This is Farm Science Review Week and I hope many of producers are able to attend. Last week, I was able to attend a training on the dairy portion of the Farm Bill in Canfield. Producers should be aware that I will be offering 2 hour updates on the dairy farm bill across our region in early October. These free programs will allow dairy farmers to learn more about the Dairy Margin Protection Program. Then later this fall and into early winter, I will be offering programs to update crop producers on the crop side of the Farm Bill. Be watching this newsletter for dates for these meetings. Have a good week!

David Marrison, AG Educator

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Frequently Asked Questions About Ohio’s New Agricultural Fertilizer Applicator Certification
Source: Ohio Department of Agriculture
http://www.agri.ohio.gov/apps/odaprs/doc/Senate%20Bill%20150%20FAQs.pdf

In May 2014, Gov. Kasich signed Ohio Senate Bill 150 into law, creating the Agricultural Fertilizer Applicator Program. The first of its kind, the program requires anybody who applies commercial fertilizer to 50 or more acres to attend a course on fertilizer application to become certified by the Ohio Department of Agriculture. In response to the many questions being asked about the program, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has put together a list of Frequently Asked Questions. There are as follows:

Who has to be certified? Do all my employees have to be certified?
Anybody who applies commercial fertilizer to 50 or more acres must be certified. The law also allows for an uncertified person to apply fertilizer if they are under the direct supervision of a person who is certified.

How will the certification process work?
There are three steps in the certification process. You must: fill out an application form, pay an application fee and attend a training session. A person that already has a valid commercial or private pesticide applicator license must apply for the certification but will not be required to pay the application fee. The fertilizer training session will also be included in the pesticide license training beginning in early 2015.

Where can I get trained? When do I need to be certified?
Training will be offered throughout the state on a both a county and regional basis. Persons intending to apply fertilizer on 50 or more acres are encouraged to become certified as soon as possible, no later than Sept. 30, 2017.
How often do I have to renew my certification?
All certifications will be valid for three years, at which point the applicator will need to be recertified. The recertification procedure will be the same as the initial certification procedure.

If I hire someone else to apply my fertilizer do I still have to be certified?
No, however the person hired to apply fertilizer must be certified or under the direct supervision of someone who is certified.

Can I buy fertilizer without a certification?
Yes. The certification is only required if you are intending to apply fertilizer.

What happens if I don’t get certified?
Applying commercial fertilizer after Sept. 30, 2017 without a certification could result in fines and/or being charged with a misdemeanor offense.

How much will it cost?
The initial application fee for fertilizer certification will be the same as the pesticide license fee: $30. A person that already has a valid commercial or private applicator license will not be required to pay the application fee.

Do I have to keep records of my fertilizer usage?
Yes, the bill requires certified applicators to maintain records including, but not limited to the date, place and rate of application of fertilizer, the type of fertilizer and the name of the person applying the fertilizer. Records must be maintained for three years after.

Is my fertilizer usage a public record now?
Generally no, the records must be kept by the certification holder so they can be audited, but are not considered public records because they will not be submitted to the state. However, ODA can take possession of records if conducting an investigation for enforcement action. Those records would then be considered public.

Will I be inspected?
The department will conduct random record audits.

Does this certification offer me any legal protections?
The bill does offer some legal protection against civil suits, certification being one of three components. Additionally, the certified applicator must maintain records and must have an approved nutrient management plan.


Online Tool Helps Dairymen with Farm Bill Options
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency recently announced the launch of the Margin Protection Program for dairy producers, which is a voluntary dairy safety net program that replaces the farm bill's previous milk price and revenue support programs. A new online tool can assist dairy producers in understanding coverage options under the new farm bill. It was developed in part by a dairy economist with Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

The tool helps producers calculate total premium costs and administrative fees associated with the program, as well as forecast MPP payments that will be made during the coverage year and the total MPP benefit that the producer can anticipate. To accompany the tool, the researchers have also developed a series of online educational resources.
and they will host a number of workshops around the country to train producers and educators on how to use the decision tool. In using the MPP online tool, producers can also access a tool to make decisions regarding the Livestock Gross Margin-Dairy insurance program, also in the farm bill.

The MPP online tool can be accessed at: www.dairymarkets.org/MPP or at www.farmdoc.illinois.edu/farmbilltoolbox. The MPP took effect on Sept. 1 and program enrollment began Sept. 2.

**Farm Futures Study Releases Best Places to Farm in United States**


Farm Futures regularly calculates financial ratios and performance for more than 3,000 counties across the country. To develop their latest rankings of **Best Places to Farm**, the group analyzed ag census data from 2002, 2007 and 2012 to calculate countywide financial performance, including return on assets, profit margin, asset turnover and average net farm income. Their rankings are based on the same measures used in other industries: profitability, financial efficiency, and growth.

What was learned? To be sure, the Midwest has long been the cornerstone of food production in this country. However, profits can be found from sea to shining sea. In fact, the most profitable places to farm in the U.S. rose to the top, often despite adversity. Drought, soaring input costs and political interference didn’t keep these growers from returns that would make even the high-fliers in Silicon Valley blush. Profit margins topping 35% and 15% to 20% return on assets make these farms look like the stuff of blue chip dreams.

So where does Northeast Ohio stand?

- Lake County- 2
- Cuyahoga County- 471
- Ashtabula County- 1,323
- Columbiana County- 1,590
- Trumbull County- 1,761
- Portage County- 1,935
- Medina County- 1,995
- Summit County- 2,025
- Geauga County- 2,501

A complete ranking of nearly 3,000 counties can be found at: [http://farmfutures.com/mdfm/Faress1/author/2/2012-Best-Places.pdf](http://farmfutures.com/mdfm/Faress1/author/2/2012-Best-Places.pdf)

**Fall Weather Forecast**

*By Jim Noel, Meteorologist*

Overall, a fairly quiet weather pattern will impact Ohio to end September with the only real threat for rain this coming weekend. Temperatures will be below normal for the rest of September with a burst of warmer weather this weekend.

**Risk for the rest of September**

- **Temperature** - below normal
- **Rainfall** - below normal generally <0.75 inches - normal is about an inch
- **Runoff** - low threat
- **Frost** - low to moderate threat for patchy frost north and northeast Ohio late this week and again middle of next week.
Freeze - low threat

October outlook is fairly close to normal temperatures, rainfall and frost and freeze timing. You can see the latest National Weather Service Ohio River Forecast Center 16-day rainfall graphic at: http://www.erh.noaa.gov/ohrfc/HAS/images/NAEFS16day.pdf

Local Woman Showcased at Farm Science Review
An exhibit honoring the contributions of women in Ohio agriculture, featuring women will be displayed this week’s Farm Science Review in London, Ohio. In an ever-changing farming industry and to honor Extension’s 100th anniversary, educators wanted to showcase the variety of roles women play in agriculture, whether in urban or rural communities. Women now make up 1 out of every 3 agricultural producers across the United States. OSU Extension Educators across the state of Ohio were asked to nominate women for the display. Locally the following women were nominated (and accepted their nomination) and will be part of this week’s display. Congratulations to Nancy Patterson (Patterson’s Fruit Farm in Geauga County), Brenda Hastings (Hasting’s Dairy Farm in Geauga County) and Cindy Lindberg (Grand River Cellars in Lake County) for being recognized!

CAUV Task Force Meeting to be held on September 22 in Jefferson
The “CAUV Rates Are Increasing Meeting” held on August 28, 2014 at the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds generated a lot of discussion with the over 400 landowners in attendance. Ashtabula County CAUV rates were updated in 2014 due to a state mandated sexennial reappraisal. Because of many factors (including higher crop prices, higher crop yields and a lower capitalization rate) property owners with land enrolled in CAUV will have their property taxes increase over 300% this year. This translates to an increase of approximately $15 to $20 per acre. Dr. John Patterson, Ohio House of Representative-District 99, was in attendance and announced he would like to start a CAUV Task Force. The goal of this task force is to provide landowners/farmers a chance to examine potential solutions in strengthening the CAUV tax program (solutions not gripes!). The first meeting of this task force will be held in the downstairs meeting room beginning at 9:00 a.m. of the Ashtabula County Extension office on Monday, September 22, 2014. Interested landowners who would like to be on this task force can contact David Marrison at 440-576-9008 or marrison.2@osu.edu for more information.

Northeast Ohio Small Farm College to be held this Fall
The OSU Extension Offices in Northeast Ohio are pleased to be conducting the Northeast Ohio Small Farmer College for new and aspiring farm businesses. The college will be held on Monday evenings October 6, 13, 20 & 27 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. This college is designed to help landowners examine potential ways to increase profits on their small acreage. This college is open to all new or aspiring farmers, new rural landowners, small farmers, and farm families looking for new ideas. The small farmer college is split into 4 sessions designed to challenge participants to plan for success.

The first session on Monday, October 6 titled “Getting Started” is designed to help participants build the foundation for their farm business. Some of the session topics will include: developing real-life expectations for your small farm, developing goals and objectives, developing an agricultural business plan, and tax and financial management of small farms. This class will be held at Grand River Cellars Winery located 5750 South Madison Road in Madison, Ohio.

The second session on Monday, October 13 titled “Enterprise Selection” will help participants decide what to raise/grow on their farm and how to develop realistic budgets for these enterprises. This session will be tailored-made based on the interests of the group. Learn more about vegetable, greenhouse, fruit, nursery and bio-fuel crops, as well as aquaculture, livestock, hay, traditional and alternative farm enterprises. Let your passions lead you to the right agricultural enterprise to raise or grow. This class will also be held at Grand River Cellars Winery.
The third session on Monday, October 20 titled “Marketing & Resources for Small Farms” will help participants build a marketing direction for their business. Learn how agricultural products are being marketed across northeast Ohio. Learn about product pricing, selling at farm markets, and Community Supported Agriculture subscriptions. This class will again be held at Grand River Cellars Winery.

The fourth session titled “Learning from the School of Hard Knocks” will be held on Monday, October 27 at Sirna’s Farm Inc operated by Craig & Anne Marie Sirna. Since 1997 Sirna’s Farm Inc, has been offering quality fresh home grown, seasonal vegetables, herbs and local products. They operate a seasonal market, two hydroponic greenhouses, and 4 high tunnel greenhouses. The farm also raises pasture-grazed cattle and chickens. This farm also operates a Community Supported Agriculture subscription program.

Participants will receive a light meal prior to each session of the first three sessions beginning at 5:30 p.m. and for the final session, we will end the tour with Sirna’s own over-fired pizza! The registration fee for this college is $100 for the first registrant from each family and $60 for each family registrant thereafter. Call the Ashtabula County OSU Extension office at 440-576-9008 to make your reservations. Reservations are requested by Monday, September 25, 2014. Space is limited to the first 35 registrants. A registration flyer can be found at: http://go.osu.edu/ne-events

Northeast Ohio Twilight Beef Tour to be held at R.J. Nye Family Farms in Hartsgrove, Ohio on October 9, 2014.

OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association are pleased to announce their annual Fall Beef Tour will be held on Thursday, October 9, 2014 at R.J. Nye Family Farms from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The farm is located at 5800 State Route 534 in Hartsgrove, Ohio. Northeast Ohio beef producers will not want the chance to tour this really nice cow-calf operation.

The Nye family operates a 50 head cow-calf operation in which the majority of the calves are fed out through a vertically intergraded stocker-feedlot system. Beef breeds raised include Angus and Angus Hybrids crossed with Simmental, Shorthorn and Maine Anjou. Beef sales include feeder calves, breeding stock, as well as finished cattle sold custom. The Nye family farms over 700 acres in Hartsgrove and Orwell Townships and raises nearly 300 acres of hay, 300 acres of soybeans, 100 acres of corn, and manages 60 acres of pasture land harvested through rotational grazing each year. During the tour, participants will be able to learn about the rotational grazing system which has been in use since 2008; tour the steer and heifer development facility; view the wintering and calving facilities for the cow herd; and learn more about their A.I breeding and herd health programs. Participants will learn how EQUIP cost share funds were used to help fence in the 6 pasture paddock areas and to build their manure storage structure. Attendees will also see their cattle handling and creep feeding systems, self-catch headlocks, and how feed is kept “pushed” up.

The Nye Family has a long history of farming in northeast, Ohio. The Nye family settled in Hartsgrove during the mid-1800s as dairy farmers and the farming practices have continued to date by the following generations. It is family oriented and heavily invested in 4-H and community programs. The farm is located on State Route 534 approximately 1.1 mile south of State Route 6 (Hartsgrove Circle) or 3.25 miles north of Route 322 in Windsor.

All beef producers are invited to attend. No reservations are needed. Dress for the weather as the tour will be held rain or shine! And as tradition, an all-beef hamburger and hotdog meal will be served compliments of the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association at the conclusion of the walking tour. This twilight tour is sponsored by the Ashtabula County Cattlemen’s Association, OSU Extension, and R.J. Nye Family Farms. Don’t miss the opportunity to visit this outstanding operation. A complete program flyer can be obtained by accessing http://go.osu.edu/ne-events or by calling the Ashtabula County Extension office at 440-576-9008.
Ashtabula County Master Gardener Volunteers Sought

If you have a strong interest in gardening and enjoy helping others, you are invited to apply to become an Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener volunteer for Ashtabula County. The main purpose of the Master Gardener Program is to help meet the horticultural needs of Ashtabula County.

To become an OSU Extension Master Garden volunteer, you must attend 11 training sessions held from January to April 2015 and volunteer 50 hours of horticultural service to the community through Extension educational programming. Such service could include teaching 4-H youth gardening, planting and maintaining Extension demonstration gardens, answering gardening questions from the public, judging flower and vegetable projects at local fairs, and assisting community garden participants. As a benefit of becoming a Master Gardener, you will increase your knowledge and understanding of such varied horticultural topics as best cultural practices for growing flowers and vegetables, house plant care, plant disease, and insect pest identification and control and much, much more.

Course topics include: history of OSU Extension, plant physiology, soils, composting, fertilizers, herbs, houseplants, plant propagation, plant pathology, diagnostics, entomology, integrated pest management, vegetables, lawns, woody ornamentals, fruits, landscape maintenance, and making effective presentations.

Three informational meetings will be held for those interested in being selected for the 2015 training program. These meetings will be Tuesday, October 7, 2014 from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m.; Tuesday, October 21, 2014 from 12:00 to 12:45 p.m. and Wednesday, November 5 6:30-7:15 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the OSU Extension office at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson. Specifics with regards to the application process, training schedule, course fee, and fingerprinting requirements will be shared at this meeting. It is recommended that applicants attend this orientation meeting.

The dates for this year’s training program are: January 22 & 29; February 12, 19, & 26 and March 5, 12, 19 & 26 and April 16. This program is taught in conjunction with the Lake County Master Gardener program. Five of the sessions will be taught at the Ashtabula County Extension Office in Jefferson and five will be taught in Lake County. All courses will be taught from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. There is a $200 course fee that covers course materials, refreshments, and speaker travel costs. Registration is limited an all applications are due by November 24, 2014. Please call the Ashtabula County Extension Office at 440-576-9008 for more information or for a complete application packet.

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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