Hello, Northeast Ohio Counties!

Today is National Ag Day! Thank you to each of you for producing and feeding.

We had a great turn out for last week’s Agronomy School in spite of the wicked Lake Effect snow storm. Thank you to all those that attended, our speakers, and of course our sponsors! We will be back again next year with an updated program to keep your farms profitable and ahead of any pests that are on the rise.

David Marrison
Extension Educator
Ag & Natural Resources
Ashtabula County

Lee Beers
Extension Educator
Ag & Natural Resources
Trumbull County
67th Annual Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet a Success

The 67th Annual Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet was held on Saturday, March 18 at the Augustus Center at Camp Beaumont in Rock Creek. The Camp Beaumont staff served an outstanding meal to 80 dairy farmers, family and guests. During the banquet, dairy farm families were recognized for their achievements during the past year. These awards included:

Ohio Top Herds

Congratulations to Alfa-Creek Brown Swiss Farm operated by the Robin & Debbie Boggs family of Andover Township for being the Top Brown Swiss herd in the state of Ohio. Additionally, Alfa-Creek Farms also owned by the Boggs family placed as the 4th overall Holstein Herd in Ohio. Additionally, Bossy’s Way Farm owned by the Cindy Zaebst family placed 15th for all Holstein Herds in the state.

Top Herd Awards for Ashtabula County

The top Holstein Herd Award went to Alfa Creek Farms of Andover Township, the top Jersey Herd went to Ringbyre Jersey Farm of Monroe Township, and the top Brown Swiss Herd went to Alfa-Creek Brown Swiss of Andover Township. The top herd in Ashtabula County for 2016 was Alfa-Creek Farms whose herd produced 29,131# Milk, 1,251# Fat, 892# Protein and 32,548# ECM. The Boggs family was presented with a nice vest for being the top herd in the county.

Four herds (Wilson Dairy Farm, Polchin Holsteins, Pine Grove Jersey Farm & Ringbyre Jersey Farm) had over 500 pounds positive gain to their rolling herd average during 2016. Congratulations to Wilson Dairy Farm of Jefferson Township for being the winner of the most improved herd rotating trophy with a 1,077# energy corrected milk gain.

For the 12th year, the low somatic cell award was presented and won by the same farm. This award is given to the herd on test that has the lowest rolling herd somatic cell count. Congratulations to the Wilson Dairy Farm of Jefferson Township for winning this award with a herd SCC average of 92,000 for 2016.

Top Cows:

Five farms were recognized for having top cows in Ashtabula County by breed and age. Alfa Creek Brown Swiss received all 4 Brown Swiss awards and Alfa-Creek Farms won 4 Crossbred Awards, 3 Holstein Awards and 2 Red & White Holstein Awards. Ringbyre Jersey swept all 4 Jersey Awards; Bossy’s Way Farm won 1 Holstein Award; and Jason Brinker Dairy won one Red & White Holstein Award. Congratulations to Alfa-Creek Farms (Aged Holstein Cow) for having the top producing cow in 2016 (47,888 pounds).

Ashtabula County Dairy Princess

A highlight of the banquet was the crowning of the 2017 Ashtabula County Dairy Princess. Congratulations to Teresa Polchin, daughter of Shannon Kidwell of Williamsfield, Ohio and Tony Polchin of Cherry Valley, Ohio, for being selected as the 2017 Ashtabula County Dairy Princess. Raeann Eldred, daughter of Rosmarie and Myron Eldred of Kingsville, Ohio, was chosen as the runner-up. Both girls had top-notch interviews and speeches to the crowd. Congratulations to both young ladies for their exceptional representation in this competition. A special thank you is extended to Katie Stokes of New Lyme, Ohio who served
as the 2016 Ashtabula County Dairy Princess.

**Director Elections**

Congratulations are also extended to Joel Baldwin, Lisa Kalas and Jason Brinker for being re-elected to two-year terms on the Ashtabula County Dairy Service Unit Board of Directors.

**Donors:**

We are extremely grateful to the following businesses who supported this year’s banquet. These supporters included: Ashtabula County Dairy Service Unit; Andover Auto Parts; Dave Ballentine’s Pest Control; Bortnick Tractor; Bossy’s Way Farm; Centerra Co-op; Conneautville’s Farm Exchange; COBA Select Sires; Cold Springs Milk Cartage; Farm Credit Services; Krystowski Tractor Sales; David Marrison; Orchard Creek Soaps; Robinson Equipment Company; Pine Grove Jersey Farm; Piper Processing; Progressive Dairy; Ringbyre Jersey Farm; Katie Stokes; Bob Sumeral Tire; and Rowdy Cow Creamery.

**Northeast Ohio Agronomy School a Success**

81 producers braved last week’s snow storm to attend the 2017 Northeast Ohio Agronomy School held at the Williamsfield Community Center in Williamsfield, Ohio. An additional 20 producers were pre-registered but could not make it through the blowing snow.

During the event 7 different speakers discussed the major issues impacting corn and soybean production in northeast Ohio. During the morning session, participants learned how to comply with the revised Worker Protection Standards; how to manage herbicide-resistant weeds; and how to develop a Success Score Card for your farm business. Then in the afternoon, producers learned more about white mold in soybeans, the economic payback of seed treatments, small grain diseases, corn ear diseases, Cry1F failures in corn, and how producers can reduce nitrogen costs by side dressing with manure.

As always, a great lunch was served by Lahti Catering. We thank W.I. Miller & Sons of Farmdale, Ohio for sponsoring this lunch. We would also like to thank Centerra Co-op, King Crop Insurance, Justin McCullough from Pioneer Seeds and the Ohio Soybean Council for being program sponsors. For producers who missed due to the weather, we have kept a program notebook for you to pick up at the Ashtabula County Extension office.

**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 fourteen scholarships for the 2017-2018 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:

- Up to $5,000 will be awarded from the Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Fund to Ashtabula County students enrolled in agriculture, natural resources, family & consumer sciences, or environmental sciences.
- Two $1,000 Ashtabula County Holstein Club Scholarships shall be awarded to deserving Ashtabula County students from a commercial dairy farm family enrolled in two year technical institute or full four year college. Or this scholarship may be awarded to a student studying...
animal science.

- The $1,000 Allan C. Jerome Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to an Ashtabula County student enrolled in agriculture, natural resources, family & consumer sciences, or environmental sciences. It is the wish of the donors that first preference be given to graduates of the Pymatuning Valley School District.

- The $1,000 Kellogg Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to a student who has at least completed their freshmen year of a two year technical or four year undergraduate college program in the study of production agriculture, dairy science, or farm management. This scholarship is given in the memory of W.H., David W., and Pauline Kellogg.

- The $1,000 Lester C. Marrison Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to a deserving Ashtabula County student enrolled in agriculture, natural resources, or family & consumer sciences. Secondary preference will be given to a student pursuing a degree in education.

- At least one $1,000 Service-Jerome Scholarship shall be awarded to a student studying agriculture, natural resources, family & consumer sciences, or environmental sciences at The Ohio State University or the Agricultural Technical Institute. It is the wish of the donors that applicants from the Pymatuning Valley School system be given 1st choice; Grand Valley Local Schools, 2nd choice; Jefferson Area Schools, 3rd choice; and all other districts, 4th choice.

- The $1,000 Harold and Dick Springer Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to a deserving Ashtabula County student enrolled in agriculture, natural resources, family & consumer sciences, or environmental sciences. Secondary preference will be given to a student pursuing a degree in education.

- Two $1,000 Centerra Co-op Scholarships shall be awarded to an Ashtabula County student enrolled in either a four year college or an accredited two year technical institute. The family must derive a portion of their income from farming.

- The $1,000 Christopher L. Zaebst Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to an Ashtabula County Student enrolled in an Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree OR accredited technical school studying an area of their choice. Preference is to a family who derives a portion of their income from dairy, or another source of production ag (crops or livestock). A student who successfully completed a 4-H or FFA livestock project for 3 or more consecutive years is also eligible. If the student maintains a 3.0 grade average (by proof of transcript) during the award year, an additional $500.00 scholarship will be awarded to the student.

- The $1,000 Prochko Family Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to an Ashtabula County student enrolled in agriculture, veterinarian sciences, or environmental sciences. It is the wish of the donors that first preference be given to graduates of the Jefferson Area School District or for a student whose family derives their income from a dairy farm.

- The $500 Lautanen Family 4-H Scholarship shall be awarded to a student who is or was an Ashtabula County 4-H club member for a minimum of five years. The student must demonstrate outstanding achievement in 4-H project work, outstanding leadership qualities, above average scholastic record, and a record of community service.

- The $500 Jim Baird Memorial Scholarship shall be awarded to deserving Ashtabula County student from a commercial dairy farm family enrolled in two year technical institute or full four year college. Or this scholarship may be awarded to a student studying animal science.

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. A student may apply and be awarded a scholarship in three years from the scholarship fund. This is a new change to the scholarship rules. Previously a student could only apply and win in 2 funding cycles.

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. More information can be obtained about these scholarships by contacting the OSU Extension-Ashtabula County office at 440-576-9008 or emailing ashtabulacountyagscholarship@gmail.com
3 GMO, Late-Blight-Resistant Potato Varieties Get EPA Approval
By Carol Miller

The EPA and FDA have signed off on three new genetically modified (GMO) potato varieties from J.R. Simplot Company. The introduced genetic material is from wild potato varieties that are resistant to late blight.

The three new varieties, Russet Burbank, Ranger Russet, and Atlantic are part of the Innate Gen. 2 line from Simplot. The company touts the new varieties as less prone to bruising and black spot, containing less asparagine, having enhanced cold storage capability, and resistant to late blight pathogens.

The genetic material used to achieve late blight resistance comes from a wild South American potato species. Simplot believes the resistant varieties will reduce fungicide applications by up to 50%.

Simplot also says the new varieties’ reduced asparagine result in acrylamide accumulations being reduce by up to 90%. And lowered reducing sugars allow for cold storage at 38°F for more than six months without the build-up of sugars.

“The Innate Gen. 2 potato is the most significant advancement to date in fighting late blight disease in North America,” says David Douches, Ph.D., Professor and Director of Potato Breeding and Genetics Program at Michigan State University. “Since late blight disease impacts both organic and conventional potato crops on a commercial scale and must be treated with fungicides, Innate provides the opportunity for a significant reduction.”

The Sorghum Plant That Could Tackle Blindness
By Deb Carstoiu

Up to half a million children around the world are going blind every year due to a lack of Vitamin A in their diets. According to the World Health Organization, Vitamin A deficiency, — which afflicts 250 million children worldwide — is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children and increases the risk of disease and death from severe infections. It is a public health problem in more than half the world’s nations, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia, affecting young children and pregnant women in low-income countries the hardest.

In Kenya, scientists are tackling this problem by developing biofortified sorghum, a staple crop that has been genetically modified to contain higher levels of Vitamin A. More than 300 million sub-Saharan Africans depend on sorghum as their primary calorie source. Its drought- and heat-tolerant properties mean it is a vital crop in drought-prone countries, where irrigation is not always accessible or affordable. Improving the nutritional level of staple crops can provide both food and nutritional security.

The Africa Biofortified Sorghum, or ABS, project is a public-private partnership established to tackle chronic Vitamin A deficiency in children, as well as improve levels of zinc and iron. If it gets commercial approval, it will be the first-ever biotech sorghum on the market. Like Golden Rice, biofortified sorghum is a cutting-edge approach to food security and quality.
In terms of tonnage, sorghum is Africa’s second most important cereal and because it originated in east Africa, Africans know how to plant, cook and eat it. Dr. Titus Magomere, a lecturer in biotechnology at Kenyatta University, is one of 70 scientists involved in the ABS project. He says it is the obvious crop to focus on.

“With the work that I am doing with biofortified sorghum, we are not trying to change the way people live, we are just improving the available nutrients in what they already have,” he said.

Dr. Magomere and his team have already increased the Vitamin A available in sorghum test plants. “This is the first step,” he explained. “The second step has been to increase availability of iron and zinc and this has been done by reducing the levels of a protein that binds iron and zinc in the plants. We hope once the product is ready, a meal of sorghum, which will be available to the local farmers, will reduce nutritional deficiencies significantly.”

Farmers like Dorothy Warubua from Kenya are hoping to take these scientific advancements from the lab to the fields.

“When I was young, many people grew sorghum, but then people were encouraged to grow other crops, and started looking down on sorghum,” she said.

Farmers were encouraged to grow maize in particular, but after a number of poor harvests, the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture supported the reintroduction of sorghum.

“Sorghum needs very little rain. If you plant sorghum and maize at the same time, the sorghum will succeed but the maize often will not — so that’s why we prefer sorghum,” says Warubua. A reliable harvest also means a more secure source of nutrition and income for farmers and their families.

“You have to have a farmer who is going to harvest so that the people will eat,” emphasizes Warubua. With Food Heroes like Warubua growing food for her community, and Magomere enhancing micronutrients in staple crops, the chronic nutritional deficiencies that haunt millions of African children can start to be addressed.

***Winter Beef Clinic to be held on March 23, 2017 in Jefferson, Ohio***
OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association would like to invite Northeast Ohio Beef Producers to their Winter Beef Clinic on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at the Ashtabula County Extension Office in Jefferson, Ohio. The keynote speaker for this workshop will be John Grimes, Associate Professor & OSU Extension Beef Specialist. Join us as we discuss the basics of feeding beef cows and calves in Northeast Ohio.

During this workshop, John Grimes will share how to economically feed cattle on a small beef farm in Ohio. Discussions will be held on feeding Brood cows and their calves. Learn how to read a hay analysis report so you can get the biggest bang from your hay & baleage feeds. John will use the results from local farms to show how forage
quality impacts the overall nutrition program. Learn about hay storage basics and grain & mineral supplementation. Learn more about the new Veterinary Feed Directive.

Local 4-H and FFA Youth will also want to attend as John will share how to feed your steer for the county fair. Learn how to plan for the growth of your steer from the day of purchase all the way through fair. This workshop is free and open to all beef producers in Northeast Ohio. 4-H and FFA youth will also gain valuable experience from this workshop. No registration is required. Light refreshments will be served. A program flyer can be found at: [http://go.osu.edu/ne-events](http://go.osu.edu/ne-events). More information can be received by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008. Do not miss this chance to increase your beef nutrition management skills.

**Ashtabula County 4-H Pancake Breakfast**

Looking for a great meal while supporting the Ashtabula County 4-H Program? If so, plan on attending the Ashtabula County 4-H Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, April 2, 2017 from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Ashtabula County 4-H Expo Building located at 127 North Elm Street in Jefferson, Ohio.

Attend and enjoy sausage, eggs and all you-can-eat pancakes provided by the Ashtabula County 4-H Advisory Committee. Adult tickets will be $7 with senior tickets at $5.00. Children under 6 are FREE. Tickets available at the door. All proceeds to benefit the Ashtabula County 4-H Program!

**Today is National Ag Day**

Today, March 21, 2017 is National Ag Day. This will mark the 44th anniversary of National Ag Day which is celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. The theme for National Ag Day 2017 is “Agriculture: Food For Life.” On March 21, 2017, ACA will host major events in the nation’s capital including a breakfast event at the National Press Club as well as a Taste of Agriculture Celebration on the Hill. Additionally, the ACA will bring approximately 100 college students to Washington to deliver the message of Ag Day.

These events honor National Agriculture Day and mark a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us. A number of producers, agricultural associations, corporations, students and government organizations involved in agriculture are expected to participate. National Ag Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America. ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public’s awareness of agriculture’s role in modern society.

The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:
- Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry.

In addition to the events in Washington, DC on March 21, the ACA will once again feature the Ag Day Essay Contest in addition to an Ag Day Photography Contest. The winning photograph will be part of the 2017 National Ag Day Poster. Visit [www.agday.org](http://www.agday.org) for more information on National Ag Day in 2017.

**ODA Seeks to Recognize Farm Families Leading in Conservation and Productivity**

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is accepting nominations to honor Ohio farm families who are leaders in conservation for the 2017 Conservation Farm Family Awards. The Conservation Farm Family Award program has recognized Ohio farm families since 1984 for their efforts in managing natural and human resources while meeting both production and conservation goals.
“Conservation practices are paramount to Ohio farmers in preserving our resources for future generations,” said ODA Director David T. Daniels. “With these awards, we are able to recognize farmers who have taken extra steps toward protecting the land using conservation practices they have implemented on their own farms.” Five area finalists will be selected from across the state and will be recognized at the annual Farm Science Review in September. They will also receive a $400 award, courtesy of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, and be featured in the September issue of Ohio Farmer Magazine.

Individual farmers, partnerships or family farm corporations are eligible for nomination, provided a substantial portion of their income is derived from farming. The judging is based on the nominee's use of new and traditional conservation techniques, comprehensive management, individual initiative in applying conservation measures and the nominee’s willingness to share conservation information, experiences and philosophy with others.

Nomination forms can be obtained from local county soil and water conservation districts or by visiting ODA’s website at www.agri.ohio.gov. The forms can be submitted by email to dswc@agri.ohio.gov or by mail to Conservation Farm Family Award, C/O Ohio Department of Agriculture 8995 E. Main St., Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43608. The forms must be returned by Wednesday, May 17. The awards program is sponsored by the ODA Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Ohio Farmer magazine, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Natural plant defense could help fight cancer, Alzheimer’s

By Seth Truscott, College of Agricultural, Human & Natural Resource Sciences


A natural defense that helps plants ward off insect predators, discovered at Washington State University, could lead to better crops and new treatments for cancer and Alzheimer’s disease.

Sachin Rustgi, adjunct assistant professor at the WSU Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, detailed the interaction of enzymes called proteases and their inhibitors, along with the role they play in plant health and development, in the latest Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2017/02/07/1621496114.abstract). The discovery could pave the way for advances in medicine and agriculture.

"By understanding this relationship, we can regulate it for our health and agricultural needs,” Rustgi said. “We can make enzymes available, or trap them when they’re not beneficial.”

As the building blocks of our bodies, proteins play important roles in plant and animal health. Special enzymes called proteases destroy proteins and must be carefully controlled to avoid problems like disease and early aging.

Rustgi explored the relationship between a protease called RD21 and its inhibitors, Serpin1 and WSCP, in plants.

“When they first start growing, young plants are quite vulnerable,” said Rustgi, who first set out to study seedling defense with colleagues at Grenoble Alpes University and Jean Monnet University in France.

They found that when a seedling emerges from soil, inhibitors shut down and protease levels rise. When an insect tries to eat the plant, the protease attacks its digestive enzymes, causing the insect to seek a different meal.

Protease inhibitors also influence plant resistance to disease and drought.
“Diseases that kill plants can be avoided by over-expressing these inhibitors,” said Rustgi. Proteases can also cause crops such as wheat, barley and corn to mature faster and avoid late-season drought.

Better understanding of protease activity could also improve human health, Rustgi said. His findings bring insights into cancer progression and could lead to new therapies for cancer and other diseases.

“These proteins are similar in structure in animals and plants,” he said. “Most medicines for cancer and aging diseases are protease inhibitors. Understanding how these proteins interact could lead to artificial inhibitors and ultimately to safer medicines.”

Rustgi, currently at Clemson University, researched this natural defense system while working with co-author Diter von Wettstein, the R.A. Nilan distinguished professor at WSU.

Their project was supported in part by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the state Life Sciences Discovery Fund, established by the governor and legislature to foster growth of life sciences.

March Weather Update
By: Jim Noel

It was one of the warmest February's one record. Here is a great summary by the National Weather Service in Wilmington, Ohio. For the period of January and February combined, many reporting stations in Ohio had the most number of 60+ days ever recorded. See the complete report at: https://www.weather.gov/media/iln/climate_summary/ClimateReport_February2017.pdf

The warm-up has led to green-up conditions running about 3 weeks ahead of schedule in Ohio. This is the current look at USGS green-up conditions...https://www.usanpn.org/data/spring

The outlook for March calls for near to slightly warmer than normal temperatures. We will not see the record warmth in March we saw in February. Precipitation will be near or slightly above normal. The outlook for April and May calls for a turn from near normal temperatures in April to warmer and slightly drier than normal conditions by late April into May. The summer outlook continues to call for a warmer than normal period with rainfall at or below normal. The freeze outlook continues to suggest a near normal or slightly later than normal last freeze based on current climate trends. Normal last freeze is generally between April 10 to 20 for much of the state. However, with early green-up and budding there is an elevated risk to fruit trees and other sensitive crops this spring as even a normal last freeze means things will be exposed.

Winter Wheat Progress and Management- Check Your Fields
By: Laura Lindsey, Pierce Paul, Ed Lentz

Last year, wheat winter progressed quicker than usual due to warm temperatures. In our Pickaway County trials in 2016, wheat reached Feekes growth stage 6.0 by April 6. This year, with unusually warm temperatures, we may see something similar. Don’t rely on calendar date. Check your fields for growth stage.

Freezes can be a concern when wheat progresses earlier in the spring. Last year, we evaluated winter wheat freeze damage at several growth stages. At Feekes growth stage 5.0, very little to no injury was
observed at temperatures as low as 14°F. At Feekes 6.0 (jointing), wheat plants were sensitive to temperatures of 24°F and lower. We are continuing our wheat freeze work this spring.

**Feekes 5.0:** Leaf sheaths are strongly erect. Plants will have an upright appearance, but the growing point is still below the soil surface.

**Feekes 6.0:** Prior to Feekes 6.0, the nodes are all formed but sandwiched together so that they are not readily distinguishable. At 6.0, the first node is swollen and appears above the soil surface. This stage is commonly referred to as “jointing.” Above this node is the head or spike, which is being pushed upwards eventually from the boot. The spike at this stage is fully differentiated, containing future spikelets and florets.

By Feekes 6.0, essentially all weed-control applications have been made. Do not apply phenoxy herbicides such as 2,4-D, Banvel, or MCPA after Feekes 6.0, as these materials can be translocated into the developing head, causing sterility or distortion. Sufonyle-urea herbicides are safe at this growth stage, but for practical reasons, weed control should have been completed by now. Small grains can still show good response to N topdressed at this time.

To identify Feekes 6.0 growth stage:

1- Pull, or better yet, dig up, several clusters of tillers with roots and soil from multiple locations in the field;

2- Identify and select three to four primary tillers from each cluster – usually the largest tillers with the thickest stem, but size can be deceiving;

3- Strip away and remove all the lower leaves (usually small and yellowish or dead leaves), exposing the base of the stem;

4- Now look for the first node anywhere between 1 and 2 inches above the base of the stem. This node is usually seen as a slightly swollen area of a slightly different (darker) shade of green than the rest of the stem. If the first node (and only that node) is seen at the base of the stem, then your wheat is at Feekes growth stage 6.

Here is a video showing how to identify Feekes 6.0 growth stage: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iukwznx4DPk

**Know these Facts before Deducting a Charitable Donation**

Source: IRS Tax Tip 2017-32

If taxpayers gave money or goods to a charity in 2016, they may be able to claim a deduction on their federal tax return. Taxpayers can use the Interactive Tax Assistant tool, *Can I Deduct my Charitable Contributions?* located at https://www.irs.gov/uac/can-i-deduct-my-charitable-contributions, to help determine if their charitable contributions are deductible.

Here are some important facts about charitable donations:

1. **Qualified Charities.** Taxpayers must donate to a qualified charity. Gifts to individuals, political organizations or candidates are not deductible. To check the status of a charity, use the IRS
Select Check tool. This can be found at: https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-select-check

2. **Itemize Deductions.** To deduct charitable contributions, taxpayers must file Form 1040 and itemize deductions. File Schedule A, Itemized Deductions, with a federal tax return.

3. **Benefit in Return.** If taxpayers get something in return for their donation, they may have to reduce their deduction. Taxpayers can only deduct the amount that exceeds the fair market value of the benefit received. Examples of benefits include merchandise, meals, tickets to events or other goods and services.

4. **Type of Donation.** If taxpayers give property instead of cash, their deduction amount is normally limited to the item’s fair market value. Fair market value is generally the price they would get if the property sold on the open market. If they donate used clothing and household items, those items generally must be in good condition or better. Special rules apply to cars, boats and other types of property donations.

5. **Noncash Charitable Contributions.** File Form 8283, Noncash Charitable Contributions, for all noncash gifts totaling more than $500 for the year (access at: https://www.irs.gov/uac/about-form-8283). Complete section-A for noncash property contributions worth $5,000 or less. Complete section-B for noncash property contributions more than $5,000 and include a qualified appraisal to the return. Taxpayers may be able to prepare and e-file their tax return for free using IRS Free File. The type of records they must keep depends on the amount and type of their donation. To learn more about what records to keep, see Publication 526, Charitable Contributions located at: https://www.irs.gov/uac/about-publication-526

6. **Donations of $250 or More.** If taxpayers donated cash or goods of $250 or more, they must have a written statement from the charity. It must show the amount of the donation and a description of any property given. It must also say whether they received any goods or services in exchange for the gift.

Taxpayers should keep a copy of their tax return. Beginning in 2017, taxpayers using a software product for the first time may need their Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) amount from their prior-year tax return to verify their identity. Taxpayers can learn more about how to verify their identity and electronically sign tax returns at Validating Your Electronically Filed Tax Return.

**Ohio Senate to Consider “Purple Paint Law” for Trespassing**

By: Peggy Kirk Hall

The Senate Judiciary today heard sponsor testimony for a proposed change to Ohio’s criminal trespass laws. The “purple paint law” proposed by Sen. Bill Coley (R-Liberty Twp.) allows landowners to use purple paint to alert potential trespassers of property boundary lines. The purple paint would serve the same purpose as a “No Trespassing” sign by indicating that a person does not have permission to enter the property.

“It is often difficult for landowners, particularly owners who have large pieces of real estate, to maintain and replace their “No Trespassing” signs on a regular basis,” states Rep. Coley. “This legislation amends Ohio’s criminal trespass law to allow purple paint to be a warning sign for trespassers.”

Ohio’s criminal trespass law establishes misdemeanor penalties for persons who knowingly or recklessly enter or remain on land of another without authorization from the landowner. The law allows several ways for a landowner to notify a potential intruder that access is prohibited: by actual communication, by fencing designed to restrict access, or by signage or posting in a manner reasonably calculated to come to the attention of potential intruders. The proposed bill would clarify that “posting in a manner reasonably calculated to come to the attention of potential intruders” would include placing identifying
purple paint marks on trees or posts around the property. The purple marks would have to be readily visible vertical lines at least eight inches long, with the bottom of the mark being at least three feet but no more than five feet from the base of the tree or post and no more than 25 yards from the next paint mark.

Today’s committee hearing is the first for the bill. If the legislation eventually passes through the House and Senate, Ohio would join a dozen other states around the country in allowing purple paint to mark property boundary lines for trespassing purposes. Similar laws exist in West Virginia, Kansas, Arizona, Montana, Arkansas, Idaho, Florida, Maine, North Carolina, Missouri, Illinois and Texas.

Follow the proposed purple paint law, SB 76 at: https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-SB-76

Spring Gardening Program Continue this Week at Local Libraries
Spring has officially arrived! The Ashtabula County Master Gardeners would like to invite you to join them at libraries across Ashtabula County this week to learn more about pollinators, tomatoes and Container & Raised Bed Gardening- The Good, The Bad & The Ugly.

The programs started this past Saturday, March 18 and will continue through this Saturday. The remaining locations and times are:

On Wednesday, March 22, the program will be offered at the Conneaut Public Library from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Then on Saturday, March 25, the gardening program will be offered at both the Rock Creek Public Library and the Grand Valley Library from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. And last but not least, the Geneva Public Library will host the final session from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on the same day.

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.

Woodland Management Field Day to be held on April 8 in Chardon, Ohio
The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will be hosting a Woodland Management Field Day on Saturday, April 8th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Hambden Orchard Wildlife Area on Sisson Road in Chardon, Ohio. ODNR Service Forester Aaron Kash, ODNR Private Lands Biologist Ryan Jackson, and NRCS District Conservationist Jonathan Mauk will be offering a morning field day to discuss and demonstrate options for private woodland management. Various aspects of wildlife habitat, forest management/timber harvesting, and conservation practices will be covered. This event is being held in the woods in previously harvested areas so appropriate footwear and attire will be necessary. This event is FREE but you must register by calling 440-564-5883 or emailing aaron.kash@dnr.state.oh.us

Chainsaw Safety Class to be held on April 8
OSU Extension Trumbull County will be offering a chainsaw safety class on Saturday, April 8th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Trumbull County Ag and Family Education Center in Cortland, OH. This class is designed to help you handle and operate your chainsaw safely when you are clearing out a fence row, cleaning up after a storm, or any other time that you may use your chainsaw. The class will begin inside with an overview of protective equipment designed to minimize injury before moving to basic saw maintenance. We will cover saw basics, how to perform a safety check, and how to keep your chain sharp. We will wrap up the morning with demonstrations outside to show proper tree felling and bucking techniques.
Pre-registration is requested by April 5th, 2017. Cost for the class is $30/person and includes handouts, light refreshments, and additional materials. To register please complete the registration form and return to OSU Extension Trumbull County, 520 West Main St., Suite #1, Cortland, OH 44410. Please call 330-638-6783 or email Lee Beers (beers.66@osu.edu) for more information.

Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Show to be held on Saturday, April 22
The Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association will be sponsoring the 20th Annual Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Jackpot Show on Saturday, April 22 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 $30 per head is required. 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.

Hydrangea School to be Held on May 3, 2017 in Jefferson, Ohio
The Ashtabula County Extension office is pleased to be offering a Hydrangea School on Wednesday, May 3, 2017 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: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events.

2017-2018 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 2017-2018 school year. One $1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a deserving 2017 High School Senior who will be attending an accredited full four year college or an accredited two year technical institute in 2017-2018. 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.
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, 2017 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.

Tri-County Grape Growers 2017 Steak Dinner to be held on Thursday, May 4
The Tri-County Grape Growers Association is pleased to announce they will be hosting their third annual Steak Dinner on Thursday, May 4 from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Harpersfield Community Center. Pre-sale tickets are required with each ticket costing $30.00 per person. The ticket price includes a one-year membership in Tri-County Grape Growers. Please RSVP by April 28 to guarantee seating. All are welcome to attend. Tickets may be purchased from the OSU Extension Office in Jefferson, Ohio (440-576-9008), John Linehan (440-466-3207) or from any active Tri-County Grape Grower Member.

David’s Weekly News Column
Published in the Jefferson Gazette on March 22, 2017 and the Ashtabula County Star Beacon on March 26, 2017.

Hello, Ashtabula County! I am pleased to report the 67th Annual Ashtabula County Dairy Banquet held on Saturday, March 18 at Camp Beaumont in Rock Creek was a great event with 80 persons in attendance. The participants were treated to a wonderful meal catered by the camp staff and to a wide range of activities to celebrate a super year in our local dairy industry.

We were very excited to be invited to host this year’s banquet at Camp Beaumont. This 1,200 acre Boy Scout Camp located just north of Rock Creek, Ohio is one of Ashtabula County’s hidden treasures. We were delighted to be able to hold our banquet here and to be treated to their talents of their culinary staff. Thanks to Bill Roloff and his staff for opening their doors to our dairy farmers.

We were very pleased that both Ashtabula County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski and Dr. John Patterson, Ohio District 99 House of Representative were in attendance to provide the crowd with legislative updates. I appreciate both Casey and John for their commitment to our local agriculture industry.

Once again this year, we had three of our Ashtabula County dairy farm families recognized for being the best of the best in Ohio. Congratulations to Alfa-Creek Brown Swiss Farm of Andover Township for being the 1st place Brown Swiss herd in Ohio. Not to be outdone, Alfa-Creek Farms of Andover Township placed 4th and Bossy’s Way Farm 15th for all of the Holstein Herds in Ohio. No other county in the state can boost three top herds! Congratulations to the Boggs and Zaebst families for their incredible achievements.

The top Holstein Herd Award went to Alfa Creek Farms of Andover Township, the top Jersey Herd went to Ringbyre Jersey Farm of Monroe Township, and the top Brown Swiss Herd went to Alfa-Creek Brown Swiss of Andover Township. The most improved herd rotating trophy was awarded to the Wilson Dairy Farm of Jefferson Township. The Wilson’s herd improved over 1,000 pounds of milk per cow last year. The Wilson’s also won the 2016 Low Somatic Cell Milk Quality Award for the 12th consecutive year. Yes, that is right, 12 years in a row!
Five farms were recognized for having top cows in Ashtabula County by breed and age. Alfa Creek Brown Swiss received all 4 Brown Swiss awards and Alfa-Creek Farms won 4 Crossbred Awards, 3 Holstein Awards and 2 Red & White Holstein Awards. Ringbyre Jersey swept all 4 Jersey Awards; Bossy's Way Farm won 1 Holstein Award; and Jason Brinker Dairy won one Red & White Holstein Award.

Congratulations to Alfa-Creek Farms for having the top producing cow in 2016. This award winning cow produced 47,888 pounds of milk which is over 5,500 gallons of milk! To put this number in perspective, the average cow in Ashtabula County gives about 22,000 pounds of milk each year. This cow produced more than double the average. That is a lot of leche!

An additional highlight of the banquet was the crowning of the 2017 Ashtabula County Dairy Princess. Congratulations to Teresa Polchin, daughter of Shannon Kidwell of Williamsfield and Tony Polchin of Cherry Valley Township, for being selected as the 2017 Ashtabula County Dairy Princess. Raeann Eldred, daughter of Rosmarie and Myron Eldred of Kingsville Township, was chosen as the runner-up. Both girls had top-notch interviews and speeches to the crowd. Congratulations to both young ladies for their exceptional representation in this competition. A special thank you is given to Katie Stokes who served as the 2016 Ashtabula County Dairy Princess. Katie did a great job representing our dairy industry over the past 12 months.

Congratulations are also extended to Joel Baldwin, Lisa Kalas and Jason Brinker for being re-elected to two-year terms on the Dairy Service Unit Board of Directors. They along with Lindsey Gray and Tom Coltman have been incredible directors and leaders for our local dairy industry. I thank each of them for all they do for our dairy industry.

We are extremely grateful to the following businesses who supported this year’s banquet. These supporters included: Ashtabula County Dairy Service Unit; Andover Auto Parts; Dave Ballentine’s Pest Control; Bortnick Tractor; Bossy’s Way Farm; Centerra Co-op; Conneautville’s Farm Exchange; COBA Select Sires; Cold Springs Milk Cartage; Farm Credit Services; Krystowski Tractor Sales; David Marrison; Orchard Creek Soaps; Robinson Equipment Company; Pine Grove Jersey Farm; Piper Processing; Progressive Dairy; Ringbyre Jersey Farm; Katie Stokes; Bob Sumeral Tire; and Rowdy Cow Creamery.

Ashtabula County dairy farmers, we are proud of each of you! This banquet is just a small way of saying thank you for your hard work in helping to feed our growing population. You are indeed a special group. To close, I would like to share a quote from Albert Einstein he stated, “Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.” Have a good and safe day.

Lee’s Monthly News Column
Published on March 16, 2017 in the Warren Tribune

Hello Trumbull County! Wild weather continues for NE Ohio this week, although we are back to normal temperatures. Warm weather in February caused thoroughly confused plants with many of them beginning to break dormancy, or, in some cases, even begin to flower. Red maples, forsythia, hellebore, and aspens are just a few of the plants I have seen in flower so far this year, and all of those are about 3-4 weeks early. Unfortunately, plants that began to grow most likely did not fare well with our most recent cold snap when temperatures dipped down into the teens at night. Plants growing in our area are pretty hardy, but just as you get a chill when you get back from your Florida vacation, growing plants have lost much of their hardiness. When we get these kinds of temperature fluctuations, the best thing to do is...
insulate your plants with old sheets, burlap, or any other material that you have laying around. If you have a large red maple tree there is not much you can do, unless you can borrow all the sheets in your neighborhood!

I am sure that right now there is someone saying “so much for climate change” as they look out at the snow-covered ground. There is a very distinct difference between immediate weather and long term weather data (climate). Climate change is contributing to the erratic weather patterns that we have been experiencing the past couple of years, and predictions are that erratic weather will continue as global atmosphere temperatures increase. This will present major challenges for your vegetable and flower gardens, but it will be a much larger challenge for agriculture more broadly as water use efficiency, weed management, and genetics become increasingly more important to obtain yields needed to feed our society.

There can be a lot of doom and gloom when climate change is discussed, and I’m not downplaying those concerns, but when it comes to agriculture I’m fairly optimistic. Scientists in both the public and private sectors are working hard to make sure that we have crop varieties able to withstand extended drought periods, use less water, and make more use of the available CO₂ in the atmosphere, as well as developing strategies to handle pest pressure. I am amazed at the progress plant breeders have made in developing perennial fruits (apple, blueberry, grape, and more) that are resistant to freezing temperatures. Frost damage can severely limit fruit production and by developing varieties that bloom later that are more cold-hardy growers can have a more reliable harvest.

There are a few events coming up that you should put on your calendar. The Northeast Ohio Small Farm Conference will be held on March 25 at the RG Drage Center in Massillon, OH. Sessions will cover all aspects of farming, including finances, marketing, production, and other topics. Cost for attendance is $60/person. More information can be found at http://agnr.osu.edu/small-farm-programs/small-farm-conferences-and-trade-shows.

Our Chainsaw Safety class will be returning on Saturday, April 8 from 9am to 12noon at the Trumbull County Ag Center. We will be learning about the safe use and maintenance of chainsaws before we head outside for demonstrations. The program is useful for homeowners, farmers, landscapers, and anyone using a chainsaw. Cost for attendance is $30/person and registration is required by April 5th to ensure adequate class size.

On April 20 the Trumbull County Master Gardeners will be hosting a workshop on composting from 10am to 12noon at the Trumbull County Ag Center in Cortland. We will be discussing how to compost your kitchen and yard waste safely and effectively to harvest nutrients that can be returned to your soil. Cost for attendance is $15/person and pre-registration is requested.

For more information or to register for any of these events 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 2017 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

Northeast Ohio Winter Beef Clinic
March 23 at the Ashtabula County Extension office

Chainsaw Safety Class
April 8 at the Trumbull County Extension Office

Composting: Getting the Most from Your Garbage
April 20 at the Trumbull County Extension Office

2017 Northeast Ohio Grape School – A Focus on Pinot Gris
April 18 at Virant’s Winery

2017 Joe Bodnar Memorial Northern Classic Steer & Heifer Show
Saturday, April 22 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds

Hydrangea School
Wednesday, May 3 at the Ashtabula County Extension office

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Lee Beers
Trumbull County Extension Office
520 West Main Street
Cortland, OH 44410
330-638-6783
beers.66@osu.edu
trumbull.osu.edu
Chainsaw Safety Class

Saturday • April 8, 2017 • 9am – 12pm

Trumbull County Extension Office
520 West Main Street
Cortland, OH 44410

Topics Will Include:
• Personal Protective Equipment
• Safety Checklist for Safe Sawing
• Chainsaw Maintenance
• Safe Tree Felling and Bucking
• And More

This chainsaw safety course offered by OSU Extension Trumbull County will demonstrate safe chainsaw handling and operating techniques for home/landowners. The course will start off with an overview of basic safety equipment before covering basic chainsaw maintenance for safe use. We will wrap up with a live demonstration of safe tree felling and bucking techniques.

For more information:
Lee Beers – Extension Educator Ag & Natural Resources
330-638-6783 • beers.66@osu.edu • trumbull.osu.edu

Pre-registration is requested by April 5th to ensure minimum numbers. Cost for the Chainsaw Safety Class is $30/person. To pay at the door call 330-638-6783 to pre-register, or to pre-pay complete the following information and send with payment to OSU Extension Trumbull County, 520 West Main St., Suite #1, Cortland, OH 44410. We will be outside for demonstrations, so please dress according.

Name(s): __________________________________________
Phone & Address: ______________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________
Number attending/amount enclosed: ______________________

Ohio State University Extension
CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity.

trumbull.osu.edu
Join us on Thursday, April 20th to learn about proper composting techniques to get the most return for your garden. Trumbull County Extension Educator, Lee Beers, will discuss what will compost, how to manage disease (human and plant), weeds, and nutrient value. We will be outside for a portion of the class to review common composting mistakes, so please dress for the weather.

To register, complete the back side of the flyer and mail with payment to OSU Extension, 520 West Main St, Suite 1, Cortland, OH 44410. Please make checks payable to OSU Extension. Payment can be made at the door on the day of the event, but please call 330-638-6783 to register in advance if you plan to attend.
Composting: Getting the Most from Your Garbage

Registration Form

April 20, 2017

Name ___________________________________________________

Address ___________________________________________________

City _____________________________________________________

State ______________________ Zip _________________________

Phone _______________________ Email _______________________

Number of People Attending:

__________ X $15 per person = $_________________

Please make checks payable to: OSU Extension

Mail registration to: OSU Extension, 520 West Main St., Suite 1, Cortland, OH 44410

Call 330-638-6783 or email beers.66@osu.edu for more information