Fall is officially here! Today, I participated in the Federal Drill for the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. In the event of an actual emergency (of any kind), we would contact both livestock and crop producers to alert them of any protective measures. Thanks to those folks who answered the “practice-calls” today. It won’t be long until we are in the fields. In fact our dry weather has allowed for some late 2nd and 3rd crop to be made. It looks like another week of nice weather (and dry!). We also had a nice CAUV Task Force meeting on Monday morning at the Extension office with over 25 producers in attendance to provide feedback to Ohio House of Representative John Patterson. If you would like to be a member of this task force, please drop me an email at marrison.2@osu.edu to receive more information.

David Marrison, AG Educator

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Agricultural Producers in Designated Counties in Northeastern and Southern Ohio Are Eligible for Assistance Including Emergency Loans through the USDA’s Farm Service Agency

New federal assistance is available for Ohio agricultural producers in 22 northeastern and southern Ohio counties who experienced crop or production loss due to a recent freeze. U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced on September 18 that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Ashtabula, Geauga, Jackson, Lake, Lorain, Portage, and Summit Counties as primary natural disaster counties after they experienced freezing weather conditions between January 2, 2014 and April 17, 2014. The USDA has also designated Ashland, Cuyahoga, Erie, Gallia, Huron, Lawrence, Mahoning, Medina, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Stark, Trumbull, Vinton, and Wayne Counties as contiguous disaster counties. With this disaster designation, primary and contiguous counties are eligible to be considered for assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), including emergency loans. Eligible farmers have eight months from the date of the official disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans and can receive guidance in applying for these loans from their local Farm Service Agency office.

Pricing Standing Corn for Silage Harvest – 2014

By: Normand St-Pierre, Bill Weiss, & Dianne Shoemaker

If it’s late summer it’s time to talk about pricing a corn crop standing in the field for corn silage. This is always a challenging question as there are a number of factors that contribute to the final price agreed upon by the buyer and seller that are challenging to quantify. This corn silage pricing discussion begins with a corn crop standing in the field. The grower’s goal is to recover the cost of producing and harvesting the crop plus a profit margin. Their base price would be the price they could receive for the crop from the grain market less harvesting/drying/storage
costs. Hopefully, this would meet their goal of covering production costs and generating a profit. During price negotiations, it should be recognized that harvest risk is also being shifted from the grower to the buyer.

To the grain farmer, the corn crop has value beyond the income from the sale of grain. If the crop is sold as silage, the corn fodder is no longer available as ground cover and/or as a potential source of nutrients and organic matter. This creates an opportunity for the dairy farm to provide nutrients and organic matter back to the corn fields from subsequent manure nutrient applications.

**Valuing the standing crop**
To look at the value of the corn as silage, we can estimate that a ton of corn silage made from a good corn crop, on average, contains approximately 7.5 bushels of corn (ranging from ~6.7 to 10 bushels). If corn is worth $3.15 per bushel at harvest, then the standing corn for silage would be worth about $23.63 per ton before the cost of harvesting for grain. If we estimate a grain harvest cost of $76 per acre, or ~$4.22 per ton (combining, hauling, storing and drying of 2 points based on Ohio Farm Custom Rates 2014), then the corn silage is valued at $19.41 per ton. However, since the nutrient and organic matter value that is removed from the field when the whole corn plant is chopped is roughly equivalent to the cost of harvesting the crop as corn grain (offsetting each other), we can use the price of corn times 7.5 bushels as the basis for pricing a standing crop ($23.63 per ton with corn priced at $3.15 per bushel during harvest). This is a starting point, additional adjustments must be made.

**Adjusting for dry matter**
The values discussed above are for corn silage at 35% dry matter. Prices also have to be adjusted for different dry matter concentrations. If actual dry matter was 30%, then the value is about $20/ton (i.e., 30/35 = 0.85 x $23.63/ton). Corn chopped at more than about 38% DM or less than about 30% DM may not ferment properly and can be a problem. The price for this corn silage should be discounted. For more details, see: http://dairy.osu.edu/bdnews/Volume%2020Issue%2001.html#Weiss

**Considering feed value**
At the 2009 Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference, Normand St-Pierre reviewed the difference between valuing corn silage using a 7 bushels of corn per ton method plus harvest and storage costs and an adjustment for 10% fermentation loss, versus pricing based on the prevailing feed nutrient value (Sesame) pricing method (See http://tristatedairy.osu.edu/Proceedings%202009/St-Pierre%20paper.pdf). This method values the silage at what its nutrients are worth based on a wider selection of feed prices plus the harvest and storage adjustments. The ratio of the two methods for 2005 to 2008, was 1.27. In other words, the nutrient value of silage to the cow was potentially worth up to 27% more than the value based on the market price for corn.

The SESAME value for Ohio corn silage is available in the most current edition of the Buckeye Dairy News available online at http://dairy.osu.edu. This is the nutrient value for AVERAGE corn silage delivered to the cow, so harvest, storage, moisture, shrink and risk costs must be deducted from the SESAME value. In addition, the SESAME value is based on average Ohio feed costs at a specific point in time. Local markets may give different results.

**Other price adjustments and considerations**
So, what does this mean in the real world? The 7.5-bushel method is a good starting point. There could be additional feed value to the buyer which has to be balanced against the harvest and fermentation risks that the buyer is assuming.

The last factor affecting the value of standing corn is risk. A farmer purchasing standing corn is assuming risk (Will it ferment properly? Can it be harvested at exactly the right time? What will the final nutrient content be? etc.). The price for the standing crop should be discounted to recognize these risks. What is the right amount to discount? This is not an easy question and is one of the factors to consider when the buyer and seller are negotiating a final
price. Setting the final, fair price for corn silage rests on an understanding of the needs of both the buyer and the seller and negotiating a price that ensures a reasonable profit for both.

Finally, it is critical that both parties agree on price, payment method and timing, crop measurement, restrictions, and similar details before the crop is harvested! Ideally, the agreement should be in writing and signed by both parties. These agreements are especially important when large quantities of crops (and money!) are involved. While this type of contracting may be uncomfortable for some producers, mainly because they aren’t used to conducting business on more than a handshake, it forces the parties to discuss issues up front and can minimize troubling misunderstandings after harvest.

Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association Meeting on October 18, 2014
The Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association will hold their next meeting at the Ashtabula County Extension office located at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson, Ohio on Saturday October 18, 2014. A Potluck dinner will begin at noon. Participants are asked to bring their own table service, beverage and a dish/dessert to share. A meeting will follow at the meeting a 1:00 p.m. The speaker will be Verity Bruening on “How to Identify Between Bee’s & Other Stinging Insects.” Open discussion on winter preparation will held as well. For more information about this meeting contact, Sharon Riccio at 440-576-8818.

Beekeeping 101 Clinic to held by Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association
The Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association will be hosting a “Beekeeping 101‖ Clinic on Saturday, November 1, 2014 from 10:00 to 2:00 p.m. at the Ashtabula County Extension office located at 39 Wall Street in Jefferson, Ohio. Topics of this workshop will include: Know Your Equipment, Installing Your Bees, Hive Management, Extracting Your Honey, and Fall & Winter Management. The cost of this clinic is $10 per person. This includes an informational packet and a light lunch. For more information or to pre-register call Sharon Riccio at 440-576-8818.

Sales Closing Date for Fall Crops in Ohio

The USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) reminds Ohio producers of wheat and winter barley that they have until sales closing on September 30 to purchase crop insurance or make a change to their existing policy. Crop insurance protects against yield and revenue losses. Producers have a number of coverage choices, including yield coverage, revenue protection and area risk policies.

RMA also recently announced the availability of the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) in select counties for winter and spring wheat for the 2015 crop year. SCO is a county-level policy endorsement that can be added to an underlying crop insurance policy, and covers a portion of losses not covered by the same crop’s underlying policy. Producers electing to participate in the Farm Service Agency’s Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) for a crop on a farm cannot buy SCO for the same crop on the farm.

Producers applying for SCO for the 2015 winter wheat crop may withdraw coverage on any farm where they have elected, or where they intend to elect, ARC for winter wheat by the earlier of their acreage reporting date or December 15 without penalty. This allows producers more time to make an informed decision related to whether to elect to participate in either the ARC or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for their winter wheat. If producers withdraw SCO coverage for a farm by the earlier of their acreage reporting date or December 15, they will not be charged a crop insurance premium. To withdraw coverage without penalty, producers must notify their agents of their intended election for ARC by the earlier of their winter wheat acreage reporting date or December 15.
SCO is available for winter wheat in Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Darke, Defiance, Fairfield, Fayette, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Highland, Huron, Logan, Madison, Marion, Mercer, Morrow, Ottawa, Paulding, Pickaway, Putnam, Ross, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Union, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot counties in Ohio. SCO is not available for winter barley for the 2015 crop year.

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. Contact a local crop insurance agent for more information about the program. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers or on the RMA website at: [http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/](http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/).

**Organic and conventional dairies show few differences in cow health and milk**

Source: Oregon State University


Cows raised on organic and conventional dairy farms in three regions of the United States show no significant differences in health or in the nutritional content of their milk, according to a new study by Oregon State University researchers and their collaborators. Many organic and conventional dairies in the study did not meet standards set by three commonly-used cattle welfare programs.

"While there are differences in how cows are treated on organic farms, health outcomes are similar to conventional dairies," said Mike Gamroth, co-author of the study and professor emeritus in OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences. "Few dairies in this study performed well in formal criteria used to measure the health and well-being of cows."

Nearly 300 small dairy farms—192 organic and 100 conventional—in New York, Oregon and Wisconsin participated in the study, which was funded by a $1 million grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The five-year project looked at many aspects of dairy cow health, including nutrition, lameness, udder cleanliness, and other conditions. Milk samples were screened for bacteria and common diseases, and farmers were asked about their operations, including the use of veterinarians and pain relief when removing horns from cattle.

Researchers found the following:

- One in five herds met standards for hygiene, a measure of animal cleanliness;
- 30 percent of herds met criteria for body condition, which measures size and weight of cows;
- Only 26 percent of organic and 18 percent of conventional farms met recommendations for pain relief during dehorning;
- Four percent of farms fed calves recommended doses of colostrum, which helps boost their limited immune systems after birth;
- 88 percent of farms did not have an integrated plan to control mastitis, a common disease in dairy cattle;
- 42 percent of conventional farms met standards for treating lameness;
- Cows on organic farms produced 43 percent less milk per day than conventional non-grazing cattle, the study found, and 25 percent less than conventional grazing herds.

Milk from organic and non-organic herds also showed few nutritional differences, researchers found. Organic milk can occasionally contain more omega-3 fatty acids, which may improve heart health. However, those increases come from seasonal grazing and are not present when cattle are fed stored forage, according to Gamroth. To become USDA-certified, organic dairy farms must allow cows access to grazing. The grain cows consume must be grown on land free of prohibited pesticides and fertilizers. Organic farmers are not allowed the use of antibiotics or hormones.

"Nearly seven in 10 organic farms previously operated conventional herds, which explains the lack of differences between them," said Gamroth. "Many organic farmers operate in a similar fashion to when they raised conventional herds, from milking procedures, to using the same facilities, to caring for sick cattle."
The study also found more conventional farms (69 percent) used veterinarians than organic dairies (36 percent). Organic dairy farmers often perform their own veterinary work, Gamroth said, because they feel vets do not always know or follow organic standards for care. Some organic herds in the study also showed a strain of bacteria, commonly known as Strep. ag., that conventional herds eliminated long ago, by using antibiotics.

Organic farms did perform better in some areas of health: cows had fewer hock lesions—injuries to the legs that often form from being housed for long periods. Calves on organic farms were also fed a greater volume of milk and were weaned at an older age than on conventional farms. Results were based on criteria from three commonly used cattle welfare programs: the American Humane Association's Animal Welfare Standards for Dairy Cattle, Farmers Assuring Responsible Management, and the Canadian Codes of Practice. However, the dairies surveyed for the study were not committed to these standards, said Gamroth.

"Our data shows there is room for improvement in dairies and sets a benchmark to measure progress in the industry," said Gamroth. "We believe adopting animal welfare standards is part of the solution, as are increases to educational efforts to improve the care of cows." Other project collaborators include Pamela Ruegg of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Linda Tikofsky and Ynte Schukken of Cornell University, and Charles Benbrook of the Organic Centre in Oregon.

2012 Ag Census Up Close: Smart Farm Policies Essential To Young Farmers
Published by Farm Policy Facts. http://www.farmpolicyfacts.org/

The number of young farmers is trending modestly upwards, according to 2012 Ag Census released earlier this year. Young, beginning principal operators who reported their primary occupation as farming increased 11.3 percent from 36,396 to 40,499 between 2007 and 2012. This increase in new blood is a welcome sight for a sector that has grown long in the teeth in recent years. But if we hope to continue this trend, strong farm policy is key. Farmers, particularly young farmers, face exceptional risks in today’s environment. In addition to the unpredictability of Mother Nature, young farmers starting out are also facing higher input costs and lower crop prices, global subsidization, regulatory burdens, and vocal opponents determined to weaken the farm safety net.

The 2014 Farm Bill took an important step in helping beginning farmers, by making crop insurance more affordable for their risk management portfolios and by developing new insurance tools for a wide array of crops. The bill also included important policies that will help cushion the fall if commodity prices drastically drop — as many have done in 2014. Other improvements to promote beginning farmers and ranchers include the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), which funds farmer education programs. The new Farm Bill also makes credit more available for beginning farmers through a microloan program.

The fact that the number of young farmers has started trending upwards is a positive development that hasn’t been seen in a number of years. But this modest increase is not nearly large enough to offset the number of farmers rapidly approaching retirement age. These emerging farmers and ranchers—and those considering a career in agriculture—need to know they have the tools to succeed. Certainly, these young farmers have a lot of passion and heart, but that doesn't do you a lot of good when you’re suffering from a flood, a drought, or volatile price swings for commodities on the world market.
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 29, 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-catching 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 and 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.

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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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