

# SPECIAL EDITION

## 2009: A Year In Review

“Ohio Farm Bureau's Vision is to forge a partnership between farmers and consumers that meets consumer needs, addresses public expectations and ensures agricultural prosperity in a global marketplace.”

A PUBLICATION OF THE OHIO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

# BUCKEYE FARM NEWS

OHIO'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 31, 2009 | VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 7

## True to our roots

“The Ohio Farm Bureau is an organization of farmers, run by farmers, for farmers...practical farmers who know farming problems and who realize the need of a powerful and influential organization through which farmers can talk and act together.”

This quote from a 1921 publication describes this organization in no uncertain terms. As we reflect on another year of accomplishments, it is appropriate to revisit this fundamental question: *Who is Ohio Farm Bureau?*



Ohio Farm Bureau members are a diverse group that includes commodity farmers, niche farmers, 4-H families, hobby farmers, rural residents, consumers and others. Every farming member gets one vote on the organization's policies.



In 2009, farmers worked through their organization to debate and establish positions on important farm and rural issues and then advocated for Ohio agriculture at all levels of government.

### OFBF by the numbers

OFBF is a federation of county Farm Bureaus representing all 88 counties. The organization reached a record membership of **235,064** in 2009. Nearly **60,000** of those members are farmers who each get one vote on the organization's policies. The retention rate for membership in the Ohio Farm Bureau this year was **89.86** percent.

OFBF's Board of Trustees is made up of **26** farmers who are elected by their peers. OFBF board members have a combined **373** years of service.

**349** farmer delegates were elected by local members to debate and finalize OFBF's policies for 2009.

There are nearly **574** OFBF Advisory Councils made up of **6,800** members that provide input on farm and rural issues.

**23** farmers from across Ohio served on OFBF's policy development committee, which develops recommendations on OFBF positions.

OFBF employees have a combined **734** years of service.

First off, Farm Bureau is not an office building in Columbus. It is not a hired team of professionals. Farm Bureau belongs solely to its members. It is the sum of the votes cast by every county Farm Bureau member at the gatherings in fellowship halls and local meeting places across Ohio. It is the thousands of advisory council participants that meet in farmhouse living rooms to discuss important issues. It is the farmers who are locally elected by their peers to annually establish their organization's marching orders. And ultimately, Farm Bureau is the voice that emerges when farmers and rural residents are willing to act together and debate the affairs of the state and nation that affect their way of life.

A core belief of one of this organization's early leaders was that farmers have the tools in their hands to shape their destiny if they would only use them.

The contemporary farmer may till two acres or 2,000. He or she may raise hogs or bees or cattle or berries. Their farm life may be a full-time endeavor or a respite from the office grind. But it is through Farm Bureau that individuals with diverse interests can advocate for a common good. When farmers exercise their vote in this organization, their shared values come forth as a collective voice that resonates through all levels of government.

To segment ourselves by product, by size, by species, by issue or by market is to forget the fundamental reason that our predecessors united: the challenges they faced were too big for any individual.

Those who work a piece of land often feel gratitude for the resources that were provided through the stewardship of past generations. Do we also recognize the resources that the farmers who came before us fought for in the public policy arena?

To name just a few: In 1967, Ohio Farm Bureau successfully advocated for a personal property tax exemption for agriculture. In 1973, Ohio Farm Bureau backed a constitutional amendment that allowed for Current Agricultural Use Valuation and prevented farmers from being taxed off of their land. In 1982, Farm Bureau supported the Ohio Farmland Preservation Act which established the agriculture district criteria and protected

farmers from nuisance lawsuits and water and sewer line assessments. In 1992, Ohio Farm Bureau organized to defeat Issue 5, which called for onerous labeling requirements on many farm inputs. In 2009, Ohio Farm Bureau successfully fought to give livestock farmers a constitutional assurance that animal rights activists would not have the only say on how farmers care for animals. The pages of this publication are filled with many more ways that farmers continued to work through their organization in this past year.

Farmers have always felt an obligation to leave their land in better shape than it was

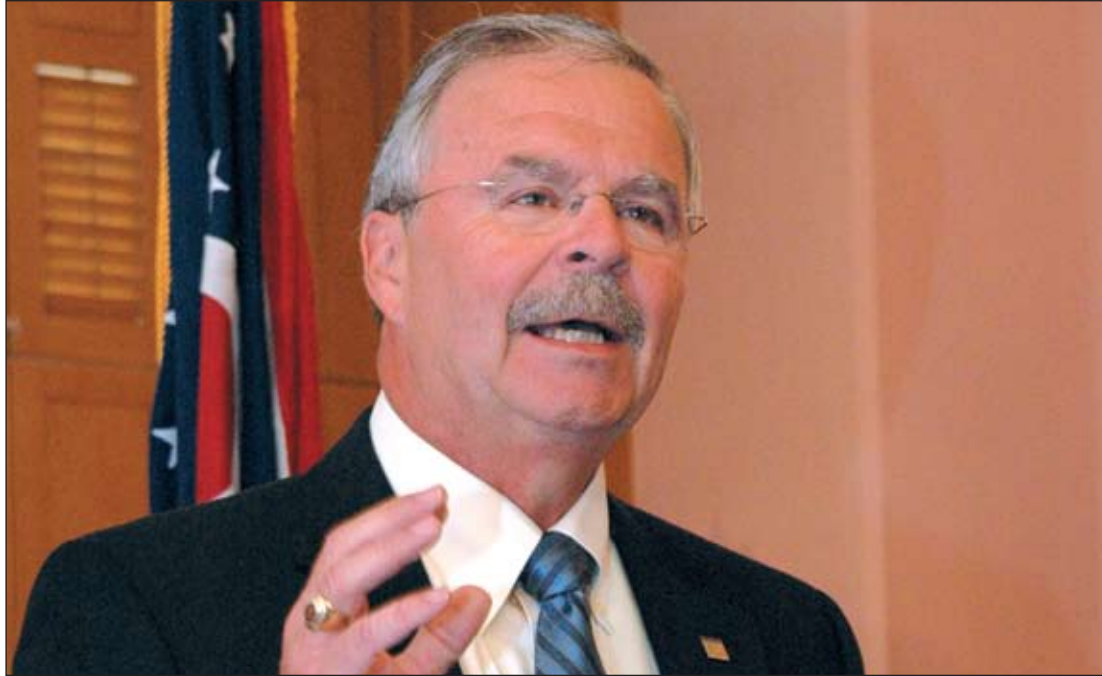
given to them. The question is how will you shape Ohio Farm Bureau so that it will be an even better resource for the next generation?

Because in the end, Ohio Farm Bureau is who Ohio farmers make it.

### A new era for the Ohio Farm Bureau

In 2009, Ohio Farm Bureau finalized a plan to ensure its future viability. More than 2,800 participants provided input into the 250 page plan titled "Ohio Farm Bureau's Envisioned Future — The New Era." The process resulted in the following updated vision statement for the organization: "Ohio Farm Bureau's Vision is to forge a partnership between farmers and consumers that meets consumer needs, addresses public expectations and ensures agricultural prosperity in a global marketplace." The plan also identifies Farm Bureau's core values as Integrity and Honesty, Grassroots Involvement, Promoting Agriculture, Member Advocacy and Teamwork. Read more excerpts from this plan inside this issue of *Buckeye Farm News*.

## 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW



OFBF Executive Vice President Jack Fisher testifies in favor of a bill that would require the state to use bio-based products when feasible.

Photo by Seth Teter

## PUBLIC POLICY and POLITICAL ACTIVISM to Create a Stronger Economy and a Positive Future...

*We will educate policymakers about best management practices that enhance consumer trust and confidence. These standards, recognized by the industry, government leaders and consumers, will be science-based, responsive, ethically sound and ensure food safety, quantity and quality.*

*We will promote funding and working relationships with providers of research, education and training that benefit agriculture and consumers.*

*We will promote stewardship of natural resources, including wildlife management while ensuring personal property rights.*

*We will recruit and support candidates for elected office at all levels who value agriculture.*

*We will promote agbioresource technologies and new markets.*

From *Ohio Farm Bureau's Envisioned Future — The New Era*, developed in 2009

## FARMERS AT THE TABLE

### OFBF guards water use

In 2008, Ohio was among the eight Midwest states and two Canadian provinces to ratify the Great Lakes Compact — an agreement that governs the use and prevents the diversion of water from the Great Lakes.

By statute, an advisory board was established in Ohio, chaired by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, to develop recommendations to the governor and General Assembly for legislation and policy needed to implement the compact.

OFBF Director of Policy Development and Environmental Research Larry Antosch is the advisory board appointee for agricultural interests in the Lake Erie Basin. He and the rest of the advisory board began working on three distinct portions of the compact in March.

"Representing agricultural interests, I'm particularly looking out for the personal property rights of agricultural water users and to ensure that agriculture-related water users are able to continue to have access to the water they need," Antosch said. "Our whole goal is to make sure those individuals using water today are protected as future regulations get developed, with the intent to grandfather all current water users who qualify under new standards."

### Council's work aims to grow local food systems

OFBF represented its members through its participation in the Ohio Food Policy Council, which released its progress report in 2009 that sets final recommendations and goals to help improve the local food system in Ohio and advance access to healthy food.

Gov. Ted Strickland created the council in 2007 to analyze food production, processing and consumption in Ohio; link producers and consumers in local food systems; and ensure that citizens in need have greater access to fresh and nutritious food.

Council recommendations included implementing a mobile poultry processing unit in the state, incorporating the Farm Bill Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program in Ohio elementary schools, creating a directory of existing low or no interest loans, grants and tax incentive programs available for agricultural businesses focused on local food systems, increasing support of agricultural economic development in the state and improving links between farmers and food businesses.



## A BETTER STATE

### OFBF spoke out for OSU Extension, OARDC

Protecting funding for Ohio State Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center was a priority for OFBF this year. The organization worked to restore funds that had been cut in early state budget proposals. OFBF emphasized that Extension delivers wide-ranging programs that could help put the state on the path to economic recovery. OFBF is also a strong supporter of 4-H. OFBF President Brent Porteus told a House budget committee the impact these programs make on Ohio's economy and its people pays back a greater return than the original investment made by taxpayers.

### New program helped link farmers with hunters to control deer damage

OFBF partnered with the Ohio Division of Wildlife to launch the Web site [www.huntohiofarms.com](http://www.huntohiofarms.com), a two-year pilot program aimed at providing farmers in Carroll, Harrison, Jefferson and Tuscarawas counties with pre-screened hunters to reduce the damage to crops by foraging deer.

Hunters from anywhere inside or outside Ohio could register at the site, providing information including hunting preferences, availability, hunting implement of choice, etc. Then farmers who own land in the pilot counties could search hunter profiles and find a good match for their farm and circumstances. More than 1,000 hunters had registered on the site after just one week.

The program will be evaluated to determine if it should be expanded to more counties in the future.



### OFBF worked to stop APV trespassing

OFBF effectively lobbied to get language in the state transportation budget to curb APV (All-Purpose Vehicle) trespassing, which can cause extensive damage to crops and fields. Trespassers will face increased penalties and a "three strikes and you're out" provision that allows for the confiscation of their vehicle. Unless they are primarily used for agriculture, APVs also will be required to display a visible license plate or number that would help law enforcement officials identify trespassers. The bill also provided funding for the creation of additional public recreation trails. OFBF had identified APV trespassing as a component of its efforts to protect personal property rights in 2009.

### Supporting SWCDs

OFBF supported provisions in legislation to re-establish funding for important services that are regularly rendered on behalf of agriculture.

Significant cuts in the state budget left Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) short of funding. OFBF policy supports an adequate source of program funding for SWCDs.

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# 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## WATCH ON WASHINGTON

### Small produce growers took on big proposal

OFBF voiced concerns with a proposed marketing agreement that could have set unworkable standards for Ohio produce growers.

OFBF received many calls from small and medium sized growers, organic growers, representatives of the Amish community and others who were concerned that the California marketing agreement for leafy greens could become the national standard.

The voluntary standards are designed to ensure food safety and could become a nationally recognized seal of approval for leafy greens such as spinach and lettuce. Growers who are unable to comply with the standards could be shut off from potential buyers.

Among OFBF's concerns were California's requirements that deal with water use, animal intrusion, field sanitation, harvest requirements and soil amendments. These specifics were designed around some California cultural practices and are not conducive to Ohio.

"In looking at the audit sheets for California, as a small grower, I don't see where I will find the time, let alone the dollars to pay for this type of program," said Lisa Schacht, a farm market operator who provided Ohio Farm Bureau's testimony during a U.S. Department of Agriculture Hearing in Columbus.

"I fear this proposal, as it now stands, will only serve to drive Ohio produce farmers out of business," Schacht said.

OFBF First Vice President Steve Hirsch, a farm market operator, also testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture, saying that a one-size fits all structure for food safety will not work.

"In my view compliance is the key to the success of any new food safety system and any new system should be flexible in nature so growers can comply," Hirsch said.

### Water regulations would burden farmers

OFBF expressed farmers' opposition to legislation that could potentially put all waters in Ohio under federal jurisdiction. The federal bill, which would expand the authority of the Clean Water Act from "navigable" waters to all waters, could make any activity affecting wet areas subject to the federal permit process. The legislation could open up farmers to citizen lawsuits for doing things such as cleaning out a drainage ditch. OFBF collected more than 5,000 postcards from Ohio farmers expressing opposition to the bill and delivered this message to Congress.



### The 'cow tax' and climate bill

OFBF along with American Farm Bureau fought against a proposed "cow tax" that would have allowed the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act.

According to Agriculture Department figures, any farm or ranch with more than 25 dairy cows, 50 beef cattle or 200 hogs emits more than 100 tons of carbon equivalents per year, requiring it to obtain a permit under the proposed rules. OFBF also voiced concerns to Ohio's congressional delegation regarding proposed climate legislation that would increase the costs of inputs, including fuel and energy, for farmers by putting restrictions on carbon emissions.

### Ruling in dust case goes against agriculture

A federal appeals court ruling earlier this year opened the door for the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate dust kicked up by farm machinery and other rural activities.

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

OFBF was disappointed with the ruling and believes the cost of new regulations would likely far outweigh any environmental benefit.

As this issue progresses, OFBF will continue to speak out against potential costly and burdensome regulations.

### Meat shipment rules will benefit Ohio

Because it would increase marketing opportunities for Ohio farmers, OFBF has been a strong advocate for allowing interstate shipment of meat.

Federal laws prohibit state-inspected meat products (beef, poultry, pork, lamb and goat) from being sold in interstate commerce but other state-inspected products such as milk, dairy products, fruit, vegetables and fish are allowed to be marketed freely throughout the United States. Ironically, meat products shipped from other countries are also allowed in the United States if they pass inspections.

A new U.S. Department of Agriculture program that would allow state-inspected meat to cross state lines is expected to have a big impact in Ohio. Ohio has the second highest number of state-inspected meat processing facilities in the United States.



Athens County farmer Curt Cline was one of several farmers featured in the Farmers Feed US promotion.

Photo by Jodi Miller

## PRESERVING and PROMOTING the Contributions of Animals to Society...

*We will work to maintain a viable livestock sector in Ohio.*

*We will promote best practices regarding livestock production.*

*We will create understanding about the roles animals play in society as food animals, companions and in service to people.*

*We will promote the proper care of all animals.*

From *Ohio Farm Bureau's Envisioned Future — The New Era*, developed in 2009

## ANIMAL ISSUES

### OFBF launches Center for Food and Animal Issues

OFBF created the Center for Food and Animal Issues in 2009 to facilitate discussion about society's relationship to animals.

The Center is a long-term effort to bring together diverse interests including farmers, consumers, zoos, hunters, researchers and pet owners to make sure all voices are heard as decisions about animals are considered. The Center also will house the Animals for Life Foundation, which will focus on fundraising efforts to support its mission. A core belief of the Center is that people have a right to use animals and a responsibility to do so humanely.

Learn more by searching for "Center for Food and Animal Issues" at [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org).

### Farmers Feed US

The past year offered all Ohioans the opportunity to get to know Ohio's farmers and their families, see them at work, tour their farms and learn more about the dedication to growing safe food, raising healthy livestock and protecting and conserving the land. Through the Farmers Feed US grocery giveaway sweepstakes, Ohioans registered online up to seven times per day for a chance at one of three awards of free groceries for a year. When registering, they viewed photos, videos and facts about Ohio farms. OFBF was a major supporter of the effort along with many commodity organizations.

### Coalition campaign spotlights Ohio livestock

OFBF supported the Ohio Livestock Coalition, a collaborative group of Ohio cattlemen, dairy producers, pork producers, sheep and wool producers, corn growers and soybean producers, as it kicked off an extensive two-month media campaign in January that included radio, newspaper and Web site advertisements. The goal was to illustrate the contributions of Ohio's livestock industry, which provides more than \$8.13 billion to the state's economy and employs more than 47,000 Ohioans. The campaign highlighted three key industry priorities: Ohio livestock producers provide safe and affordable food, are environmentally responsible and take animal care responsibly.



### Training helped promote trust in farmers

OFBF hosted Operation Hometown Outreach, a training program that equipped Ohio farmers to speak out for their livelihoods. Farmers learned to become spokespersons for the livestock community in order to promote trust in the U.S. food system. Participants were provided training and then were scheduled to speak with civic organizations about livestock production practices.

# 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## Investing in youth

Ohio Farm Bureau again offered conferences for Farm Bureau youth during the summer months. The conferences provide opportunities for youths to bond and build leadership, teamwork and communications skills. The program changes each year, and youths can participate up to four times. Learn more about OFBF youth programs in the "Get Involved" section at [ofbf.org](http://ofbf.org).

## Volunteers work to grow membership

2009 was the first full year under the new structure of a year-round campaign, resulting in an all-time high membership of 235,064. The new structure was intended to allow volunteers to work at selling memberships as they have time.

OFBF also moved to an anniversary renewal date for membership, meaning new members now get a full year of membership regardless of when they join.

Building relationships is a key to the effectiveness of any organization, and membership volunteers approached the year in this manner. Many volunteers built relationships with affinity groups, which are businesses and organizations that have similar interests and philosophies as Farm Bureau. "It is important for us to make Farm Bureau relevant to new audiences," said OFBF Senior Director of Membership Marketing Janet Cassidy. "Getting others to speak positive about Farm Bureau is what will allow us to continue to grow and do the work that has been set forth by our members." Ohio Farm Bureau volunteers were able to sign several businesses and many of their employees as Farm Bureau members by simply building relationships. Cassidy also stated, "Sometimes the first visit to a business or other organization does not result in a membership right away, but later on the initial contact can prove to be very beneficial."

Nationwide Insurance and Medical Mutual of Ohio were also very instrumental to the membership campaign. Executive Vice President Jack Fisher said, "Nationwide Insurance has a closely shared heritage with Ohio Farm Bureau, and its agents and management demonstrated an unprecedented effort to assure the success of the 2009 campaign. Medical Mutual, as a new partner, also put forth a tremendous commitment to helping us succeed."



Ohio farmers leave Capitol Hill during an annual trip in which they meet with Washington officials.

Photo by Dan Toland

A strong effective  
**ORGANIZATION**  
that is member driven,  
financially strong and  
focused on farmers...

*We will continue to grow a strong membership representing member interests, increased member involvement and expanding member services.*

*We will continue to develop quality county and state programs to serve our members' needs.*

*We will provide opportunities and resources to encourage and empower members to be advocates for agriculture.*

*We will achieve financial strength within Farm Bureau at the county, state and national levels.*

From *Ohio Farm Bureau's Envisioned Future — The New Era*, developed in 2009

## Leadership Buffet

OFBF's Leadership Buffet provides opportunities for members to participate in seminars that work at improving their leadership skills. Some of the popular workshop topics in which members participated in 2009 included public speaking, how to set goals, how to get new people involved, how to make volunteering attractive, how to build an effective team and etiquette training. To learn more about the Leadership Buffet, click on "Leadership Development" in the "Get Involved" section at [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org).

## OFB Foundation

In 2009, the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation raised \$8,000 at its annual silent auction held during the 2008 OFBF annual meeting in Columbus. An additional \$32,000 was raised through the annual Foundation Golf Outing. Special honoree recognition was given to Bill Dolan, retired executive director of the Children's Hunger Alliance at that outing. The money raised by the Foundation was used in funding award grants that helped to develop programs helping smaller, community based groups and support programs and projects focused on agricultural education, ecological and/or economic development.

This past year 11 service groups throughout Ohio received \$30,000 from the Foundation in grants.

The Foundation also awarded a total of 10 academic scholarships worth \$1,000 each in three scholarship programs. The newest offering in 2009 was the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation Scholar (OFBFS) award. This award recognized students for their academic efforts, community service and that they have chosen to pursue a career that could enhance the partnership between producers and consumers.

The second scholarship program is the Darwin Bryan Scholarship Program, which honors youth with strong leadership skills. And the third scholarship program, the Women's Leadership in Agriculture Scholarship, awards students who achieve excellence in academics and participate in activities in social and charitable organizations that provide opportunities "to enable, to uplift and to strengthen the lives of young women."

Grant applications are accepted in December, and academic scholarship applications are accepted in March. More information about the OFB Foundation and its programs is available at [ofbfoundation.org](http://ofbfoundation.org) or call 614-246-8294.

## GROWING GRASSROOTS



### Empowering advocates

Twenty new advocates for agriculture completed their training through Ohio Farm Bureau's inaugural AgriPOWER Institute in 2009. The year-long intensive training consists of seven multi-day sessions where farmers and others in the agricultural industry can gain in-depth training on advocacy and engage high-level government officials, activists, media insiders and farm leaders on pressing local, state and national issues. OFBF's second AgriPOWER class, shown above, is currently in the midst of its training. Learn more by searching for "AgriPOWER" at [ofbf.org](http://ofbf.org) or e-mail [agripower@ofbf.org](mailto:agripower@ofbf.org) for details.



### County presidents head to Capitol Hill

For the 63rd year, OFBF's county presidents made their trek to Capitol Hill to lobby on behalf of farmers back in Ohio. "When (legislators) associate a name with a face, and a face with an issue, they know how important it is to their constituents. Our presence here makes a great impact," said Athens County Farm Bureau President David Bright during the trip.

In the photo above, farmers participate in a briefing at the Embassy of the Organization of American States.



### Meeting face to face

More than 300 county Farm Bureau leaders gathered in Columbus in February for OFBF's annual Ag Day at the Capitol to meet with lawmakers about the budget, education funding and other issues affecting agriculture and rural life. Gov. Ted Strickland, shown above, Sen. Tom Niehaus and House Speaker Armond Budish addressed the group, who then met individually with their lawmakers. "Farm Bureau members put a face on the issues. Legislators need to hear the stories to make it real to them," said Adam Sharp, OFBF senior director of legislative and regulatory affairs.

## 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## AMONG THE BEST

## Young Agricultural Professionals

In 2009, OFBF sent a trio of Young Agricultural Professionals to compete in American Farm Bureau's Young Farmer and Rancher contests at AFBF's annual meeting in San Antonio in January. Harrison County's Wendy Chrisman competed in the Sweet 16 Round of the Discussion Meet, which tests participants' ability to cooperatively discuss challenges facing agriculture. Fairfield County's Katy Endsley represented Ohio in the Excellence in Agriculture competition, which recognizes successful young people involved in farming but whose primary occupations are not farming or owning an agribusiness. And fourth-generation cattle farmers Robert and Autumn Morrison of



Robert and Autumn Morrison won the use of a Kubota tractor through the Outstanding Young Farmer contest.

Jefferson County represented OFBF in the Outstanding Young Farmer contest, which recognizes individuals for accomplishments in their farming operations and their leadership in the farm community.

Paulding County couple Ryan and Nikki McClure were appointed by AFBF President Bob Stallman to serve on American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee in 2009. The committee is made up of 16 Young Farmers and Ranchers from state Farm Bureaus across the United States.

Learn more by searching for "Young Agricultural Professionals" at [ofbf.org](http://ofbf.org).

## Earning recognition

OFBF received AFBF's new Pinnacle Award, given to the best Farm Bureau in each membership division for overall outstanding achievement combined with membership growth. The organization also won four out of a possible five President's Awards for the third straight year, twice as many as the closest state Farm Bureau competitor, and received AFBF's Award for Excellence in all

five program areas – Agriculture Education and Promotion; Leadership Development; Member Services; Policy Implementation; and Public Relations and Information.

OFBF's communications projects also were recognized among the nation's best as the organization received eight awards and seven honorable mentions at American Farm Bureau's annual PR Conference.

Ohio Farm Bureau's policy team received American Farm Bureau's traveling FBACT (Farm Bureau Agricultural Contact Team) trophy for the Midwest Region in 2009 for excellence in grassroots activities aimed at the 110th Congress. The award is based upon participation in federal issues, member visits to Washington, in-state grassroots activities, other activities and recruitment.

## County programs awarded for excellence

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation recognized county Farm Bureaus for their outstanding activities and achievements during the awards banquet held at this year's OFBF Leadership Conference.

County activities were judged by 38 member-volunteers from across the state on how well the planning and execution of activities supported the organization's three program areas: Communications, Organization and Public Policy.

Counties recognized as having the best overall programming in each division were awarded the highest honor – the President's Award. The President's Award winners include Harrison County, Carroll County, Marion County, Tuscarawas County and Butler County.

Two county Farm Bureau programs also have been recognized on the national level. The LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) Program of Carroll, Harrison, Jefferson and Tuscarawas counties, along with the Grand Lake Agriculture Leaders Program of Mercer County, have earned the opportunity to participate in American Farm Bureau's Showcase at the 2010 AFBF annual meeting in Seattle. On an individual basis, Floyd Simpson of Belmont County has also been selected by AFBF to display his "Tag-Sav-R" invention as part of the Farmer Idea Exchange program.

## Members saved money in '09

Ohio Farm Bureau members have a number of benefits available to them ranging from money savings to property protection. Here are a few of the benefits that members took advantage of (as of November) in 2009.



**Insurance** — Because of the partnership Ohio Farm Bureau has with Nationwide Insurance and our newest partner, Medical Mutual of Ohio, members were able to save money on auto, home, farm and health insurance.

**\$25,000+**  
in rewards

**\$2,500 Reward** — Ohio Farm Bureau's Property Protection Program paid more than \$25,000 in rewards to individuals providing information to local law enforcement agencies, which led to the arrest and conviction of people committing felonies on the property of Farm Bureau members. The Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association endorses this program and encourages Ohio residents to display the reward signs on their property.

**Up to 75%**

**Workers' Compensation** — In 2009, more than 9,000 members saved between 25 percent to 77 percent on workers' compensation premiums. This year, CompManagement Inc. served as a new partner with OFBF in administering the program.

**\$79,948**

**Grainger** — In 2009, Ohio Farm Bureau members received discounts totaling \$79,948 on tools, electrical equipment, safety and security equipment, plus much more.

**49 new tractors**

**Case IH** — Farm Bureau members purchased 49 new tractors from Case IH and saved significant money with the company's rebate program for Farm Bureau members.

**300+ Dodge vehicles**

**Dodge** — A long-time member benefit is the rebate program offered through Dodge. Ohio Farm Bureau members were able to save money on the purchases of more than 300 Dodge vehicles in 2009.

**40% more nights**

**Choice Hotels** — Farm Bureau members who travel took advantage of the special discount offered through Choice hotels. The total number of room nights used by Farm Bureau members increased by nearly 40 percent more than the totals for 2008.

For a complete list and explanation of member benefits, visit the Ohio Farm Bureau Web site, [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org).

## NATIONWIDE NEWS

## Change continues to be constant at Nationwide

Change proved to be the password at Nationwide this year, even as the insurance and financial services company continues its 83-year sponsor relationship with Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

Leadership roles within Nationwide offered the most visible changes, as new CEO Steve Rasmussen reassigned presidents of several Nationwide companies to share their knowledge and experience across other operations. Among these changes:

- Mark Pizzi became president of Nationwide Insurance.
- Kirt Walker was named president of Nationwide Financial.
- Mark Thresher became Nationwide's chief financial officer.
- Larry Hilsheimer was elected president of Customer Choice Distribution, serving customers through the Internet, direct sales offices and affinity organizations.

Past OFBF board member Jeff Zellers became the chairman of the Nationwide Board Sponsor Committee, which oversees the company's relationships with OFBF and other Farm Bureau sponsors. Kurt Ely, former senior VP for OFBF, joined Nationwide to lead the Sponsor Relations team, which

works with OFBF leaders and members on a daily basis.

Other new developments at Nationwide included the opening of Ohio's first *On Your Side* Center located just north of Columbus, next to the Nationwide Training Center. The *On Your Side* Center is staffed with licensed agents who serve as customer advocates focused on an "above and beyond" customer experience. The center also offers community space for groups such as Farm Bureau to hold meetings.

Nationwide continued to emphasize its heritage (founded by OFBF in 1926 as Farm Bureau Mutual) by initiating a new *Farm Certified Agent* program aimed at enhancing agents' understanding of farm operations, risks and coverages. Along with the certification program, Nationwide Agribusiness emphasizes its *On Your Side* Farm Review to update farm policies and answer customers' questions.

Remaining unchanged in 2009 was Nationwide's support of important ag-support programs, such as Ohio 4-H, Ohio FFA and Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. Also, two additional Farm Bureaus that became sponsors of Nationwide this year – Connecticut and Vermont – highlighted the

company's continued support of Farm Bureaus and commitment to serving member insurance needs.

Other ongoing programs included member/leader meetings held with OFBF and other Farm Bureau sponsors, Nationwide's National Policyholder Conference in which OFBF leaders took part, and the Sponsor Leader Conference – each of which gave Farm Bureau participants a chance to speak directly with Nationwide board and management members about their insurance experience with Nationwide.

For a mutual insurer like Nationwide, owned by its policyholders, these exchanges directly with customers offer the best opportunity for constructive change to continue at Nationwide in 2010 and beyond.



In 2009, Steve Rasmussen (l) became Nationwide CEO and Jeff Zellers (r), past OFBF board member, became chairman of the Nationwide Board Sponsor Committee.

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## 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## Grow and Know

OFBF created a new education program this year. The first Grow & Know event was held in July at Bob Evans Farms in Gallia County and offered nonmembers and members the opportunity to learn about various aspects of farming, gardening and cooking. Grow & Know also leveraged the *Our Ohio* brand into membership marketing activities and services. Approximately 70 people registered for eight breakout sessions including topics on beekeeping, home canning, gardening, cooking and more. Event evaluations were positive and many attendees requested a similar training closer to home. Grow & Know will be expanded in 2010 as a new way to both serve members and connect farmers and consumers. Watch for the 2010 schedule in the March/April 2010 *Our Ohio* magazine.



## State fair success

OFBF coordinated the "Land and Living: Agriculture Your Link to Life" exhibit at the Ohio State Fair where an estimated 350,000 fairgoers participated in an interactive agricultural display in a 32,000-square-foot building used exclusively for the display. More than 9,000 children planted a flower and took it home as part of the Green2Go exhibit, 5,256 children participated in a pedal tractor course called the OFBF Country Cruise, and 28 memberships were sold during the fair.

Making its debut this year was the *Our Ohio* Expert Stage where agricultural experts enlightened guests in areas such as plant and animal science. COSI on Wheels also presented its show "Lunchroom Live" daily.

Bob Evans Farms was a new partner this year. The company distributed free recipe and coupon booklets. The winners of the Ohio Farm Bureau/Bob Evans recipe contest also were announced at the fair.

Special guests to the building included Sen. George Voinovich, State Auditor Mary Taylor and Gov. Ted Strickland.



Former U.S. Rep. Charlie Stenholm (l) talks with OFBF President Brent Porteus on OFBF's radio show Town Hall Ohio.

Photo by Seth Teter

## COMMUNICATION and Consumer Education to Forge a Partnership between Farmers and Consumers...

*We will build consumer trust in agriculture by being open and transparent about our practices and encourage education and communication between farmers and all segments of the population.*

*We will promote the integrity of agriculture to enhance public trust.*

*We will communicate to consumers that current agriculture practices, proper animal care and environmental protection are compatible, and will provide a safe, affordable and abundant food supply.*

*We will use technology to enhance communications and educational efforts.*

*We will work with traditional and emerging forms of media and special interest groups to ensure an accurate portrayal of our industry and communicate a unified message.*

From *Ohio Farm Bureau's Envisioned Future — The New Era*, developed in 2009



## Communicating with consumers

Ohio Farm Bureau continues to promote and enhance its statewide communications products. *Town Hall Ohio*, a weekly talk radio program, airs on top-rated 610 WTVN AM and allows Ohio Farm Bureau to set the agenda on public policy discussions. *Town Hall Ohio* added four new stations to its network this year, which allows the show to reach nearly 90 percent of the state. The program is the highest rated show in the state capitol radio market during its time slot as measured by the Arbitron audience measurement service. Guests included Ohio State President E. Gordon Gee, Gov. Ted Strickland, Attorney General Richard Cordray, former U.S. Congressman Charlie Stehnmolm, Ohio Senate President Bill Harris, Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner and Treasurer Kevin Boyce.

*Our Ohio* television began its fifth season in November: An average of 40,000 households per week watch the series, and 168 people from 38 counties were featured in the series in 2009. The 26 programs contained 49 unique segments with most profiling farm families or agricultural topics of interest to Ohioans.

The *Our Ohio* Web site has continued to see its usage grow each year since its launch in 2005. The site had 234,805 unique visitors compared to 173,669 last year. Sharing functions were added to the site this year, making it easier for visitors to share the information from the Web site on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

*Our Ohio* advertising, including print, radio, TV, exhibits and events, is an ongoing part of the *Our Ohio* consumer education campaign. Print advertisements promote Farm Bureau members and their stories under the theme: "True Stories. Real People. Down to Earth." The full-page magazine ads appear year-round in regional magazines for a total of more than 1.9 million impressions.

## Getting social on the Web

Ohio Farm Bureau found a new way to forge a partnership between farmers and consumers in 2009 by incorporating social media into its Web presence. A revamped Web site, [ofbf.org](http://ofbf.org), combined a clean look and feel with an interactive experience, where users may create accounts to comment on stories, vote in polls, share stories on online social networks and receive their county information when they sign into the page.

Ohio Farm Bureau has become known nationally as a leader in agriculture's use of social media. OFBF's *Guide to Social Media* has been shared throughout the nation and is used as a training guide for Ameri-

can Farm Bureau Federation. Other state Farm Bureaus and agriculture organizations are turning to OFBF as a model for social media participation, and a recent *National Journal* article said Ohio Farm Bureau is "leading the pack on Twitter." Visit

[www.tinyurl.com/OFBFSocialMedia](http://www.tinyurl.com/OFBFSocialMedia) to find OFBF's social media accounts, download easy-to-use social media tutorials and to find out why Ohio Farm Bureau wants and needs its members there.

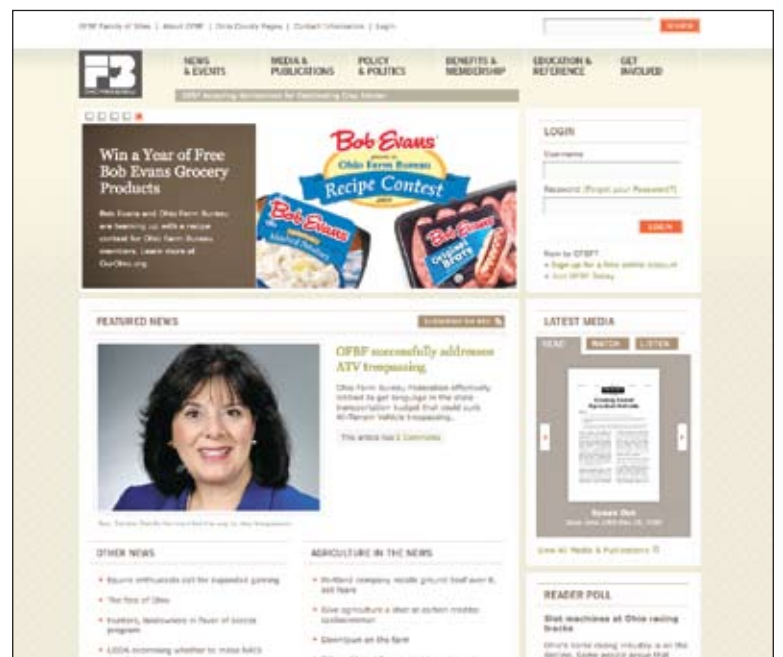
## Link Up

Connect with Ohio Farm Bureau on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Visit [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org) and click on "media and publications" then "social media."

twitter

facebook

YouTube



OFBF's new Web site, [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org)

## 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW

# County Highlights

## Stark County Farm Bureau partner in jail garden to benefit community

An innovative project at the Stark County Jail resulted in an educational opportunity for inmates and a long-term benefit for the clients of Meals on Wheels in Stark and Wayne counties. Under the guidance of Master Gardener volunteers from OSU Extension's Stark County office and the Stark County Farm Bureau, non-violent inmates at the jail planted a vegetable garden. After the produce was harvested, it was delivered to Meals on Wheels, where it was used in meals prepared for its clients. Up to five supervised inmates worked in two hour shifts in the 30-foot by 90-foot garden located at the jail. Stark County Farm Bureau and Hartville Hardware provided financial assistance and equipment. "This is an exceptional use of people, land and natural resources," said Organization Director Nick Kennedy. "It's a great example of the positive impact agriculture has on the community, and we're proud to support the program."



Photo courtesy of Kristy Foster / Farm and Dairy

These are just a few of the many activities from county Farm Bureaus in 2009. Learn how to get connected with your county Farm Bureau at [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org).

## Livestock display travels to Delaware County

Delaware County Farm Bureau took notice when an animal activist group displayed anti-animal agriculture information in the Delaware County Library. In an effort to help educate the public about the positives of animal agriculture, the board formed a committee to put together its own display for the library. The "Pleased to Meet You" display featured five area livestock farm families throughout the month of August and invited library patrons to learn more by visiting the Farm Bureau's animal display at the county fair and the [www.FarmersFeedUs.com](http://www.FarmersFeedUs.com) Web site. According to Organization Director Katie Grove, it was estimated that more than 5,000 people viewed the display.

## Farmers work locally

### Learning farm safety in Putnam County

Putnam County third-graders got to take part in the county's Farm Safety Day Camp to learn about hazards on the farm. Topics covered included grain and lawnmower safety, chemical safety, "pretty poison" safety (household chemicals), water safety, electrical safety, PTO (Power Take Off) safety and ATV safety.

### Preserving land in Fairfield County

Louise Warner of Hocking County spoke with attendees at the Southeast Ohio Farmland Preservation meeting sponsored by the Fairfield County Farm Bureau in February. Warner told of her personal experience protecting her farmland through Ohio's Ag Easement Purchase Program made possible through the Clean Ohio Fund.

### Farmers donate bushels to fight hunger in Miami County

Members of Miami County Farm Bureau and Troy Elevator, a division of the Mennel Milling Co., partnered to fight hunger in Miami County through OFBF's "Farmers Feed Our Needs" campaign. The county Farm Bureau invited all farmers to donate some of their harvested wheat bushels to help fight hunger. For every bushel donated, Troy Elevator deposited the current wheat market price of the day into an account, which at the end of harvest was donated to the Bethany Center in Piqua. Organization Director Mandy Havenar said county farmers donated 648.5 bushels of wheat and raised \$2,700 to go along with it. The county Farm Bureau and Troy Elevator continued the campaign throughout the corn and soybean harvest.

### Morgan County summer reading fun with Farm Bureau

Morgan County Farm Bureau brought the positive word of agriculture to youth this summer by sponsoring the summer reading program at the Kate Love Simpson Library. The county Farm Bureau provided a number of agricultural related activities for the children and brought in live animals for the children to pet and learn about. Eighty children made bean art, planted seeds in a glove to watch them sprout and tried their hand at milking a model cow.

### Seneca County's Coats from the Heartland

Seneca County Farm Bureau collected new and gently used coats in all sizes as part of its "Coats from the Heartland" initiative. Collected coats were distributed to the needy throughout northwest Ohio. Seneca County Farm Bureau President Dwight Clary said he used to collect and send coats to Good Morning America's coat drive but thought a Farm Bureau-led coat drive would be a more direct way of helping local needy families.

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## 2009: A YEAR IN REVIEW

# Looking back on ISSUE 2

*A brief history of one of the largest grassroots campaigns in Ohio agriculture*

Last December, hundreds of Ohio farmers representing all 88 counties met to vote on Ohio Farm Bureau's policies for 2009. They approved extensive animal care policy, which stated that "we support properly researched, veterinary approved and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that provide consumers with a wholesome food supply" and "we oppose legislation that, unless clear abuse is evident, restricts private ownership or use of animals." Additionally, farmers stated that "we oppose legislation that restricts or prohibits a producer's ability to produce and sell livestock that is raised according to industry accepted animal husbandry practices."

Two months later, that the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal rights group, called a meeting with Ohio Farm Bureau and other farm organizations. The HSUS said if farm groups refused to agree to legislation

that illegalized common farming practices, it would consider forcing its regulations via a ballot initiative.

HSUS, an extremely well-funded and highly sophisticated public relations machine, had been undefeated in several states, including its most recent ballot initiative in California that passed by a two-thirds margin. Not only is that measure expected to drive some California farmers out of business, it was so poorly written that no one is sure how to comply. Backed by polling, HSUS said it was poised for a similar victory in Ohio.

Following the meeting, Ohio Farm Bureau and other farm organizations were clear on one point: animal rights groups should not have the only say on how Ohio farmers care for animals.

Farm Bureau, under the guidance of its board of trustees, all of whom are farmers, engaged in extensive deliberations on the best way to ensure animal care while protecting Ohio farms and Ohio's food supply. There was

little question that the public would demand some form of assurance that farm animals are well cared for.

Farm groups voiced their concerns with legislators, who responded in June by introducing a bill that would place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot to give Ohio a comprehensive process to address animal care issues. Despite facing one of the worst budget crisis in state history, lawmakers worked together to pass the measure, which became Issue 2.

The resolution called for an Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board that would include family farmers, veterinarians, a food safety expert, consumers, the dean of an agricultural college and a local humane society representative. The board, in conjunction with the Ohio Legislature, will prescribe standards for animal care and well-being that protect Ohio's farms, families and locally grown food supply.

## Farmers working for farmers

A few of the major victories in Farm Bureau's history include repealing the personal property tax for farmers, amending the constitution through the Save Open Space campaign to allow for CAUV tax relief, establishing agricultural districts to protect farming activities, blocking Issue 5, a burdensome labeling law, and passing Issue 2 to protect Ohio's farmers, animals and food supply.



1967



1973



1982



2009



1992

In August, nearly 500 farmers gathered at Ohio Farm Bureau's leadership conference to discuss the issue and to launch local, grassroots campaigns to inform voters.

What followed was a groundswell of support that saw tens of thousands of yard signs posted in fields and front yards across the state. Farmers talked to civic organizations and distributed information at community events. They called into radio shows and wrote letters to their newspapers.

On Election Day, their efforts paid off and voters approved the measure

by a nearly 2 to 1 margin.

Given the strong support Ohioans gave to this approach to animal care, it's unclear how the HSUS and other animal rights groups will work to undo the wishes of voters. But it's obvious that the animal rightists are angered about the possibility of not having control over the decisions made by Ohio farmers.

When HSUS brings its attack in 2010, as it has promised, Issue 2 has provided a blueprint for what can be achieved when farmers unite.

# Happy Holidays

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