I hope each of you had a very relaxing Memorial Day weekend. I would like to thank all of our nation’s Veterans for the sacrifices and service which they gave in order to provide all of us with the many freedoms which we enjoy. Thank you! With the nice weather I know many Memorial Day picnics were held in the fields this year. Good progress is being made across the county. Congratulations to the 14 youth who were selected to receive an agricultural scholarship for next fall. Congratulations are extended to Chalet Debonne’ and Ferrante Wineries for winning Ohio Top Wines. I also had a few interesting stories cross my in-box this week. I have included them in today’s issue. The one is a nice article on GMOs and I would be interested in hearing back on your farm retail therapy stories! Have a good week!

David Marrison, AG Educator

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14 Ashtabula County Scholarship Recipients Selected
The Ashtabula County Agricultural Scholarship Fund was founded on April 29, 1952 by a group of local leaders to help promote interest in the study of agriculture, home economics, environmental sciences, and natural resources. Since then, the committee has grown to also additional community scholarships which are open to any student regardless of the college major. This scholarship program is driven by a super group of Ashtabula County volunteers and supported by countless families, agribusiness firms and prior recipients.

This year, OSU Extension and the Ag Scholarship Fund Committee are pleased to announce the scholarship committee was able to present a total of $13,000 in scholarship money to fourteen outstanding young people. It was a tough selection process for our committee as we were impressed with all the applications submitted for consideration. The scholarship recipients chosen were:

Allison Crouch, daughter of Elizabeth and Kenneth Crouch of Andover, is a recipient of a $1,000 Agricultural Scholarship Fund award. Allison will graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School this spring and will attend Wilmington College next fall majoring in Agriculture Education.

Jackson Bogardus, son of David and Sarah Bogardus of Andover, is also a recipient of a $1,000 Agricultural Scholarship Fund award. Jackson will graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School this spring and will attend Hocking College next fall majoring in Wildlife Resource Management.
Jessica Grady, daughter of Angela and Patrick Grady of Rome, is also a recipient of a $1,000 Agricultural Scholarship Fund award. Jessica will graduate from Grand Valley High School this spring and will attend Westminster College next fall majoring in Environmental Science.

Logan Fetters, son of Brad and Jodie Fetters of Jefferson, is the recipient of the $1,000 Service-Jerome Scholarship. Logan will graduate from Jefferson High School and the ATECH this spring and will attend The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI) next fall majoring in agricultural power equipment.

Andrew Holden, son of Glen and Robin Holden of Pierpont, is the recipient of the $1,000 Alan C. Jerome Memorial Scholarship. Andrew will graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School this spring and will attend The Ohio State University next fall majoring in AgriBusiness.

Katie Peck, daughter of Jim and Jackie Peck of Geneva, is the recipient of the $1,000 Harold and Dick Springer Memorial Scholarship. Katie is a 2014 graduate of Geneva High School and is attending Heidelberg University majoring in Environmental Sciences.

Sydney Baldwin, daughter of Joel and Jessica Baldwin of Sheffield, is a recipient of a $1,000 Ashtabula County Holstein Club Scholarship. Sydney is a 2013 graduate of Jefferson Area High School and is attending The Ohio State University majoring in Radiologic Technology.

Nicole Mann, daughter of Sharon Mann and Tim Mann of Pierpont, is also a recipient of a $1,000 Ashtabula County Holstein Club Scholarship. Nicole will graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School this spring and will attend The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI) next fall majoring in Dairy Production and Management.

Bailee Mazzaro, daughter of Tom and Charity Mazzaro of Williamsfield, is the recipient of the Lester C. Marrison Memorial Scholarship. Bailee is a 2014 graduate of Pymatuning Valley High School and is currently attending The Ohio State University majoring in Agricultural Communications.

Sarah Piper, daughter of Frank and Beverly Piper of Dorset, is the recipient of the $1,000 Kellogg Family Memorial Scholarship. Sarah will graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School this spring and will attend Ohio Christian College next fall majoring in business management.

James Riley, son of Ron and Wendy Riley of Williamsfield, is the recipient of a $1,000 Western Reserve Farm Cooperative Scholarship. James is a 2014 graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School and is currently attending Westminster College majoring in Accounting and Business Administration.

Rachel Yilit, daughter of Michael and Jan Yilit, is also a recipient of a $1,000 Western Reserve Farm Cooperative Scholarship. Rachel is 2013 graduate of Charleroi Area High School in Pennsylvania and is currently attending Kent State University majoring in Nursing.

Miranda Stover, daughter of Steven and Joanne Stover of Kingsville, is the recipient of the $500 Jim Baird Memorial Scholarship. Miranda will graduate from Edgewood High School this spring and will attend the Mount Vernon Nazarene University next fall majoring in Early Childhood Education.
Rebecca Dillon, daughter of Steve and Lynne Dillon, is the recipient of the $500 Lautanen Family 4-H Scholarship. Rebecca will graduate from Pymatuning Valley High School this spring and will be attending Kent State University next fall majoring in Biochemistry Pre-Medicine. Ashtabula County, you should be proud of Sydney, Jackson, Allison, Rebecca, Jessica, Logan, Andrew, Bailee, Nicole, Katie, Sarah, James, Miranda, and Rachel. They are super individuals and a great reflection of all that is good in Ashtabula County.

**ODA Honors Top Wines in Ohio**

By Ashley McDonald, ODA

Ohio Agriculture Director David T. Daniels honored the Director’s Choice recipients at a recent event held at the Statehouse for retailers, distributors, restaurateurs and winery owners. More than 20 wines were evaluated by a panel of judges, on behalf of Director Daniels, for the highly coveted award.

The 2015 award recipients are:

**White Wine:** 2013 Ferrante Grand River Valley Riesling

**Red Wine:** 2013 Raven’s Glenn R2 Noiret

**Specialty Wine:** 2013 Debonne’ Vidal Blanc Ice Wine

All of the Director’s Choice award recipients are eligible for the Ohio Quality Wine designation. It was created in 2007 by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee and is assigned to wines made from at least 90 percent Ohio-grown grapes. These wines must also achieve at least 15 of 20 points on a sensory evaluation and pass a chemical analysis before receiving the quality seal. Ohio’s grape and wine production is an integral component of Ohio’s $105 billion food and agriculture industry.

Ohio Department of Agriculture Director David T. Daniels (center) presents the Director’s Choice Award to Nick Ferrante (left) and Jim Arbaczewski (right) of Ferrante Winery for their white wine, 2013 Ferrante Grand River Valley Riesling. Ohio Department of Agriculture Director David T. Daniels (left) presents the Director’s Choice Award to Joel Sandrey of Debonne’ Winery for their specialty wine, 2013 Debonne’ Vidal Blanc Ice Wine.

**Coyotes, Dens & Pups**

By Marne Titchenell, titchenell.4@osu.edu

April through May is the time of year when female coyotes (Canis latrans) reluctantly enter underground dens to birth their pups. With their incredibly heightened senses of hearing and smell, confinement in a small underground den limits these senses making coyotes even more nervous than normal. However, the female recognizes underground dens are a safe and protective place for her pups; therefore she reluctantly makes the necessary decent underground. Coyote dens can be located within or under a downed tree, under rock outcroppings, or in an existing burrow vacated by a raccoon or skunk. Coyotes will also dig out their own den if necessary. Dens are usually concealed by protective vegetation and found on a slope to aid in drainage.

A coyote pack is very dedicated to the survival of the current year’s pups and will defend the area around the den against threats. What kind of threats? To a coyote defending pups, a threat may be a curious dog out for a stroll in the park or perhaps a hiker spending a warm spring day in the woods. It’s no coincidence that this is also the time of
year when the highest amount of conflict between coyotes and medium to large sized dogs occurs. During times of
the year other than the pup birthing season, medium to large sized dogs usually emit enough of a presence to deter a
coyote. However, coyotes are much more defensive this time of year in order to protect their pups from harm. A
dog or person that accidentally wanders too close to a coyote den may encounter a parent coyote that is much less
likely to be scared off and will often hold their ground. If such a coyote is encountered, back away slowly and try to
avoid the area for the next few months. By July and August the pups should be out and about and able to move on
their own, and the parents will be a little less defensive of the denning area.

While medium to large sized dogs can typically hold their own when it comes to coyotes, the same isn’t true of cats
and small dogs. Cat owners should think twice about letting cats roam outside, especially at night, if coyotes are
known to be in the area. Small dog owners should always keep an eye on their pets when walking them at any time
of day. At night, small dogs should be kept on a short leash when walking. If a coyote is encountered, pick up the
small dog and harass the coyote until it moves away. Harassing is yelling at the coyote, waving your arm (the one
NOT holding the dog), or throwing something in the general direction of the coyote (not directly AT the coyote). The
coyote should respond to this harassment by running away. If it does not, or proceeds to follow you, return home or
to the nearest building and try to note any distinguishing characteristics of the coyote. Aggressive or fearless coyotes
should be reported to a nuisance wildlife control operator or company for removal. Several OSU Extension
FactSheets on coyote conflict and damage management can be found at

Homeowners with coyote dens nearby are usually aware of said dens. Both the adults and pups are very vocal,
especially at the end of the day when the pack is together. Barking, yipping, yowling, and of course, howling can be
heard from quite a distance away. A coyote pack consists of the alpha male and female, a few other adult coyotes,
and the new litter of pups. In urban areas, packs are typically 5 - 6 coyotes plus the pups. Litter sizes range from 4 - 6
pups but can be larger or smaller based on available resources. A fascinating ability of coyotes is that they are able to
adjust their litter sizes based on food abundance and population density (litter sizes of 11 pups have been reported).
In urban areas, coyote litters tend be larger, which indicates there is plenty of food available. For more information
on urban coyotes, visit [ http://urbancoyoteresearch.org ] to learn about research studying urban coyotes in Chicago
metropolitan region.

Say Hey to this Hay Pricing App
Source: http://www.agweb.com/article/say-hey-to-this-hay-pricing-app-NAA-ben-potter/

Freshly mowed hay is one of the most iconic and pleasant smells in all of farming. But negotiating the sale of standing
hay isn’t nearly as pleasant. A new mobile app from University of Wisconsin Extension hopes to change that.

The app, simply called Hay Pricing, helps farmers review current and historic hay prices, and estimate the value of standing hay. Although the app was
developed by UW Extension, users can pull hay prices from 20 states. They can also input projected hay yield, cutting schedule and harvest costs to better
predict their hay value.

Greg Blonde, Waupaca County Extension ag agent, says because there is not an
established commodity market for hay as there is for corn or soybeans, finding
reliable market information can be a challenge. “This new mobile tool will help
farmers and rural landowners access the latest hay market information on the go, plus give them a simple tool to
help estimate field value when considering buying or selling standing hay.” Blonde says others who may find the
Pricing Hay app useful include Extension educators, feed and crop consultants, lenders, rural appraisers and real
estate professionals.
The Hay Pricing app was developed by Smart mAAPS Consulting, which also created an app last fall called Pricing Wet Corn to help buyers and sellers better manage an immature corn crop. Both apps are free to download for Android devices at the Google Play store.

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 provided by Blue Line Entertainment and 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.

Vegetable of the Week - Rhubarb (Rheum rhabarbarum)
Author: Julie S. Crook; crook.46@osu.edu

Rhubarb is an easy to grow cool season, perennial vegetable. It is grown for its leafstalks that have a tangy flavor and is great in pies and jams, especially when combined with strawberries.

Rhubarb grows best in fertile, well-drained soils that have good organic content. The planting area should be cleared of any weeds. Proper soil preparation will help rhubarb stay healthy and productive for years. Since rhubarb is a long lived perennial, it should be planted to one side or at the end of the garden so as not to interfere with planting and growing annual vegetables. Some gardeners find the rhubarb plant suitable to include in a perennial flower bed because of its ornamental texture and size.

Planting rhubarb seeds is not recommended in Ohio; it is generally purchased as divisions or crowns. These crowns are best planted in early spring though they can also be planted in the fall after dormancy sets in. Each rhubarb plant requires approximately one square yard of space. The crowns should be covered with 1 - 2" of soil. Planting the crowns too deep will delay growth and production.

Rhubarb should not be harvested the first year in order for the plant to become well established. It is best to remove the flower stalks as they appear; this allows the plant to channel its energy into the leafstalk production. Allowing rhubarb to produce seed will also reduce the overall vigor of the plant.

In Ohio rhubarb is harvested in late May and throughout June. It is best to stop harvesting when the plant starts to produce thin stalks which is a sign the plant's reserves are low.
Do Farmers Have the Need for Retail Therapy?
By Jessica Lavicky, author of The Fence Post Blog
http://farmprogress.com/blogs-The-Fence-Post-56-fcb

Retail therapy: The act of shopping as an outlet for frustration and a reliever of stress.

Do farmers have a type of retail therapy? I can’t imagine buying parts, or seed corn would actually relieve stress. More like cause it. It doesn't happen often, but there are times where I need a half day of retail therapy to unwind, calm down and just reset. This last time around it was a win-win situation; I actually needed some nice dress spring/summer clothes.

I spent a good hour online surfing through a couple of my favorite stores, checking out the new arrivals and trying to get the best price for what I wanted. This last time, I went overboard. After shopping online, I met up with a friend and we shopped for another few hours at the local mall. Ouch. My wallet took a huge dent.

Luckily, some of the online items I bought I had to return. Wrong size, wrong fit, or just....wrong. That’s what you get sometimes when you buy online. Do farmers have a type of retail therapy? I can't imagine buying parts, or seed corn would actually relieve stress. More like cause it.

What would be their type of retail therapy? Buying shop rags? A new pair of pliers? A new pair of work boots! Maybe some would go and buy a new tractor or that new manure spreader they have been eyeing. Now let's talk about buyer's remorse!

GMO Debate Heats up in Sacramento
By Sammy Caiola, scaiola@sacbee.com

Is Chipotle pandering to unfounded fears? Or is it protecting consumers from hidden threats? The answer likely depends on where you stand on GMOs. In April, the burrito chain announced the removal of nearly all genetically modified ingredients from its nearly 2,000 restaurants. “Chipotle is on a never-ending journey to source the highest-quality ingredients we can find,” the company states on its website. “Over the years, as we have learned more about GMOs, we’ve decided that using them in our food doesn’t align with that vision.” GMO proponents call the move irresponsible. Critics call it overdue.

The fight over GMOs has been called “the World War I of food issues.” It’s a battle that is far from over. On May 21, demonstrators blocked entrances to biotech titan Monsanto’s Woodland plant to call attention to its role in producing genetically modified foods and pesticides. The protest kicked off a weekend of demonstrations worldwide against Monsanto.

Man’s ability to tinker with a crop’s genetic makeup has evolved a great deal since Gregor Mendel’s 19th-century pollination discoveries. A modified corn seed from Monsanto spends up to seven years in a lab receiving genetic and chemical fortifications (and a striking neon treatment coat) before it’s planted. The result is increased pest resistance, weed-killer resistance and water efficiency for about 90 percent of the nation’s corn and soybean crops. It’s been a boon to farmers. But it’s making some consumers cringe.

Despite findings from the American Medical Association, the World Health Organization and the U.S. Food and Drug Association that eating GM food poses little to no risk to human health, fears persist. Every major scientific organization in the world has concluded that the GM crops that are currently on the market are safe to eat, and these are precisely the same organizations that most of us trust when it comes to the changing of the climate or the
need for vaccines. (Pamela Ronald, director of UC Davis’ Laboratory for Crop Genetics Innovation and Scientific Literacy)

A recent Pew survey found that while 88 percent of scientists say GMO foods are safe to eat, 57 percent of Americans believe they are unsafe. GMO opponents cite a lack of long-term studies, and say genetically modified crops may harm the food chain and environment. Many global entities, including eight member nations of the European Union, have fully or partially banned the cultivation of genetically modified seeds. The USDA hinted earlier this month that it may soon provide a voluntary non-GMO certification that companies can request. To help you decide if eating GMOs is right for you, we’ve put together a primer:

Genetically modified vs. genetically engineered
The shorthand for the debate is “genetically modified,” but “genetically engineered” is perhaps the more appropriate term. Farmers have genetically modified plants for ages through cross-breeding – a pollinating technique used to select the most desirable traits in crops by crossing them with more successful varieties. The result is what we call a hybrid crop (cue the pluot); even organic farmers grow them.

Genetic engineering usually refers to the use of recombinant DNA methods to directly insert a gene from another organism into the DNA of host plant cells to transfer over a specific trait into a seed. Genetic engineering in the United States is approved for about 20 crops, according to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications’ list. It’s mostly used to produce corn and soybean for cattle feed and ethanol production. “It sounds scary,” Tawny Hendrix, 23, said while eating at a midtown Chipotle last week. “I think plants should just grow how they grow. Why are we messing with nature?”

But “messing with nature” is likely a key to feeding a growing population with a depleting pool of resources, GMO advocates say. “To advance agriculture, and to help maintain the safety of farmworkers and to advance the health of children here and abroad, we really need science-based practices,” said Pamela Ronald, director of UC Davis’ Laboratory for Crop Genetics Innovation and Scientific Literacy. “People are getting their information about health from Chipotle and Whole Foods and major corporations that are trying to sell you things, and that’s really not accurate.”

Why do farmers use genetically modified seeds?
GM seeds are aggressive. They resist viruses, they tolerate environmental stressors, and most bugs want nothing to do with them. The crops they produce tend to be bigger and last longer in travel. They’re also extremely efficient, said Topper van Loben Sels of Amistad Ranches Inc. in Courtland. Monsanto’s biotech seeds are “Roundup Ready,” meaning they’re engineered to be resistant to an herbicide called Roundup, which is made from a chemical called glyphosate.

This isn’t about producing the best product or doing the right thing. When we have a supply and demand curve, it all becomes, at the end of the day, about what the return is. That’s where we become disconnected from our food. Brenda Ruiz, Biba chef and policy chair for Slow Food California. With the conventional herbicide, farmers usually have to make several passes over the land to prepare a fine soil bed and pre-irrigate the soil in order for herbicides to take effect. Van Loben Sels said he makes just two passes to prepare the field instead of 11, which saves him fuel, keeps his soil moist, and minimizes dust and chemicals his workers breathe.

The Courtland farm’s entire corn crop and alfalfa crop, both used for cattle feed, are grown from modified Monsanto seeds, which van Loben Sels buys from his local fertilizer dealer. Though he’s forced to buy new Monsanto seeds every year due to the company’s strict patenting agreements, he says he’d do it for all of his crops if the seeds were available in California. “I call it the water-friendly, worker-friendly seed,” he said.
What about environmental concerns?
The mass distribution of Roundup in the United States is worrisome to GMO opponents who believe the chemical damages the soil, though the USDA’s Extension Toxicology Network and the Environmental Protection Agency have both found the product to be nonvolatile. While GM proponents insist that herbicide use will decrease with the use of engineered crops, some studies have shown that it has actually increased due to the need for more Roundup on “super weeds” that become resistant to glyphosate. A 2013 report from Food & Water Watch found that the total volume of glyphosate applied to the three biggest GM crops – corn, cotton and soybeans – has risen tenfold since its introduction in 1996. Many have also voiced concern that the chemical has contributed to the declining honeybee population in the United States.

What are the health concerns about GM foods?
While the consumption of genetically modified foods has not yet been shown to cause harm to humans, those opposed to the idea believe there’s another shoe to drop. A recent Pew survey found that while 88 percent of scientists say GMO foods are safe to eat, 57 percent of Americans believe they are unsafe. The often-cited American Academy of Environmental Medicine, an alternative medicine organization that also opposes vaccines and water fluoridation, lists study after study showing the adverse effects of genetically engineered crops on animals, including infertility, accelerated aging and changes in the liver, kidney, spleen and gastrointestinal system.

However, a report published in the Journal of Animal Science, considered by many to be the most comprehensive look so far at the effects of GM foods, found that it was safe for consumption and did not cause any significant harm to the 100 billion animals studied. Many used the study, headed by UC Davis geneticist Alison Van Eenennaam, to declare the GM argument over. (UCD receives some research funding from Monsanto.)

Adding to the debate, the World Health Organization in March declared glyphosate a probable carcinogen, adding it to a long list of other things that may cause cancer including art glass, wood smoke and high-temperature frying. Though the relevance of the categorization has been questioned by many scientists, it’s also being used to fuel a fierce national debate about whether the USDA has a responsibility to label genetically engineered food products.

Where do local chefs stand on the issue?
In the farm-to-fork capital, there are no shortage of opinions on GM foods. While several high-profile chefs, including Brenda Ruiz of Biba, have taken a stance against GMOs, others aren’t opposed to them. Patrick Mulvaney of Mulvaney’s B&L said he feels like “the unicorn in the room” when the topic of GMOs comes up among chefs. Mulvaney does not know if the ingredients he sources are genetically engineered. He assumes they aren’t, but he doesn’t ask because genetic engineering is, in his opinion, “a technique, not a problem.” When Mulvaney purchases his ingredients, he buys from places that fit his definition of sustainability – a healthy farm, a healthy business and healthy workers. He does not believe GM foods conflict with that.

Read more here: http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article21614607.html#storylink=cpy

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