydrangeas. Learn about types, care, pruning and bloom times. You will receive a quick reference chart to take to the garden center and a hydrangea plant to take home. The registration fee for this workshop is $30 per person. Please make checks payable to OSU Extension. Registration includes handouts, light refreshments and a hydrangea plant to take home for your landscape. Due to space limitations, this program will be limited to the first 50 registrants. First come, first served basis. For questions, please call 440-576-9008. A registration flyer can also be obtained at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events.

To close, I would like to share a quote from Rabindranath Tagore who stated “Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark.” Have a good and safe day.

Lee’s Monthly News Column
Hello Trumbull County! Lately, you would be hard pressed to find a farmer who would have many positive comments about the economics of farming. Although grain prices have been low for several years, there is some positivity on the horizon for an increase in corn prices. I saw prices above $4/bushel this past week. Unfortunately, this optimism doesn’t extend to our local and regional dairy farms.

Last week 100 dairy farms in 8 states that were supplying Dean Foods with Class I fluid milk were notified that their milk contracts would end on May 31st. For some multi-generational family farms this latest hit may be too much to bear. There will be some very tough family conversations taking place around the dinner table between now and May 31st, and for some, those conversations may turn to selling the cows or the farm. All farmers know that prices will fluctuate, but milk prices have been stubbornly low for several years, eating into any reserves or equity farmers may have had. Couple that with high herd numbers in the US, global markets, declining demand for milk, and new milk processing facilities coming online, we now have a perfect storm where something has to give.

Dean Foods was supplying many Walmart stores with privately labeled milk, but Walmart recently built its own processing plant in Fort Wayne, IN, which resulted in Dean Foods losing a
market for their milk. This news brought out calls to boycott dairy products from that retailer, but as several prominent dairy economists put it, you're just hurting another family farm on the other side of the state. The best thing you can do is buy more dairy products and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

Farmers sell their milk by the hundred weight (or 100 pounds of milk) not gallons as many would assume. On average it costs the farmer about $18-$19 to produce 100 pounds of milk. You can understand the stress that many farmers felt when they opened their milk check to see that they were paid as low as $13.50 for that 100 pounds. Every time they turn on the milking machines they are losing money. This stress is not lost on those companies purchasing milk - some have started including letters in their milk check payments offering assistance programs to help families work through stressors they face.

As I am writing this article, I just discovered that the dairy farm I worked on while growing up just received their letter from Dean Foods. This is a sad day, and I hope all the affected dairies are able to find a new home for their milk. If you, or someone you know is facing stressful situations on the farm, let us know so that we can get you appropriate resources.

We have another excellent Trumbull Crop Lunch coming up on Tuesday, March 20 at the Trumbull County Agriculture and Family Education Center where you can learn about harmful algal blooms (HAB) and the propositions to prevent the blooms from occurring. Justin Chaffin, PhD, Research Coordinator, Senior Researcher with The Ohio State University’s Franz Theodore Stone Laboratory Ohio Sea Grant will present information on the blooms in the lake in regards to biomass and toxicity. Eric Zamary, Trumbull SWCD Water Quality Specialist, will provide a brief update regarding the chemical water quality monitoring program at the District. Cost for this program is $5 per person, and it includes lunch sponsored by the Trumbull County Holstein Club.

On-site payment is available, but please call the Trumbull SWCD office to let us know you will be attending so we can order enough food. Call the office at 330-637-2056, opt. 3 or email Amy Reeher at reehlera@embarqmail.com to register, or if you have questions. Trumbull Crop Lunch is a partnership between The Ohio State University Extension, Trumbull SWCD, and Trumbull County USDA NRCS.

For more information about farming, gardening, the Master Gardener program, or any other program, call the OSU Trumbull County Extension Office at 330-638-6783 or visit trumbull.osu.edu. Don’t forget to check out and “Like” OSU Extension Trumbull County’s Facebook page for current programs and up to date information.
Upcoming Extension Program Dates

The following programs have been scheduled for Northeast Ohio farmers. 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)

2018 Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet
Saturday, March 24, 2018

Last Chance Fertilizer and Pesticide Recertification
Thursday, March 29, 2018

21st Annual Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Show
Saturday, April 21, 2018

Hydrangea Workshop
Thursday, April 26, 2018

Women in Agriculture Programs
April 28, 2018
David Marrison
Ashtabula County Extension Office
39 Wall Street
Jefferson, OH 44047
440-576-9008
marrison.2@osu.edu
ashtabula.osu.edu

Lee Beers
Trumbull County Extension Office
520 West Main Street
Cortland, OH 44410
330-638-6783
beers.66@osu.edu
trumbull.osu.edu
This program is sponsored by Sage’s Apples and Ohio State University Extension Geauga County. Erik Draper, Horticulture Extension Educator and the “Ole Sage Crew” will be “cutting loose” on pruning techniques.

This will be a hands-on, get yourself dirty, workshop! We will prune peach and apple trees, and small fruits like blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and grapes. Bring your own pruners, loppers or saws and dress for the weather. Participation is expected and is a big part of the learn-as-you-lop-it fun!

To register, or if you have any questions, please call the Extension office at 440-834-4656. Mail your payment to OSU Extension, P.O. Box 387, Burton, OH 44021.

Registration fee is $20 per person/couple Includes refreshments, handouts and a half peck of apples

SATURDAY
March 31, 2018
9:00AM -12:00PM
(Registration 8:30am)
_________________________

Location:
Sage’s Apples
11355 Chardon Road
Chardon, OH 44024

Directions at: sagesapples.com

Registration Form - March In and Prune Out 2018

Name________________________________________________________

Address________________________________________________________________________________

City_______________________________State_____________Zip_____________Phone_______________

Number Attending x $20 per person/couple = $__________________

geauga.osu.edu

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity
To: Supporters of Ashtabula County Agriculture  
From: David L. Marrison  
Re: Sponsorship of 2018 Ag Day

On May 11, 2018 nearly 1,100 members of the class of 2029 will be descending on the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds to participate in Ashtabula County’s “Ag Day.” Coordinated by OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, the primary goal of this event is to educate first graders on where their food comes from and to showcase the different types of agricultural commodities which are being produced in Ashtabula County.

During this interactive day, students will be able to get up close and personal with farm animals, crops, fruits, and vegetables at interactive stations relating to our county’s agriculture.

The students:
- Will learn about bees, dairy cows, sheep, horses, beef cows, goats, pigs, alpacas, chickens, ducks, and turkeys.
- Make their own home-made butter and tried their hand at milking a cow.
- Learn how seeds are planted to give us an array of tasty fruit and vegetables and how they are processed into foods that we enjoy.
- Learn what type of machinery is used in agriculture.
- Learn the importance of healthy nutrition and exercise.

Ashtabula County’s Ag Day program has become a community supported effort as over 300 volunteers and donors help to make this day a reality for the students. The cost of hosting this event is nearly $20,000 (both monetary and in-kind) and without the support of many this program would not be possible. **We are asking you to considering becoming a donor for the 2018 Ag Day.** We are once again offering 5 levels of sponsorship:

- **Platinum Sponsorship** - $1,000 and over
- **Gold Sponsorship** - $500 to $999
- **Silver Sponsorship** - $250 to $499
- **Bronze Sponsorship** - $100 to $249
- **Friends of Ag Day** - $1 to $99

Our target date for sponsorships is April 1, 2018 – especially for our Platinum and Gold Sponsorships. We are asking all Ashtabula County farms, agribusinesses, and supporters of Ashtabula County Agriculture to consider making a donation to help us educate our youth about agriculture. Your gift to this program is 100% tax deductible. Donors are recognized in a variety of manners (see back for more details). If you are interested in helping with this year’s program or would like to be a sponsor, please contact Abbey Averill at 440-576-9008.

Yes, I would like to be a sponsor of the 2018 Ag Day!

Sponsor Name(s)_______________________________________________________________

Address_________________________________________________________________________

Phone____________________________ Email_____________________________________

$_______Platinum $_______Gold $_______Silver $_______Bronze $_______Friends of Ag Day

______In-Kind, I can offer the following in-kind support____________________________________

Make checks payable to: OSU Extension  
Return to: OSU Extension, 39 Wall Street, Jefferson, OH 44047  
For More Information: 440-576-9008
There are many ways to become a sponsor for this event. Your support of the Ashtabula County Ag Day can be provided through a monetary donation or through an in-kind donation. Listed below is how your company’s donation will be recognized by the committee and some ideas for donation opportunities.

**Platinum Sponsorship - $1,000 and over**
- Company/Individual name on back of shirt which all volunteers wear.
- Sign at the 12 interactive stations.
- Listed in the donor brochure sent home to every student’s home.
- On sponsorship list for media publication.
- Recognition at Ag Day for being a sponsor.
- **Ideas for in-kind donation:** Sponsor three or more classrooms from your local school or help sponsor the bus transportation ($3,500 total for busing) or sponsor the “Adventures in Agriculture with Chris Clover” coloring book ($1,500). Donate an agricultural based-giveaway valued over $1,000. For example, an Ag Day lunch box for every student.

**Gold Sponsorship - $500 to $999**
- Company/Individual name on back of shirt which all volunteers wear.
- Sign at all 12 interactive stations.
- Listed in the donor brochure sent home to every student’s home.
- On sponsorship list for media publication.
- Recognition at Ag Day for being a sponsor.
- **Ideas for in-kind donation:** Sponsor two classrooms from your local school or sponsor your local school’s busing. Donate an agricultural based-giveaway valued over $500, provide milk and ice cream for each student, sponsor the dwarf cherry tomato plants to be taken home by every student or help provide lunch for the over 300 volunteers. Donate reusable Ag Day tote bag for each classroom.

**Silver Sponsorship - $250 to $499**
- Listed in the donor brochure sent home to every student’s home.
- On sponsorship list for media publication.
- Recognition at Ag Day for being a sponsor.
- **Ideas for in-kind donation:** Sponsor a classroom from your local school. Donate an agricultural based-giveaway valued over $250, sponsor the supplies needed for one of the stations (example: whipping cream to make the homemade butter), or sponsor the Callie the Cow milking station.

**Bronze Sponsorship - $100 to $249**
- Listed in the donor brochure sent home to every student’s home.
- On sponsorship list for media publication.
- Recognition at Ag Day for being a sponsor.
- **Ideas for in-kind donation:** Donate an agricultural based-giveaway valued over $100. We can use money to purchase program supplies (example: potatoes, carrots, flower pots, soil) for the 12 interactive stations.

**Friends of Ag Day - $1 to $99**
- Listed in the donor brochure sent home to every student’s home.
- On sponsorship list for media publication.
- Recognition at Ag Day for being a sponsor.
- **Ideas for in-kind donation:** Sponsor a child to attend- $25. Donate an agricultural based-giveaway valued up to $99. We can use money to purchased program supplies (example: hand sanitizers for the 12 interactive stations).

**Volunteerism:** We need over 300 volunteers to help with this program. Your company can provide volunteers to be presenters at one of the 12 interactive stations, be a group leader to lead a classroom from station to station, or help with safety coordination or in logistics. Contact Abbey Averill at OSU Extension at 440-576-9008 for more details on volunteer opportunities.
Does your Private Pesticide Applicators license or Fertilizer Applicator certificate expire on March 31, 2018? If so, this will be your last opportunity to re-certify this year before it expires. Once expired you will need to contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture to retake the exams to obtain your license. Don’t let that happen! We will be offering Fertilizer Applicator recertification from 5-6p.m. followed by Pesticide Applicator recertification from 6-9p.m. Stay for one, or both!

To register please visit http://www.cvent.com/d/vgq7jg to pay via check or credit card. If you do not have internet access you can also register by completing the form on the back of this flyer and mailing with payment to OSU Extension Trumbull County, 520 West Main Street, Cortland, OH 44410. Please make checks payable to OSU Extension. You can also call our office at 330-638-6783 to register if you would like to pay at the door.

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Last Chance Pesticide & Fertilizer Recertification

Thursday,
March 29, 2018
5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Trumbull County Ag Center
520 West Main Street
Cortland, OH 44410
Fertilizer Recertification - 5-6p.m. - $10
Pesticide Recertification - 6-9p.m. -$45
Call 330-638-6783 for more information
Last Chance Recertification
March 29, 2018
Trumbull County Extension

Name ___________________________________________________

Address ___________________________________________________

City __________________ State ______   Zip_________________

Phone _______________________ Email ______________________

Number of People Attending:

Private Applicator Recertification _____ X $45 per person = $_______
Fertilizer Applicator Recertification _____ X $10 per person = $_______
Total = $_______

Please make checks payable to: OSU Extension

Mail registration to: OSU Extension Trumbull County, 520 West Main Street, Cortland, OH 44410

Contact Lee Beers at 330-638-6783 or beers.66@osu.edu for more information.