



The Call

"In this budget, we will end direct payments to large agribusinesses that don't need them."

PG 3

The Response

"Yanking the rug out from farmers now would be a mistake."



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A PUBLICATION OF THE OHIO FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION

BUCKEYE FARM NEWS

OHIO'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPER

MARCH 12, 2009 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 11

Ohio farmers take political award

BY DAN TOLAND

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 5 AREAS OF SUCCESS



Federal issues

OFBF members sent 10,495 post cards and letters to federal lawmakers regarding a number of proposed laws and regulations.



Visits to Washington

More than 300 members delivered key messages to Congress and agriculture officials.



In-state activities

More than 1,000 members participated in 34 different Congressional district-based farm forums, farm tours, fund-raisers and more.



Other activities

Successful candidate screenings were held prior to the election, resulting in the "Friend of Farm Bureau" designation for ag-friendly legislators.



Recruitment

A 20-member inaugural class participated in OFBF's AgriPOWER Institute, an intensive leadership training program.

Last month, American Farm Bureau recognized Ohio Farm Bureau Federation's (OFBF) policy team and grassroots activity as among the nation's best.

OFBF was awarded the traveling FBACT (Farm Bureau Agricultural Contact Team) trophy for the Midwest Region for excellence in grassroots activities aimed at the 110th Congress.

"Passing legislation that supports our issues is a challenging process that requires active participation by our members," said OFBF Senior Director of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Adam Sharp. "This (award) is a big thank you for all our members taking the time to participate in a wide range of grassroots government activities."

OFBF was evaluated in five areas of grassroots involvement including participation in federal issues, member visits to Washington, in-state grassroots activities, other activities and recruitment. Here's a few highlights:

- Members sent 10,495 post cards and letters to lawmakers on livestock permitting, horse slaughter legislation, the farm bill and water regulations.
- More than 300 members met directly with lawmakers and agriculture officials in Washington on the farm bill, energy bill, estate tax reform, immigration reform, trade agreements and more.
- More than 50 key farmers not yet active in OFBF traveled to Washington to learn about Farm Bureau, how policy is made and the importance of grassroots involvement.
- More than 700 members participated in farm tours and listening sessions with Reps. Zack Space and Charlie Wilson and Sen. Sherrod Brown, a member of the Senate agriculture committee.



Farm Bureau believes that the costs of regulating rural dust in Ohio would likely outweigh any benefit.

Ag dealt a blow in dust case

Ruling creates potential for more regulations

BY SETH TETER

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can regulate dust kicked up by farm machinery and other rural activities, a federal appeals court has ruled.

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) had challenged U.S. EPA regulations, saying the agency failed to show that rural dust causes adverse health effects.

"Most disappointing is that the court suggested industry had the burden of proving that dust from agricultural sources was safe, rather than EPA proving

within a margin of safety that the emissions caused harm," AFBF President Bob Stallman said.

How this ruling will impact Ohio farmers is yet to be determined, said Adam Sharp, Ohio Farm Bureau's senior director of legislative and regulatory policy.

"Each state develops their own state plan for meeting their obligations under the Clean Air Act. These plans do not have to include agriculture, but states will have to demonstrate how they will meet clean air goals," he said.

That means the Ohio EPA has the option of regulating rural dust as part of its state implementation

See COURT, pg 6

Role of local government in question

BY SETH TETER

As a state commission rethinks local government in Ohio, some township trustees are bristling at notions to consolidate or eliminate the office they hold.

"There is a movement, and that movement is to do away with townships," said Jeff Knowlton, a township trustee from Washington County.

Knowlton, who spoke to Ohio Farm Bureau's AgriPOWER Institute, emphasized his office's responsiveness to constituents.

"If there's a tree that goes down across the road in the middle of the night, the local people know my number," he said.

Steven Bradley, a township trustee in Muskingum County, compared local government to the bottom rung of a ladder.

"It is solid," he said. "You look at our federal government right now and it's pretty shaky."

The Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration was formed by Ohio lawmakers last year, and it began its work in January. It is charged with examining ways to

See GOVERNMENT, pg 6

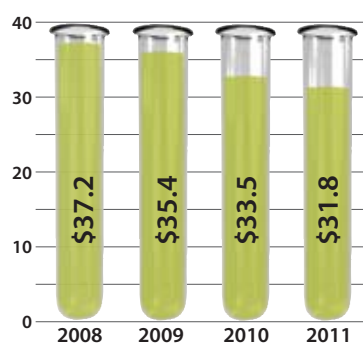
Healing the cuts

Ohio Farm Bureau is encouraging lawmakers to restore funding that was cut from Ohio State Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) in the proposed state budget.

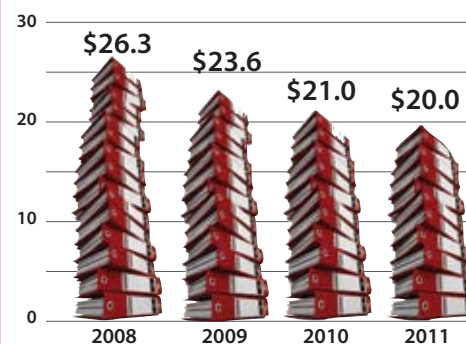
"The proposed cuts are huge. We need to make sure that legislators are aware of agbioscience's impact in Ohio," said Beth Vanderkooi, OFBF director of state policy. "Farm Bureau will be very active on this."

Both institutions help create jobs and provide a significant direct impact to Ohio's economy while supporting farmers through research and development and dissemination of information.

OARDC FUNDING (in millions)



OSU EXTENSION FUNDING (in millions)



*Numbers have been rounded

PUBLIC POLICY

NEWS *briefs***Brunner, Fisher, Portman candidates for U.S. Senate**

Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner and Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher, both Democrats, recently declared their candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Republican George Voinovich, who will retire at the end of his term. Fisher, who is backed by Gov. Ted Strickland, immediately resigned as director of the Ohio Department of Development. The Democratic nominee will likely face former U.S. Rep. Rob Portman of Cincinnati, who earlier announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination.

**Obama putting off NAFTA renegotiations**

President Barack Obama recently warned against a "strong impulse" toward protectionism while in a global economic recession. He said his election-year promise to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on behalf of unions and environmentalists will have to wait. In a news conference, Obama said he wants to find a way to keep his campaign pledge to toughen labor and environmental standards, but stressed that nothing should disrupt the free flow of trade between neighbors. American Farm Bureau opposes any effort to rewrite NAFTA.

Corn farmers launch educational coalition

Corn farmers from 10 states, including the Ohio Corn Growers Association, and the industry's trade group — the National Corn Growers Association — have formed the Corn Farmers Coalition to educate policymakers in Washington.

The coalition launched a Web site (www.CornFarmersCoalition.org), an advertising campaign and a statistical abstract.

"Washington needs to know that corn farmers are using some of the most advanced technologies on the planet to do more with less — to grow more corn using fewer resources every year," said Mark Lambert, director of the coalition. "American corn farmers, the majority of them small business people, are among the most productive in the world."

The coalition will meet with reporters, think tanks and members of Congress to talk about what's ahead: how U.S. farmers, using the latest technologies, will continue to grow enough corn in an environmentally friendly way to meet all our needs; the prospects for making the farm bill more responsive to the market; and the future of renewable fuels, a vital issue for our economy and national security and a key issue for the new administration.

COOL law in effect March 16

The final rule for the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program will go into effect as scheduled on March 16. The rule has been under regulatory review by USDA pursuant to a Jan. 20 memorandum from the president's chief of staff. The COOL regulation requires country-of-origin labeling for muscle cuts and ground beef (including veal), pork, lamb, goat and chicken; wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish; fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables; peanuts, pecans, macadamia nuts and ginseng sold by designated retailers. These commodities must be labeled at retail to indicate the country of origin. The final rule outlines requirements for labeling covered commodities and the recordkeeping requirements for retailers and suppliers. For complete information on the COOL statute and regulation, go to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool>.

**USDA forecasts 20 percent drop in farm income**

USDA's Economic Research Service has projected net 2009 farm income to be \$71.2 billion, 20 percent lower than the preliminary estimate for 2008. Also, net cash income is predicted to be \$77.3 billion, down by 17 percent from 2008, although it remains above the previous 10-year average of \$71.8 billion. The report is forecasting a decline in total expenses for the first time since 2002, although total expenses are still expected to be 9 percent higher than in 2007. The forecast also projects the first decline in crop receipts since 1999, but receipts are still expected to be the second-highest on record.

Study suggests ethanol plants do not change farmland use

A recent study conducted by the University of Illinois revealed that ethanol plants do not change farmland use in either total acreage farmed or crops raised. "(The study) demonstrates that the often cited link between new ethanol plants and the conversion of non-agricultural land to corn is highly questionable," said Rod Weinzierl, executive director of the Illinois Corn Growers Association, which commissioned the study. "Corn ethanol is not a central driver in the conversion of non-corn farmland to corn production."

**Payment limit comment period extended**

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack has extended the comment period for the 2008 farm program payment limitation and payment eligibility rulemaking process to March 29, as requested by a coalition that included American Farm Bureau. The extension allows farmers to better assess the impact of the rule on their operations and to more appropriately comment before the rule is made final for the 2010-2012 crop years. No modifications will be made for the 2009 crop year with sign-up already under way.

HOUSE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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John Domenick, chairman, District 95

Allen Sayre, co-chairman, District 96

Jeff Wagner, ranking minority member, District 81

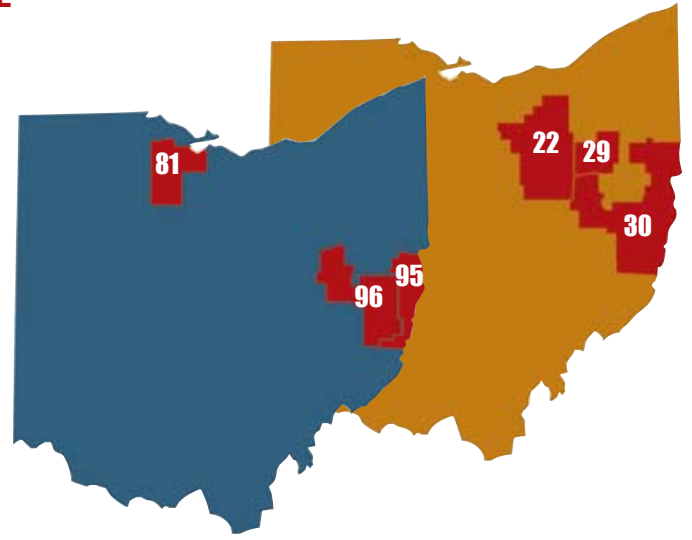
SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Controlled by: Republicans

Kirk Schuring, chairman, District 29

Bob Gibbs, co-chairman, District 22

Jason Wilson, ranking minority member, District 30



Domenick



Sayre



Wagner



Schuring



Gibbs



Wilson

A look at the new state legislature

Several key Ohio House and Senate committees for agriculture have new chairmen and many have been strong supporters of agriculture.

In the House, the committees that are of particular interest to agriculture are the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Agriculture & Development Subcommittee of Finance, said Beth Vanderkooi, Ohio Farm Bureau's director of state policy. The chairman of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee is John Domenick and the co-chairman is Allan Sayre. The ranking Republican is Jeff Wagner, a farmer. Stephen Slesnick is the chairman of the Agriculture & Development Subcommittee of Finance.

"The entire House of Representa-

tives had control shift to the Democrats. This gives us an opportunity to work with people we haven't worked with as much in the past," Vanderkooi said. "At Farm Bureau because we work with a variety of issues, we work very well with both parties. We work closely with both urban and rural issues."

On the Senate side, the committees are run by Republicans. Kirk Schuring is the chair of the Agriculture Committee while Bob Gibbs, a former Ohio Farm Bureau president, is the co-chair. Jason Wilson is the minority leader on the committee and is a "phenomenal supporter of Farm Bureau," Vanderkooi said. The Education Committee is another key committee of interest to agricul-

ture with Gary Cates the chairman and Schuring the vice-chairman. The Finance and Financial Institutions Committee also has strong Farm Bureau supporters with John Carey as chairman and Mark Wagoner as the vice-chairman.

"The great thing about Farm Bureau is that we have a strong relationship throughout the General Assembly. We are in a good position," Vanderkooi said.

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TAKEN *at their word*

Ear-catching quotes from the past few weeks

Dairy Farmer Matthew Freund in the *New York Times* on his business that turns processed cow manure into biodegradable flower pots.

"It's a strange world when poop is more valuable than milk."

Oklahoma farmer Tim Bartram in a *Reuters* article talking about a White House budget proposal to end direct payments to farmers with more than \$500,000 in sales.

"We did some figuring and would not take much to get to that cap. They are showing a real lack of understanding of agriculture."

The *Columbus Dispatch* in an editorial on how farmers are implementing innovative practices that address concerns about climate change.

"The point is that the very complexity of the climate-change problem suggests that solutions can and will come from innovators everywhere, large and small."

AFBF President Bob Stallman explaining how the land and tax base provided by farmers supports rural communities.

"(Farmers) are the way rural America pays for its schools, often paves the roads and keeps sheriffs on the payroll."

To see these quotes in context, visit the "Featured Links" section at www.ofbf.org

PUBLIC POLICY

Farm Bureau opposes changing to a single food agency

The extensive and ever widening recall of peanut products is prompting calls for the United States to consolidate its two food inspection agencies into a single agency.

Farm Bureau opposes merging the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Department of Health and Human Services into a single entity. The two agencies are responsible for the majority of food safety oversight. FSIS regulates meat, poultry and egg production and processing while the FDA agency inspects almost all of the other food products, including fresh produce, dairy, processed products and food imports.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has said he supports having a single food inspection agency.

"We oppose consolidation of the FDA and USDA into one agency because of our concern with the disruption of those programs. Reorganizing them now could cause real harm to the food safety system," said Adam Sharp, OFBF's senior director of legislative and regulatory policy. "Consolidation of the agencies would result in less organization and more time and energy would be spent on the transition than on inspections, which are critical for food safety."

Some of the proposed food safety bills could threaten trade relations

because they are not based on science or risk, Sharp said.

Instead of creating a single food agency, the United States should increase education and funding for food safety inspectors, Sharp said, noting that food safety systems and public research have not been adequately funded.

"We're interested in having a lot of improvements made in the food safety system as it exists today. We should focus on upgrading our science and technology abilities, improve the tools that inspectors have, have better funding for floor inspectors and increase the quality of the inspections," he said. "Adequate funding is essential for improving food safety."

The FDA needs to respond quickly and accurately to identify contaminated products and remove them from the market, and it needs to do so in a way that results in as little disruption to producers as possible, Sharp said. Producers who suffer market losses because of inaccurate government-advised recalls or warnings should receive indemnification, he said.

"The United States continues to have one of the safest food systems in the world. Unfortunately whenever there's an outbreak, lawmakers feel pressure to make changes to our food protection system, which in the end could actually disrupt the food chain," Sharp said.

Obama plan would end direct payments to some farms

Proposal sets \$500,000 sales threshold

In a speech to a joint session of Congress, President Barack Obama said he would end direct payments to "large agribusinesses that don't need them."

The White House budget would phase out direct payments to farms with sales of \$500,000 or more.

News outlets reported that about 126,000 farms would be affected by the proposal and that farmers could achieve \$500,000 in sales with just under 900 acres of corn.

"The amount of money saved by slashing farmer safety net programs is a pittance compared to what the government has been spending on bail-outs and stimulus payments and even compared to the annual federal budget," said Adam Sharp,

OFBF senior director of legislative and regulatory policy. "If they want real budget savings, they need to target real money somewhere else beyond farm programs, which are less than one percent of the annual federal budget."

American Farm Bureau and other farm groups recently sent a letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack expressing strong and continuing support for the farm safety net after he stated direct payments would have "a very limited future," and that farmers should start looking at other options such as generating carbon credits to address climate change as an alternative means of support.

The letter stated direct payments are the only component of the safety net currently helping every farmer with base acres to deal with steep increases in input costs, dramatic commodity market swings and increasing uncertainty in the credit markets that they rely on to keep their farms running.

"The amount of money saved...is a pittance..."

~Adam Sharp, OFBF senior director of legislative and regulatory policy

"Agriculture has been one of the relatively bright spots in the U.S. economy this past year and the farm bill is a contributor to that stability," Sharp said. "With commodity prices falling and production costs remaining high, yanking the rug out from farmers now would be a mistake."

Coshocton County couple works to feed a need

Through OFBF's "Farmers Feed Our Needs" campaign, farmers are combining with partners to help hungry and less fortunate Ohioans.

When Coshocton County Farm Bureau Board Member Jim Childress learned about the campaign, he knew one way his county Farm Bureau could make a difference.

Being a deer hunter, he knew of his local Farmers and Hunters Feed the Hungry (FHFH) program, whereby hunters donate harvested deer to be processed for local food pantries. Childress's wife, Evelyn, said the program was right up his alley.

"The wasting of meat is really

upsetting to Jim," she said, adding that a lot of hunters just want to hunt trophy deer for their racks and will leave meat to spoil. "When he comes back from hunting and sees dead deer just lying there, he always says, 'some hungry people could have used that.'"

See COSHOCTON, pg 6

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COUNTY news

Nine NE counties combine for conference

Approximately 200 people gathered in Wooster last month from Ashland, Holmes, Lorain, Medina, Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas and Wayne counties for a local conference on trends and issues affecting farmers and rural families. Topics covered included workers' compensation safety training, the new Ohio Line Fence Law, property tax reappraisals, Farm Bureau member involvement and more. In addition to the county Farm Bureaus, OSU Extension, Nationwide Insurance and other affinity groups helped make the event possible.

A jump start to membership

Clinton, Fayette, Greene and Highland counties kicked off this year's membership campaign at a joint meeting in Wilmington Feb. 5. Membership volunteers received materials, practiced membership renewal telephone conversations and learned about the prizes available for reaching certain recruitment numbers.

All county Farm Bureaus are in membership mode—the last kickoff was March 7 in Fairfield County. Pictured here (left to right) are Andrew Borton, Kyle Wilson, Mark Stokes and Doug Pigeon from Clinton County.



Photo by Lynn Snyder

Van Wert County breezes into membership

Ohio Farm Bureau Director of Energy Services Dale Arnold was the featured speaker at Van Wert County Farm Bureau's membership kickoff in January. Arnold spoke along with Dave Dickson of Iberdrola Wind Energy to 75 Farm Bureau members during an informational wind energy session. Organization Director Jennifer Smith said wind energy has become a hot topic in Paulding and Van Wert counties and that several companies are looking at the counties as possible wind farm locations.

Jefferson County receives White-Reinhardt mini-grant

Jefferson County Farm Bureau has been selected as one of 23 recipients of a \$500 mini-grant from the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's White-Reinhardt Fund. The mini-grant will help bring the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) on Wheels "Ag Adventures" outreach program to Cloverbuds (pre-4-H-aged students) and teachers in Jefferson County elementary schools during the Farm Bureau's Agriculture Awareness Day at the 2009 county fair. "Ag Adventures" activities enhance students' knowledge of agricultural science and will be educational for teachers and adults who will be attending the fair as invited guests. Jefferson County Farm Bureau plans to reach 75 to 100 educators and 400 students during the day.

The White-Reinhardt Fund for Education is a special project of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture in cooperation with the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee. It was established to honor two former chairs of the Women's Committee, Berta White and Linda Reinhardt, who were leaders in the national effort to improve agricultural literacy.

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COSI ON WHEELS

'Agriculture Adventures' wraps up successful run

After reaching an estimated 482,333 participants through 1,183 events (as of the end of this school year), the COSI on Wheels program, "Agriculture Adventures," is ending its visits to Ohio schools. The Ohio Farm Bureau-sponsored program has visited elementary schools throughout Ohio and six adjoining states since 2000, teaching students the science behind their food.

Introducing students to life on the farm and exploring how food is produced from the farm to the table, the program gave students a chance to grind wheat, milk a cow and learn which products come from the Ohio agriculture industry.

Upon the completion of this school year, "Agriculture Adventures" will be replaced by a new COSI on Wheels health and wellness program that will debut in

schools in the fall. OFBF is on an advisory committee for the new program's development.

"It's been a win-win for all," said OFBF Education Specialist Judy Roush, "and a very effective outreach program for us and for COSI Columbus."

COSI on Wheels has been on the go since 1983, while Farm Bureau came on board in 2000 by sponsoring "Agriculture Adventures." Prior to the show going on the road, OFBF put together a three-day local farm tour to help COSI understand agriculture. "It made a huge difference," Roush said. "They could see what we were talking about and it helped shape the program into what it is today."

Because of Farm Bureau's sponsorship, "Agriculture Adventures" has been made available to county

Farm Bureaus at special events and will continue to be offered in this fashion over the summer months. A great number of local Farm Bureau volunteers have come into schools to help with the program's hands-on breakout sessions, sharing even more agricultural information and knowledge with children.

Arcadia Elementary School in Hancock County will be one of the last stops for "Agriculture Adventures." Arcadia High School Agricultural Education Instructor and FFA Adviser Doug Conine won a free visit for the school through an *Our Ohio* contest that will bring COSI on Wheels to the school March 19.

For more information on COSI on Wheels, visit "Featured Links" at www.ofbf.org.

Picnic on the farm

Ohio Farm Bureau has created a new contest as part of this year's membership campaign. Farm Bureau members who sign at least one new member in this year's campaign will earn a ticket to dine on a local farm. Sign two members and get two tickets.

"These exclusive picnics were created as an avenue to encourage associate members to be part of the membership campaign," said OFBF Director of Membership Marketing Janet Cassidy. The contest is open to all membership workers who sign at least one new member. Cassidy said an on-farm dining experience could be an incentive for associate members to get out and ask their friends, family and neighbors to join Farm Bureau. "Typically we count on our farmers to bear the bulk of the

load on membership," Cassidy said. "This year, we wanted to see if we could expand our productive workers to include associate members."

County Farm Bureaus are planning the picnics based on interest and participation. A full-page ad was included in the March/April *Our Ohio* magazine to announce these summer events. For more information, contact county Farm Bureau offices.



Our Ohio Telling Agriculture's Story

Restaurants that feature local products

A new addition to the Buying Local Directory at OurOhio.org is a listing of restaurants that offer local products on their menus. Restaurant owners who are members are invited to list their businesses on the Buying Local Directory; the enrollment form is available at OurOhio.org, click on "Resources" then "Register a Restaurant." This is also an opportunity to invite these businesses to be a part of Farm Bureau so they can participate in this new member benefit.

Discussion forums now available at OurOhio.org

Readers are now invited to comment on all things *Our Ohio* at the OurOhio.org discussion forums. Each topic on the Web site has its own discussion page: food and

recipes, gardening, farming, travel, pets, *Our Ohio* television series and magazine, teacher resources and healthy living. Users must create a log-in before commenting on any of the topics, or before creating a new discussion topic.

To get started, visit OurOhio.org and click on the forums section on the home page.

E-mails requested

Ohio Farm Bureau staff members have created a bi-monthly newsletter for teachers that describes all the resources available to them through Farm Bureau and other agricultural groups. Members who know teachers who should be receiving the newsletter should provide the teachers' e-mail addresses to Judy Roush, jroush@ofbf.org or call (614) 246-8243.

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"Farm Bureau is a fun experience for me and wonderful and positive. It's a great way to meet different people."

~ Stephen Heppe, Portage County

Stephen Heppe has been a Farm Bureau member for four years and has been Portage County's president since September. He was active in Farm Bureau youth and participated in the Young Farmer trip to Washington D.C. He also went to this year's American Farm Bureau annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

Heppe is a 4-H program assistant in Wayne County and a part-time farmer raising soybeans and corn on his farm. During planting and harvesting seasons, he helps his father on his nearby 700-acre farm. He graduated from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural education.



Heppe

Heppe is active in the Portage County 4-H program and is one of the coaches of the county livestock judging team, which has been in three national contests over the last six years.

He and other Farm Bureau members have been active this year in trying to revive and find funding for a farm-city tour.

"We'd like to bring the people from the city out to see what agriculture is about and teach them about some of the things we do," he said. "Educational outreach is so important because so many people have been removed from the farm for so long that they don't understand the basic concepts of farming. When we have education and an understanding of what we do, it makes them realize that what they see on TV might not really be what is happening."

"Animal agriculture is constantly changing and faces a great deal of challenge. This allows every day of my job to be diverse, challenging and rewarding."

~ Sandy Kuhn, director of commodity relations and executive director of the Ohio Livestock Coalition

As director of commodity relations, Sandy Kuhn plans and facilitates the Trends and Issues Conference, oversees the six Advisory Teams, serves as a liaison with the Ohio commodity organizations and works with Farm Bureau staff on commodity related issues. In her capacity as the executive director of the Ohio Livestock Coalition, she works with coalition members to promote animal agriculture in Ohio.



Kuhn

"Agriculture is a way of life for me, and I can't imagine doing anything that doesn't involve something in agriculture," she said. "I love it and the people involved in it."

She grew up on top of Conkles Hollow State Park in Hocking County and spent a lot of time on her grandparents' farm. Her parents, sister and brother-in-law now own the farm and have sheep and miscellaneous other animals that she "randomly shows up with."

Kuhn graduated from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in ag education and animal science and master's degrees in ag education and business management. She previously worked at OSU South Centers with berry growers on sales, marketing and product development. She currently serves as vice president of the Fairfield County OSU Alumni Club.

NATIONWIDE NEWS

Preventing slips and falls

Many slips and falls happen during normal, everyday work situations such as climbing stairs and ladders, walking on catwalks and bin floors, or working on top of platforms and loading docks. Employees who work in these situations everyday don't think about the possibility of an accident so they sometimes have the potential to become hasty and careless or not take the proper precautions.

Operational/procedural errors

Many accidents result from not following designated work or safety procedures. Examples include:

- Using an improper work surface
- Not using safety equipment or guarding correctly
- Not paying attention or getting distracted
- Working too close to an opening or edge without a lifeline or harness
- Not following established procedures
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Using portable metal ladders where they might come in contact with electrical conductors
- Failure of the employer to identify unsafe equipment or provide accident prevention programs
- Not securing the base of ladders
- Placing ladders so that top rails are not firmly supported against buildings or lashed, secured or held in position to prevent slippage
- Side rails of ladders do not extend at least 36 inches above the landing
- Not providing or not using protective equipment
- Becoming entrapped in material

Equipment failure/design problems

Many accidents result from failure of materials, equipment or the working surface. Examples include:

- Failure of working surface components or supports



Photo by iStockphoto.com/Ferrnig Photography

- Failure of safety equipment
- Structural collapse
- Broken safety lines
- Floor openings not guarded by standard railings, toe boards or covers
- Using defective ladders
- Fixed ladders used to ascend heights exceeding 20 feet are not equipped with cages, wells or safety devices, nor with a landing platform for each 30 feet of height
- Single cleat ladder used to access heights exceeding 30 feet
- Stepladder's metal spreader not correct size to securely hold the front and back sections in an open position
- Access ladders or other safe access to scaffolds are not provided

Other causes

Accidents could also be caused by other conditions including weather (high winds, ice, snow, etc.), environmental conditions (toxic gases or excessive heat), illness (heart attack, stroke, etc.), sleeping on the job, alcohol or drugs, poor housekeeping, inadequate training or language barriers.

If a slip or fall does occur:

- Contact necessary emergency services
- Take action to prevent immediate reoccurrences
- Collect information about the accident
- Record witness statements
- Take pictures of the accident scene
- Describe the scene at the time of the accident including condition of the victim, the activity that was taking place, their footwear and the condition of the floor
- Contact your insurance company as quickly as possible

Preventing accidents

Slips, falls and other workplace accidents can result from complex series of events, and numerous questions must be answered when you're trying to assess risk factors. You can avoid a great deal of risk by making sure you always take the proper basic preventative measures, including:

- Proper work surfaces and guarding
- Using proper protective equipment
- Proper training and supervision
- Establishing and enforcing safe working procedures

WORKERS' COMPENSATION CORNER



Ask Kathy

Q: I heard the group rating filing deadline has been extended, what is the new date?

A: The filing deadline has been extended to April 24, 2009. That's good news, because you still have time to enroll in the 2009 program and you still have time to be evaluated for the group rating program if you have not already submitted an evaluation request. If you can't locate your enrollment paperwork we will be glad to send another packet to you. You may request a packet by calling 877-463-7283. If you would like to be evaluated for the 2009 program, you may request an evaluation packet by calling the same number.

Q: I understand that the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (OBWC) plans to make changes to the group rating program, how will the changes impact me?

A: OBWC has several items they are reviewing with regard to the group rating program. One change that has been adopted is a deductible program. The deductible program is designed to help employers lower their premium by offering an upfront discount in the form of a deductible. Details regarding the deductible program may be found on the OBWC website at www.ohiobwc.com. Click on Ohio Employers from the menu at the very top of the page. On the new page, you'll find Deductible Program listed under the Programs menu. The application for the program will be available April 1, 2009 and must be submitted to the OBWC by May 31, 2009. The program will apply to claims filed July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. If you have questions regarding the program you may contact OBWC at 1-800-644-6292 or contact me at the number below.

For more information, call Kathy at 800-336-4733, option 1, ext. 48650 or visit the web at www.gatesmcdonald.com.

Kathy Redmond is an Account Relationship Consultant with GatesMcDonald®, a subsidiary of Nationwide®. Since 1929, GatesMcDonald remains the oldest and one of the largest Ohio State Fund Workers' Compensation TPAs in the industry. Kathy has been involved with the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation workers' compensation program for more than 20 years. Kathy and her team of experienced professionals are available to assist members with their workers' compensation concerns.

on YOUR behalf

Here are some additional activities in which your support of Farm Bureau helped strengthen agriculture and rural Ohio.

2009 Ohio Farm Bureau Goals

Market Farm Bureau to achieve membership growth

Increase grassroots involvement by creating a volunteer-friendly Farm Bureau

Expand relations with Nationwide and other affinity organizations

Promote the agbioresource industry

Influence trade, labor, tax, education, energy and farm policy

Speak out and stand up for animal agriculture and the food industry

Protect personal property rights

When new laws update old laws, people must also be updated. OFBF staff trained township trustees on their responsibilities under the new line fence law.

Livestock groups are seeking information on trends in animal welfare initiatives. OFBF gave presentations to four district Ohio Cattlemen's Association meetings regarding the impact of California's Proposition 2 on the livestock industry; provided an update on issues to the American Veal Association; and

met with the Animal Ag Alliance to discuss animal welfare/rights issues.

Agriculture is always in need of new spokespersons. OFBF planned, hosted and coordinated the sixth session of its inaugural AgriPOWER Institute.

Farm Bureau provides its members with support in regards to their property rights. OFBF jointly filed a "friend of the court" brief with Mahoning County Farm Bureau in a case currently on appeal in support of a member's property rights and his right to farm.

Farmers need to be aware of their legal responsibilities. Ohio Farm Bureau joined OSU Extension in a grant application to the USDA to obtain funds to conduct training of small farmers in legal topics related to farm leases and farming contracts; and gave a presentation of current legal issues to a Mercer County leaders group.

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plan for air quality. But the U.S. EPA has the final say on the plan, which is required for states to receive full highway funding, Sharp said.

Rural dust is typically made up of relatively large particles known as coarse particulate matter and has been more of an air quality issue in the arid Southwest. Because there are currently no areas in Ohio that

exceed the threshold for this type of dust, it appears agriculture does not have a significant negative impact on air quality, Sharp said.

"We feel the cost of new regulations would likely far outweigh any environmental benefit," he said.

AFBF Regulatory Specialist Paul Shlegel said the ruling could open the door for environmental lawsuits

against farm operations. But it is unclear how states will interpret the regulations, he said.

"Could they require that you only operate your vehicles at a certain time of day or at times when the dust will be less likely to affect people or after precipitation? We don't know exactly what it's going to be," he said.

COURT from PG 1

GOVERNMENT from PG 1

increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local government and facilitate economic development.

Reformers argue there is too much overlap in local government. For example, neighboring townships might invest in their own equipment, such as fire trucks, instead of sharing resources to reduce costs. Residents may also be confused about which elected officials are accountable for specific issues.

Athens County Commissioner Lenny Eliason said residents often turn to his office to solve problems that aren't under his jurisdiction.

"People don't realize that county government is a maze," he said.

Mark Partridge, Ohio State Univer-

sity's Swank Professor of Rural-Urban Policy, hopes the state commission recommends fundamental changes to governmental structures and outdated tax policies. In a report from Ohio State Extension, Partridge noted that no elected official is looking out for an entire region's interest. As communities vie for income tax dollars, it can hinder economic development, he suggested.

"The system gives individual communities an incentive to poach from each other," Partridge said. "If taxes were collected on a regional level and dispersed on a per-capita basis, leaders would focus on making the pie bigger for everyone, instead of competing with each other."

COSHOCTON from PG 3

Through a partnership with FHFH, Coshocton County Farm Bureau urged local farmers and hunters to provide unwanted harvested deer to help feed the hungry. Free to hunters, the \$40 to \$75 processing fee was funded by grants from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and supplemented by money from Coshocton and Knox County Farm Bureaus.

During this past hunting season,

six FHFH-approved local processors accepted and processed 256 deer harvested in parts of Coshocton, Holmes, Knox and Wayne counties for the program.

The Childresses volunteered to deliver the meat from the processors to six pantries. The donated venison provided 46,580 individual meals for Coshocton County residents.

"People don't realize it when we tell them the pantries fed 150 people

Partridge says reforms that encourage collaboration on purchases or services do not address the systemic problems in local government.

The commission must present its findings by July 1 of next year. For now, township trustees are standing behind their accountability to local residents.

"(Policymakers) need to keep the township government viable so you know whose door to go hammer on," said William Shaw, a township trustee in Athens County.

(The AgriPOWER institute is an intensive yearlong program designed to develop agricultural advocates. Applications are being accepted for the next class. Visit www.ofbf.org.)

per day in the county," Jim said. "We are opening eyes about the need to get hungry people food that would otherwise go to waste."

He said plans are to continue the program in 2009.

"We hope all our Farm Bureau members can take this program to heart," he said. "If every two farmers could donate three or four deer (from their property), it would really feed a great amount of people."

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OPINION

your **LETTERS**

Perfect attendance matters in the workplace

Thank you for your Feb. 26 article "Governor calls for education overhaul." I was involved in all phases of my grown children's education, tutored elementary and high school students and recruited, hired and trained engineers and have one recommendation for Gov. Strickland. It is to mandate that all Ohio schools recognize perfect attendance as often and with the same importance as honor roll. I have experienced former "A" students that seemed



Photo by istockphoto.com

unable to get to work every day and on time and "C" students that rarely missed a day or arrived late. It is difficult to operate a business with absent and/or late employees.

~ Russ Beckner, Butler County

BUCKEYE FARM NEWS LETTERS POLICY:

Buckeye Farm News welcomes letters from our readers. Letters 300 words or fewer from OFBF members are preferred and may be edited. Letters should include a name, address and daytime phone number. Send letters to letters@ofbf.org or by mail to Letter to the Editor/ Buckeye Farm News, P.O. Box 182383, Columbus, OH, 43218.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Ohio farmers win national environmental awards

John and Jim Anderson of Shreve were the recipients of the American Sheep Industry Association's Environmental Stewardship Award for their goals of preserving the forests and natural beauty of their farm while developing a relatively low input forage base that enhances the health of the sheep flock, soil and water. According to ASIA, the father-and-son team, whose families have an environmental goal of year-by-year improvements in soil quality, erosion control, wildlife habitat and overall farm health, have spent a great deal of time, money and effort to develop their sheep operation with environmental stewardship in

mind. They carefully plan ahead to assure that any management practices implemented on their farm will be environmentally sound.

The Ohio Sheep Improvement Association, one of their nominators, said that the Andersons believe that if they can do their part to protect the land and the environment around them, these resources will be around for the many generations to come.

Neil and Gina Boeckman of Celina recently received the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association's annual Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award during the 2009 International Poultry Expo. The award is given in recognition of exemplary

environmental stewardship by family farmers engaged in poultry and egg production.

"The American consumer increasingly is requiring environmental responsibility of all industries," said association chairman Monty Henderson. "The poultry industry has an excellent record, but we must continue to be a responsible steward, using advancing technologies and the latest management techniques to do our part in maintaining a clean environment for everyone," he added.

Applicants were rated in several categories, including dry litter or liquid manure management, nutrient management planning, community involvement, wildlife enhancement techniques, innovative nutrient management techniques, and participation in education or outreach programs.

"The American consumer increasingly is requiring environmental responsibility of all industries."

~Monty Henderson, U.S. Poultry and Egg Association

LIVESTOCK MEETING IS APRIL 6

The Ohio Livestock Coalition is holding its annual meeting and industry symposium on April 6 at Der Dutchman in Plain City. Topics include animal welfare activities at the Ohio State University vet school, the Ohio Livestock Coalition's industry image campaign and becoming an activist in support of animal agriculture. Also, the annual Neighbor of the Year award and environmental stewardship awards will be presented. Registration is \$30 if paid by March 27 or \$40 thereafter. For more information visit www.ofbf.org or call (614) 246-8288.

Deer harvest surpasses quarter of a million

A total of 252,017 deer were killed during Ohio's 2008-09 hunting season, according to the Ohio Division of Wildlife. This season's total surpasses the 2006-07 record total of 237,316.

"I was very pleased with the season. Hunters continued to put heavy pressure on the antlerless deer," said David M. Graham, chief of the Division of Wildlife. "In spite of a record harvest, work remains to lower the deer population, particularly in eastern Ohio."

Graham said the solution is not longer seasons or larger bag limits, but access to growing deer herds. Counties reporting the highest number of deer checked during the season were: Coshocton-9,564; Tuscarawas-8,814; Licking-7,967; Guernsey-7,916; Harrison-7,454; Muskingum-7,245; Knox-7,223; Ashtabula-6,448; Holmes-6,320 and Carroll-5,997.

Attorneys to explore farm issues at Extension conference

Legal issues in agriculture will be the focus of a one-day Ohio State University Extension conference on March 25.

The Northwest Ohio Agricultural Law Conference will feature sessions taught by attorneys on Using Flexible Farm Rental Agreements, Ohio Conservancy District Law, Legal Risk Assessment Issues, Authority Over Large Livestock Operations, Farm Business Planning Strategies and an Agricultural Law Update.

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at The Lighthouse Banquet Facility, 10055 W. US 224, Findlay. Registration is \$30 per person and \$20 for additional family or company members. The fee covers lunch and materials. Ohio Farm Bureau is among the event's sponsors.

Featured speakers include Bill Beach and Kathryn Mohr of Robison, Curphey and O'Connell; Larry Gearhardt and Dave Pennington of Ohio Farm Bureau; Peggy Hall of OSU Extension; and Robert Moore of Wright Law Company, LPA.

For more information or to register, log on to www.aede.osu.edu/programs/aglaw, or contact the OSU Extension office in Hancock County at (419) 422-3851.



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NOTEWORTHY

Barn fires rose this winter

Take steps for prevention

An unusual number of barn fires this winter has prompted the state fire marshal's office to issue an advisory that landowners take a look at their structures and do what they can to prevent the fires.

In the first five weeks of 2009, Ohio had 18 barn fires, according to Shane Cartmill, public information officer for the Division of State Fire Marshall. During the last weekend of January, the state had several barn fires, prompting the fire marshal's advisory.

"The occurrence of fires has slowed down tremendously," Cartmill said. "Maybe getting the word out has had an effect."

Since 2000, 4,938 barn fires have been reported in Ohio, claiming five lives and injuring 64 people and 136 firefighters, according to the state fire marshal's office.

Those fires have caused more than \$77.8 million in damages. The department does not track livestock losses. Cartmill did not have a damage estimate for this year's fires.

"It concerns me that so many firefighters are being injured in barn

fires. Firefighters face obstacles and hazards they wouldn't in residential or commercial structure fires," said State Fire Marshall Michael Bell.

Barns can burn quickly, especially if they are filled with straw and hay or house equipment containing fuel, Cartmill said. Rural locations also can be a challenge for firefighters if there is not a readily available source of water. And the heavy timbers used to build barns without firewalls or fire stops are dangerous for firefighters.

"Winter time is very common for any type of structure fire because residents are spending more time indoors building fires or using alternative heat sources to save on bills. For barns, it's

not uncommon to use heating sources to keep livestock or equipment from freezing, which can cause an increase in fires," Cartmill said.

Bell said the fires have been caused by arson, farm equipment, hot ashes, smoking and fireworks.

"There is reason to believe many of the fires are the result of arson," he said.

At the end of December, Columbiana County was hit by a rash of barn fires that appeared to be the

"Anytime you have some down time is a good time to do some housecleaning."

~ Shane Cartmill,
Division of State Fire Marshall



Barn fires can present unique obstacles for firefighters who often deal with residential or commercial structure fires.

work of arsonists, said Nick Kennedy, an Ohio Farm Bureau organization director. He said the fires stopped after Ohio Farm Bureau, the county Farm Bureau and the state fire marshal's office offered rewards for information about the fires.

"Unfortunately it does happen. For now, it's quieted down," he said.

With winter typically being not so busy for farmers, Cartmill recommended that they do some housecleaning in their barns to help prevent fires. That includes knocking down spider webs, sweeping up loose hay and checking cords on electrical devices.

"Anytime you have some down time is a good time to do some housecleaning. Anything that can be done is that much more in helping prevent a fire," he said.

The state fire marshal's office

urged fire departments to work with local farmers and barn owners to make their barns safer.

"Talking about this through the

media or having someone from the fire department talk informally with a farmer or landowner helps," he said.

"Fire prevention has to start at home."

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR BARN SAFE:

- Eliminate items that start fires. Don't store fuel, paints or solvents in the barn.
- Enforce a no-smoking policy in and around the barn.
- Don't keep coffee pots or hot plates in the barn.
- Ensure that electric service to the barn is fire code compliant. Wires should be the correct gauge and enclosed in a conduit.
- Farm equipment, including tractors, mowers and trimmers, should be properly maintained and in good running condition. The equipment should never be started in or near the barn.
- Warming fires and bonfires should never be built near the barn. Hot ashes and coals should not be disposed in or near the barn.
- Store hay separately from where machinery is stored. Hay should be dry before it is put into the building.
- Fire departments should identify barns and water sources before there is an incident.

Source: State fire marshal's office



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