Hello Northeast Ohio Counties!

I see a few farmers were able to get some seed in the ground last week before it turned cold and wet. Both corn, and soybeans were in the ground, but we have a long way to go before we are fully planted.

If you are looking for something to do this weekend instead of staring at your planter, come out to the Master Gardener Plant Sale on Saturday in Cortland. If you can't grow corn, try your hand at flowers.

Stay safe!

Lee Beers
Trumbull County Extension Educator

Andrew Holden
Ashtabula County Extension Educator
Windows for Planting Expected Next 2-3 Weeks

By: Jim Noel
Source: https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2019-13/windows-planting-expected-next-2-3-weeks

After a wet spring was forecasted since January, it appeared in April that a window would open in May. The rain total window has; however, the frequency window has not. The rainfall the last two weeks in Ohio has averaged 1.5 to 2.5 inches with some streaks above 3 inches and some below 1.5 inches. Normal for this period is 1.5 to 2.0 inches. The reality is the ground is just so wet from the wet period up to May. The other BIG key is the frequency of the wet weather.

Often times when it is wet in say the eastern U.S., it is dry in the western U.S. The opposite also holds true. However, we have a very active and progressive weather pattern all around the northern hemisphere. This means a lot of weak to moderate storms on a continuous basis. It is not just Ohio either. Boston, MA set a record for most days with measurable rain in the month of April.

Much of the U.S. is very wet right now. The latest soil moisture rank shows most of the corn and soybean belt is in the top 1-5%. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/Soilmst_Monitoring/Figures/daily/curr.w.rank.daily.gif

There are some questions on similarities to past years. Yes, you can see some similarities to 1993 or 1965 or 1948 and 1949 but there is no perfect year. It depends on where you are. From the widespread wetness in the U.S. you have to look at 1948/1949 for a closest fit but even that does not.

Going forward for the rest of May, we will be seeing increasing temperatures which will lead to increasing evapotranspiration. Hence, like most years, even with some rainfall, the ground will begin to dry in the top layers.

Up to May 16, temperatures will be below normal. However, starting May 17-May 31 the second half of May will see above normal temperatures and evapotranspiration so things will dry some. Rainfall for the rest of May will average close to normal in the 1.5-3 inch range as seen in this link... https://www.weather.gov/images/ohrfc/dynamic/NAEFS16.apcp.mean.total.png

Looking ahead to the summer growing season, not much has changed. We expect near to slightly above normal temperatures from June to August. However, due to the wet soils, we expect normal daytime temperatures and above normal nighttime temperatures similar to last summer. Humidity levels will be above normal this summer too with all the evaporation. Therefore, expect increased issues with mold and mildew. As for precipitation, June looks like a variable month with areas of above and below normal precipitation. That could create some early challenges for growing if you get...
areas of hard ground near the top soil with wet groundneath. As we get into July and August, indications are for a little wetter than normal pattern to resume.

**Trumbull County Master Gardener Plant Sale**

This Saturday (May 18th) will mark the return of the annual Master Gardener Plant Sale in Cortland, OH from 9AM to 2PM. If you are looking for plants that do well in our area this is the sale you’ve been waiting for. Lots of perennial plants that have been tested by our Master Gardeners will be available for sale. Sale goes on rain or shine! Cash or check only. Questions? Call 330-638-6783.

**How Much Rest Does Your Pasture Need?**

By: Victor Shelton, NRCS State Agronomist/Grazing Specialist


I took the time to walk through most of my pastures a few days ago. I recommend doing this fairly often to keep a mental forage inventory. It is best to record the findings. Some use fancy electronic data sheets, some track on paper charts, some just have notes in their pocket datebook or smartphone. I use a combination. I like the paper charts for long term planning, but for a quick assessment, I like a white board.

I have a white board, you know, one of those new-fangled chalk boards that you use erasable markers on. I took 1/8-inch black tape and used it to outline the boundaries of all the fields. If I get present yield estimates taken, I put those numbers on the board with the date collected. But I use the board more for tracking grazing patterns and, more importantly, rest.

Animal groups are color coordinated and enter and exit dates are marked on the board. If animals are strip grazed across the field, then an arrow is included to show the move. I can now look at the board and quickly see how long it has been since the field was last grazed and/or how many days it has been rested.

Rest is very important; really important! If a pasture is continuously grazed, how much rest does the pasture get? None if the animals are never removed. If you divide the
pasture up into four permanent paddocks and rotate through them, seventy-five percent of the paddocks are at least getting some rest. Is it ideal, no, but it is still better than no rest. If we increase the number of paddocks to say, twelve and rotate through them, then ninety-four percent of the paddocks are getting some rest while the six-percent portion is being grazed.

How much rest is really needed or ideal? Early in the growing season when forages are growing fast, it can be pretty short, but normally never less than 14 days. As forage growth starts to slow down a little, then rest should be at least 30 days. When summer heat and drier conditions kick in, cool season grasses then benefit from longer rests, quite often 45 and up to 60 days. To keep it simple, just remember when forages are growing fast, move animals fast (no running, a gentle walk from pasture to pasture is sufficient), and when forages are growing slower, move animals slower.

After grazing is initiated in the spring, I generally recommend continuing to graze around the system until the first paddock is ready to graze again. You can then move back to that paddock and start over. The paddocks that you skip can then be stockpiled for summer grazing or cut for hay. If forage growth starts slowing down quicker than expected, say from lack of rain, then you can always jump back to the paddocks you skipped. If you plan ahead, especially if you have been tracking moves for a few years, you can estimate what field(s) you may want to skip this year in the first rotation. If you have fields that could benefit from longer rests due to being used hard the previous year or overwinter, or one(s) that could benefit from some extra carbon, then this is a chance to provide some extra rest and recovery.

I’ve said this before, but I’ll say it again. It is best to not start the grazing season in the same field every year. Those first fields often get grazed before ideal conditions. This short time abuse, done year after year, can increase problem weeds and reduce diversity of forages, especially desired forages.

Forages can’t rest while being bitten off by ruminants. They only rest when they are allowed to regrow in peace! I often talk about stop grazing heights. It takes grass to grow grass! We need to move the animals to maintain an effective solar panel. Only green, growing leaves carry out photosynthesis! Most tall cool season forages, such as orchardgrass and tall fescue, need at least four inches of live leaf matter left for collecting solar energy for rebuilding roots, reserves, and then regrowth.

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The grazing or harvest event of forage removal has a direct correlating effect on root growth. Research shows that we can remove up to fifty percent of the forage plant with little or no impact on root growth. If we removed more than that fifty percent, then root growth is drastically slowed down. Once we remove seventy percent or more of the plant, which is approaching hay removal levels, root growth comes to a screeching halt. It will now take a longer rest period. There is approximately equivalent live growth above and below ground. When we remove plant leaf matter, roots respond similarly because they are supported by those leaves. Therefore, there is dieback of roots when not enough leaf matter is left for maintenance.

The old adage, or rule of thumb, of “take half and leave half” is actually not a bad rule as long as the starting point is enough! More importantly, when we allow animals to graze too close, we slow down regrowth, require longer recovery, and reduce year around production. For the highest production, most tall cool season forages do the best when grazing is initiated at eight to twelve inches and ended at four to six inches as the stop grazing height. Stop grazing height, or residual height, is not the tallest forage left behind after a grazing event, but the shortest! The shortest forages should be at least four inches tall. Animal intake is also influenced by the amount of desirable forage present, especially height. Intake can be reduced when a full bite is not possible.

Longer rests periods and more live residual left behind mean more roots. More roots support quicker regrowth of grazable material and increase drought tolerance. The more growth there is above ground means there are more live roots below ground. As longer, deeper roots move downward through the soil profile, they bring moisture and nutrients upward. Shallow root systems have no drought tolerance. It certainly doesn’t appear right now like the lack of moisture could possibly be a problem, but we are always only about sixty days from a drought. Drought management should always be a part of our contingency plan.

Forages need rest. Rest influences forage yield, persistence and, therefore, animal performance. No or little rest results in lower forage yields and poor persistence of desirable species due to depleted root reserves and roots. On average, most forages benefit from at least thirty days of rest between grazing events. How productive would you be if you worked 24/7 with no rest?

Enjoy the new grazing season and keep on grazing!
Cool weather has slowed everything down including insect growth and development, and we could see problems with alfalfa weevil later than typical this year. Alfalfa fields should be scouted weekly for weevils until at least the first harvest. Followup scouting may be needed after harvest in heavily infested fields.

Spot problem fields early by checking alfalfa tips for feeding damage – small holes and a tattered appearance. Fields that have a south facing slope tend to warm up sooner and need to be checked for weevil earlier.

Scout for alfalfa weevils by collecting a series of 10 stem samples from various locations. Place the stems tip down in a bucket. After 10 stems have been collected, shake the stems vigorously shaken into the bucket and count the larvae. Divide this number by 10 to get the average number of larvae per stem. Do this procedure at least 3 times (for a grand total of 30 stems, in 10-stem units). Alfalfa weevil larvae go through four growth stages (called instars). The shaking will dislodge the late 3rd and 4th instar larvae which cause most of the foliar injury. Close inspection of the stem tips may be needed to detect the early 1st and 2nd instar larvae. Also record the overall height of the alfalfa. The treatment threshold is based on the number of larvae per stem, the size of the larvae and the height of the alfalfa according to the following table. When alfalfa is around 12-16 inches in height, growers should consider an early harvest rather than spraying. Over 16 inches, we would always recommend an early cutting. In those fields which are cut early for alfalfa weevil, the regrowth should be checked to make sure weevils that are still alive do not prevent good regrowth.
Table 1. Action thresholds relevant to stand height, tip feeding, and density of larvae per stem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stand Height Inches</th>
<th>Indication of Problem % Tip Feeding</th>
<th>Problem Confirmation Larvae per Stem</th>
<th>Recommended Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recheck in 7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>&gt; 1</td>
<td>Spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
<td>Spray or harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>&gt; 4</td>
<td>Harvest early</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When harvested early due to weevil, check within one week for regrowth.

For more information about alfalfa weevil, visit our factsheet at https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/ENT-32

**Ohio Corn, Soybean and Wheat Enterprise Budgets – Projected Returns for 2019**

By: Barry Ward, Leader, Production Business Management, College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences- Ohio State University Extension


Production costs for Ohio field crops are forecast to be largely unchanged from last year with slightly higher fertilizer and interest expenses that may increase total costs for some growers. Variable costs for corn in Ohio for 2019 are projected to range from $356 to $451 per acre depending on land productivity. Variable costs for 2019 Ohio soybeans are projected to range from $210 to $230 per acre. Wheat variable expenses for 2019 are projected to range from $178 to $219 per acre.

Returns will likely be low to negative for many producers depending on price movement throughout the rest of the year. Grain prices used as assumptions in the 2019 crop enterprise budgets are $3.60/bushel for corn, $8.20/bushel for soybeans and $4.25/bushel for wheat. Projected returns above variable costs (contribution margin) range from $150 to $308 per acre for corn and $144 to $300 per acre for soybeans. Projected returns above variable costs for wheat range from $102 to $202 per acre (assuming $4.25 per bushel summer cash price).
Return to Land is a measure calculated to assist in land rental and purchase decision making. The measure is calculated by starting with total receipts or revenue from the crop and subtracting all expenses except the land expense. Returns to Land for Ohio corn (Total receipts minus total costs except land cost) are projected to range from $23 to $182 per acre in 2018 depending on land production capabilities. Returns to land for Ohio soybeans are expected to range from $84 to $254 per acre depending on land production capabilities. Returns to land for wheat (not including straw or double-crop returns) are projected to range from negative $2 per acre to a positive $143 per acre.

Total costs projected for trend line corn production in Ohio are estimated to be $753 per acre. This includes all variable costs as well as fixed costs (or overhead if you prefer) including machinery, labor, management and land costs. Fixed machinery costs of $66 per acre include depreciation, interest, insurance and housing. A land charge of $187 per acre is based on data from the Western Ohio Cropland Values and Cash Rents Survey Summary. Labor and management costs combined are calculated at $69 per acre. Returns Above Total Costs for trend line corn production are negative at -$120 per acre.

Total costs projected for trend line soybean production in Ohio are estimated to be $518 per acre. (Fixed machinery costs – $52 per acre, land charge: $187 per acre, labor and management costs combined: $45 per acre.) Returns Above Total Costs for trend line soybean production are also projected to be negative at -$76 per acre.

Total costs projected for trend line wheat production in Ohio are estimated to be $488 per acre. (Fixed machinery costs: $52 per acre, land charge: $187 per acre, labor and management costs combined: $39 per acre.) Returns Above Total Costs for trend line wheat production are also negative at -$137 per acre.

These projections are based on OSU Extension Ohio Crop Enterprise Budgets. Newly updated Enterprise Budgets for 2019 have been completed and posted to the OSU Extension farmoffice website:

https://farmoffice.osu.edu/farm-management-tools/farm-budgets

**Trump says U.S. farmers to get $15 billion in aid amid China trade war**

By Jeff Mason, Rod Nickel and Tim Ahmann
WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump said on Monday that his administration was planning to provide about $15 billion in aid to help U.S. farmers whose products may be targeted with tariffs by China in a deepening trade war. “We’re going to take the highest year, the biggest purchase that China has ever made with our farmers, which is about $15 billion, and do something reciprocal to our farmers so our farmers can do well,” Trump told reporters at the White House.

He did not provide more details on what kind of an aid package it would be. American farmers, a key constituency of Trump, have been among the hardest hit in the trade war. Soybeans are the most valuable U.S. farm export, and shipments to China dropped to a 16-year low in 2018. Sales of U.S. soybeans elsewhere failed to make up for the loss. U.S. soybean futures fell to their lowest in a decade on Monday.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said on Friday that Trump had asked him to create a plan to help American farmers cope with the heavy impact of the U.S.-China trade war on agriculture.

A new aid program would be the second round of assistance for farmers, after the Department of Agriculture’s $12 billion plan last year to compensate for lower prices for farm goods and lost sales stemming from trade disputes with China and other nations.

“Out of the billions of dollars that we’re taking (in on tariffs on Chinese imports), a small portion of that will be going to our farmers, because China will be retaliating, probably to a certain extent, against our farmers,” Trump said.

The tariffs are not paid by the Chinese government or by firms located in China. They are paid by importers of Chinese goods, usually American companies or the U.S.-registered units of foreign companies.

On Monday, China said it would impose higher tariffs on a range of U.S. goods, including frozen vegetables and liquefied natural gas, striking back in its trade war with Washington after Trump warned it not to.

Last year, Beijing imposed tariffs on imports of U.S. agricultural goods, including soybeans, grain sorghum and pork as retribution for U.S. levies.

While farmers have largely remained supportive of Trump, many have called for an imminent end to the trade dispute, which propelled farm debt to the highest levels in decades and worsened credit conditions for the rural economy.

Trump’s pledge on Friday to buy American farm products that China normally imports and distribute them to poor countries drew criticism from Canada.
“Dumping products in developing countries is not the way we do things,” Canadian Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau told reporters on a conference call from the G20 meeting in Japan, adding such efforts required multilateral coordination. “It seems easy, but it is complicated to do it the right way,” Bibeau said. “Obviously, it may create some distortion in the market and this is what we want to avoid.”

**Beef Contribution in 2018 from Dairy Cattle**

By: Jared Geiser


Dairy cattle continue to be a significant contributor to the commercial U.S. beef supply. Despite growing beef cattle inventories since 2014, dairy animals have been a stable source of beef and continue to play a key role in filling U.S. beef demand. In 2018 the dairy sector contributed 5.6 billion pounds (21.0 %) of beef to the U.S. commercial beef supply from finished steers, finished heifers and cull cows. Although down from the peak of 24% in 2015, the dairy cattle contribution is still significant.

In 2018 total U.S. commercial beef production was 26.9 billion pounds, the highest production since 2002. Between 2002 and 2018 U.S. commercial beef production has ranged from a low of 23.7 billion in 2014 to a high of 27.0 billion in 2002, with dairy animals contributing 22% in 2014 and 18% in 2002. The contribution from dairy cattle varies based on the size of the native cattle herd and its contribution to the beef supply, as well as the number of cull dairy cows. The percentage of dairy beef contribution has ranged from 18% to 24%, while the actual pounds of dairy beef contribution have ranged from 4.7 to 5.7 billion pounds.

Finished dairy steers are the largest beef contributor from the dairy industry followed by cull cows and finished heifers. In 2018 finished dairy steers contributed 3.37 billion pounds (12.6%) to the total pounds of beef harvested. Since 2002 dairy steers have made up between 10.8% and 14.7% annually. Cull dairy cows contributed 1.8 billion pounds (7.0%) in 2018, and historically have made up from 5.8% and 8.0% of beef production since 2002. Finished dairy heifers contributed 419 million pounds (1.53%) in 2018, historically ranging from 0.6% to 1.7% of total beef production.

Additionally, dairy animals contribute to the amount of prime beef supply. With 85-90% of dairy animals being Holstein, Holstein steers contribute the largest portion of dairy beef. Between 2002 and 2018, Holstein steers have contributed between 32 and 60% of prime beef harvested in the U.S. In 2018 we saw the lowest percentage of prime beef (21.3%) contributed by Holstein steers since our data set began in 2002. Note though that the overall percentage of beef that graded prime increased to its highest level ever in 2018, at 8.3% of total U.S. beef production.
Dairy animals had a significant impact on U.S. beef production in 2018. With inventories of native cattle increasing the percentage of beef from dairy animals has reduced incrementally from the highs of 2015, but still remain a major part of U.S. beef production.

**OHIO AG LAW BLOG -- THE AG LAW HARVEST**

By: Evin Bachelor
Source: https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/fri-05102019-1118am/ohio-ag-law-blog-ag-law-harvest

We might be in the middle of planting season, but it’s time for another harvest! Here’s our latest gathering of agricultural law news that you may want to know:

**Hemp bill completes third hearing in Ohio House committee.**
The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee in the Ohio House of Representatives completed its third hearing regarding Senate Bill 57 on Tuesday. The bill would decriminalize hemp produced under the regulatory system proposed in the bill. The committee heard testimony from nearly two dozen individuals and organization representatives. None of the witnesses gave testimony in opposition to the bill. Nearly all of the testimony, including the testimony given on behalf of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and Ohio Chamber of Commerce, was offered in support of the bill. The Ohio Farmers Union submitted testimony only as an “interested party” rather than as a “proponent,” saying that it supports the principle of hemp decriminalization, but does not believe that the hemp marketing program established in the current version of the bill would be necessary. Click HERE to view the witness testimony regarding Senate Bill 57 on the Ohio General Assembly’s webpage.

**Food and Drug Administration sets public hearing on cannabis in food and drinks.**
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has set May 31, 2019 as the date of its first hearing on whether to legalize the use of cannabis derived compounds like CBD in foods and drinks. According to the Federal Register, the hearing is open to the public, and intended for the FDA to obtain scientific data and information about the safety, manufacturing, product quality, marketing, labeling, and sale of products containing cannabis or cannabis-derived compounds. The hearing will be held in Maryland on May 31st, but those wishing to submit written or electronic comments may do so until July 2nd. Click HERE for more information from the Federal Register about the hearing.

**Cattle ranchers file class action suit against major meatpacking companies.**
The Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) and six other named parties brought suit against major meatpackers, including Tyson Foods, JBS USA, Cargill, and National Beef Packing Company. Filed in federal court.
court in the Northern District of Illinois, the plaintiffs’ complaint alleges that these meatpackers colluded to suppress the price of fed cattle since at least 2015, and that as a result, the plaintiffs suffered significant economic harm from the deflated prices. When companies agree to set prices for an industry, they engage in collusion, which could violate U.S. antitrust laws. The 121 page complaint includes a number of charts, graphs, and visuals that explain the alleged economic manipulation, along with a thorough history of an alleged pattern of collusion. If the federal judge certifies the class as requested, other cattle ranchers will have the choice of whether to be included in the class or not. This is important in determining whether the unnamed members of the class are bound by a final decision or able to participate in any settlement or final award. Click HERE to view the complaint and learn more about this lawsuit.

**Indiana Right-to-Farm law upheld by Court of Appeals of Indiana.**
When a federal court in North Carolina decided that that state’s right-to-farm law did not protect hog barns operated by Smithfield Foods in lawsuits alleging agricultural nuisance, there was concern that right-to-farm laws in the United States may be in trouble. However, those fears have begun to subside in other states. As we explained in a previous blog post, Ohio’s right-to-farm law provides greater protections from a nuisance lawsuit than North Carolina’s law. Further, the Court of Appeals of Indiana recently upheld the use of Indiana’s Right to Farm Act. In doing so, it upheld a lower court decision that granted summary judgment in favor of the defendant livestock operators. At the start of the case, the plaintiffs alleged that the defendants created a nuisance, acted negligently, and caused a trespass when the defendants constructed and began to operate a new concentrated animal feeding operation in 2013. However, the defendants cited Indiana’s Right to Farm Act as a defense and won. The plaintiffs sought to challenge the constitutionality of the Indiana’s Right to Farm Act, but the appellate court found that the law was within the legislature’s proper authority, did not constitute a taking, and did not improperly set farmers apart for preferential treatment. The original plaintiffs have a few more days to file an appeal with the Indiana Supreme Court. Click HERE to read the appellate court’s opinion.

**State of Washington passes cage-free egg production law.**
Washington is set to join states like Massachusetts and California in requiring egg-laying hens to live free of cages. Once signed into law by the governor, Substitute House Bill 2049 would require poultry operators to use a cage-free housing system that would allow hens to roam within the confined area by 2023. Further, hens must be “provided enrichments that allow them to exhibit natural behaviors including, at minimum, scratch areas, perches, nest boxes, and dust bathing areas.” Farm employees must be able to provide care while standing in the hens’ usable floor space. The bill would also make it illegal to buy, sell, or transport eggs and egg products that were not produced in compliance with the state’s cage free egg production law. The Humane Society of the United States spearheaded the legislative effort on this bill, which initially passed the Washington House of Representatives 90-6 and the

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Northeast Ohio Agriculture

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties
Senate 40-6. Click HERE for more information about the bill’s status, and HERE to read the final text of the bill.

**Missouri legislature considers ending local regulation of CAFOs.**
The Missouri General Assembly is considering a pair of bills that would 1) limit the ability of county commissions and health boards from imposing restrictions on confined animal feeding operations that are more stringent than state law, and 2) eliminate the authority of county commissions and health boards from inspecting livestock operations. So far, each bill has passed one chamber of the Missouri General Assembly, and is being considered in the other chamber. Supporters argue that the bills would provide for regulatory consistency across the state in light of varying local regulations. Opponents argue that the bills would harm local jurisdictions from enacting restrictions that better protect the environment than current state law. This debate is similar to recent and ongoing debates in states like Tennessee and Wisconsin over which entities can regulate confined animal feeding operations, and how much. Click HERE for more information about Missouri’s Senate Bill 391, and HERE for more information about Missouri’s House Bill 951.

**Spring 2019 Beef Twilight Tour to be Held May 30th**

Join the Ashtabula County Cattleman’s association for this year’s Spring Beef Twilight Tour on May 30th in Dorset, Ohio. The Paul Farm has been in beef production in Dorset since the 1970’s. The tour will showcase a facility that features a Murray Grey cow-calf operation and a rotational pasture system. Guest will enjoy information from several entities including: Hickory Nut Fencing, USDA NRCS, and Fowler Seed Marketing.

All beef producers and industry individuals are invited. No reservations are needed. Don’t miss this opportunity to visit these outstanding operations.

A Free Beef Hamburger and Hotdog Meal will be served at the conclusion of the program, compliments of Cherry Valley Slaughtering & Processing.

**Location:** 4564 Hays Rd. Dorset, OH 44032  
**Cost:** Free  
**Contact information:** Call Andrew Holden at 440-576-9008 or Email Holden.155@osu

**Lee’s Monthly News Column**

Hello Trumbull County! Well, tillage and planting season will start as soon as the weather cooperates. I know most farmers have everything ready to go, so as soon as the soil dries out they will be hitting the fields in force.

The USDA conducts a Census of Agriculture every 5 years to view the status of agriculture throughout the country and they use this information to design policies. Any
farmer that produces an agricultural crop is required to submit information to the census. The last census was conducted in 2017, and the USDA has recently released the results, and they are very detailed down to the county level. This is a great snapshot of the current state of agriculture in Trumbull County.

You can find the whole report here: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/index.php.

There is a lot of information to digest, and I haven’t had a lot of time to look through it all, but I will highlight a few major points. The biggest point to take away from the census is that there are more farms in Trumbull County now than there were in 2012 – 148 to be exact. That’s encouraging news. There are 323 new and beginning farms represented in the most recent census, and if you do a little backwards math you can see that we lost 175 farms in that same period. That puts a little somber mood on the increase in the number of farms, but I do hope we see that positive trend of more farms continue in the next census.

So the next question is, where are they farming? Well, I don’t know exactly where, but Trumbull County has also seen an increase in the number of acres farmed by almost 10,000 acres. This land was most likely converted from forested land, or old fallow ground brought back into production. If you drive around the county you will still see thousands of acres of fallow ground that is sitting idle. Although the average size of a farm is 119 acres, that doesn’t tell the whole story. We have several large farms (1,000 acres or more), but the biggest increase in farm size is in the 50 acre or less category. What we are seeing in Trumbull County is mirroring the farming trends throughout the country – a significant increase in the number of small farms.

These smaller farms are not breaking the bank either, and indicates that most of the new farmers have an off the farm job as a primary income source. More than half of our farms reported selling their agricultural products for $5,000 or less from the farming operation. I hate the term “hobby farm”, but I think we have a lot of dedicated farmers out there working hard to bring in supplemental income.

I thought for sure there would be a large increase in vegetable production, beef cows, or organic farms. These are the typical small farm trends we see throughout the US, but I have not found any single agricultural practice that has a significant increase. It appears that all agricultural segments in the county have increased, which is another great highlight from census.

Like I said, there is a lot of data to make sense of in the census, and I will be working over the next few weeks to get a better understanding of the changes we have seen. It was a nice surprise to see the number of new farms. We have been losing many farms in the past couple of years, and the general mood around the future of farming is rather
gloomy. Our farmers are still struggling, so please support your local farmers at farmers markets, produce stands, and please, please, please - drink more milk!

The Trumbull County Master Gardeners have a busy month coming up! The Wednesdays in the Gardens series is continuing in 2019, and the next event is on May 8th with a presentation on how to make a Japanese moss ball. And then on the 22nd, we are continuing with the Japanese gardening theme with a presentation on Bonsai. Looking out to June 12th, join us for a presentation on growing grapes. These events are free to the public, and start at 6PM (rain or shine) at 520 West Main St, Cortland, OH. Bring a lawn chair!

The Master Gardeners will also be bringing back their popular plant sale on May 18th from 9AM to 2PM. This is a great place to buy plants that you know will do great in your garden, and all the proceeds go right back into providing gardening education to Trumbull County. We will have lots of perennials, annuals, and the popular garden tool tent. Please bring cash or check, we are unable to process credit or debit cards.

For more information about 4H, FCS, Agriculture, or Master Gardeners please 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 Events

Master Gardener Plant Sale
May 18th

Spring 2019 Beef Twilight Tour
May 30th

Skip the Landfill: Composting 101
June 3rd – Ashtabula OSUE

Untold Stories of the Garden with Danae Wolfe
June 24th - Ashtabula Co. District Library - FREE

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity.
Skip the Landfill:
Composting 101

Monday, June 3rd 2019, 6:00 – 7:30 P.M.

RSVP today to come learn about how you can take the food and lawn waste you usually throw away, and turn it into beneficial, money saving compost. The benefits of composting include: reducing waste that ends up in the county landfill, improve soil quality, and supplying valuable soil nutrients and use less fertilizer.

Come learn how to make compost work for you, different types of compost systems (Including composting with worms), and solutions to any of your compost issues. Enjoy presentations from Dan Brown, Ashtabula County Local Foods Coordinator, Suzanne Westlake from Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District, and Andrew Holden, Ashtabula County ANR Educator.

Location: Ashtabula County Ohio State Extension Office – Jefferson Ohio
Contact: Contact Andrew Holden at Holden.155@osu.edu or call 440-576-9008

Cost: $10

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Skip the Landfill: Composting 101

Monday, June 3rd 2019, 6:00 – 7:30 P.M.

Cost: $10.00 RSVP by May 31st
Checks payable to OSU Extension Ashtabula

Details: The benefits of composting include: reducing waste that ends up in the county landfill, improve soil quality, and supplying valuable soil nutrients and use less fertilizer.

Come learn how to make compost work for you, different types of compost systems (Including composting with worms), and solutions to any of your compost issues. Enjoy presentations from Dan Brown, Ashtabula County Local Foods Coordinator, Suzanne Westlake from Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District, and Andrew Holden, Ashtabula County ANR Educator.

More information: Please contact Andrew Holden at Holden.155@osu.edu or 440-576-9008

Ashtabula County Extension Office
39 Wall Street, Jefferson, OH 44047
Downstairs Meeting Room

Please register by May 31st by sending in a completed form to the Ashtabula County Extension office at: 39 Wall Street, Jefferson, OH 44047 or calling 440-576-9008 Checks payable to OSU Extension Ashtabula

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Phone: ______________ Email: ______________

Pay (please circle): AT DOOR / MAIL-IN

https://go.osu.edu/Cqp5

We Sustain Life

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Thursday, May 30th, 6:30 P.M.

The Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association and the Ohio State University Extension invite you to join us for this year’s Spring Beef Twilight Tour on May 30th in Dorset, Ohio. The Paul Farm has been in beef production in Dorset since the 1970’s. The tour will showcase a facility that features a Murray Grey cow-calf operation and a rotational pasture system. Guests will enjoy information from several entities including: Hickory Nut Fencing, USDA NRCS, and Fowler Seed Marketing.

All beef producers and industry individuals are invited. No reservations are needed. Don’t miss this opportunity to visit this outstanding operation. See you there May 30th!

A Free Beef Hamburger and Hotdog Meal will be served at the conclusion of the program, compliments of Cherry Valley Slaughtering & Processing.

Thank you to Joe and Barb Paul for hosting this event!

Location: 4564 Hayes Rd. Dorset, OH 44032
Cost: Free  Contact Information: Call Andrew Holden at 440-576-9008 or Email Holden.155@osu.edu