

**Change in the livestock industry:**

*"If you were a great mechanic on a 1968 Camaro and you opened the hood of a (Toyota) Prius today, you may not know what's going on under there. And that's the way agriculture is today."*

PG 3

**A closer look at the best county programs** PG 6



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A PUBLICATION OF THE OHIO FARM BUREAU® FEDERATION

# BUCKEYE FARM NEWS

OHIO'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPER

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## Bridging *the* Gap



**CRITICS ARE WEIGHING IN...**

**...SO FARMERS ARE SPEAKING OUT**

EDITOR'S NOTE

They don't understand modern agriculture. Or they just don't like it. In either case, they're pointing their fingers at farmers for global warming, food prices, government waste, animal mistreatment and environmental degradation. Who are "they?" They're turning out to be everyone from relentless activists to well-meaning voters, regulators and reporters. Perhaps more importantly, "they" are often the majority.

New challenges are on the way in the form of laws, regulations, ballot initiatives, Internet videos, newspaper editorials and lawsuits. This well-fed nation has asked a lot of its farmers. Now, farmers are being told they need to do much more.

To be clear, agriculture is not about "us" versus "them." Everyone eats, appreciates green space, wants proper care for animals and a clean environment. Farm Bureau recognizes this with its mission to "forge a partnership between farmers and consumers." So what happens when philosophies don't line up or communication falls short?

Farm Bureau is calling on farmers to write a congressman, give testimony to regulators, host a tour, submit a policy, sit on a committee or sign a new member. Farmers have a lot invested in their operations; giving as little as just a few minutes to advocate for everything they've worked for is a wise investment. As you read this and future issues of *Buckeye Farm News*, we hope you'll take some time to consider how you could become involved.

### New Obstacles & New Opportunities



**Food vs. Fuel**

*Corn-based ethanol continues to take the blame for high food costs. Now that corn prices have dropped, why aren't food costs coming down?*

▶ See PG 4



**'Cow Tax'**

*Will environmental regulators really fine farmers for the gasses emitted by livestock? Farm Bureau is monitoring a proposal that could make it possible.*

▶ See PG 2



**Animal Care**

*A ban on slaughtering horses may pass in Congress. Also, donations to animal rights groups have increased by 11 percent.*

▶ See PG 2



**Farmland**

*Ohio lost more than 6.9 million acres of farmland between 1950 and 2000. With tighter budgets, public funding to save farms may not be enough.*

▶ See PG 3



**Advocate**

*Twenty farm advocates took an intensive look at Washington politics through the AgriPOWER Institute. Apply now for the next class.*

▶ See PG 2



**Reach Out**

*Ohio farmers spent two days to develop public relations skills needed to defend the livestock industry.*

▶ See PG 3



**Meet a need**

*The "Farmers Feed Our Needs" campaign is helping those in need while showcasing Ohio agriculture.*

▶ See PG 2



**Volunteer**

*Farm Bureau has undergone many changes in recent years, but the need for local volunteers continues.*

▶ See PG 6

## Decision time: producers consider ACRE Program

BY DAN TOLAND

Recently-released details on important Farm Bill programs will allow farmers to make firm decisions for the coming year, but there are still new options to think about.

In a letter to USDA, American Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations said lower crop prices, tight credit and jumps in input costs led to cash strains for farmers.

Providing some relief, the sign-up period for the Direct and Counter-cyclical payment (DCP) Program began Dec. 22 and will run through June 1, allowing producers to request a 22-percent advance direct payment for eligible commodities.

But now that details are out on the new Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program, farmers must decide whether to enroll in the new, state revenue-based program instead of the traditional system.

The optional ACRE Program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses rather than prices.

After much debate between Congress and USDA, ACRE's revenue guarantee will be based upon the two most recent years for which any information on U.S. prices is available. So for the 2009 crop year, the guarantee will be calculated using the average of U.S. cash prices for the 2007 and 2008 crop years.

"The decision by USDA to use

recent year data was important," said Ohio Farm Bureau Federation Senior Director of National and Regulatory Affairs Adam Sharp. "Given market volatility, the use of this data was critical in making the program more attractive for growers."

According to USDA, producers may enroll in DCP now, request advanced direct payments, then later modify to enroll in the ACRE program, or wait to enroll in both at the same time in the spring.

Ohio State University Professor Carl Zulauf has provided factors farmers should consider about ACRE. For his complete breakdown of ACRE, visit "Featured Links" at [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org).

**ACRE FACTORS**

- Yields and prices annually updated based upon a five- and two-year moving average, respectively.
- Revenue guarantee can't decline more than 10 percent annually.
- Payments based on actual planted acres, not historical base acres.
- Direct income payments are reduced by 20 percent.
- 30 percent lower loan rate.
- Revenue target declines if and when market revenue declines.
- Once enrolled, farmers are locked in through 2012.

## PUBLIC POLICY

## FARMERS BECOME ADVOCATES

# OFBF recruiting for second AgriPOWER class

When U.S. soldiers went into Al Qaeda hideouts in Afghanistan, they discovered information on bird flu, downy mildew and foot and mouth disease.

"They're aware of what they could do to this sector," a U.S. Department of Agriculture official told a group of farm advocates from Ohio.

Insight into homeland security issues was just part of a broad spectrum of information participants in OFBF's AgriPOWER Institute were seeking when they traveled to Washington, D.C. last month. The trip included numerous candid meetings with political insiders to help farmers understand how business is conducted in the nation's capital.

House legislative aides offered guidance on effectively getting concerns to members of Congress. The group was encouraged to make contact with legislative staff members who brief politicians on the specifics of farm issues. The repeated message was that lawmakers pay close attention to the letters, e-mails and phone calls coming in from their constituents.

One Congressional aide acknowledged that most farmers would simply prefer to do their job without government interference.

"To be left alone, you have to fight to be left alone," he said.

The breadth of the trip, which ranged from a discussion on domestic farm policy with the deputy secretary of the USDA to a meeting on trade agreements at the Colombian ambassador's residence, continued the inten-

sive training offered by the AgriPOWER Institute. After a successful inaugural year, the program is looking for the next round of participants.

Preble County farmer Lane Osswald said the program has been the best training he has experienced from all levels of Farm Bureau.

"I have had some amazing leadership training, but these sessions are focused on building advocates for agriculture," he said.

The year-long program is seeking the next class to participate in seven multi-day institutes. Topics cover public policy issues facing local communities, Ohio, the nation and the world. Specific sessions will help class members become effective leaders and advocates.

The program's tuition is \$4,000, which includes lodging, meals, travel and course materials. OFBF currently plans to offer several full scholarships and other organizations are invited to sponsor a participant.

Coshocton County farmer Alan Brinker said the institute reopened his eyes to the importance of speaking up for agriculture.

"After spending many years devoted to the growth and success of this industry, it certainly is wise to devote equal time to the promotion of it," he said.

For more information, including an application and tentative agenda, contact David White at 614-246-8261 or e-mail [agripower@ofbf.org](mailto:agripower@ofbf.org).

"To be left alone, you have to fight to be left alone."

—U.S. Congressional aide to Ohio farm advocates

## So called 'cow-tax' draws criticism

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) has registered its opposition to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposal to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act, asserting it would essentially result in new taxes on livestock operations.

"Most livestock and dairy farmers would not be able to pass along the costs incurred under this plan," said Mark Maslyn, AFBF executive director of public policy. "Steep fees associated with this action would force many producers out of business. The net result would likely be higher consumer costs for milk, beef and pork," said Maslyn, in comments submitted to EPA.

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, and thus would need to obtain a permit under the proposed rules. More than 90 percent of U.S. dairy, beef and pork production would be affected by the proposal, Maslyn noted.

Permit fees vary from state to state but EPA sets a "presumptive minimum rate" for fees. For 2008-2009, the rate is \$43.75 per ton of emitted greenhouse gases. According to Maslyn, the proposed fee would mean annual assessments of \$175 for each dairy cow, \$87.50 for each head of beef cattle and \$20 for each hog.

In addition, Maslyn said the proposed rules would be ineffective because of the global nature of greenhouse gases. "Reduction of a ton of greenhouse gases anywhere will make a difference, but if a ton is removed in Iowa and replaced by a ton in China, then no net effect occurred," he said. "A livestock tax and regulation of greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act will impose restrictions and added costs on the U.S. economy without reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere."

OFBF also submitted comments to the EPA and is monitoring the situation.

## Bills may soon ban horse slaughter

Two major pieces of legislation banning horse slaughter are expected to be reintroduced in early 2009. Farm Bureau strongly opposes legislation to restrict equine processing or export for processing with the belief that banning horses from slaughter infringes on producers' rights to manage livestock according to commonly accepted agricultural practices and sets a dangerous precedent for banning other foods for reasons other than food safety or public health. Farm Bureau also believes a ban

does nothing to improve horse welfare because it ignores the underlying problem of unwanted, unmanageable and abandoned horses. None of the proposed bills addresses the welfare of the horses that cannot be slaughtered or exported. The Animal Welfare Council estimates it would cost \$1,900 per year to house and feed each unwanted and abandoned horse, not including veterinary or farrier services. Farm Bureau continues to work to prevent such legislation.

## Funding up for animal rights

In 2007, the latest reporting period available for review, charitable donations to animal rights groups rose 11 percent, according to the Animal Agriculture Alliance, an industry watchdog. This provided activist groups with more funds in 2008 to develop activities such as California's Proposition 2, undercover video operations, legislative initiatives and legal action.

Total donations to the most significant domestic and international animal-rights groups reached nearly \$330 million in 2007. Though revenue for these groups was up in the low double-digits, total assets expanded 31 percent, due to conservative spending by the groups.

### FUNDING FOR KEY GROUPS

	2007 (\$millions)	2006 (\$millions)	Change
<b>Humane Society of the United States</b>	130.0	130.2	0%
<b>Massachusetts SPCA</b>	47.9	46.9	2%
<b>World Society for the Protection of Animals</b>	33.5	18.6	80%
<b>People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals</b>	28.9	26.0	11%
<b>Farm Sanctuary</b>	5.1	4.5	14%
<b>Compassion in World Farming</b>	4.9	3.0	60%
<b>Animal Acres</b>	1.5	0.3	443%

Source: Animal Agriculture Alliance



Photo by Dan Toland

Volunteers from Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations across the state donated their time and efforts in a massive cabbage harvest in Sandusky County that provided nearly 122,000 meals for hungry Ohioans.

## Farm Bureau, volunteers rally to feed Ohio's hungry

Through OFBF's county-based "Farmers Feed Our Needs" campaign, Ohio farmers are helping to provide less fortunate Ohioans with safe and healthy food.

Some examples of Farmers Feed Our Needs events across Ohio:

- OFBF and the Sandusky County Farm Bureau brought together more than 60 volunteers to hand-harvest more than 150,000 pounds of cabbage. Dozens of volunteers from local agribusinesses, county Farm Bureaus and FFA chapters committed to pick and transport the crop that was donated to the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks.
- Ashland County Farm Bureau held a breakfast where county leaders donated non-perishable goods to the needy and learned of the possibilities of economic development through agriculture.
- Clermont County Farm Bureau volunteered to serve at a soup kitchen at the Felicity United Methodist Church. The volunteer members did everything from preparing soup and sandwiches to serving the lunch to cleaning up. They served more than 100 meals.
- Cuyahoga County Farm Bureau gave away reusable grocery bags, Farm Bureau gloves, ice cream scoops and other items for a \$1 donation. The proceeds went to the Cleveland Food Bank.
- Licking County Farm Bureau donated 10 bushels of apples from Heartland Orchard in Thornville to the Licking County Aging Program, Meals on Wheels.
- Morgan, Muskingum, Perry and

Washington County Farm Bureaus organized a bus trip to the Fabulous Food Show in Cleveland, with members donating more than 100 canned items and \$170 to food banks.

- Warren County Farm Bureau boxed up food items that would be used for a traditional Thanksgiving meal for 10 families completing a nine-week program through a service called Interfaith Hospitality. This program helps families who have been struggling to get back on their feet and find jobs.

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PUBLIC POLICY

# New strategies can save farmland

*Policies rather than funding may provide solutions*

With policymakers tightening the public purse strings, farmers may have to become more creative in preserving farmland.

"In farmland preservation, we are used to raising money and buying development rights, but it's not the only way to go about it," said OFBF Senior Director of Local Affairs Larry Gearhardt, offering the following ways to help without requesting funding:

**Zoning**

Gearhardt recommends each county have a solid comprehensive land use plan as a building block of legitimate zoning. "Townships need to be allowed to rely on county comprehensive plans or it will throw zoning into turmoil," Gearhardt said. A court case in Wayne County threatened to invalidate township zoning because it relied on the county land use plan. He also said preservation efforts should include agritainment operations, because if they fit the state definition of "agricultural," such operations cannot be zoned.

**Livestock**

"Large livestock farms keep farmers in farming and land in production, and ensure that farmers are making enough money to continue in agriculture," Gearhardt said. He compared two counties in western Ohio that contain more than half of Ohio's large livestock farms with two southern Ohio counties that have just one large livestock farm. He said farms in the counties with more livestock, although almost 100 acres smaller on average, had significantly higher land values. "To keep people in farming, livestock appears to be the answer," he said.

**Policies**

Gearhardt said state policies and plans can have an effect on preservation. He used a farm in Scioto County as an example, where if the Ohio Department of Transportation would have moved its proposed highway project just up the hill, it wouldn't be splitting a Farm Bureau member's farm in two and ruining his drainage system.

To hear podcasts from Gearhardt and others who spoke at last year's Farmland Preservation Summit visit [http://cffpi.osu.edu/summit08\\_speakers.htm](http://cffpi.osu.edu/summit08_speakers.htm)



As the livestock industry faces increasing criticism, farmers are working to share their stories with consumers.

# Livestock farmers prepare to reach out to community

Last year, voters in California passed an aggressive law restricting how farmers can house livestock, despite warnings that it could cripple the state's large egg industry.

"The probability is high that it could someday happen here in Ohio," said Trish Cunningham, a Delaware County livestock and grain farmer.

To become better equipped at defending her livelihood, Cunningham recently participated in Operation Hometown Outreach, which aims to develop spokespersons for the livestock industry.

"Being a young person and fortunate enough to be involved in

production agriculture, I find it very important that we get out and tell our story," she said "There's so much bad press against us these days that we need to tell our story."

OFBF hosted the program, which is a project of the United Soybean Board and the Center for Food Integrity, a firm that aims to promote trust in the U.S. food system. After providing training, participants are scheduled to speak with civic organizations about modern livestock production practices.

"Through this program alone we will have talked to hopefully 80 to 100 groups next year, telling them

about animal agriculture," said Sandy Kuhn, OFBF's director of commodity relations. "These people are voters, so we are hoping they go to church and they go to other organizations and they'll help to tell our story also and ask us to come speak to other groups."

Beth Anne Mumford, an Operation Hometown Outreach trainer, said farmers are frustrated by some of the issues being raised about livestock production.

"What we are finding from farmers is that they are being asked questions about what they do in a way

*See LIVESTOCK, pg 4*

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## PUBLIC POLICY

NEWS *briefs*

## NATIONAL

**Renewable Fuel Standard increased for 2009**

The energy bill of 2007 has targeted renewable fuel volume to reach 36 billion gallons by 2022. Recently, it was announced the 2009 renewable fuel standard (RFS) will be increased to 10.21 percent to ensure that at least 11.1 billion gallons of renewable fuels be blended into the United States' transportation gasoline. The 2008 standard was 7.76 percent, equating to roughly 9 billion gallons.

**Forecasted exports decrease while imports slow**

The combination of weaker global demand, falling prices and an appreciating dollar has created an unfavorable outlook for U.S. exports. Fiscal 2009 U.S. agricultural exports are forecast at \$98.5 billion, which is \$17 billion below record 2008 sales, according to USDA's Economic Research Service. Despite the stronger dollar and some relief from high oil prices, a slumping economy with rising unemployment and falling consumer spending is slowing import growth. While fiscal 2009 agricultural imports are forecast to be a record \$81 billion, this represents the slowest growth rate in many years.

**Vilsack to be new agriculture secretary**

President-elect Barack Obama named former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack to serve as his secretary of agriculture. If confirmed by the Senate, Vilsack will be the fifth secretary of agriculture from Iowa. AFBF President Bob Stallman said Vilsack is a strong proponent of furthering the use of renewable fuels such as ethanol, biodiesel and wind, as well as an advocate for biotechnology.

**Farm Bureau grows across nation**

Farm Bureau's national membership rose to 6,243,286 member families in 2008, marking 48 consecutive years of membership growth.

## STATE

**OFBF on Equine Task Force**

OFBF will serve on the Ohio Department of Agriculture's newly-formed Equine Industry Advisory Task Force. The task force will discuss strategies for promoting and strengthening Ohio's equine industry.

**Ohio farmers provided \$375,000 in Emergency Conservation Funds**

USDA will provide \$77 million in Emergency Conservation Program funds for farmers and ranchers (\$375,000 in Ohio) to repair farmland damaged by natural disasters in 2008. Contact your local FSA office for more information.

**CORRECTION:** In the Dec. 18 Buckeye Farm News, Ambassador Club members Chad Johnson, Duane Leaman, Lloyd Mumaw, Bob Slicker and Tim Workinger were incorrectly listed under Warren County. They are from Wayne County.

**Corn growers question high food costs**

Ohio farm and renewable fuel groups have fired back at food manufacturers who have pinned rising grocery prices on corn-based ethanol.

At a Statehouse press conference, Dwayne Siekman, executive director of the Ohio Corn Growers Association, said food company profits continue to rise while corn prices have dropped by more than 50 percent since their peak last summer.

Corn had reached \$7.88 per bushel earlier this year but had

fallen to \$3.80 per bushel when Siekman addressed the media in late November.

"The question we're asking is 'where is the drop in food prices?'" Siekman said.

The Grocery Manufacturers Association, which represents businesses such as Kraft Foods and Kellogg Co., has called for reforms to the nation's ethanol policy, linking corn prices to food costs.

Siekman said ethanol played a role in raising the cost of corn,

but last year's unusually high crop prices were a result of speculation and other factors. The main reason consumers were paying more at the grocery is due to the run-up in fuel prices, he said. Now that both corn and petroleum prices have fallen, Siekman said there is no excuse for food prices to be so high.

Asked if food companies are blaming higher prices on ethanol as a way to increase their bottom lines, Siekman replied, "Time and time again, we see that is the case."

**LIVESTOCK** from PG 3**Biodiesel grants available to Ohio school districts**

Ohio is providing an additional \$250,000 in grants to fund the use of soy biodiesel in Ohio school buses.

Thanks to the Biodiesel School Bus Grant Program, 21 school districts are already powering their buses with soy biodiesel and providing cleaner air for their students, according to the Ohio Soybean Council.

This grant program was included in Gov. Ted Strickland's biennium budget last July as a result of the legislative work of the Ohio Soybean Association and the Ohio Farm Bureau. Schools that did not take advantage of funding from the first round are encouraged to apply for the second round of funding.

To be considered for grant funding and download an application, administrators are encouraged to visit [www.soybiodiesel.org/kids](http://www.soybiodiesel.org/kids). School districts are eligible for a maximum of \$25,000, and grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis within four weeks of approval. Applicants will be required to provide information about their fleets, refueling practices and estimates of how much B20 soy biodiesel will be used. Grants will be paid on a reimbursement basis, and the deadline to apply is May 31.

Under direction of ODO's Ohio Energy Office, applying for the grant program is an easy step-by-step process, and assistance in filling out the application is made available through the Ohio Soybean Council.



that makes them feel that the public has maybe lost some confidence in what's being done on farms," she said. Although he doesn't raise livestock, Warren County farmer Joe Steiner participated in the program because the livestock industry is a major customer for his grain. He said concerns have arisen as the public lost touch with agriculture.

"If you were a great mechanic on a 1968 Camaro and you opened the hood of a (Toyota) Prius today, you may not know what's going on under there. And that's the way agriculture is today. Guys that used to hang out at their grandfather's farm thought they understood agriculture, but it's not what we do today. And if they don't understand it, they have concerns," he said.

Steiner acknowledged that public relations can be a foreign concept to farmers, but consumers need to know that livestock producers are good operators.

"We in agriculture have concerns about operations that aren't doing the right thing. We'd be the first to point them out, and we're willing to work with anybody to make it better if it needs to be improved," he said. "But most of these operations out here are doing a fine job and we just need to tell that story."

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION CORNER**

Ask  
Kathy

**Q: I am a current participant in the 2008 Ohio Farm Bureau workers' compensation group rating program but I can't locate my 2009 re-enrollment packet. Is it too late for me to enroll?**

**A:** No, it is not too late for you to enroll in the program. We will be glad to send another packet to you. You may request a packet by calling 877-463-7283. We would like to have the enrollment paperwork returned to us no later than February 20, 2009. If for some reason, you are unable to return the enrollment paperwork by that date, we will automatically enroll you in the group rating program in order for you to continue to receive your premium savings.

**Q: Am I too late to be evaluated for the 2009 Ohio Farm Bureau group rating program?**

**A:** No, it is not too late to be evaluated for the 2009 group rating program. We will accept evaluation requests through February 4, 2009. Evaluation forms may be requested by calling 877-463-7283 or may be obtained from our website, [www.gatesmcdonald.com](http://www.gatesmcdonald.com).

For more information, call Kathy at 800-336-4733, option 1, ext. 48650 or visit the web at [www.gatesmcdonald.com](http://www.gatesmcdonald.com).

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

# COMMUNICATIONS

## COUNTY news

### Four-county leadership program kicks off

Carroll, Harrison, Jefferson and Tuscarawas County Farm Bureaus, in cooperation with OSU Extension and past county LEAD participants, recently launched a four-county program to develop future leaders with agriculture and natural resources knowledge. Seventeen participants, pictured below, gathered at the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center in Columbus for the first of eight institutes, which will also include a trip to Washington, D.C. During the first institute, participants learned about personality types, communication and leadership styles and strategies, time management and goal setting, the new farm bill and team-based approaches to management. "It is imperative to the future of agriculture to develop leaders to serve as county board members, township trustees, county commissioners, state representatives and senators, as well as national office holders," said Organization Director Michele Specht.



Photo by Michele Specht

### Building young leaders in Fairfield County

The Fairfield County Farm Bureau recently hosted a meeting for recent and soon-to-be graduates of Fairfield County Agricultural Education programs to introduce them to opportunities for young people in Farm Bureau. OFBF Senior Director of National and Regulatory Affairs Adam Sharp discussed the inner workings of Farm Bureau, and the group expressed interest in meeting together in the future to learn about key issues facing the agricultural industry. Many renewed their membership in Farm Bureau during the meeting. "Generating interest from young agricultural professionals to be the next key leaders of an organization that works so well to represent them is a vital part of what the county Farm Bureau can do to carry on the legacy of this organization," Organization Director John Torres said.

### Fairfield County Farm Bureau fair building dedicated

The newly completed "Fairfield County Farm Bureau Ed Sands Building" at the Fairfield County Fairgrounds was officially dedicated during the county fair in October. Fairfield County Farm Bureau donated \$50,000 toward the construction of the multi-purpose building that will house sheep projects during the fair and other events year round. "This building serves as a great example of what a dedicated group of people can do to support local agriculture," said Organization Director John Torres. Individuals can still contribute to the building fund by sponsoring sheep pens in the building. Additional funds will be used to improve other facilities on the fairgrounds.



Photo courtesy Fairfield County Farm Bureau

### Butler, Hamilton counties recognize 'Friends of Agriculture'

Butler and Hamilton County Farm Bureaus recently honored local candidates in the November election who received OFBF's Agriculture for Good Government Political Action Committee (OFBF-AGGPAC) "Friend of Agriculture" designation. The presentation was held at Brown's Family Farm Market, just south of Ross in Butler County. In the photo at right, Butler County Candidate Gary Cates (center) receives his "Friend of Agriculture" recognition from Butler County Public Policy Action Team Leader Kevin Fall (l) and OFBF Director of Political Education Doug Foxx. Others receiving the designation include Bill Coley, Courtney Combs and Tim Derickson, all of Butler County, and Louis Blessing, Denise Driehaus, Dale Mallory, Robert Meckenberg, Connie Pillich, Bill Seitz and Tyrone Yates, all of Hamilton County.



Photo courtesy of Butler County Farm Bureau

### Farm Bureaus cruise through membership

Nearly 800 Farm Bureau members from Ohio Farm Bureau's Northeast Region and Adams, Brown and Clermont counties in the Southwest Region recently embarked on a cruise through the Gulf of Mexico to Cozumel in celebration of a successful membership campaign. Some counties gave away free cruises to membership workers who signed the most new members. Organization Director Heather Uter said the excitement for the event was "huge" and helped increase the number of new members volunteering in Farm Bureau. She said the event was so successful that plans are already being made for a December 2009 cruise to the Bahamas. The group's ship, HOLIDAY, is seen docked in Cozumel in the photo above.



Photo courtesy of Connie Ward

## Full-year membership approach made for easier campaign

"Take anybody, anytime" is how Ohio Farm Bureau Director of Member Programming Scott Donaldson describes one of OFBF's new approaches for its membership campaign.

"(2008) was the first almost full year membership campaign, and we opened up all the stops. We thought beyond the box on ways to market Farm Bureau membership - ways that we had never thought of before," Donaldson said.

Last summer Ohio Farm Bureau reached gain for its 41st consecutive year under the new full-year membership campaign approach. Donaldson said the new campaign style is easier for Farm Bureau volunteers because it allows them to work on selling memberships as they have time.

"Instead of just asking volunteers to sell memberships for a month or two in the winter, we're asking them to keep membership on their minds all year in the course



of their regular activities, meetings with clubs and their neighbors. This is a more volunteer friendly method," he said.

Donaldson said membership boundaries opened up because volunteers started selling memberships at events they attended even though they weren't within their county.

OFBF staff and county volunteers spent a lot of time reaching out to affinity groups to stress the importance of having a Farm Bureau membership, said Janet Cassidy, director of membership marketing.

"We contacted a lot of new groups last year, probably 40. We hadn't really reached out to so many groups before in such a collective way," she said.

Those groups included local cattlemen, beekeepers, FFA graduates, hunters, restaurateurs, county Soil and Water Conservation Districts, fair boards and county Extensions.



### Coming next on Ohio Farm & Country

The election of 2008 was one that will not soon be forgotten. A new president was elected, many new congressional and legislative leaders earned the right to represent their districts, and voters promised to preserve farmland through the passage of Issue 2 (the Clean Ohio Fund). *Ohio Farm and Country* in February will take a look at ways landowners and businesses are using Clean Ohio programs.

Also on the show, the EPA has proposed a new permit fee based on the amount of greenhouse gas generated by livestock including cattle and hogs. If implemented, the proposal could cause many livestock farms to cease operations. Farm Bureau is working to make certain this proposal does not become reality.

Specialization is not uncommon within the medical profession, and it's becoming even more common in the agriculture sector. The show will showcase how many producers have streamlined their operations, helping them to remain viable in agriculture. Also, school districts may be able to take advantage of funding from the state that could benefit Ohio's soybean producers.

The February episode of *Ohio Farm and Country* will start airing on Sunday, Feb. 1 on *Ohio News Network* (ONN) and may be seen throughout the entire month.



### Our Ohio Telling Agriculture's Story

#### Coming up on 'Our Ohio' TV

New episodes of *Our Ohio* television began airing Jan. 10. Upcoming story topics include raising soybeans for biodiesel production, Lake Farmpark, Freshwater Farms aquaculture operation and a house built entirely of recycled materials. The show airs on all Ohio public television stations, including Cincinnati's WCET Sundays at noon. For air dates and times, visit [www.OurOhio.org](http://www.OurOhio.org), "TV/Videos," then "where to watch."



Photo courtesy of ThinkTV.

#### New for teachers

Ohio Farm Bureau has a new way to reach teachers to let them know about all the educational materials available to them. OFBF created a new newsletter, *Teacher's Lounge*, which is being included in each *Our Ohio* magazine and then is posted on the *Our Ohio* Web site. See them at [www.OurOhio.org](http://www.OurOhio.org), "Food/Families," then "Teacher's Lounge." To sign up to receive the newsletter, contact Judy Roush at 614-246-8243 or e-mail [jroush@ofbf.org](mailto:jroush@ofbf.org).

*Our Ohio* is brought to you by Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and Nationwide Insurance.

## Under 35? Mark your calendar for leadership conference

OFBF is holding a Young Agriculture Professionals leadership conference on March 6-7 in Dublin, Ohio.

The Young Agriculture Professionals program is geared toward individuals under 35 who are full and part-time farmers, extension agents, teachers, consumer educators, media reporters, livestock and equine enthusiasts, beekeepers, green industry employees, gardeners, foodies and anyone who shares an interest in agriculture. The conference will focus on personal and professional development as well as networking and fellowship.

For more information call your county Farm Bureau.

## OFBF sponsors Cattlemen's BEST program

OFBF has joined Farm Credit Services of Mid-America, Green Oak Farm and MAC Trailer as new sponsors of the Ohio Cattlemen's Association's (OCA) BEST program.

The BEST program, now in its 10th year, is a youth development program recognizing Ohio's junior beef exhibitors through a series of sanctioned steer and heifer shows that include showmanship competition. BEST provides participants with education and leadership development opportunities through cattle shows, educational sessions, leadership conferences and essay and photography competitions. Those participating in the sanctioned shows earn points for their placings, which are tracked at [www.ohiocattle.org](http://www.ohiocattle.org).

OFBF will also provide a \$5 discount per household on a one-time BEST nomination to all BEST participants who are Farm Bureau members.

"(The sponsors') tremendous support of the BEST program will allow the program to continue to grow and recognize even larger numbers of Ohio's beef industry youth," said OCA President Mike Carper.

Nearly 300 industry youth and 400 head of cattle participated in the 2007-2008 program.

For more information on the BEST program, including a complete show schedule and exhibitor rules, visit the OCA Web site [www.ohiocattle.org](http://www.ohiocattle.org) or contact the association office at (614) 873-6736.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## OFBF's best programs

*President's Award winners describe their successes, share award application tips*

Last year marked the start of a new awards application process that emphasized the importance of having OFBF's three program areas — communications, public policy and organization — work together on projects. Presidents of the five county Farm Bureaus that received OFBF's top honor of the President's

Award recently shared insight into the success of their programming along with a couple of the 43 Farm Bureau volunteers who judged last year's entries.

The leaders of the five winning counties all said the success of their programming relied heavily on strong support from volunteers and staff.

They spent countless hours researching, organizing and evaluating their programs and sometimes incorporating ideas from other county Farm Bureaus into their own events.

Several of the counties have been getting ideas by looking at the awards applications that are at [www.ofbf.org](http://www.ofbf.org).

Vickie Powell, a Division 2 communications judge, said she was impressed by the amount of work some counties put into planning and executing their programs and explaining it in the applications. Herb Eglie, a Division 5 public policy judge, said he was surprised to find that he was mostly in agree-

ment with the other judges on selecting the top three counties and the President's Award winner. Judges gave the highest scores to the counties that had effective events and did well explaining them.

Below is a breakdown of the President's Award winners' programming from last year.



PIKE

### Pike Co. – Division I

Pike County had a lot of success with its Agriculture Awareness Day and most of its award application focused on that event. The event reached out to more than 500 third-graders and dozens of teachers. Young Farmers and several Nationwide agents participated, along with many agriculture agencies, county commissioners and state park representatives. Participants were asked to be Farm Bureau members. The *Our Ohio* brand was promoted through a display and presentations of local producers with samples of their products. The event received extensive media coverage and featured a nametag contest and essay contest, with the winners being recognized before hundreds of their peers and county officials. The contest winners' entries and pictures of the event were then displayed at the Pike County Fair.

"If you look at all three programming areas, a lot of things are tied together with our Agriculture Awareness Day. I like the way it all works together. It does require a lot of planning, though. We've done this for 11 years and it's the biggest thing we do in our county. I'm seeing kids graduating now who remember going through it," said Tim Williams, president of Pike County Farm Bureau.



CARROLL

### Carroll Co. – Division II

John Davis, president of the Carroll County Farm Bureau, said his county's awards application focused on several activities to give a more comprehensive look at the overall programming. The application also included photos and descriptions of works in progress such as a four-county Leader Education and Development Program and "Tailgate to Touchdowns," a tailgate party at a football game.

"We made a laundry list of our key events and incorporated them into our application. You've got to keep good records of everything you do to make it easier to write the application. It was a real team effort," he said.

The county Farm Bureau did a lot of marketing of Nationwide and *Our Ohio*, including a fair book that promoted the brand at the Carroll County Fair. The Farm Bureau is a member of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Committee and helped hold a "Business After Hours" at the Ed Long Farm with more than 100 chamber members in attendance. Other major activities that Farm Bureau had a major presence in was a county Drive-It-Yourself Tour with 532 in attendance, Ag Conservation Expo, which drew 1,200 people, and Adopt a Teacher Program, which had 250 children participate.



RICHLAND

### Richland Co. – Division III

While Farmers' Share Breakfasts are a fairly common promotion, Richland County Farm Bureau held its first one last year, drawing 600 people with help from 50 volunteers. A lot of the county's award application focused on this event.

"This was the first time we did this and we weren't sure how successful it would be because several other counties do this," said Fred Cooke, president of the county Farm Bureau. "But it was a huge success, especially for being our first. We tried to take a different approach with ours."

Instead of charging the amount of money farmers make from a typical breakfast, the event was free and residents were asked to make a donation for local food banks. More than \$800 was collected. The Shelby FFA made a wall poster that detailed the farmer's share of breakfast costs and posters of agriculture statistics were displayed. *Our Ohio* placemats and displays were used and the *Our Ohio* television show was broadcast. The event recruited new volunteers, educated consumers, incorporated Nationwide Insurance and strengthened relationships with local and state leaders.



TUSCARAWAS

### Tuscarawas Co. – Division IV

The Tuscarawas County Farm Bureau also incorporated several key events into its awards application and detailed not only the success of the programs but what improvements could be made. One event that the county became involved in was the Forest Heritage Festival. Farm Bureau was a major participant and contacted the Louisville Slugger Bat Factory for a kit that made a bat from bark. More than 8,600 visitors attended the festival and 600 bags were handed out with membership information and *Our Ohio* materials. The event raised \$86,500 for Akron Children's Hospital.

Another successful activity was "Field Trip Without a Bus," which brought agriculture to the classroom for 180 fourth and fifth grade students. An *Our Ohio* video on soybeans was shown and various ag groups provided hands-on activities.

"We took on an organized effort early on. We've got more project ideas than we can do. The key is to build on it and plan it properly; you can't just throw it out there," said Jerry Lahmers, Tuscarawas County Farm Bureau president.



MAHONING

### Mahoning Co. – Division V

Mahoning County Farm Bureau detailed a few successful programs at length in its award application. The first was its presence at the Canfield Fair. About 120 Farm Bureau volunteers helped run the group's activities. The *Our Ohio* barn masterpieces were displayed and TV media followed the voting results. Farm Bureau personnel and shuttle drivers wore *Our Ohio*/Farm Bureau shirts.

The county also hosted the dedication of Agland Co-op's upgraded grain and drying equipment. State and county leaders attended the dedication. Part of the following news coverage was about how Farm Bureau works with members in the agriculture industry and legislators. Farm Bureau also was asked to help set up a buy fresh/buy local information tent, solicit farmers to sell produce and distribute the Mahoning Valley Agri Guide at the Youngstown State University Festival of Arts.

"If you come up with an idea, you need to follow through with it. Each year the challenge is to find creative ideas," said David Kenreich, Mahoning County Farm Bureau president. "We have a strong youth program and we try to involve them as much as possible."

## Volunteer roles need filled under new structure

☐ All levels of involvement are welcome

When OFBF overhauled its programming structure in 2007, specific volunteer positions, such as the County Information Coordinator, were dropped to give members more leeway in determining how they'd

like to serve the organization.

But even though titles for some positions no longer exist, the need for volunteers to carry out the same responsibilities does, said John Wargowsky, OFBF senior director of field communications.

"We may no longer have County Information Coordinators, but

having volunteers working with the local media is just as important as ever," he said. "The same is true for all of the positions that existed under the previous structure."

Under the old system, volunteers were given uniform guidelines to help carry out the mission of OFBF. Those specific instructions were dropped to

create a more volunteer-friendly organization and to give counties greater say on which programs are best suited for their areas. Volunteers can continue to serve Farm Bureau through one of three action teams: Public Policy, Communications and Organization.

"We want members to identify ways in which they feel comfortable

serving the organization, even if they only have a few minutes to give. It can be as easy as calling your organization director and asking 'How can I help,'" Wargowsky said. "We encourage members to utilize whatever skill sets they have. One thing that hasn't changed is the importance of volunteers to Farm Bureau."

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# ORGANIZATION

## Workers' comp safety meeting dates

County meetings not listed are yet to be announced.

Adams	Mar. 31	Cooperative Extension Service
Allen	Mar. 30	St. Joseph Parish Hall, Wapakoneta
Ashland	Feb. 19	OARDC, Fisher Auditorium
Ashtabula	Mar. 30	St. Mary's Church, Orwell
Auglaize	Mar. 30	St. Joseph Parish Hall, Wapakoneta
Brown	Mar. 31	Cooperative Extension Service
Butler	Mar. 19	Janet Clemmons Center
Carroll	Apr. 4	First United Methodist Church
Champaign	Mar. 5	Der' Dutchman in Plain City
Clark	Mar. 5	Der' Dutchman in Plain City
Clermont	Mar. 31	Cooperative Extension Service
Columbiana	Apr. 8	Mill Creek MetroParks
Crawford	Mar. 25	TBA
Cuyahoga	Mar. 19	EHOVE Career Center
Defiance	Mar. 26	Fulton County AG Center
Delaware	Feb. 26	Grady Memorial Hospital
Erie	Mar. 19	EHOVE Career Center
Fairfield	Mar. 16	Ross County Service Center, Chillicothe
Franklin	Feb. 26	Grady Memorial Hospital
Fulton	Mar. 26	Fulton County AG Center
Geauga	Mar. 30	St. Mary's Church, Orwell
Guernsey	Apr. 17	TBA
Hamilton	Mar. 19	Janet Clemmons Center
Hardin	Mar. 9	Ohio Hi Point Career Center
Harrison	Apr. 4	First United Methodist Church
Henry	Mar. 26	Fulton County AG Center
Hocking	Mar. 16	Ross County Service Center in Chillicothe
Huron	Mar. 19	EHOVE Career Center
Jefferson	Apr. 4	First United Methodist Church
Lake	Mar. 30	St. Mary's Church, Orwell
Logan	Mar. 9	Ohio Hi Point Career Center
Lorain	Mar. 19	EHOVE Career Center
Madison	Mar. 5	Der' Dutchman, Plain City
Mahoning	Apr. 8	Mill Creek MetroParks
Marion	Mar. 25	TBA
Medina	Feb. 19	OARDC, Fisher Auditorium
Mercer	Mar. 30	St. Joseph Parish Hall, Wapakoneta
Montgomery	Aug. 1	Clark's Farm, Lytle Road
Morrow	Mar. 25	TBA
Noble	Apr. 17	TBA
Paulding	Mar. 2	Lincolnview High School
Pickaway	Mar. 16	Ross County Service Center, Chillicothe
Portage	Mar. 30	Summit County fairgrounds
Putnam	Mar. 29	Lincolnview High school
Richland	Mar. 25	TBA
Ross	Mar. 16	Ross County Service Center, Chillicothe
Seneca	Mar. 3	TBA
Shelby	Mar. 30	St. Joseph Parish Hall, Wapakoneta
Stark	Mar. 30	Summit County Fairgrounds
Summit	Mar. 30	Summit County Fairgrounds
Trumbull	Mar. 30	St. Mary's Church, Orwell
Tuscarawas	Apr. 4	First United Methodist Church
Union	Feb. 26	Grady Memorial Hospital
Van Wert	Mar. 2	Lincolnview High School
Warren	Aug. 1	Clark's Farm, Lytle Road
Wayne	Feb. 19	OARDC, Fisher Auditorium
Williams	Mar. 26	Fulton County AG Center
Wyandot	Mar. 3	TBA

## Foundation offers scholarships

Students pursuing careers that have an agricultural connection are invited to apply for three scholarship programs supported by the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation.

A new offering for 2009 is the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation Scholar (OFBFS) award. This award recognizes students for academic effort, community service and career interests that use agriculture to enhance the partnership between producers and consumers in rural,

suburban and/or urban settings.

The Foundation's Women's Leadership in Agriculture Scholarship Program (WLASP), designed to help women pursue career opportunities where agriculture plays a key role, is being offered for the fourth year. While some WLASP recipients come from farm and rural backgrounds, close to half come directly from suburban and urban communities.

The Darwin Bryan Scholarship

Fund assists students who have been active in the Farm Bureau youth program and/or whose parents are Farm Bureau members. It recognizes student participation in local activities and promotes Farm Bureau's leadership development process.

Additional information, eligibility requirements and application forms for all programs are available at [www.ofbfoundation.org](http://www.ofbfoundation.org). The application deadline for each program is March 2.

## Vanderkooi named OFBF director of state policy

OFBF's Public Policy department has announced the appointment of Beth Vanderkooi as director of state policy. She will help the organization represent its members at the Ohio Statehouse and with others in state government.

Vanderkooi has spent the past six years as a legislative aide in the office of state Sen. Tim Grendell, R-Chesterland, and also during his time as a state representative. She has worked on a number of issues important to Farm Bureau members, including eminent domain and private property rights. She was raised on a small farm in Bellville and holds a bachelor's degree as an Ashbrook Scholar from Ashland University, where she studied political science, economics and international studies.

Vanderkooi joined the OFBF staff on Dec. 22.



Vanderkooi

### NATIONWIDE NEWS

## Nationwide offers member discounts and extra coverages

How do you save 10 percent on farm insurance and get up to nine additional insurance coverages at no extra cost as an Ohio Farm Bureau member? It begins with asking for a Farm Bureau rate quote from a Nationwide agent. To locate an agent, visit [Nationwide.com](http://Nationwide.com) or call 877-ON-YOUR-SIDE.

As the founder of Nationwide, OFBF continues to endorse Nationwide's insurance coverages, many of which come with special rates for OFBF members.

For example, OFBF members may receive a 10 percent farm rate discount from Nationwide Agribusiness on its AgriChoice farm insurance policy. Another exclusive Farm Bureau member benefit is the "additional coverages" endorsement built into the AgriChoice policy. Only OFBF members insured with an AgriChoice policy may receive the additional coverages at no additional cost, such as:

- Identity theft protection up to \$15,000
- Business property
- Personal property at a dwelling other than the insured's
- Money, gold, etc.
- Landlord's furnishings
- Refrigerated products
- Removal of fallen trees and debris
- Theft of firearms, silverware, precious stones
- Credit card fraud, forgery, and counterfeit currency

Members also may qualify for up to a 10 percent discount on Nationwide insurance for cars and home, as well as for savings on other coverages.

Contact a Nationwide agent for more details on all the insurance benefits and discounts available to OFBF members.

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## NOTEWORTHY

## Farm Income Enhancement Program marks 20th anniversary

Twenty years ago, Dale Arnold was one of dozens of Farm Bureau organization directors out pounding on doors, trying to raise funds to start a program that would promote value-added activities among producers. The concept at the time was difficult for many farmers to grasp, Arnold said.

"During that time, it was hard to explain about value added and the need to expand beyond traditional products such as milk into other value-added products that consumers were looking for. For farmers it was quite a stretch," Arnold said. "Now whenever you mention the words 'value-added', the vast majority of farmers are very familiar with it."

Today, the program – the Farm Income Enhancement Program – is so successful that it has drawn the attention of ag groups in other states and other land-grant universities, said Tom Sporleder, an Ohio State University professor of agribusiness and Farm Income Enhancement endowed chair.

"The program has helped producers get into all types of value-added investments over the years. One of

the program's first investments was ethanol," said Sporleder, who has released a special report marking the 20th anniversary of the program.

The idea for the program came from a paper written by OSU professor Dennis Henderson in 1986.

**"A similar service provided by private industry would cost thousands, perhaps even millions, of dollars"**

*~David White, OFBF senior director of policy research and development*

The concept was expanded after discussions among Henderson, professor Joseph Havlicek, the department chair of the Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Department, and C. William Swank, Ohio Farm Bureau's executive. OFBF helped find donors to contribute to the program, and Nationwide Insurance contributed more than \$500,000. April 8, 1998 is the date of the endowment's creation on paper; the first official activity was a conference held a year later.

"If a farmer or person in ag research has an idea for a product, the center can take the idea and do research and determine what is needed to bring that idea to market," said Arnold, now director of Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation.

Over the years, the Farm Income Enhancement Program has been

involved in various activities ranging from outreach endeavors to applied research projects such as creating a new powder from soybeans for use in high-energy drinks.

A major accomplishment of the Farm Income Enhancement Program was being a founder of Heartland Agdeavor Association. The non-profit corporation enhances farm income by providing investment opportunities in businesses that add value to agricultural commodities.

"The Farm Income Enhancement Program provides farmers with the opportunity to study various proposals that might lead to further enhancement of their income. This is a very valuable service since a similar service provided by private industry would cost thousands, perhaps even millions, of dollars, making the study portion of an idea or concept cost prohibitive," said David White, OFBF's senior director of policy and research and development who is a member of the Farm Income Enhancement Advisory Council.

The need for the program grows because so many people recognize the importance of having value-added products, Arnold said.

"The need for the center is even greater today with all the technology advances. Twenty years ago, you would never have thought about the things that they are doing today," he said.



Jeff Howard (center) receives his award from nominator Tim Hesselbrock and Butler County Farm Bureau President Gail Lierer.

Photo courtesy of Butler County Farm Bureau

## Howard receives crop advising award

Jeff Howard, a Yield Pro sales specialist for Harvest Land Co-op in Seven Mile, recently received the 2008 Excellence in Crop Advising award from Ohio Farm Bureau and the Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Program.

The award is given to a Certified Crop Adviser who has performed superior service for farmer clients in nutrient management, soil and water management, integrated pest management and crop production.

Howard, who was nominated by Tim Hesselbrock of the Butler County Farm Bureau, works with clients in Butler, Montgomery and Preble counties, where he has also served on Farm Bureau boards and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) committees.

He works cooperatively with the SWCDs to help landowners meet their environmental requirements and promote soil conservation practices. He has established test plots to demonstrate fertilizer application rates and methods and conducts field days and technical meetings for corn, soybeans, wheat, orchards, vegetables, pastures and forages.

His commitment to the agricultural industry, his farmer clients and his continual effort to improve conservation has resulted in considerable savings to his clients' operations.

Howard also received \$500 from Pioneer, a DuPont Co., in conjunction with the award.



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