



BUCKEYE FARM NEWS

OHIO'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPER

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Photo by Galen Harris

How sweet it is: Representatives from Ohio Farm Bureau and Velvet Ice Cream recently got together for the first run of the new Honey Caramel flavor ice cream. Now available at grocery stores, the carton features the Farm Bureau logo as well as Farm Bureau member Barry Conrad, a beekeeper. The new flavor was the result of a contest that aimed to promote Ohio-grown ingredients. Pictured from left are Joe Dager, Conrad, Jack Fisher, Brent Porteus and Joanne Dager.

Farm Bureau elects new leaders

Hirsch of Ross County named president

COMPILED BY STAFF

Steve Hirsch of Chillicothe has been elected president of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF). He became the organization's 23rd president during a special election by OFBF's board of trustees April 5.

Hirsch, 46, replaces Brent Porteus, who stepped down after three years as president in order to stand for election to the Nationwide board of trustees. Porteus, a grain and cattle farmer, was elected to a three-year term on the Nationwide board. Keith Truckor of Metamora will continue to serve as OFBF's treasurer.

Hirsch has been OFBF's first vice president for three years and has served on the board for 10 years as the trustee for District 15, which includes Fairfield, Hocking, Pickaway and Ross counties. He will remain the district's board representative.

He is an 18-year member of Ross

County Farm Bureau and served as its president and chairman of the membership, public policy and safety committees.

Hirsch farms with his father, brother and cousin producing apples, peaches, grapes, strawberries, raspberries and other crops. They also operate a retail farm market and a cider pressing facility.

He and his wife, Kimberly, are the parents of three children.

Hirsch earned a degree in business administration from the University of Dayton. In addition to his Farm Bureau activities, he has been active with the Ohio Fruit Growers Society, the Direct Agricultural Marketing Association, the American Heart Association and his local Chamber of Commerce.

Sparky Weilnau of Milan was elected OFBF's first vice president. Weilnau previously served as the organization's first vice president from 2004 - 2006 and as treasurer from 2001 - 2003. He has served as the District 3 trustee representing Farm Bureau members from Cuyahoga,



Hirsch



Weilnau

Erie, Huron and Lorain counties since 1996. He maintains that role as vice president.

Weilnau and his wife Catherine are the parents of two sons. Their farming operation consists of popcorn, field corn, soybeans and wheat. He has been a member of the Erie County Farm Bureau since 1976 and has been involved in numerous leadership roles. He was an Erie County commissioner, serves as a Milan Township trustee and is a member of the Erie County Regional Planning Commission.

Tim Williams of Piketon was elected to OFBF's Executive Committee. The committee is elected by

See **LEADERS**, pg 2

Transportation bill addresses weight variance, property rights issues

BY SETH TETER

Ohio Gov. John Kasich recently signed legislation that funds Ohio's Transportation and Public Safety departments as well as other projects related to transportation and infrastructure.

+1
Add to the Effort: Several OFBF policies were addressed in this bill. Share this news and ask others to join Farm Bureau.

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) was successful in advocating for amendments to the bill that align with several of the organization's priority issues and general policy positions.

These include:

- Elimination of the late registration fee on seasonal and farm vehicles.
- Expansion of the definition of farm commodities as it pertains to gross vehicle weight variances, to include

manure, turf, sod and silage. These new commodities are permitted only a 5 percent overweight variance, compared to the 7.5 percent variance in existing law.

- Agricultural commodities that already receive the 7.5 percent gross vehicle weight variance will no longer be assessed fines if the per-axle weight exceeds the allowed amount, so long as the total vehicle weight does not exceed the permitted weight and 7.5 percent variance.
- Newly defined agricultural commodities (manure, turf, sod and silage) that receive the 5 percent gross vehicle weight variance will not be assessed a fine if the per-axle weight exceeds the allowed amount, so long as the total vehicle weight does not exceed the permitted weight and 5 percent variance.
- Replaces the definition of timber with a definition of forest product, which includes logs, chips, sawdust, mulch, bark, pulpwood, biomass and firewood in regards to the gross vehicle weight variance.

In response to a proposal by Kasich to develop "public private partnerships," OFBF weighed in to ensure that eminent domain authority was not abused in the pursuit of these projects.

"Through amendments drafted by a coalition including Senate leadership, the governor's office and OFBF staff, we were able to narrow the scope of projects and provide specific safeguards to protect private property rights to align with the original intent of the governor's proposal," said Beth Vanderkooi, OFBF director of state policy.

An additional amendment addressing ditch maintenance funding and procedures was amended into the legislation with the support of OFBF.



Photo by Seth Teter

A crowd filled the hearing room at the Ohio Department of Agriculture during a recent Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board meeting. Many wore shirts that pictured veal calves with the caption "Let them turn around."

Board reaches consensus on veal standards

BY SETH TETER

The Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board is past its final major hurdle in establishing the first comprehensive set of standards for animal care in Ohio.

Earlier this month, the board established standards for veal production, resolving for now the last of the controversial issues it was facing.

However, board member Tony Forshey said the group's work isn't done.

"This is going to be a living document for years to come," he said.

The creation of veal standards

represented the most challenging discussion the board has had to date.

The Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, animal advocacy groups and a major Ohio veal producer had all urged the board to phase out the use of tethers and narrow stalls in veal production by 2017.

That timeline was consistent with a recommendation made by the American Veal Association as well as an animal care agreement reached between the Humane Society of the United States and Ohio farm organizations that prevented a ballot initiative in 2010.

However, a number of veal farm-

ers said that converting to the new system would be cost prohibitive and not necessarily result in better animal care. The board attempted to seek middle ground and, in a 6-5 vote, it initially proposed allowing farmers to continue to use current stall systems for the first 10 weeks of a calf's life.

That decision drew strong criticism from many individuals and organizations and raised the prospect that the Humane Society of the United States would relaunch its ballot initiative.

The board received more than
See **BOARD**, pg 2

THE MESSAGE BOARD

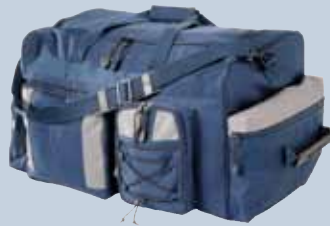

Their Words

"My father was so disappointed. He thought that was a guy thing — not for his little girl."

~ Farmer Meredith Nunn in the *Mercury News* describing how she challenged perceptions when she spent her inheritance to buy 20 acres and start farming.

"If you don't have family involved, then you just don't make it."

~ Sheila Mootz in the *The Parthenon* talking about what kept their southern Ohio cattle farm going.



Traveling this summer?

Be sure to use your Farm Bureau member discounts for hotel stays, amusement park tickets and car rentals. Learn more at www.ofbf.org by clicking on Benefits and Membership.

The next step in social media

This black and white image is known as a "QR Code." QR codes connect the real world with the digital world by allowing you to "scan" them through applications on smart phones such as the BlackBerry, Droid and iPhone.



You can scan this code to learn more about Marion County Farm Bureau's Follow Farming project, which uses social media to connect consumers to how their food is produced. You can also find out more about their project at Facebook.com/followfarming.

Here's how it works:

1. Download a QR Scanning application to

your smart phone. Here are a few we suggest:

- i-nigma (www.i-nigma.com) – BlackBerry, Droid, iPhone
- RedLaser (www.redlaser.com) – Droid, iPhone
- BlackBerry users may also use the "Scan Group Barcode" option in the BlackBerry Messenger application (www.blackberry.com/messenger)

2. Open your QR Code scanning application on your smart phone and scan the code as directed.

3. Let your smart phone do the work for you as it connects you with websites, photos, videos and other content and actions as described with the codes!

State budget process continues to unfold

Testimony is heating up in the Statehouse as advocates pursue changes to initial funding proposals for state agencies and programs. While the budget process is just getting underway, Ohio Farm Bureau is keeping a close eye on how the final budget may shape up.

As reported in the previous *Buckeye Farm News*, the Ohio Department of Agriculture faces an 8.8 percent cut in fiscal year 2012 with the same level of funding the next year. The biggest change is a new fee for operators of large scales and large meters such as those used to weigh trucks or measure fuel or are used at grain elevators. The fee would be \$75 per device that would go into ODA's weights and measures program.

Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center would see 10 percent funding cuts in 2012 but no cuts the following year.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) face a 100 percent reduction in general revenue funding as well as partial reductions in other sources of funding.

"There is concern about SWCDs. They are making the case for restoring the funding" said Beth Vanderkooi, Ohio Farm Bureau's director of state policy. "SWCDs are integral for farmers."

"We are opposed to the 100 percent reduction in the general revenue funding, especially since there is no additional fee mechanism to cover this huge loss of funding," said SWCD President Kent Stuckey in testimony to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Finance. He asked that the House consider restoring the \$2.9 million general revenue funding to the SWCD or provide an alternative solution.

Ag and Natural Resources Subcommittee of Finance Chairman Troy Balderson has indicated that the House may reinstate some funding for SWCDs.

Stuckey noted that water quality is of particular interest in Ohio in light of the problems at Grand Lake St. Marys watershed and the renewed interest in natural gas and oil drilling.

"We believe SWCDs should play a key role in how drilling in the shale formations for oil and gas development in the state takes place," Stuckey said. "There will be huge impacts to the land and water resources on private lands, and we are the experts that can work with these individuals and the oil and gas companies to ensure soil stability, erosion control and other surface and sub-surface issues are addressed."

LEADERS from PG 1

and from OFBF's board of trustees.

The committee includes the organization's president, vice president, treasurer and seven trustees. It is charged with carrying out the business of Farm Bureau between meetings of the full board.

Williams serves as District 21 trustee, representing Farm Bureau members from Jackson, Pike, Scioto and Vinton counties. He served on the board for five years and retired in 2006 then returned for his current term in 2009.

Williams and his wife, Robin, grow apples and peaches, operate

a seasonal farm market and own a cow-calf beef herd. Williams is a 41-year member of the Pike County Farm Bureau. He served as county president and vice president and has been active in policy, membership, agricultural ecology and State Issue 2 committees.

He is manager of Pike Water, Inc. Williams is a director with the Pike County Chamber of Commerce and is involved with Ohio Environmental Health Association. He is a graduate of Piketon Vocational Tech.

BOARD from PG 1

4,000 public comments mostly favoring "turnaround" housing.

Many of the veal producers who were opposed to the standards had also told the board that allowing calves to be kept in stalls for the first ten weeks provided no benefit to them. That led the board to reinstate the requirement that all veal calves be kept in turnaround housing by 2017.

However, several board members were conflicted with the decision due to the potential impacts on veal production. It was also apparent that board struggled to balance the concerns of the public with the con-

cerns of farmers.

"Truly, our exercise here has been democracy in action," said board member Robert Cole responding to the widely varying perspectives he was asked to consider.

Board member Leon Weaver said the group's work demonstrates a willingness of the farm community to openly work with the public to address concerns.

"I want to ask the public at large to embrace us in the same way," he said.

Weaver also said it will be important for the board to monitor the

effects of its rules, because if production is driven to states with weaker standards, neither farmers nor animals will have benefited.

"We can find the better good by working together," he said.

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ANALYSIS

FARMERS consider CONSUMER trust, ANIMAL CARE regulations



The Ohio Livestock Coalition's annual meeting and industry symposium examined legal, regulatory and public relations issues facing farmers. Below are highlights from that conversation.

Rethinking consumer outreach would benefit farmers

New research is showing that the way farmers have traditionally reached out to consumers is not the most effective approach. When it comes to building trust, here are three concepts to consider from the Center for Food Integrity's Charlie Arnot:

"You don't have an image issue. You have a trust issue."

A theme that has been drawn from the Center for Food Integrity's work is that consumers trust farmers, but they're not sure that today's agriculture is farming.



Arnot

Charlie Arnot, the center's executive director, said farmers have had the conversation backward when attempting to address consumer concerns about who they are and what they do.

When consumers ask if animals should be confined, for example, farmers have replied "science says we can," Arnot said.

"Can" and "should" are not the same question, he said.

Before explaining the science, Arnot said farmers should recognize where the consumer concern is coming from and provide assurance that farmers share similar values in regard to animal care, the environment and food production.

He said that simply providing more knowledge to consumers is not adequate.

"We can't educate our way into trust," he said.

Likewise, talking about economics falls short, because consumers "are really not interested in whether you're efficient or productive."

Communicating shared values is three to five times more effective at building trust than demonstrating competence at what you do, he said.

"Show me how it's done. I want to see it."

A new study shows that consumers are much more likely to trust a video tour of a farm than the opinion of a farmer.

If farmers can show consumers what they do "and have reasonable transparency about it, it will have greater credibility," Arnot said.

Part of that transparency is conceding that all farm systems have advantages and disadvantages.

"(Consumers) want some acknowledgement of the pros and cons so they can weigh the information," he said.

The fact that more consumers are turning to the Internet to learn about food production can be a good thing, Arnot said, because "we can compete online."

Arnot said consumers want information from those they don't believe have a conflict of interest. And when farmers discuss the benefits of how they produce food, "we have to focus on the benefits to others, not the benefits to (us)."

"It's not an act of altruism. It's smart business."

Arnot said that nobody got into farming because they wanted to be involved in public policy or public relations. However, gaining the trust of the public is in a farmer's self-interest, he said.

"They won't feel the need to step in and provide oversight over who you are and what you do," he said.

Arnot said the U.S. food system has been positioned as having food that is "controversial" and food that is "controversy-free."

To help counter that narrative, farmers should "engage consumers and support choice," he said.

In the end, Arnot believes consumer trust will lead to a much more favorable business climate than expanded regulations.

Creative thinking can improve animal care

Joy Mench, an animal scientist from the University of California, Davis presented a model that divided animal care considerations into three categories:

- **Mind** – Feelings such as pain, fear and frustration
- **Nature** – Species-specific behavior
- **Body** – Animal health and physiology

When asked which of these should be given the most consideration, a study found that 46 percent of consumers emphasized mind, 40 percent nature and 14 percent body.

Mench pointed to conventional chicken cages, which do well in managing "body" issues such as internal parasites. But she said they fail to provide for the "nature" of the animal in cases such as perches and nesting areas.

She said consumers don't seem to care that conventional cages are better at preventing mortality, because the animal is going to be killed anyway.

"They just want the animal to live well while it's alive," she said.

She also believes that these separate aspects of animal care are not as conflicting as they're sometimes made out to be. She challenged the industry to "think a little more creatively" to develop systems that balance these concerns.

"I have a high level of faith in producers to do that because producers are very innovative," she said.

Enriched cage systems, which provide scratch pads, perches and nest boxes, are an example of how that can be done, Mench said.



Mench

An audience member noted that regardless of what consumers say they want, most will only buy the cheapest product. But Mench said that was a problematic way to approach the issue.

"(Consumers) don't feel it should be their responsibility to support an ethical structure," she said, noting that they may look for more regulation to fill that role.

While animal welfare used to be seen as consistent with the farmers economic well-being, that attitude is changing. As a result, the compatibility of the producer's self-interest and the welfare of the animals is increasingly questioned.

"Farmers are viewed as advocates for their economic self interests," she said, which means consumers want oversight to ensure animals are treated well.

Among Mench's concerns are care standards that are not targeted at specific improvements in animal well-being. For example, a standard that only seeks to increase the space of an enclosure may provide no actual benefit to the animal.

She is also concerned with the small number of researchers who are primarily focused on animal welfare and the establishment of state-by-state standards.

"One thing we have to think about is how we create a national policy framework," she said.

"One thing we have to think about is how we create a national policy framework."

Animal advocates, farmers both pushing for standards

Peggy Kirk Hall, director of Ohio State University's agricultural law program, said farm animal care standards have been established in two phases.

The first phase started with animal advocacy groups successfully backing a ballot initiative in Florida in 2002 and then continuing their efforts state by state through 2009.

The second phase consisted of legislation backed by agricultural groups that was intended to balance the concerns farmers had with new regulation.

"We, I think, in Ohio can claim the start of that phase," she said, referring to the establishment of the Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board.

Between 2002 and 2009, animal advocacy groups were successful in establishing new animal

care regulations in seven states. Since 2009, agricultural interests have backed the establishment animal care regulations in 11 states.

"I think it's a challenge right now to keep up with all the activity around the country," she said.

Hall highlighted a proposed constitutional amendment in Missouri that would provide citizens the right "to grow crops, hunt and fish wildlife, and raise animals in a humane manner without the state imposing an undue economic burden on animal owners."

"Did you ever think you'd see (the right to grow crops) in a constitutional amendment," she asked.

Other proposals in Iowa and Florida seek to prohibit individuals from making secret videos of farm operations or obtaining em-

ployment under false pretenses.

Hall also pondered whether citizens should be required to report animal abuse that they witness. She referred to the Conklin dairy video in which an employee was filmed abusing cows over a period of weeks.

"A lot of people were angry that the videographer continued to tape animal abuse and not report it," she said.

Another emerging debate is whether animals should have rights under the law, such as the right to certain standards of living. That would be very different

from the concept of animal welfare, which is a legal or moral duty placed upon humans, Hall said.

"That's a very interesting consideration," she said.

"I think it's a challenge right now to keep up with all the activity around the country."

NEWS *briefs*

Progress made toward Colombia FTA

American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman said the Obama administration's ability to strike a deal that moves the Colombia free trade agreement forward is great news for America's farmers and ranchers.

A group of Farm Bureau leaders pushed the trade agreement during a recent visit to Colombia and Panama.

"U.S. farmers and ranchers have been losing market share in Colombia to our competitors who have trade agreements with the country. It's time to turn the tide and recoup our losses," Stallman said. "Colombia has duty-free access to the U.S. market, while our products face excessive tariffs to sell to Colombia's market. When implemented, the Colombia FTA would level the playing field for U.S. farmers and ranchers by eliminating these tariffs."

Lawmakers seek to eliminate Form 1099 requirement

Lawmakers recently passed a bill repealing the onerous Form 1099 requirement that America Farm Bureau Federation believed was a costly, burdensome and unnecessary tax compliance requirement. The new health care law contains a provision set to begin in 2012 requiring that businesses submit a Form 1099 to the Internal Revenue Service for every vendor from which they purchase \$600 or more worth of goods or services. H.R. 4, passed by both the House and the Senate, would repeal this new requirement.

AFBF comments on federal budget

As lawmakers begin looking at cuts to rein in federal spending, AFBF is weighing in on how those cuts could impact farmers.

America's farmers are willing to do their part to help balance the nation's budget and cut the crippling federal deficit but farmers are concerned about cuts that might impact the agricultural safety net, said AFBF President Bob Stallman.

Even before any cuts, farm program expenditures have been falling for years, Stallman said.

"It is vital that decisions to cut farm program spending be made with a recognition of the cyclical nature of our farm economy and its ties to a global economy that can be even more volatile. The cost of our safety net varies by market condition," Stallman said.

"We know the importance of a fiscally responsible federal government because we follow fiscally sound principles each and every day on our farms and ranches. We can all agree that something must be done to address our country's deficit. We know that cuts must be made, and we ask that they be made with a fair hand and a focus on the long-term, big picture facing American agriculture."

Portman calls for less government regulation, fair foreign trade policies

After serving 12 years in the U.S. House and in two federal cabinet positions, Rob Portman thought he was done with politics. But then U.S. Sen. George Voinovich retired and Portman successfully ran for his position. As the junior senator from Ohio, the Republican finds himself representing Ohioans during what he calls "difficult times."



Portman

"My goal is to put partisanship aside and focus on what's best for the people. Right now we have a lot of problems," he said during a recent *Town Hall Ohio* show where he talked about his career and the challenges that the United States faces today.

Portman comes from a small business background, which has made him more aware of the struggles that many farmers face in Ohio. He criticized the federal government for making it harder for farmers to be successful, citing higher taxes, stricter regulations and lack of movement on vital trade policies. "Scary" is how he described U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposals on dust, air, water, pesticides and carbon dioxide emissions.

"Farmers are some of the best entrepreneurs anywhere. They're used to ups and downs. The last thing farmers want is the federal government to make it harder for them," he said.

During the Ohio Farm Bureau radio show, OFBF Executive Vice President Jack Fisher praised the senator for his long-standing support of small businesses. Portman's interest is personal. Turned down for a bank loan, Portman's father had to borrow money from a relative to start his forklift dealership in Cincinnati. The business grew from five employees to more than 300. Portman's family also has been owner of the Golden Lamb Inn, Ohio's oldest hotel, since 1926.

Portman said there's a lot of uncertainty in Congress about the individual income tax and capital gains tax, making it difficult for small businesses to plan their

future. Because the current Congress and President Obama did not deal with the death tax, he said the tax could come back in two years and be worse than it was 10 years ago.

"The situation is very tough for farmers because they can't plan. They don't know whether they will be able to pass on their small business, which is the farm, to their kids and grandkids," he said.

Portman praised county Farm Bureau presidents and leaders for sharing their concerns about the death tax during a recent visit to Washington D.C.

"I thought it was really effective. Farmers were there from all over Ohio and were able to tell their representatives directly what their concerns were," he said.

One of the keys to getting the U.S. economy going is to take away the uncertainty and give people clear rules that are in favor of jobs and growth, he said. He criticized the amount of control that federal regulators have today, saying that over time the power has shifted from the legislative branch to regulators.

"Congress passes big pieces of legislation and leaves tremendous authority with regulators," he said, pointing out that more than 500 new rulemakings are in the works.

Other ways to stimulate the economy are to lower the cost of health care while maintaining its quality, do away with frivolous lawsuits, allow small businesses to pool together to buy insurance and have health savings accounts that are tax free and can be rolled over year to year, he said.

Portman, who is a former U.S. trade representative, said he is "really frustrated" by the United States' lack of movement on foreign trade policies, including those in Colombia, South Korea and Panama.

"If trade is done right, it increases American jobs," he said. "We're losing jobs here in this country because (other countries) are now buying corn, soybeans, pork, beef and poultry from other countries. We have the best farmers in the world here and the best farmland in the world. We're the most productive farmers in the world. We just want a fair shake."

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POLICY & POLITICS

Name change among Zehringer's hopes for ODA

Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Jim Zehringer said he is looking at working with lawmakers to find a new name for his agency that will give Ohioans a better understanding of its work.

Zehringer said a more appropriate name would be the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Food Safety.

"The functions of our department go beyond its name," he said during the Ohio Livestock Coalition's Annual Meeting and Industry Symposium.

Zehringer also believes that opportunities in agriculture go well beyond raising crops and livestock.

"Farming is one of 200 things you can do in agriculture," he said.

State officials hope more young people will see those opportunities through a new program that would allow fourth graders and a guest to get into the Ohio State Fair for free by showing their report card.

They would then be able to engage in a number of educational activities related to agriculture. Ohio Farm Bureau is partnering in the effort.

"The governor really wants to make this a priority," Zehringer said.

Zehringer also believes that agriculture can lead the effort toward economic recovery.

He said he doesn't think it's a coincidence that Mercer County leads the state in agricultural receipts and has the lowest unemployment rate. Higher education needs to better target business needs, he said, noting that there are currently 65,000 open jobs in Ohio.

He also praised the work of the Ohio Livestock Care Standards board, noting that he recently visited a restaurant that boasted its meat came from animals that were raised humanely.

"Here in Ohio, we can all say that," he said.

Preserving farmland in Fairfield County

The Ohio Farmland Preservation program continues to ensure that tens of thousands of acres on hundreds of farms across the state remain in agricultural production.

In one recent example, more than 300 acres of land in Fairfield County were preserved through the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP). Roger Wolfe, along with Joe and Azure Koehler, signed papers to place the development rights of their land into the program.

"Fairfield County is among the fastest growing counties in Ohio in terms of population," said John Torres, organization director for Fairfield, Hocking, Pickaway and Ross County Farm Bureaus. "It has long been a Fairfield County Farm Bureau policy to support programs that help protect farmland." Both Wolfe and the Koehlers are members of Fairfield County Farm Bureau.

AEPP is funded through the Clean Ohio program and provides funding so landowners and communities may preserve Ohio's farmland. The Koehlers signed over the development rights on 131 acres through this program. Wolfe signed over his development rights as well, but first



From left, Azure and Joe Koehler and Roger Wolfe are among a number of Ohio farmers to have their land permanently preserved.

sought protection of his 207 acres through an Agricultural Security Area, which restricts the development of large blocks of land in an agreement between local government and landowners for a 10-year period of time.

According to John Ferbrache, research specialist for Fairfield County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), with the addition of these 338 acres, there is now a total of 1,700 acres in Fairfield County permanently protected through these programs.

The county commissioners, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation District, all share the responsibility of monitoring the land preservation programs. The Fairfield County Farm Bureau supports programs like these and recognizes the need to build strong relationships with all agencies involved.

Find out more about the Farmland Preservation program by visiting the Ohio Department of Agriculture's website at www.agri.ohio.gov.

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Advisory Councils: Speak Out

Your guide for May meetings

Advisory Council Questions:

Young Agricultural Professionals, see page 7

ACTION STEP: This month, invite Young Agricultural Professionals to your council meeting for the discussion and the opportunity to join you in the policy development process and to share ideas.

Young Agricultural Professionals are the future leaders of Farm Bureau. The success of the organization is based on creating, building and maintaining relationships.

- How does your county involve Young Agricultural Professionals in Farm Bureau activities and policy development?
- What do the Young Agricultural Professionals that you've invited to your council meeting say their major agricultural issues or concerns are?
- What can your advisory council do to mentor Young Agricultural Professionals and build relationships?
- Based on the discussion from the meeting, what are your policy suggestions?

State, farmers continue efforts to improve Grand Lake St. Marys

Regulators are planning to continue to work with farmers following the release of new rules resulting from pollution concerns in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed.

The rules allow the state to designate "watersheds in distress"

based on factors such as nutrient impairments, threats to public health, toxic algal blooms and impacts on aquatic life.

Once a watershed receives the designation it triggers restrictions on the winter application of manure and a requirement for farmers to develop and implement nutrient management plans.

Rob Hamilton of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil and Water Resources told attendees of the Ohio Livestock Coalition's annual meeting that the state wants to keep a positive relationship with farmers by using guiding principles as it applies the rules. Among them are keeping in mind the concerns of landowners and using regulation as a "backstop" after first giving farmers a chance to comply.

"We have a lot of respect for landowners and private property out there and we hope that will continue," he said.

Hamilton said of the 300 livestock farms in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed, close to 60 percent are covered by a nutrient management plan or in the process of obtaining one. The same holds true for 70 percent of the cropland.

Hamilton also said that complaints about farmers applying nutrients this past winter fell dramatically from previous years. However, Hamilton said he is concerned that some farms need more cropland than they have to apply manure.

Grand Lake St. Marys was among a number of lakes throughout Ohio that had health advisories issued last summer due to blooms of toxic algae. While the algal blooms are fed by nutrients found in farm runoff and other natural sources, it is believed that a wet spring followed by a hot dry summer may have exacerbated the problem.

FARM BUREAU NEWS

Animals for Life Foundation now accepting grant applications

The Animals for Life Foundation, which was established by Ohio Farm Bureau, is now accepting requests for proposals (RFP).

According to David White, the Foundation's executive director, RFP applications will be considered that help the Foundation further develop and implement its vision and mission – to increase public acceptance and understanding of human-animal interdependency and achieve public recognition that animals bring value to human life.

All applications must contain an outline of a proposed budget, proj-

ect objectives, project relationship to the Foundation, project work plan, measurable project milestones, project team members and project partnerships.

This will be the second year that the Foundation has accepted and awarded grants. Last year the Foundation awarded grants that helped create a campaign to build awareness about the importance of the human-animal bond; stimulate conversation about the benefits between humans and animals and responsibilities for animal care; reinforce consumer confidence and

trust in Ohio's livestock farmers, and help educate fifth grade students about animal care, the value animals bring to human life and the human-animal bond.

Interested parties have until July 1 to complete and submit their RFP application to the Foundation. Information about the RFP application process is available on the Foundation's website at www.aflfoundation.org or by contacting the Foundation office at 614-246-8261 or afl@ofbf.org.



Tasteful Photo: The Mahoning County Farm Bureau recently participated in the Our Valley Cooks food expo. The group uses the event to engage attendees on their food and how it is produced.

NATIONWIDE NEWS

Nationwide Agribusiness applies more than 100 years experience in protecting farms

In 1909, Iowa farm and grain cooperative leaders needed a way to stop the financial devastation caused by destructive wooden elevator fires that occurred all too frequently throughout the Midwest.

By working together, they created a new source of affordable insurance, based on the principles of mutual benefits, called the Farmers Cooperative Elevator Mutual Insurance Association. Today, that risk solutions leader is part of the Nationwide family of companies and is known as Nationwide Agribusiness.

From its beginning, the new insurer built its reputation by focusing on the unique needs of American agriculture. Today, Na-

tionwide Agribusiness serves farms, ranches, commercial agribusinesses, and related operations across the country, and has grown to become America's No. 1 insurer of farms and agriculture cooperatives.

This evolution of the small farmers' mutual to the nation's largest farm insurer is not surprising given that Nationwide was founded by the Ohio Farm Bureau and has maintained its interest in serving agriculture and Farm Bureau members throughout the United States.

As farming changed radically in recent decades, Nationwide Agribusiness has kept pace through innovation and by truly listening to its customers' needs. Throughout,

it has maintained a century-long tradition of trust and integrity, customer-first service and industry leading specialization in ag-related safety training, claims handling and risk solutions.

Farm Specialization

Nationwide Agribusiness Farm Certified agents are trained to understand the newest innovations and related risks in farm operations. They perform On Your Side® Farm Reviews to help customers achieve long-term business goals. Nationwide Agribusiness' industry-leading risk management specialists work with customers to help prevent losses before they occur, and to re-

turn farms to full operation when covered losses do occur. Nationwide Agribusiness also provides discounted rates on farm insurance for Ohio Farm Bureau members.

Nationwide Agribusiness operates in 46 states. In addition to insuring grain elevators, feed mills and dairy farms, the insurer serves food processors, sugar refineries, implement dealers and ag-related businesses such as nurseries and greenhouses and related industries along the food, fuel and fiber chains.

Nationwide Agribusiness supports the long-term viability of the agriculture industry through active sponsorship of many national and

local agricultural and social services organizations in communities across the country. Nationwide, Nationwide Agribusiness and their employees provide ongoing support through the Nationwide Foundation for organizations such as FFA, 4-H, American Farm Bureau Foundation, Farm Safety 4 Just Kids, United Way and the American Red Cross.

For more information about Nationwide Agribusiness, locating a Nationwide Agribusiness Farm Certified agent or asking about an On Your Side® Farm Review, visit www.nationwide.com/OFBF, or contact a local Nationwide agent.

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OUTREACH

Young Agricultural Professionals contests offer opportunities, rewards

Ohio Farm Bureau's Young Agricultural Professionals program is seeking individuals 18-35 who are interested in pursuing new opportunities offered by several annual competitions. In addition to gaining valuable experience, winners will receive an expense-paid trip to compete at the 2012 American Farm Bureau annual meeting in Hawaii.



Discussion Meet:

This is a formal version of what naturally happens during Farm Bureau Advisory Council meetings or County Board Committee Meetings. It is not a panel discussion or debate, but an exercise in cooperative problem solving designed to give experience in leading group discussions and chairing committees. The competition helps individuals sharpen critical thinking skills, share ideas concisely and directly and use problem solving techniques to tackle real issues facing agriculture.

Outstanding Young Farmer:

This award is designed to recognize successful young farmers for achievement in the business of farming and leadership and involvement in the agricultural community, particularly within local and state Farm Bureau. In addition to offering farmers recognition for their accomplishments, the program helps young farmers strengthen business planning

skills, develop new marketing opportunities and network with others who love agriculture. New this year, the four state finalists chosen will give judges a short PowerPoint presentation about their farm, Farm Bureau involvement, leadership and passion for farming.

Excellence in Agriculture:

This program recognizes successful young agricultural professionals who are actively contributing and growing through their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture. The program helps individuals highlight their strongest leadership strengths, sharpen valuable communication skills and promote diverse careers within agriculture.

This year, all contestants will have an opportunity to show their excitement for agriculture and Farm Bureau by making a one-to-three minute video, "What's Your Story" in which they introduce themselves, talk about their passion for agriculture and the value of Farm Bureau membership.

Young Agricultural Professionals are people who are 18 to 35 and are interested in improving the business of agriculture, learning new ideas and developing leadership skills. To get more information, visit <http://bit.ly/YoungAgProfessionals>, e-mail Darrell Rubel at drubel@ofbf.org or visit www.facebook.com/YoungAgProfessionals.

Food retailers continue to focus on consumers' changing demands

There are about 7,000 grocery stores in Ohio, ranging from corner carryouts to modern supermarkets, and like farmers, those businesses are responding to consumer demand.

Leo Braido, chairman of the Ohio Grocers Association, said in his 29 years working for Riesbeck's Food Markets, consumer expectations have changed significantly.

Braido said consumers are more health and wellness oriented as well as more finicky than they used to be. The old grocery store motto of "Pile it high and watch it fly" no longer applies, he said.

"You have to do your level best to listen attentively each and every day to what the customer is telling you they want as opposed to you giving them what you think they want," he said during a recent edition of Ohio Farm Bureau's radio show *Town Hall Ohio*.

Retailers' response to consumers ultimately trickles down to farmers,

according to Janet Cassidy, OFBF senior director of marketing communications.

"That really impacts food production these days," she said. Braido acknowledged that food retailers sometimes get too caught up in issues of price and value.

"I ask our managers all the time, 'Was the best meal you've ever eaten the least expensive one you've ever bought,'" he said. "And the answer is certainly 'no.'" He added that Ohio farmers produce some of the highest quality food products in the nation.

"We are very much in tune with balancing the quality piece with the value

piece for the consumer," he said. Tom Jackson, CEO of the Ohio Grocers Association, said balance is important because 71 percent of consumers rate prices as a very important decision maker when they buy food. Jackson said grocers are in the right business in a down

economy because people still have to eat. However, consumers may become more conservative in their shopping habits.

"Quite frankly, they're making the list at home, bringing it to the store and following it," Jackson said.

Another major trend that could affect farmers is consumers demand for locally grown foods.

"We tell our folks that work for us, 'Decisions best for consumers are those made closest to consumers.' And certainly food that's best for consumers is that which is grown as close to the consumer as possible," Braido said. "Each and every season that we can engage local farmers and buy their product, we want to do that."

"You have to do your level best to listen attentively each and every day to what the customer is telling you they want."

~Leo Braido, chairman, Ohio Grocers Association

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Melvin and Jean Knollman, center, accept the Neighbor of the Year Award from OFBF's Mike Bumgarner, left, and David Glauer, right, of the Ohio Livestock Coalition.

Knollman Farms named Neighbor of the Year

Knollman Farms, of Hamilton, Ohio, recently received the 2011 Ohio Livestock Coalition (OLC) Neighbor of the Year Award which recognizes a farmer who has positively developed and enhanced relationships between neighbors in Ohio's farm communities.

"Being a good neighbor means that farmers should be courteous of their neighbors and educate them on what they do and why they do it, especially for those who may be unfamiliar with livestock and farming," said David White, OLC executive director. "While there were many outstanding nominations this year, Knollman Farms was chosen for their tireless efforts for going above and beyond what's expected of them."

Knollman Farms was recognized for its commitment to being a responsible farm and a leader in the local community. The farm is respectful of its neighbors and makes it a priority to keep the property clean and presentable at all times.

The family farm is located on a busy highway near a local amusement park. The farm takes extra precautions such as storing manure in an area behind the barns so that it is out of sight and spreading when appropriate so it doesn't disturb neighbors.

Additionally, Knollman Farms actively educates local elected officials and community members about agriculture. The family regularly participates in volunteering with 4-H, donations, hosting and coaching local teams, loaning equipment to other farmers and many other activities.

Knollman Farms received a plaque and a \$250 cash donation to an organization of its choice courtesy of OLC and OFBF.

NOTEWORTHY

Applications being accepted for 2011-2012 AgriPOWER class

OFBF is currently accepting applications for members of its 2011-2012 AgriPOWER Institute class.

Designed specifically for farmers and agribusiness professionals, the yearlong AgriPOWER program focuses on public policy issues confronting agriculture and the food industry. Each year, AgriPOWER Institute helps 20 individuals develop the skills necessary to become effective leaders and advocates for agriculture by learning from experts in these fields.

The program consists of seven multi-day institutes (17 total days) covering public policy matters facing local communities, the state of Ohio, the nation and the world. Additionally, specific sessions help class members develop important skills necessary to become an effective leader and advocate. One session will be held in Washington, D.C. to help class members gain a valuable understanding of national and global issues.

OFBF, as well as other commodity organizations, will be awarding scholarships to individuals for the 2011-2012 AgriPOWER Institute covering the cost of lodging, meals, group travel, institute materials and course content for the program.

Those interested in the class are encouraged to work to get a sponsored nomination from their county Farm Bureau or commodity organization.

Individual self-nominations will also be accepted. Applications for the 2011-2012 AgriPOWER Institute are due June 1.

For a complete description, 2011-2012 class schedule, informational brochure and applications, visit <http://bit.ly/agripower>.



Photo by Sandy Kuhn

Twenty Ohio leaders, shown here during a trip to Washington, D.C., recently graduated from the AgriPOWER Institute.

The graduates are Matt Bell, Muskingum County; Jake Bodimer, Gallia County; Shirlee Bostdorff, Wood County; Sara Camacho, Washington County; Rich Deaton, Darke County; Abra Dunn, Franklin County; Evan Hahn, Ashland County; Brenda Hastings, Geauga County; Aaron Heilers, Shelby County; Rachel Heimerl, Licking County; Tracie Isler, Marion County; Jamie King, Delaware County; Andy Korb, Butler County; Nathan Like, Henry County; Jamie Metzger, Pickaway County; Christy Montoya, Montgomery County; Kim Rassi, Cuyahoga County; Leia Ringler, Richland County; Chris Rogers, Brown County and Kristin Taylor, Wayne County.

During the past year, participants engaged government officials, activists, media insiders and farm leaders on pressing local, state and national issues. Among the topics were government structure and spending, regulations, the environment, animal welfare, international trade and public relations.

House passes bill to prevent costly, redundant pesticide regulations

The U.S. House has passed legislation that protects pesticide applicators, including farmers and other small businessmen, their customers and state and local government from costs associated with duplicating already existing federal pesticide regulations.

The bill, H.R. 872, was sponsored by Ohio Reps. Jean Schmidt and Bob Gibbs.

"Reps. Schmidt and Gibbs led this critical bi-partisan effort in Congress, and we are proud of their strong support for Ohio and American agriculture," said Jack Fisher, OFBF's executive vice president.

Pesticides are currently regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. A court ruling had prompted pesticide applicators to also seek compliance under the Clean Water Act.

Fisher also thanked House Speaker John Boehner for his support and assistance in bringing the bill to a floor vote, which was passed with bipartisan support 292 - 130.

Other Ohioans who voted for the bill include Reps. Steve Austria,



Steve Chabot, Bill Johnson, Jim Jordan, Marcy Kaptur, Steve LaTourette, Bob Latta, Steve Stivers, Jim Renacci, Pat Tiberi and Mike Turner.

Fisher said credit also goes to county Farm Bureau presidents who were in Washington, D.C. less than two weeks before the

House passed the bill asking for assistance from Congress on this issue.

"We are glad to see this quick and very helpful response," he said.

In a separate development, Ohio Farm Bureau welcomed news that the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals granted a request by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to extend the pesticide permit deadline to Oct. 31 from the previous deadline of April 9.

A previous lower court ruling required EPA to establish the duplicative regulations that prompted H.R. 872.

"The appeals court ruling and House passage of their bill are both very important, but do not fully resolve the issue. We now ask the U.S. Senate to move quickly and approve similar legislation," Fisher said.

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