I hope each of you had a great Memorial Day Weekend and that you had time to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. I had a nice time planting geraniums for the Sewing Hayseeds 4-H Club on Saturday at the cemeteries in New Lyme. Kudos to this great group of kids for honoring our Veterans! It has been a beautiful stretch of weather to finish off the last half of May. I know many are pleased with how much has been planted in the past two weeks. Some really nice baleage has also been made and as I walked our hay fields this weekend, the timothy heads were pushing out, which means it is at its highest feed value time. In fact, you can thank me for the nice rain on Sunday evening as I had just cut some hay! The next chance for rain is Thursday so it will be another couple of busy days here in Ashtabula County. Have a good and safe week.

David Marrison, Ashtabula County Ag & NR Educator

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Northeast Ohio Agronomic Crops Report
By Les Ober, CCA & Program Assistant for Agriculture for Geauga County
Source: http://neohiocropweather.blogspot.com/

For producer who grow wheat this is ground zero for your crop. The time for greatest disease risk for Wheat has arrived. In NE Ohio where heat and humidity can be a problem the risk of Fusarium Head Scab is all too real. Producer need to be scouting there fields now. With all of the recent heat Wheat is heading. In a few days it will start to flower. This is when you need to get on line and find out what the risk level is. The following article will give all of the information you need to determine your risk level.

Wheat Scab Update: Late-May 2016
By Pierce Paul & Jorge David Salgado

Wheat is now flowering in parts of central Ohio and will continue to flower in more northern counties later this week and into next week. According to the FHB forecasting system (http://www.wheatscab.psu.edu/), the risk for scab is low in central and northern Ohio for fields flowering at this time (May 23). Although it has rained fairly consistently over the last 7-14 days, conditions were relatively cool last week, which likely reduced the risk of the scab fungus infecting the wheat spikes. Scab develops best under moderate to warm temperatures and humid conditions.
Continue to keep your eyes on the weather and the forecasting system over the next week or so as there is rain in the forecast and warmer temperatures for later this week. Fields flowering at the end of this week or early next week (May 25-30) may still be at risk for scab. Prosaro and Caramba are the two fungicides recommended for head scab control. Stay away from the strobilurins when the risk for scab is high as they have been linked to higher grain contamination with vomitoxin. Click on the links below to see updated factsheet # PLPATH-CER-06 for more on head scab of wheat and barley and factsheet # PLPATH-CER-03 for guidelines on how to use and interpret the scab forecasting system.
http://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/plpath-cer-06
http://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/plpath-cer-03

Here is the latest Agronomic Crops report for NE Ohio

- Corn 80% planted and 20% emerged. Despite a slow start corn is emerging fast and off to a good start.
- Soybeans; 70% planted and 10% emerged.
- Oats 100% emerged. Be on the watch for Cereal Leaf Beetle
- Wheat: is now heading and looking good with very little disease pressure to this point.
- Forages: Alfalfa and some Orchard Grass is ready to run. There has been very little Alfalfa Weevil pressure. Producers are taking advantage of the weather and dropping hay everywhere.

Botulism Prevention with Small Grain Baleage
Mr. Rory Lewandowski, Extension Agriculture Educator, Wayne County, The Ohio State University Extension

Recently, I had a question from a dairy farmer concerning possible botulism in some small grain baleage. Bacteria in the clostridial family are responsible for producing the dangerous toxin that causes botulism. These clostridial bacteria are found everywhere in the soil and are common on plant material during harvest. Clostridial bacteria are active when forage moisture is high, above 65% moisture. The other condition that serves as a warning signal for the potential production of the botulism toxin is an anaerobic (no air) condition combined with poor fermentation. Poor fermentation is usually indicated by a forage pH of greater than 4.5. Clostridial bacteria will not grow if the pH is below 4.5.

Over the past several years, the practice of planting cereal rye as a winter cover crop and then harvesting that cereal rye as an early spring forage crop has become more common. Another practice where a small grain is routinely used as forage is to plant oats as a nurse crop with a new alfalfa seeding. The oats is then harvested early, typically at late boot to early heading stage of maturity. In either situation, the small grain crop is generally chopped and put into a silo as silage or is cut and baled at a high moisture content and wrapped with plastic as baleage. Both of these harvest methods depend upon fermentation to produce a safe, quality forage.

Good forage fermentation depends upon lactic acid production to reduce pH to 4.5 or lower, ensiling or wrapping at the proper moisture content, and the exclusion of air. Forage pH is a primary indicator of quality and botulism risk in cereal grain baleage. Clostridial bacteria can grow at a pH of 5 or higher. Be very cautious of feeding small grain baleage with a pH of 5.5 or higher. If the baleage has a putrid or ammonia smell to it, this should serve as another warning sign for potential botulism. Producers may wish to test the pH of any baleage which is suspect. Electronic hand-held pH meters can be purchased from most any agricultural supply catalog store, such as Nasco or Gemplers.

Water-soluble carbohydrates (WSC) provide the sugars needed for the lactic acid-producing bacteria to lower the pH. Cereal forages, such as rye, wheat, and oats, have lower WSC contents than corn or sorghum species, so management practices become very important. Chopping forage helps to bring the WSC located inside plant cells into contact with lactic acid producing bacteria which are on the outside of the plant. The lack of chopping in baleage production is an obstacle to optimum fermentation. Another consideration is weather. WSC content can decline once the forage has been cut, begun to dry down, and then is rained on. As WSC content declines, it becomes more of a
challenge to get a low forage pH during the fermentation process.

Rye, wheat, or oat baleage must be made at the correct moisture percentage to obtain good fermentation and avoid potential problems with clostridial bacteria. Ideally, baleage should be made when the forage is at 40 to 60% moisture. Strive for a 50% moisture average on bales. As mentioned earlier, clostridial bacteria that produce the botulism toxin like wet conditions. Small grain baleage at greater than 65% moisture increases the risk for botulism toxin production. Also, the risk for bolulism in baleage increases with increased soil contamination and baling of dead animals within the forage.

Excluding air and getting a dense, tightly packed bale is another important step to get good forage fermentation and to produce a safe, quality baleage product. As rye, wheat, and oats mature, this becomes more difficult because fiber content increases and the plants are not as pliable. Bales should be wrapped as quickly as possible. A good goal is to wrap within 2 hours of baling, but certainly no later than 8 to 10 hours after baling. There is quite a lot of research that indicates a minimum of four layers of 1 mil plastic is needed to get a good seal on the bale, and the plastic should be UV resistant. If bales are going to be stored for long term (greater than 6 months), applying six layers of plastic is recommended. Inspect bales on a regular basis and patch any holes in the plastic with tape made specifically for plastic.

**USDA Extends Deadline for Recording Farm Structure**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on May 27, 2016 a one-time, 30-day extension to the June 1 deadline for recording farm organization structures related to *Actively Engaged in Farming* determinations. This date is used to determine the level of interest an individual holds in a legal entity for the applicable program year. Farming operations will now have until July 1 to complete their restructuring or finalize any operational change. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued the extension in response to farmers and ranchers who requested more time to comply, and to assure that everyone has enough time to provide their information under the new rules.

“Most farming and ranching organizations have been able to comply with the actively engaged rule,” said Vilsack. “This one-time extension should give producers who may still need to update their farm structure information the additional time to do so.”

The 2014 Farm Bill provided the Secretary with the direction and authority to amend the *Actively Engaged in Farming* rules related to management. The final rule established limits on the number of individuals who can qualify as actively engaged using only management. Only one payment limit for management is allowed under the rule, with the ability to request up to two additional qualifying managers operations for large and complex operations.

The rule does not apply to farming operations comprised entirely of family members. The rule also does not change the existing regulations related to contributions of land, capital, equipment or labor, or the existing regulations related to landowners with a risk in the crop or to spouses. Producers that planted fall crops have until the 2017 crop year to comply with the new rules. The payment limit associated with Farm Service Agency farm payments is generally limited annually to $125,000 per individual or entity.

Since 2009, USDA has worked to strengthen and support American agriculture, an industry that supports one in 11 American jobs, provides American consumers with more than 80 percent of the food we consume, ensures that Americans spend less of their paychecks at the grocery store than most people in other countries, and supports markets for homegrown renewable energy and materials. USDA has also provided $5.6 billion of disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; expanded risk management tools with products like to Whole Farm Revenue Protection; and helped farm businesses grow with $36 billion in farm credit. The Department has engaged its resources to support a strong next generation of farmers and ranchers by improving access to land and capital; building new markets and market opportunities; extending new conservation opportunities. USDA has developed new markets for rural-made
products, including more than 2,500 biobased products through USDA’s BioPreferred program; and invested $64 billion in infrastructure and community facilities to help improve the quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/results.

NOAA Issues Summer Weather Outlook
By Ben Potter
http://www.agweb.com/article/noaa-issues-summer-weather-outlook-naa-ben-potter/

Memorial Day is the unofficial start to summer. Now that it’s behind us, what sort of weather can we reasonably expect to see this season? NOAA recently issued its June/July/August outlook. Here are some highlights.

NOAA forecasters are expecting warmer-than-average temperatures across most of the U.S. this summer. The only area forecasted for normal summer temperatures are in South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma.

For precipitation, NOAA anticipates normal amounts across much of the U.S., but says New England and the western Corn Belt are the two geographies most likely to see a wetter-than-average summer.

NOAA also released its seasonal drought outlook, valid through the end of August. Drought is expected to persist in areas of the Southwest and California. Drought development is most likely in Pennsylvania, northern Minnesota and western North Dakota, and a large area of the Pacific Northwest.

NOAA will issue its next three-month outlook on June 16. For more information, visit www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov.

New FDA Food Label Highlights Dairy’s Value
by Corey Geiger, Managing Editor
Source: http://www.hoards.com

All food labels in stores will have a different look in a few short years. Notable changes include:

- Vitamin D and potassium levels must be declared on all food labels.
- Lactose, if added as part of dried and concentrated dairy ingredients, will not be counted as added sugar.
- Calories from fat will be dropped from nutrition labels. Meanwhile, source of fat — saturated versus trans — continues to be a label requirement; mounting evidence has shown trans fat is detrimental to human health. Saturated fats, such as those found in dairy foods, have beneficial attributes.

For dairy foods, these updates by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would be deemed a win. All of the above updated label requirements will
be implemented on food package labels by July 2018 for manufacturers with over $10 million in sales. All remaining companies will need to comply with the edict by July 2019.

In dropping vitamins A and C and adding vitamin D and potassium to dietary labels, FDA has called out vitamin D, potassium, calcium, and iron as under-consumed dietary needs by Americans. The good news for dairy is that three of these four — calcium, potassium, and vitamin D — are readily found in dairy products. “The Nutrition Facts panel is an important part of nearly every food package sold in the United States and serves as an integral component of nutrition education and information for consumers,” said Cary Frye, International Dairy Foods Association vice president for regulatory and scientific affairs. “As such, it is important that the Nutrition Facts panel reflect the very best nutritional science available.”

Not only is the story changing for fats, but sugars, too. “Scientific data shows that it is difficult to meet nutrient needs while staying within calorie limits if you consume more than 10 percent of your total daily calories from added sugar,” wrote FDA officials. “This is consistent with the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.” For this reason, the new label will include a line calling out added sugars. Click for more information on FDA’s new food label requirements at: http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm385663.htm#images

**How Will New Lease Accounting Rules Affect You?**

By: Paul Neiffer


If you borrow money from a bank for farm operations, you will likely have loan covenants that call for certain net worth to debt ratios. Recently released accounting standards regarding lease accounting may require your bank to change these covenants. Knowing how these new rules will affect your farm is important so that you can plan with your bank accordingly. The good news is that these rules do not go into effect until 2020.

If you purchase equipment using a capital lease, the rules do not change too much. There is some tweaking on how the lease is calculated and how to report the lease in your footnotes to your financial statements, but that is about it. The major change deals with operating leases, especially cash lease farm ground. If you rent farm land under a cash lease and the contract is for more than a year, you will be required to capitalize the lease payments as both an asset and a liability on your balance sheet. Many farmers have rental arrangements that can last ten years or more. Also, if the lease is only for a year, but it is highly likely that the lease will continue, the rules require you to determine your estimated length of the lease and book those payments too.

*For example, assume Farmer Jones cash leases 1,000 acres at $300 per acre on a five-year contract. He will be required to book an asset of about $1.5 million (it will be less due to an “interest” discount) and a liability for about the same amount (there can be differences based on timing of lease payments). Under the old rules, no asset or liability was required. If his net worth was $1 million and he had debt of $1 million, his net worth to debt ratio was 1:1. Under the new rules, his net worth remains the same, however, his liabilities now rise to $2.5 million. This reduces his net worth to debt ratio from 1:1 to .4:1 which is a dramatic drop even though economically nothing has changed.*

Additionally, if Farmer Jones had farmed this ground for many years and is expected to continue farming after the five years is up, he may need to book even more of a liability. The key is to know the new rules and how it might affect your operation and your relationship with your bank.
Cattle Pricing - We Need A Little Perspective
By – John F. Grimes, OSU Extension Beef Coordinator (This article first appeared in the April, 2016 issue of The Ohio Cattleman magazine)

The first months of 2016 have flown by as we’ve now moved deep into the spring season. A flurry of activity since the first of the year has kept beef producers extremely busy and with Ohio’s calving season nearly over producers are busy with breeding season, hay making and managing grazing of the spring flush.

Through the 2016 winter “meeting season”, I have had discussions with many individuals involved in all levels of the beef industry about the current status of the beef economy. Much of the discussion has focused on the price volatility in beef markets since the historic price peaks reached in 2014 and the first half of 2015. These once-in-a-lifetime price levels will always be a fond memory for active participants in the market at that time. Unfortunately, the memory of these prices and the current beef economy has combined to make price forecasting and long-term planning a challenging task.

Sales of all classes of cattle at weekly auction markets as well as at production sales featuring bulls and females have seen lower prices compared to the previous 12-24 months. Producers have expressed concerns over the significant drop in prices and where do we go from here. At the risk of oversimplification of a complex economic phenomenon, I think we should review a few of the key factors that impacted prices in the second half of 2015.

The historic price levels of 2014-15 finally encouraged producers to aggressively expand their breeding herds. Fewer heifers entered feedlots and remained on farms and ranches. Expansion was encouraged by the weakening of drought conditions in the western United States. While domestic beef demand has remained positive since the price peak, export sales of beef have struggled due in large part to the strong value of the U.S. dollar in world markets. Much of the rapid drop in fat cattle prices last fall can be attributed to the larger supply of fed cattle at record large carcass weights that resulted in a temporary surplus of beef in the supply chain. Our primary competition in the protein market, pork and poultry, have aggressively increased their overall production as well.

Before we get carried away with too much doom and gloom for the economic outlook for the beef industry, I think producers should keep a realistic view of our current prices from a historical perspective. Much like the euphoria that grain producers felt with $7 per bushel corn a few years back, record high beef prices were not sustainable forever. While beef prices have retreated significantly from the highs of the past couple of years, today’s prices look very favorable compared to any years outside of 2014-15.

In my opinion, the current market for potential herd sires provides a fairly accurate picture of overall beef cattle markets at this time. Average sale prices for bulls in Ohio and across the United States are lower than a year ago but look very similar to 2014. Excellent bulls are in high demand and still bring premium prices. There is solid demand for good bulls as well. It does appear that breeders kept too many bull calves for the current demand as prices for the lower 25% of bulls available is softer than the past couple of years. In other words, buyers are being more discriminating when making purchases this year. This sounds very similar to the consumer of our ultimate end product, beef. Provide the customer with a consistent, high quality product and demand and eventual sales will be positive.

The obvious question that is being asked today is “Where are beef prices heading in the future?” There are folks much smarter than me that can offer a much more qualified response to the previous question. Basic supply and demand economics would suggest that like the beef cowherd expansions before, prices for fed cattle, feeder cattle and calves will move lower based on additional supplies. U.S. and global beef demand will dictate the magnitude of the decline.
While prices may moderate, the short- to intermediate-term outlook is generally positive. However, we must recognize that every segment of beef production including cow-calf, backgrounding, stockers, and feedlots are cash-hungry enterprises that will require aggressive management to remain profitable. Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind:

1. Manage against rising costs by improving production efficiencies.
2. Use technologies that increase production efficiencies and offset the risk of declining revenue.
3. Keep in mind that weather risk is unpredictable and make business decisions that can withstand worst-case scenarios.

I contend that we are still in a very exciting time to be involved in the beef industry. We must accept that future profits will not come as easily as they did in 2014 and 2015. Those who plan ahead wisely by managing costs and making sound marketing decisions can increase their chances of long-term success. The producers that can accomplish this will be given the privilege of producing the best-tasting source of protein for consumers around the world for years to come.

**Ashtabula County 4-H Camp is Filling Up-Get your Reservation in Today!**
One of the highlights of our Extension program during the summer months is all of our 4-H activities. These activities are highlighted by our resident 4-H Camping week at the end of June at 4-H Camp Whitewood in Windsor, Ohio. Each year, we sell out camp with nearly 165 youth ages 8-14 attending this week long camp chaperoned by 35 teenager camp counselors.

This year’s camp will be held from Sunday evening June 26 through Saturday morning July 2, 2016 and the cost of camp is $300 per camper. This camping week is the culmination of a lot of hard work of our 4-H Camp Counselors who began their training program in January. This year’s theme is “The Knights of the Whitewood Table.” Our counselors are having a lot of fun developing activities around this medieval theme for the campers. I am so impressed with the maturity of our counselors and their leadership for our campers.

For campers interested in attending, you may want to have your parents act quickly as our latest update indicated there are only 20 spots left for our camp this year. This is no surprise to me as our camp staff and counselors conduct an exceptional camp! Registration can be completed on-line at [http://www.4hcampwhitewood.com/](http://www.4hcampwhitewood.com/). More information about this camp can also be received by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.

**Cloverbud Fun Days Scheduled for July 5-7**
We do have something for our kids not old enough to attend our week long 4-H camp. Once again this year, two of our great 4-H Advisors will be conducting the “Cloverbud Fun Days” on July 5 to 7, 2016 for kids ages 5-8 years old. This program will be held at the 4-H Expo Building at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds in Jefferson from 9:00 to 12:00 noon each day.

This fun day is packed with crafts, games, and just plain old fashion fun. This program is limited to the first 40 registrants so it is important that you register early as the program sells out each year. The registration fee for the program is $35 per participant. The $35 fee covers snacks, craft supplies and event insurance. Activities will include nature study, creative arts, songs, stories, games and much, much more! Pre-registration is necessary to insure adequate supplies and supervision for your children. For registration details, contact the OSU Extension Office at 576-9008 for more information.
Northeast Ohio Farm Bureau Program Assistant/Intern Position Applications Being Taken

The Northeast Ohio Counties of Farm Bureau is looking to hire a summer program assistant/intern to provide special project and program support to the Organization Director. The position is a 30-40 hours per week from June to August/September, based on student’s availability, class schedule, and workload desire. Flexible scheduling but work may require specific evenings and weekends.

The primary duties include providing support/event coordination to county leaders on county program and special projects as assigned by the Organization. The intern will also assist with membership prospecting and will assist in maintaining a social media presence in the area. The minimum educational requirement is a high school diploma and the person should have the capacity to motivate, enthuse and recognize volunteers, be proficient in basic computer skills, and have strong written and verbal communication skills.

To apply please send resume, cover letter, and references to: Northeast Counties Farm Bureau, 8220 State Route 45, Suite B, Orwell, OH 44076, or email to nefarmbu@fairpoint.net. The deadline to apply is June 6, 2016. For further information, questions, or concerns, please contact Organization Director, Mandy Orahood via e-mail: aorahood@ofbf.org or at 440.437.8700

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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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