Hope everyone has a good and safe week. We had a great day last Friday for the 2015 Ashtabula County Ag Day. Over 1,000 first graders and their teachers/chaperones traveled to the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds to participate in this wonderful hands-on ag experience. I really appreciate the over 200 volunteers who helped this program run smoothly. Tonight, the Ashtabula County Ag Scholarship fund committee is meeting here in the Extension office to award over $13,000 in agricultural scholarships to high school seniors & college students. I am very pleased to see the quality of this year’s applicants. I was also grateful to see the progress we made in the fields this past week. It is has been a nice start to May. Have a good and safe week!

David Marrison, AG Educator

In this Issue:

- 2015 Ashtabula County Ag Day a Success
- Ohio Cash Rent Averages for 2014
- Weather Update 5/12/2015
- U.S. Gives Farmers Approval to Spray Crops from Drones
- USDA Releases Value-Added Producer Grant Funding Details
- Talkin’ ‘bout that (Millennial) Generation
- 4-H Camp Counselor Chili Cook-off & Family Fun Night
- Taking Your Vegetable Garden to the Next Level Class to be held on May 21 in Cortland

2015 Ashtabula County Ag Day a Success

On Friday, May 8 over 1,000 members of the class of 2026 descended on the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds to participate in Ashtabula County’s “Ag Day.” This program was sponsored by OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau with the goal of educating first graders on where their food comes from and to showcase all the different types of agricultural commodities which are being grown in Ashtabula County.

This is the fourth year for this program and it gets better every year! During this interactive day, students were able to get up close and personal with farm animals, crops, fruits, and vegetables at twelve interactive stations relating to our county’s agriculture.

We were delighted with perfect weather for this event. This made for a beautiful day for the kids to visit the stations scattered across the fairgrounds. During the day, the 1st graders learned about all the different types of farm animals in our county. During their day, they got to learn more about dairy cows, sheep, horses, beef cows, goats, pigs, alpacas, chickens, ducks, and turkeys. Each student was able to make their own home-made butter with the PV FFA Chapter and try their hand at milking a cow. Best of all, every student received a great chocolate milkshake from the Ashtabula County Holstein Club.

The youth also learned how seeds are planted to give us an array of tasty fruit and vegetables. They also learned how these fruits and vegetables are processed into foods that we enjoy. For instance, they learned how cucumbers
are transformed into pickles and how tomatoes are turned into ketchup, salsa and spaghetti sauce. They also learned about root crops like carrots and potatoes and how grains are made into bread.

They also learned how honeybees are important to agriculture, touch and smell fresh Christmas trees, learn how Miscanthus grass can be made into paper products, and see different tractors which are used on local farms. Each child was also able to plant a Sweet ‘n Neat miniature tomato plant with the Ashtabula County Master Gardeners. These miniature tomato plants can be raised this summer in a container. These one foot plants will give the kids tasty cherry tomatoes later in the summer. It was fun watching the enthusiasm on the kids’ faces as they explore our great industry of agriculture. There were a lot of oohs and ahs heard all over the fairgrounds. It was a wonderful event!

This event was a major undertaking by OSU Extension and Farm Bureau. Thank you to Abbey Averill, OSU Extension Program Assistant, for providing the leadership to this event. Abbey did a wonderful job coordinating with the planning committee and working with each school to plan trip logistics. Thanks Abbey for a wonderful job!

A special thank you is extended to the over 200 volunteers who donated their time to teach at one of the activity centers, serve as a classroom guide, or work behind the scene to make the day flow smoothly. This program would not have been possible without the help of each of these volunteers. Special appreciation is extended to the Lakeside Functional Skills class and their teachers Mrs. Kendzerski and Mrs. Stopek. These students were an incredible assistance as they stuffed all the Ag goodie bags for the 1,000 first graders prior to the event and were very valuable in helping to man the water stations and help out the Master Gardeners with the tomato planting during Ag Day.

The cost of hosting this event was over $10,000 and without the support of many this program would not have been possible. For the third year, we were able to cover the transportation cost for each school. Our other donors were also important as they donated program materials and dollars to support the day. Thank you to our platinum sponsors: Ashtabula County Holstein Club, Ruth Mary Service, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, OSU Extension-Ashtabula County, Ashtabula County Fairboard, Ashtabula County Veteran’s Service Commission, Walmart Stores, Inc, Western Reserve Farm Coopperative, and the Albert Ford Charitable Trust. Our gold sponsors were: John & Nancy Patterson, Crosswinds Grille at The Lake House Inn, Erie Bank and Attorney Katherine S. Riedel.

Our silver sponsors were: AGS Graphics, Barb Schaab-Ashtabula County Recorder, Bossy’s Way Inc., COBA Select Sires, Farm Credit Services, Marrison Farms, Mideast Dairy Council, Wright Farms, LTD and an anonymous donor from Conneaut. Our bronze sponsors were: Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association, Arms Trucking Company, Andover Bank, Ashtabula County Soil & Water Conservation District, Cherry Valley Slaughtering & Processing, Countryside Vet Clinic, Easton Culligan, Ferrante Winery, Pymatuning Valley Primary PTO, Inc, Joe & Encie Moroski, Ralph & Pat Pankowski, Sheryle Tersigni, Spencers Farm, Valley Feed Mill, and Dan Whitmire. And our Friends of Ag Day sponsors included: Jefferson Grange, Bernie Haythcer, Hoppin Hoofers 4-H Club, Saybrook Grange, Saybrook Raiders 4-H Club, Cheryle Chiaramonte, Kalas Farm, Markko Vineyards, Piper Processing, Judge Marianne Sezon, Snowy Oak Tree Farm, and Western Reserve Animal Clinic.

We are already planning for next year’s event. We welcome feedback from anyone who participated in this year’s program and are looking for committee members to serve on the 2016 planning committee. We are so excited on how this program helps open agriculture world to our county’s youth! If you are interested in helping with next year’s program, please contact Abbey Averill at 440-576-9008.
Ohio Cash Rent Averages for 2014
The Ohio Cash Rent County Estimates for 2014 have been posted to the National Agricultural Statistics Service’s (NASS) website. The following rental rates have been pulled from this report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2014 County Estimate</th>
<th>2013 County Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Trumbull</td>
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Weather Update 5/12/2015
Jim Noel

After some early week rain of less than 0.25 inches in most places with isolated totals to 0.50 inches in the far north and west part of the state, it will turn more seasonable in terms of temperatures but very little additional rainfall is forecast during the upcoming week.

It looks like the second half of May will be warmer than normal by several degrees with increasing chances for rain. However, most places will see 1-2 inches of rain which is still normal to a bit below normal. Therefore, overall, May will go down as a warmer and slightly drier than normal month.

Looking ahead to summer, this appears to be an El Nino summer. The weak El Nino will continue and may strengthen some. El Nino will likely last into fall and possibly into 2016. Typically, El Nino years push crop yields closer to trend line and summer weather can have stresses from temperature and precipitation swings.

U.S. Gives Farmers Approval to Spray Crops from Drones
[http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/nation/2015/05/05/drones-farm/26956101/](http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/nation/2015/05/05/drones-farm/26956101/)

Fresno, Calif. — A drone large enough to carry tanks of fertilizers and pesticides has won rare approval from federal authorities to spray crops in the United States, officials said Tuesday. The drone, called the RMAX, is a remotely piloted helicopter that weighs 207 pounds, said Steve Markofski, a spokesman for Yamaha Corp. U.S.A., which developed the aircraft.

Smaller drones weighing a few pounds had already been approved for limited use to take pictures that help farmers identify unhealthy crops. The RMAX is the first time a drone big enough to carry a payload has been approved, Markofski said. The drone already has been used elsewhere, including by rice farmers in Japan. The FAA approved it for the U.S. on Friday.
“I certainly understand their cautious approach,” Markofski said. “It’s a daunting task given our airspace is complicated.” The drone is best suited for precision spraying on California’s rolling vineyards and places that are hard to reach from the ground or with larger, piloted planes, said Ken Giles, professor of biological and agricultural engineering at the University of California, Davis. Giles tested the drone in California to see if it could be used here. “A vehicle like this gives you a way to get in and get out and get that treatment done,” Giles said.

Brian Wynne, president and CEO of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, said in a statement that the approval highlights other potential uses. “The FAA is taking an important step forward to helping more industries in the U.S. realize the benefits (drone) technology has to offer,” he said.

USDA Releases Value-Added Producer Grant Funding Details

About $30 million in grant money will be available through USDA’s Value-Added Producer Grant Program for the 2015 funding round, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Friday, May 8, 2015. The funding is intended to assist farmers and food entrepreneurs to develop new product lines.

"Farmers and ranchers are creative people who, with a little help, can put that creativity to work and improve the bottom line for their operations," Vilsack said. "Value-Added Producer Grants enable them to develop new product lines to grow their businesses."

More information on how to apply is on page 26528 of the May 8 Federal Register. The deadline to submit paper applications is July 7, 2015. Electronic applications submitted through grants.gov are due July 2. USDA’s VAPG grants can be used to develop new product lines from raw agricultural products or additional uses for already developed product lines, the agency said.

Military veterans, socially disadvantaged, and beginning farmers and ranchers; operators of small- and medium-sized family farms and ranches; farmer and rancher cooperatives; and applicants that propose mid-tier value chain projects are given special priority in applying for VAPGs. Additional priority is given to group applicants who seek funding for projects that "best contribute" to creating or increasing marketing opportunities for these type of operators.

The USDA Value-Added Producer Grant program has awarded 853 grants totaling $104.5 million since 2009. Approximately 19% of the grants and 13% of total funding has been awarded to beginning farmers and ranchers, USDA said. Congress increased funding for the VAPG program when it passed the 2014 Farm Bill.

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition also Friday released a new, updated version of its Farmers’ Guide to Value-Added Producer Grant Funding which can be accessed at: [http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/](http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/)

The VAPG guide provides clear information on the program's application requirements, including a step-by-step description of the application and ranking processes. Individual farms as well as groups of producers and producer-controlled coops and businesses are eligible to apply for either planning grants or working capital grants. For this grant cycle, $10.2 million is available from the Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations bill, with most of the balance coming from direct funding provided by the 2014 Farm Bill.

"Ideally, the notice of funding availability would be released each year in time to give farmers the three winter months to put together and submit their proposals," said Ferd Hoefner, NSAC policy director. "This year's timing, coming at the busiest time of the farming year and with just a 60 day turn-around time, is unfortunate. We nonetheless applaud USDA for keeping up the pressure that was needed to get the rule and funding notice through
the White House review process. "The release during planting season and the short turn-around time makes it doubly important for farmers to use NSAC's Guide as a quick starting point for general reference before starting in on a proposal," he said.

**Talkin’ ‘bout that (Millennial) Generation**

By Stan Ernst, Businesss & Marketing Specialist/Ag Economist, Specialty Crops Business Program Manager

[http://vegnet.osu.edu/sites/vegnet/files/imce/newsletters/VegNet/may/5.4.15VegNet%20Newsletter.pdf](http://vegnet.osu.edu/sites/vegnet/files/imce/newsletters/VegNet/may/5.4.15VegNet%20Newsletter.pdf)

Baby Boomers have controlled marketing culture, diets and food product development for, well, a generation or so. Those Americans born between 1946 and 1964 changed the food world in many ways with their interests in variety, convenience and healthy eating, with the money to make markets. Produce growers benefitted from Boomer’s year-round grocery expectations for fresh veggies their development of related technologies and supply chains. Plus, there were various waves of specialty crop demand, produce-oriented diets, vegetarianism, immigration shifts and other Boomer trends that pushed produce expansion.

They’re still around. They’re still spending. But if your marketing plan is based on Boomers, you might reconsider. Enter the Millenial Generation. They’re hard to define. Harder to target. And they’re the emerging market power.

Millenials were born sometime between the early 1980s and the early 2000s, depending on who you ask, and are currently 42% of the U.S. population. In the next few years, they’ll be over half the working population and control more than 1-in-3 retail dollars. We’ve been talking about how cynical these consumers are ever since their spending power started showing up a decade or so ago. They don’t believe advertising. They’re not brand conscious or loyal. Their food preferences are consistent, but they’re big experimenters too. Millenials are starved for time and use technology to be more efficient. But they take time for what’s important to them.

On the whole, I think Millenials will be good for the vegetable industry. They may have grown up on fast food, but 72% claim to enjoy cooking and want to learn how to cook more. Most surprising to some, these 20- and 30-somethings are preparing fresh food at home more than other age groups, they’re the leaders of the fresh-and-less-processed food movement, with fresh produce a cornerstone. This is a generation that, because friends may be more important than family, seems to have rediscovered food-centered gatherings and experimentation. Because they especially like information technologies, Millenials are bound to share and promote whatever (and whoever) they’re “into.”

What’s the catch? It’s in the attitude…Millenials are often cynical and self-focused. They vote their favorite trends with their dollars (regardless of income), and can turn on you the minute you or your product doesn’t suit them or what they think is important. And they tell their friends. This is the generation that has thoroughly embraced the blog, other social media, and food activism. Despite not being very brand-loyal in general, Millenials want “brand relationships” when it comes to fresh and local foods and other products they see as part of their lifestyle image. They respond to companies’ cultural and lifestyle behaviors and likely base what brand loyalty they have on that. Next time… what to do with Millenial markets.

**4-H Camp Counselor Chili Cook-off & Family Fun Night**

The Ashtabula County 4-H Camp Counselors will be hosting a **Chili Cook-off Fundraiser** on Friday, May 29, 2015 at the Ashtabula County fairgrounds 4-H Expo Building in Jefferson, Ohio from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. This cook-off is being held to help the 31 volunteer camp counselors raise funds to conduct the 2015 Ashtabula County 4-H Camp. Over 30 different chili recipes will be on hand for attendees to try. In addition, cornbread, salad, desserts and beverages are included. Each attendee will be able to vote
on their favorite chili. Tickets are $5 per person and children under the age of three are free. Music will be provides by Blue Line Entertainment and a get some of your local favorites wet in a dunk tank. To purchase tickets are to receive more information about the event, contact the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

Anyone wishing to enter a chili into the contest can also make an entry. Entries will be taken on a first come, first served basis. Three categories for entries are: #1: Thick & Hearty; #2: Hot & Spicy; and #3: Unconventional. Two tickets will be given for each entry. Each entrant will need to supply a 18 quart roaster of chili. The grand prize winner will receive $250 cash and the first place in each category will receive $50. The chili with the best table display will receive $30 cash. More information about making an entry into the cook-off can be obtained by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

**Taking Your Vegetable Garden to the Next Level Class to be held on May 21 in Cortland**

Would you like to take your gardening skills to the next level? If so, OSU Extension and the Trumbull County Master Gardeners will be offering a “Taking Your Vegetable Garden to the Next Level” class on Thursday, May 21, 2015. This workshop will feature Amy Enfield, a consumer horticulturalist from Scotts Miracle-Gro Company based out of Columbus, Ohio. The class will be held from 10:00 to 12:00 noon at the Trumbull County Extension office located at 520 West Main Street in Cortland, Ohio.

Amy Enfield will share ways to make your vegetable garden more productive, sustainable, nutritious and fun. She will also highlight new vegetable varieties and share information on organic practices and products. The registration cost for this program is $15 per person. Seating is limited so call today at 330-638-6783 to reserve your spot.

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

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