

Though their goals are the same, some animal rights groups are

more extreme

"The agenda of these groups is focused solely on advancing a vegan agenda through destruction and intimidation." PG 2

than others

"I think they're committed to years if not generations of small steps." PG 3



OFBF picks best children's book PG 8

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BUCKEYE FARM NEWS

OHIO'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPER

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Amid budget cuts, Extension moves ahead with reorganization

Reduced funding forces layoffs, and more are projected

BY SETH TETER

Faced with losing nearly a quarter of its funding in the proposed state budget, Ohio State University Extension is going forward with a new model of delivering services.

The reorganization — based on a strategic plan completed last year — positions Extension to provide resources on a regional basis rather than by county.

"The budget problem just sped the situation up a bit more, because we believe in the model," said Extension Director Keith Smith, who is also the university's associate vice president of agricultural administration.

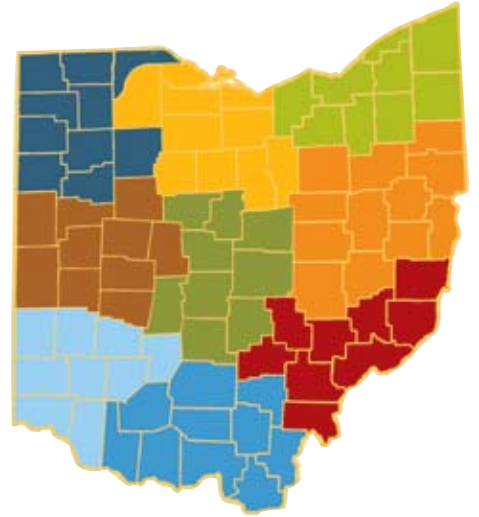
What was initially intended to be a "slow, incremental" change is now on track to be implemented on June 1, he said.

The new structure divides the state into nine multi-county Extension Education and Research Areas. While each county would maintain a local Extension contact, educators would provide services

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NEW STRUCTURE

Ohio State Extension will now provide services based on nine education and research areas, shown here, rather than by county. Extension will maintain a presence in each county.



FUNDING

Due to budget cuts, Extension was forced to eliminate more than 20 positions. More layoffs are expected under the state's current budget proposal.

Farmers air concerns in D.C.

Local leaders make trip as federal issues mount



Discussing the economy, U.S. Sen. George Voinovich said that if all of America held the values of Ohio farmers, it wouldn't be in the current financial situation.

AT ISSUE

- ▶ The president's proposal to reduce farm program payments.
- ▶ A tax on livestock gas emissions.
- ▶ Efforts of animal rights groups to put limits on livestock production.

SEE PAGE 2

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson said opponents of farm payments have made people believe that farmers are "too big and too rich."



A guide to influencing farm, rural policy

COMPILED BY STAFF

Ever wonder why Farm Bureau supports one issue and opposes another, or how it makes up its mind on hot button topics such as tax policy or livestock regulations?

Spring marks the time when Ohio Farm Bureau members begin gathering for discussions that will lead to the establishment

of the organization's local, state and national action agenda. Local grassroots policy development meetings identify issues that

are important to Farm Bureau members and generate possible solutions.

According to Larry Antosch, OFBF director of policy development and environmental research, the process is one of the best means to assure that the grassroots input from Farm Bureau members is addressed.

"The policy development process has been in place since the early days of Farm Bureau. Policy development is a highly effective and unique process that at times can be easily taken for granted," Antosch said. "We must not underestimate the importance and power of Farm Bureau's grassroots policy development process to address problems and concerns."

So what makes good policy? According to Antosch, it has to be more than simply stating an opinion.

"Policy should clearly state the problem or issue that needs to be addressed and state a possible solution," he said.

Well-written policy strikes a delicate balance between stating a specific goal and not dictating a narrow solution that may tie the hands of those who will work to make it a

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Ohio county Farm Bureau presidents participate in a briefing at the embassy of the Organization of American States.

BY DAN TOLAND

By May, more than 4,000 Farm Bureau members from across the country will have traveled to Washington, D.C., bringing agriculture's message directly to national policymakers.

For the 63rd year, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation's (OFBF) county presidents made their annual trek to Capitol Hill to lobby on behalf of farmers back home.

"This is about taking the broad perspective and relating it to what you do," OFBF President Brent Porteus told the county presidents. "Your

face-to-face interaction personalizes all the messages we say throughout the year."

During a briefing on current agriculture issues at American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) headquarters, AFBF Director of Public Policy Pat Wolff told the presidents that their job was the most important role in Farm Bureau, helping it to become one of the top 25 lobby organizations in the country. "I cannot make a member of Congress care, but that's what you can do

by coming here and speaking up for what is important to you," she said.

"I cannot make a member of Congress care, but that's what you can do by coming here."

~Pat Wolff, AFBF Director of Public Policy

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PUBLIC POLICY

NEWS *briefs***Production of ethanol up 41 percent in 2008**

In 2008, 9.2 billion gallons of ethanol were produced in the United States – an increase of 41 percent, as reported by the U.S. Department of Energy. There are now 193 refineries nationwide and increases are still expected, despite the downtrodden economy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is predicting 15 percent of the ethanol industry's capacity will go unused this year. Farm Bureau supports the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS), which gives a solid foundation for grain-derived ethanol to grow upon, while encouraging investment in second-generation biofuels including cellulosic ethanol and biomass-based diesel.

Ag committee could draft greenhouse gas bill from meetings

According to House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, D-Minn., a draft bill could follow hearings with 400 groups on ways American farmers can make money from efforts to control greenhouse gases. AFBF President Bob Stallman has said that climate change legislation may hurt, rather than help, the farm sector. Stallman said emissions legislation could drive up the cost of fuel, fertilizer and pesticides, while the payment per acre for carbon control is low.

**ACRE calculators available**

A number of online calculators have been set up to help farmers make decisions on whether or not to enroll in the new Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program. The latest is from the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri. This calculator runs a stochastic analysis (accounting for variability) for corn, soybeans, cotton, rice, wheat and grain sorghum in Ohio and other Midwestern states. For links to multiple online ACRE calculators, visit the "Featured Links" section of www.ofbf.org.

**Young Farmers show optimism**

AFBF's 17th annual survey of young farmers and ranchers, ages 18 to 35, has revealed that America's young farmers and ranchers have a high level of optimism about agriculture and 89 percent of those surveyed say they are better off than they were five years ago. They said availability of land and facilities, overall profitability and economic challenges are their top concerns. "We're facing very challenging times this year," said Mathew Meals, AFBF YF&R Committee chair. "In good times as well as bad, optimism is the No. 1 job requirement for being a successful farmer and rancher. Farming has always been a difficult and challenging business, but most of us wouldn't trade it for any job in the world."

More animal rights bills introduced

The passing of Proposition 2 in California last year has opened the gates for even more animal rights legislation to reach the legislature in a number of states. Bills introduced by senators in California and Illinois would outlaw the docking of dairy cows' tails except "during an individual treatment, emergency or operation, if the treatment or operation is performed by a veterinarian for veterinary purposes" with proper anesthesia. Legislation in California also would require all eggs imported into California be from cage-free hens.

Lawmakers want White House office for rural policy

Saying that his constituents face challenges just as unique as urban residents, Ohio Congressman Zack Space called on President Obama to establish a White House office dedicated to rural issues.



Space

According to a news release, "Space demanded that, since the President has already established an Office of Urban Policy, he should establish an Office of Rural Policy."



Wilson

The creation of the office "would send a clear signal to the millions of Americans who live outside cities that they will not be ignored in the

Obama administration," said Space, a Democrat whose district covers a large portion of eastern Ohio.

The Congressional Rural Caucus, including Space and Rep. Charlie Wilson, a Democrat also from eastern Ohio, sent a letter to Obama saying that rural residents face highly unique policy issues, including agriculture, conservation, economic development, education, health care, information technology and transportation infrastructure.

The letter said even broad policy measures, such as a recent proposal to reapportion the federal gas tax based on miles driven rather than fuel consumed, could have severe ramifications in rural areas.

"There is no reason that urban areas should have their own representation in the White House while rural areas go unrepresented," Space said.

COUNTY PRESIDENTS' TRIP**Spending, livestock issues lead Washington talks**

In all, more than 80 of Ohio's county Farm Bureau presidents and spokespersons visited with 18 Ohio representatives on a wide array of agricultural issues during the annual lobbying mission to Washington.

Below is a recap of a few of the more pressing issues that were discussed.

Subsidy reductions

The Obama administration has proposed lowering the cap on farm subsidy payment limits from \$500,000 to \$250,000 – a move that received the ire of those who worked hard to produce the 2008 Farm Bill.

Economists estimate cutting payments from those with an adjusted gross income of more than \$500,000 could eliminate payments to the average 800-acre row crop operation in Ohio.

"They've convinced everyone that we are all too big and too rich," House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, D-Minn., told OFBF presidents. In a farm conference earlier that same week, he said the proposal is "a very stupid idea" that is "dead on arrival."

AFBF and 37 other commodity groups sent a letter to the House and Senate Agriculture and Budget Committees opposing the proposed cuts. "The ink is barely dry on the new farm bill, and all of the provisions have not yet been fully implemented," AFBF President Bob Stallman stated in the letter. "The bill must be fully implemented and allowed to work before changes are considered."

'Cow tax'

A proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rule under the Clean Air Act would require any entity emitting more than 100 tons of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) per year to obtain a permit. This could include gases from natural processes on livestock farms in a



Photo by Dan Toland

County Farm Bureau presidents, shown here leaving Capitol Hill, met with lawmakers on a variety of federal issues.

scenario that has become known as a "cow tax."

If EPA were to regulate GHGs under the act, AFBF calculated it could cost farmers and ranchers \$175 per dairy cow, \$87.50 per beef cow and \$21.87 per hog. Peterson, however, disagreed that such a rule would affect farms. "There is no cow tax...it never existed; it is fiction. We are not going to have a cow tax," he said, basing his assertion on a letter he received from EPA saying it does not intend to regulate agriculture under the rule.

While Farm Bureau is appreciative of the chairman's efforts, OFBF Senior Director of Legislative and Regulatory Policy Adam Sharp said it will take more than that to assure a cow tax isn't levied on farmers.

"A letter from the EPA saying agriculture is not a target means little in a court of law," he said. "Only congressional action will fix this program, or mark my words, a court will say that this regulation will apply to agriculture at some

point in the future. Until we see a statutory guarantee, we have major concerns with this proposed rule."

Legislation has been introduced in the Senate to prevent a "cow tax" on farmers and ranchers. Farm Bureau supports the bill.

Animal welfare

With animal rights groups targeting Ohio, there was much discussion

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Extremist attacks on the food chain rose in 2008

The Web site, www.directaction.info, boasts headlines such as "Animal Products Ruined At Supermarkets," "The Fire Was Not An Accident" and "Poultry Farm's Van Attacked With Stones."

It is the diary of the Animal Liberation Front, an extreme animal rights group that advocates intimidation, harassment and vandalism against farmers, researchers, hunters and businesses that use animals and animal products.

The reports come in from all over the world and each one is categorized – vandalism, arson, sabotage, liberation and so on. They contain photos and messages such as "Free range is not good enough, organic is not good enough, go vegan and leave the animals in peace" and "Neither the security cameras, nor the police, nor the speciesists can stop us!"

According to the Animal Agriculture Alliance, a watchdog for the livestock industry, attacks on the global food chain from animal rights and environmental extremists jumped 42 percent -- from 155 in 2007 to 220 in 2008. Attacks on food retailers in the United States that were claimed by groups such as the Animal Liberation Front jumped 377 percent in the same time period, from 9 to 34.

"The message is loud and clear that the agenda of these groups is focused solely on advancing a vegan agenda through destruction and intimidation," said Animal Agriculture Alliance Executive Director Kay Johnson Smith. "The fact that extremists are willing to massively increase their attacks on the food chain during a serious economic downturn should cause major alarm for all companies and organizations responsible for feeding people."

PUBLIC POLICY

From the farm forum

Each year, U.S. House Minority Leader John Boehner holds a farm forum in his southwest Ohio district to discuss issues facing American agriculture. OFBF President Brent Porteus highlighted some of those issues for attendees during this year's event. Below are excerpts from Porteus' speech.

On funding cuts to programs such as Ohio State Extension and to the Department of Agriculture:

"No doubt that's largely because of the terrible financial pinch our state finds itself in. But setting aside the immediate circumstances, inadequate funding for these priority programs is a long term trend that needs to be reversed. Without that relatively small investment in these areas, we risk not only our long term success, but our

current ability to farm profitably, protect the environment and keep our food safe. Without these investments, we move closer to a day when American meals may not grow by American farmers."

On the burden of regulations:

"One economic study says that American farmers, American businesses and families spend nearly \$1.4 trillion a year complying with federal and state regulations. That's almost 15 percent of our economy, more than \$4,600 per every American that is spent simply on meeting the rules of the game. And that price tag went up by about 14 percent a year since 1960.

Do we need standards that assure our health, that assure our safety and security, our happiness and protect

the environment? Absolutely. But don't we need to find some balance between idealism and reality?"

On the efforts of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to challenge Ohio livestock production methods with legislation or a ballot initiative:

"To me, what's most important in all this is that we in agriculture be very clear on one point about HSUS. Their ultimate goal...is to put livestock farmers out of business on the way to creating a meat-free American society.

They're smart enough to know that a vegan society won't happen overnight. I think they're committed to years if not generations of small steps. And that first small

See FORUM, pg 6

Rural agenda includes jobs, infrastructure

In comments at a U.S. Department of Agriculture outlook forum, American Farm Bureau President Bob Stallman said AFBF is employing a two-pronged approach to improve the quality of life in rural America: public policy advocacy and serving as a ready resource on rural development issues for states and counties.



Stallman

"Well into the late 20th Century, American agriculture operated under the attitude that farming was the backbone of rural America," Stallman said. "That paradigm is drastically changing. Off-farm income is of growing importance to farm families. Averaged across all farms, USDA'S 2008 estimate says 92.5 percent of total farm family income comes from off-farm sources."

Stallman said it is clear that today's farm families need employment opportunities in their hometowns in addition to their farm income. And they need vibrant local businesses that provide goods and services to their farms. But, he said,

the relationship between farmers and rural communities is still a two-way street.

"Make no mistake. Rural communities need farmers and agriculture," Stallman said. "Agriculture and the land and tax base America's farmers and ranchers provide are in a great many cases the financial base for county and rural governments. They are the way rural America pays for its schools, often paves the roads and keeps sheriffs on the payroll."

Many issues dealing with rural development are high on the national agenda these days as they relate to economic recovery. Stallman emphasized the need for high

"Make no mistake. Rural communities need farmers and agriculture."

~Bob Stallman, AFBF President

quality, affordable and accessible high-speed Internet service as vital for improving all aspects of life in rural America. He said broadband options in rural areas can often be cost prohibitive

and that rural America lacks affordable, modern telecommunications infrastructure.

In addition, he emphasized the importance of improving rural highways and the inland waterway systems of locks and dams, both used to transport farm goods and critical for economic recovery.

Alert system guards against metal theft

OFBF is continuing to explore ways it can work with the scrap metal industry and local law enforcement to address farmers' concerns over metal theft.

After a recent meeting with the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, OFBF is considering how it could utilize an industry Web site and electronic alert system that keeps scrap dealers on the lookout for stolen items. The Web site, www.scraptheftalert.com, broadcasts descriptions and photos of metal materials that have been

reported stolen and also provides the contact information of the investigating law enforcement officer.

Although it is widely used by scrap dealers, many communities are not familiar with the alert system, said Beth Vanderkooi, OFBF director of state policy. She said Farm Bureau members can be helpful by making local law enforcement officers aware of the resource. OFBF has already talked with a representative of the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, she said.

Vanderkooi also noted that a metal theft law passed last year establishes a committee in the next legislative session to review how the law's new standards for purchasing scrap metal are working.

"That provision is something that is very unique about this particular law," she said.

At last year's annual meeting, OFBF delegates called on the organization to do more to address metal theft in rural areas.



Mayer Farm Equipment
Jeffersonville, OH

Heritage Farm Equipment
Van Wert, OH

Homier & Sons
Payne, OH

Steinke Tractor Sales
Eaton, OH

Witmers, Inc.
Salem, OH

Schmidt Machine Company
Upper Sandusky, OH

Holgate Implement Sales
Holgate, OH

D & J Equipment Company

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COUNTY news

Preserving Land in Fairfield County

Louise Warner of Hocking County, in photo at right, spoke with attendees at the recently-held Southeast Ohio Farmland Preservation meeting sponsored by the Fairfield County Farm Bureau. Warner told of her personal experience protecting her farmland through Ohio's Ag Easement Purchase Program made possible through the Clean Ohio Fund. Warner was one of many in attendance at the meeting held in February for farmland owners to learn about the many tools available for them to protect valuable Ohio farmland.



Photo courtesy of Fairfield County Farm Bureau

Dancing for dollars in Washington County

Washington County Farm Bureau held a soup and sandwich dinner and square dance at Our Lady of Mercy Social hall in Lowell at the end of February to support the Farm Business Planning & Analysis (FBPA) Program. The Farm Bureau provided the food and asked for donations to the program. Organization Director Kari Burkey said more than \$1,000 was raised for FBPA, which greatly exceeded expectations. She said more than 250 people attended the square dance, with many young people enjoying the Farm Bureau function.



Our Ohio Telling Agriculture's Story

New Local Dining Directory

A new addition to the Buying Local Directory is now available. Restaurants that purchase locally grown products and serve them on their menu are now eligible to be listed as part of the Buying Local Directory. Restaurants must be current Farm Bureau members to participate.

If farmers are selling their products to local restaurants, consider asking the restaurant owners to participate in the Buying Local Directory. The enrollment form is available at OurOhio.org, click on "Resources" then "Register a Restaurant," or contact your county Farm Bureau office for a paper enrollment form. If the restaurant owners aren't Farm Bureau members, they can join at GrowWithFB.org

Join the conversation

Readers are now invited to comment on all things *Our Ohio* at the www.OurOhio.org discussion forums. Each topic on the Web site has its own discussion page: food and recipes, gardening, farming, travel, pets, *Our Ohio* television series and magazine, teacher resources and healthy living. Users must create a log-in before commenting on any of the topics or before creating a new discussion topic.

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

Equine Affaire

Stop by the Ohio Farm Bureau booth at Equine Affaire April 2 to 5 at the Ohio Expo Center, 717 E. 17th Ave., Columbus. The 17th annual Equine Affaire will draw tens of thousands of horse people to enjoy a world-class educational program and extensive trade show, as well as an entertaining and informative competition. Adults \$13, children \$8. For more information, visit equineaffaire.com



Coming next on Ohio Farm & Country

The latest census report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been published and the number of farms in this country is on the increase. But that's not the case here in Ohio. *Ohio Farm and Country* in April will look at the latest numbers and highlight the diversity of Ohio agriculture.

Also in this episode, dairy farmers are facing some tough times as the price of milk has dropped nearly 50 percent in the past six months. Watch to see what these farmers are facing and also what they are doing to survive. Food safety is on everyone's mind with the latest salmonella case, but the farmers of America still produce the safest food supply in the world. *Ohio Farm and Country* will investigate the food safety programs here in Ohio and what consumers need to do to prevent food borne illnesses once they get the food home. Even with another record deer harvest this past year, the deer herd population is still too large in many people's mind. Find out what is being proposed, and what the Division of Wildlife says needs to happen to control the population of all species of wildlife.

Ohio Farm and Country for April will start airing on April 5 on *Ohio News Network* (ONN) and may be seen throughout the entire month.

Correction: In the Feb. 26 *Buckeye Farm News*, a story about OFBF's new Teacher's Lounge newsletter contained an incorrect phone number. For more information on the newsletter, contact Judy Roush at 614-246-8243 or e-mail jroush@ofbf.org.

Teachers: Get the Ag Bag before it's too late

In honor of National Agriculture Day on March 20, Ohio Farm Bureau began offering a special "Ag Bag" of resources for teachers of all subjects and grade levels to use in the classroom.

Ohio Farm Bureau Education Specialist Judy Roush said the information about agriculture included in the bag is a resource that teachers will appreciate. "We can help teachers locate resources that may not be on their radar screen that are appropriate to help with what they are teaching," she said, adding that accurate information is extremely important for teachers to access.

Valued at more than \$60, the materials contained in the bag are only available to teachers who are, or become Farm Bureau members between now and April 30.

Teachers must call or e-mail Roush (614-246-8243 or jroush@ofbf.org) to request the Ag Bag by April 30. The Ag Bag will be shipped at no charge within two weeks of confirming an eligible teacher's membership.

Ag Bag items include:

- Large blue Farm Bureau tote bag
- 22" x 15" Every Day is Earth Day to a Farmer poster

- Farm Facts booklet, including a one-sided poster map
- Classroom set of 25 We Grow in Ohio coloring books
- Ohio Livestock poster and student handouts
- Set of 10 Farm Bureau pencils

- A hardback edition of Sugarbush Spring
- What Grows in Ohio poster
- Exploring Our Economy multimedia kit
- Fields of Energy DVD and teacher's guide

The Ag Bag offers \$60-worth of resources for teachers to use in the classroom.



Hundreds gather for Young Ag Professionals Leadership Conference

Young Agricultural Professionals learned more about the ag industry and themselves when they attended the Young Ag Professionals Leadership Conference earlier this month in Columbus.

About 200 people were at the two-day conference in Dublin where they attended professional development seminars. Jeremy Evans, co-chair of the Young Agricultural Professionals Advisory Team, said feedback has been mostly positive.

"We were happy with all the speakers," said Evans of Tuscarawas County. "The best part of it was meeting new people and being able to network with other people."

One workshop focused on how to remain active in Farm Bureau after age 35 when no longer in the Young Ag Professionals program.

"Farm Bureau is not just for a

short time in your life," said Darrell Rubel, OFBF director of volunteer development. "No matter what your age, there are opportunities for you."

Some of the other speakers were Julie Fox with Ohio State University Extension talking about how to market yourself and your farm, OFBF's Senior Director of Corporate Communications Joe Cornely addressing common myths about agriculture and how to deal with the media about them and Sarah Carano of the American Red Cross talking about what you can do before, during and after a weather disaster.

"During one session, the young ag professionals learned about how to use social media such as Facebook to tell about their operation and why they should tell everybody about it. Social media reaches out to everybody and has the potential to reach

millions of people," Rubel said.

Evans said that "hands down" that the best session came from Chad Hymas, who had a one-ton bale of hay fall on him in 2001, leaving him a quadriplegic.

"It really hit home with me," he said. "There were very few dry eyes in the room. It was a very moving, touching discussion of life. We got a lot of nice comments. I think it really hit home with other folks."

Evans also said a highlight was meeting other young people from around the state who are in the ag industry.

"Sometimes at the local level there aren't very many young people who are doing the same things," he said. "It was nice being able to see that on the state level we are all facing the same situations, that we're not alone."

2 different youth conferences offered this summer

Ohio Farm Bureau youths will have a chance to bond with each other and learn leadership skills at OFBF youth conferences this summer.

The Quest conference is July 8-10 and for ages 12-14. It will be held at Ohio Wesleyan College in Delaware. The cost is \$100 per person, and the registration deadline is June 12. OFBF youths are allowed to attend the Quest conferences a total of two times.

During the conference, youths will build friendships and learn how to communicate with others, how to reach out to others and how to deal with stress and issues important to young teens.

The Higher Ground conference, for ages 14-18, also will be held at Ohio Wesleyan College. This year's con-

ference is July 19-24 and the cost is \$200 per person. The deadline to register is June 19. During Higher Ground, teens will learn how to enhance their creativity, leadership and teambuilding skills. The program changes each year and youths can participate up to four times.

Fees for both programs include meals, lodging and a T-shirt. More details will be available at www.ofbf.org and through county Farm Bureaus.

The Youth Advisory Team also has been announced. The members are Steven Cain, Stark County; Nicholas Colston, Stark County; Kristi Moff, Mahoning County; Sarah Roof, Putnam County; Zack Shaver, Henry County; Kyle Walterbaugh, Wood County, and Hannah Zimmerman, Mahoning County.

ORGANIZATION

MAY WE INTRODUCE...

"I feel we'd be losing all of our voice in agriculture if we didn't have a voice in Farm Bureau. We'd be totally lost."

~ Karen Debolt, Delaware County

Karen Debolt has been a Delaware County Farm Bureau member for about four decades and actively involved for most of those years. She started the farm fun tent at the Delaware County Fair 15 years ago and worked on the farmer's share breakfast and women's committee for years.



Debolt

She was born and raised in Delaware County and her family goes back 150 years in Wayne County. She used to have a dairy farm but it is now a grain farm and her son, Brad, and her husband David work on it. Debolt has run the combine for almost 40 years and also operates the tractor and cultivator. "Farm women were among the first to do women's lib," said Debolt.

She just retired as director for the Hartford Fair Board. She is very active at Galena United Methodist Church and is campaign chairman for the new church. "My life goal is to get it paid off," she said.

"If it wasn't for Farm Bureau, we wouldn't have a CAUV tax, and we wouldn't be able to farm in our area because it's mostly development ground," she said.

"Working for OFBF is a very rewarding job knowing you are helping to make agriculture better."

~ Nick Kennedy, organization director for Columbiana, Portage, Stark and Summit counties.

Nick Kennedy got his start at Ohio Farm Bureau as an intern while he was an Ohio State University student. He worked for the Young Farmer, Youth, Technology, Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Ag Ecology Department. He also was a teaching assistant for the agriculture education department.



Kennedy

Kennedy is now in his fifth year as an organization director for Columbiana, Portage, Stark and Summit counties.

"Helping to plan all the different events with my volunteers makes me enjoy my job no matter how stressful or difficult it gets," he said.

Kennedy has a bachelor's degree in agricultural education with a minor in human development and family science.

Medical Mutual health plans save Farm Bureau members money

Are you feeling the pinch of the current economic downturn? Did you know Ohio Farm Bureau's health insurance partner, Medical Mutual, offers in-network preventive care at no additional cost and an opportunity to earn a \$75 deductible credit?

As an Ohio Farm Bureau member, you have access to Medical Mutual's SuperMed One – Ohio Farm Bureau health insurance plans. These plans cover the following in-network services at 100 percent*, and they are not subject to your deductible:

- Routine physical exam
- Routine vision exam
- Dental exam and cleaning
- Well child care services, including exams and immunizations (up to \$500 per benefit period)

- Routine mammogram
- Routine Pap test
- Routine blood screenings for cholesterol, colon cancer, bone density and others
- Routine diagnostic tests for EKGs, x-rays and others

**Subject to benefit levels.*

In addition, Medical Mutual offers a way for you to actually put money back in your pocket, to the tune of \$75. Medical Mutual partners with WebMD, the leading online health and wellness information service, to offer Ohio Farm Bureau members access to the Health Risk Assessment (HRA).

The HRA is a series of questions about your past health history, current medical information and life-

style habits, compiled to give you a picture of your overall health. Once you have answered all of the HRA questions, a scored summary report will appear onscreen to help you evaluate your health risk for certain chronic diseases, such as diabetes or heart disease. This report will also provide you with information to help you manage or improve your health.

Farm Bureau members who complete the questionnaire will receive a \$75 credit toward their in-network deductible for 2009.

For more information about Medical Mutual's health plan offerings for Farm Bureau members, talk to your Nationwide agent or independent insurance agent. You can also visit ofb.supermedone.com.

NATIONWIDE NEWS

Prevent losses before they happen

The numbers don't lie – studies show that every dollar invested in safety could result in a \$4 benefit. If you think about what that could mean to a farm operation, it becomes more apparent why loss control services can offer good value.

For 100 years, Nationwide Agribusiness has worked with people in agriculture to help protect valuable assets through insurance coverages,

safety education and "loss control" programs.

Today, Nationwide Ag is the leading farm insurer in the United States, and part of the Nationwide family of companies, endorsed by Ohio Farm Bureau. As part of that relationship, and to provide additional value to Farm Bureau membership, Nationwide Ag offers loss control services directly to farmers and their farm operations.

Nationwide Ag's no-cost loss control programs for customers come from staff who can assist with:

Program development — Safety and health procedures to reduce the likelihood of accidents and illnesses from related hazards and exposures.

Training — Training specific to the operator and his or her employees on policies and procedures.

See **NATIONWIDE**, pg 6

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on YOUR behalf

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

2009 Ohio Farm Bureau Goals

Market Farm Bureau to achieve membership growth

Increase grassroots involvement by creating a volunteer-friendly Farm Bureau

Expand relations with Nationwide and other affinity organizations

Promote the agbioresource industry

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

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

Protect personal property rights

Preserving Ohio's natural resources is important to farmers. ➤ Staff represented OFBF and Lake Erie Basin agricultural interests at the first meeting of the Ohio Great Lakes Compact Advisory Board and participated in a Natural Resources Conservation Service meeting to help develop the statewide score sheet to qualify applicants for the 2009 general EQIP program.

County Farm Bureaus receive support from state staff. ➤ Staff represented OFBF at a Butler County Farm Bureau legislative meeting, Fairfield County Farm Bu-

reau's membership campaign kick-off and Greene County's Farmer's Share Breakfast.

Ohio agricultural groups are collaborating as animal rights groups target the state. ➤ OFBF gave presentations about animal rights/welfare issues to Crawford County Cattlemen's Association, OFBF Young Agricultural Professionals conference, Fairfield County Farm Bureau's membership campaign kick-off, Greene County Farm Bureau's Farmer's Share Breakfast and Buckeye Veal producers/growers. Staff met with the Ohio Association of Meat Processors and Ohio Grocers Association to discuss the impact animal welfare/rights group could have on members. OFBF also participated in interviews with print media regarding activities of the Humane Society of the United States in Ohio.

Ohio farmers need up-to-date information on changing regulations. ➤ OFBF attended the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Milk Sanitation Board of Directors meeting to receive information about proposed testing/fee structuring changes.

Lawmakers need background on farm and agricultural issues to produce sound policies. ➤ OFBF met with the new Ohio House Agriculture Committee chair, speaker of the Ohio House and Ohio House minority leader to discuss various agricultural policy issues.

GUIDE from PG 1

reality. The policy should be directed to something that Farm Bureau can or should be expected to accomplish.

The process begins with establishment of a local policy development team.

"That team consists of individuals who represent all segments of the local agricultural community. Members are appointed early in the year and meet throughout the spring and summer, gathering pertinent information to use to draft policy proposals," Antosch said.

The team members use both Farm Bureau and non-Farm Bureau resources as they consider issues. Individual Farm Bureau members, advisory councils and county Farm Bureau teams all serve as policy development resources. In addition, the team meets with the leadership of commodity groups, government agencies, elected officials and special interest groups.

"It is important that sufficient information and facts are gathered to ensure that sound policy recommendations are drafted and proposed," Antosch said. "The team gathers information from a multitude of sources to identify issues that can/should be addressed as well as possible solutions."

Potential policy recommendations are drafted and presented to Farm Bureau members for their consideration at the county annual meeting. Adopted county policies are submitted to the state policy development team, which is made up of Farm Bureau members from around Ohio. The state Policy Development Team recommends policy changes to the membership for its consideration at the state annual meeting.

"Once adopted, the policies

serve as a guide to accomplishing OFBF's goals and establish our priorities," Antosch said.

QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GOOD POLICY:

- Does it directly affect agriculture?
- Does it ask for or will it result in action?
- Is it forward looking?
- Is it of high interest to members?
- Should it be undertaken by Farm Bureau?
- Is it needed?
- What should be written?
- What is the result expected?
- Is it general enough to give latitude for execution?
- Is it specific enough to establish a clear goal?
- Is it something Farm Bureau can – or should be expected to – accomplish?
- Is the proposal forward looking? (Will it affect something in the future that can result in some form of action?)
- Is the problem something Farm Bureau can actively address?
- How does it relate to Farm Bureau's vision statement: "Forging a partnership between farmers and consumers that meets consumer needs and ensures agricultural prosperity in a global marketplace." Does it move Farm Bureau closer to the shared vision for the future?

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throughout their region.

"This is the positive side of this new reorganization. We'll still deliver the unbiased, research-based information out to the citizens of Ohio in their county, but using the resources of an area," Smith said.

One goal is to allow Extension educators to specialize in their field of expertise instead of providing general services to a single county, Smith said. Regional coordinators would be charged with ensuring that counties receive a fair share of programming based on their financial support.

"If the county does not provide funding, then we don't provide the resources back," Smith said.

But the governor's proposed cuts to Extension's budget means the new model will have to take effect with fewer staff than planned. On March 5, Extension was forced to cut more than 20 county positions. Smith said the current budget proposal could mean 30 to 35 more field staff will be lost.

"The concern we have is about the lack of educators, because of the budget situation. If we had a

EXTENSION from PG 1

full complement there would be no problem whatsoever," he said.

For example, there will not be enough staff to have an Extension educator for 4-H in every county. So, counties are being encouraged to provide a local 4-H program assistant that would be supported by an Extension educator in that region.

"If anything we've advocated more resources for 4-H to make sure that the 4-H program is going to be viable and alive in every one of the counties," Smith said. But due to the funding situation, "we might be a little skinny in some spots."

Ohio Farm Bureau Federation is making it a priority to restore Extension's funding. OFBF Executive Vice President Jack Fisher said Extension delivers wide-ranging programs, including business and community development, that could help put the state on the path to economic recovery.

"In a time when we're trying to create new economic activity and create jobs, the very thing we've had in place for a number of years has a track record, has worked, has shown

a return on our investment. I think it deserves a little bit more consideration than it's getting right now," he said.

Fisher said economic realities leave Extension leaders with little choice but to restructure their operations.

"I suspect if we had our druthers, we'd like the individual county program, but collectively we're dealing with the resources that we have and are keeping a good program going."

The latest funding cuts come after several years of waning financial support for Extension, which previously absorbed reductions by leaving positions unfilled. In 2001, the program had 270 educators, a number that has dropped to about 220, including the recent layoffs. Farmers who hope to avoid further cuts still have a chance to sway lawmakers who are debating the governor's budget proposal, Fisher said.

"Now's not a time to sit on the side and complain; now's the time to be involved," he said.

WASHINGTON from PG 2

on the issue in Washington.

Ohio Republican Reps. Jim Jordan and Bob Latta both agreed to help agriculture in any way possible.

"Generation after generation of people today have never stepped foot on a farm. They have only seen it in a painting," Latta said.

Jordan added, "It's important at all levels for leaders to say there are things that we're not afraid to defend – the values that made us special in the first place."

Peterson said he thinks agriculture needs a better message to send

to consumers. "Saying 'we have the most abundant, safe food supply in the world' isn't working. We're just talking to each other; and we're going to have to refocus."

Ohio Congressman and House Republican Leader John Boehner agreed. "Do not underestimate the power of these organizations to come in and change the rules," he said. "The story of animal care must be told to people in a way they appreciate. The best defense is a good offense...and it's time to be on offense."

FARMERS from PG 1

hustle of government happening before your eyes. It's overwhelming and I'm never disappointed any time I come to Washington."

The Washington lawmakers were also quick to express gratitude for

the interactions back home in their districts. During a breakfast, Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, thanked county presidents for helping to give him an understanding of the richness of Ohio agriculture through his

roundtables and farm tours in Ohio.

But perhaps Rep. Bob Latta, R-Ohio, best helped the presidents understand their roles in D.C. "The best voices we hear are from our lobbyists back home," he said.

NATIONWIDE from PG 5

dures outlined in written loss prevention programs.

Hazard recognition — Assistance in identifying areas of potential loss that may have been overlooked, and recommendations on how to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Regulatory reference — Answers to questions on how to interpret regulatory issues, and how to respond to citations from OSHA, EPA, NFPA, DOT, and other regulatory agencies.

Loss control services can include:

- On-site Reviews & Cost Savings Reviews
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- Loss History Analysis & Risk Management Counseling
- Property Engineering Services
- General/Employee Safety Training
- Industrial Hygiene/Ergonomic Specialized Services
- Fleet Safety Program & Motor Vehicle Reports (MVR) Program
- Regulatory/Compliance Assistance

- Safety Publications & Safety Video Lending Library

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Unfortunately, accidents and property losses on the farm can and do happen. And they don't always occur during normal business hours. Nationwide customers can call in a claim whenever it occurs, and speak with a Nationwide claims professional who's ready to help – 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 800-248-6283.

Whether it's a simple loss or something more serious, Nationwide claims reps are trained to provide "on your side" service in helping to settle a farm policy claim. That way, the operation can get back up and running as soon as possible.

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— OPINION — *your* LETTERS

Editor's note: OFBF received several responses to the March/April *Our Ohio* magazine, which contained two articles on the need to control the wildlife population in Ohio, including several positive responses from associate members. Hunters have also contacted the organization to suggest ways to address the problem. Below is one of those letters.

Hunter access program could help farmers

I read the March/April 2009 edition of *Our Ohio* magazine and had some comments on the article; *The Bucks and Does Stop Here*.

First, I am not a farmer, although I am a Farm Bureau member and personally acknowledge the importance of farming. I grew up in rural Pennsylvania and understand what farming is about.

Second, I am an avid hunter. My favorite method of hunting is archery. I enjoy the challenge of getting close to the animals and the preparation it requires in order to be successful. My wife and I moved to Ohio 19 years ago because of my job. For about 14 years, I still traveled back to Pennsylvania to hunt with families and friends. As my three sons became old enough to

hunt, I started to search for places to hunt in Ohio. That has been one of the hardest endeavors I have come across. I have been fortunate enough to have parents of friends of ours allow us to hunt on their small 50 acre farm. Otherwise we hunt on public property or on private property when invited by friends.

I would like to see a system that would link responsible hunters to landowners who desire hunters to harvest game in order to reduce the population. I'm tired of being told no when I ask permission and have basically given up. Pennsylvania has a program that links landowners and hunters. Landowners list their property with the game commission and it is posted anonymously by county. Hunters can submit a form that the landowner examines. If the landowner feels comfortable with the hunter's credentials, they call the hunter for a person to person discussion and then can grant permission. The landowners only speak to who they feel will be a good fit for their property.

I think something like this could be a great asset to Farm Bureau farming members.

Thanks for the magazine. I enjoy reading it.

~ Eric Kwasnicka, Stark County

BUCKEYE FARM NEWS LETTERS POLICY:

Buckeye Farm News welcomes letters from our readers. Letters 300 words or fewer from OFBF members are preferred and may be edited. Letters should include a name, address and daytime phone number.

Send letters to letters@ofbf.org or by mail to Letter to the Editor/*Buckeye Farm News*, P.O. Box 182383, Columbus, OH, 43218.

— INDUSTRY NEWS —

Pearl Market seeking farmers and vendors

The Pearl Market, set in downtown Columbus, is currently seeking farmers/growers and merchandise vendors for its 2009 Pearl Market Season. The market is within a five-minute walk of more than 41,000 office workers, 1,200 hotel rooms and approximately 600 apartments and condo units. The market will operate from May 19 through October, on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The fee for space is \$90/month for two days a week, and \$75/month for one day a week. Seasonal rates are available for \$360 and \$300, respectfully. For more information, visit "Featured Links" at www.ofbf.org.

Learn the basics of selling timber

Landowners interested in learning how to successfully sell timber while meeting their woodland ownership goals are invited to attend the "Basics of Selling Timber Workshop" to be held April 18 at Troyer's Dutch Heritage Restaurant in Bellville.

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the workshop will explore the timber marketing process from deciding if and what to harvest, advertising, making the process competitive, developing a contract, controlling erosion with best management practices and understanding timber taxes.

The workshop is sponsored by OSU Extension's Ohio Woodland Stewards Program, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Forestry, Ohio

Forestry Association and Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

Participants will be introduced to a variety of resources that are available to help with the timber harvesting process and the management of woodlands.

The class qualifies for four hours of continuing education credit for the Ohio Forest Tax Law Program.

Register by April 8 and pay \$40 per person. Register from April 9-13 and pay \$50 per person. Registration ends April 13. Lunch and materials are included.

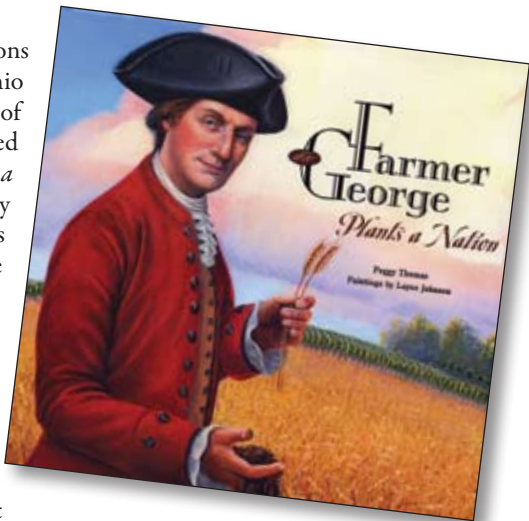
Register online at <http://woodlandstewards.osu.edu>.

For more information, call 614-688-3421 or e-mail ohiowoods@osu.edu.

NOTEWORTHY

OFBF selects Children's Literature Award winner

The Communications Committee of the Ohio Farm Bureau board of trustees has selected *Farmer George Plants a Nation* written by Peggy Thomas with paintings by Layne Johnson as the 2009 winner of the annual OFBF Children's Literature Award. Calkins Creek, a subsidiary of Boyds Mills Press, is the publisher of this 40-page picture book that focuses on George Washington's life as a farmer, inventor and scientist. The author describes Washington's efforts to create a self-sufficient farm at Mount Vernon while also forming a new nation.



"All of us at Boyds Mills Press are proud to publish books that bring the story of agriculture to young readers. Because fewer of our kids know about agriculture firsthand, we believe it is necessary to accurately tell the story of producing food and fiber," said Kent Brown, publisher, Boyds Mills Press, which has published five of the previous award-winning books OFBF has selected.

The book is currently out of stock but will be available in April for county Farm Bureaus to purchase. Contact the county Farm Bureau to order the book; cost is \$9.

Consider a visit to the local library or bookstore to take a look at the other books that were considered for this year's award: *Johnny Appleseed*, written by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Jim Burke. Harper Collins, 2008. *Little Star - Raising Our First Calf* written by twins Rianna and Sheridan Chaney, photographs by Kelly Hahn Johnson and Rebecca Long Chaney. Down Under Publications, 2008. *Our Farm* written and photographed by Michael J. Rosen. Darby Creek Publishing, 2008. *Soil! Get the Inside Scoop* written by David L. Lindbo and others. Soil Science Society of America, 2008.

OLC media campaign focuses on consumer-farmer connection

The Ohio Livestock Coalition kicked off an extensive media campaign in January that included radio, newspaper and Web site ads.

The goal of the campaign, which ran for two months, 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.

"We felt we needed to make more of a consumer to farmer connection. Besides, farmers are consumers, too, so we are hitting both groups," said Sandy Kuhn, OLC's executive director. "The campaign recognizes that consumers need to feel good about where their food comes from."

The campaign highlighted three key industry priorities: Ohio livestock producers provide safe and affordable food, are environmentally responsible and take animal care seriously.

Newspaper ads appeared in *ThisWeek* Newspapers, a weekly publication serving 24 neighborhoods in central Ohio. The ads ran for four weeks in the newspapers, which have a weekly circulation of 352,828. A full-page ad also appeared in *Our Ohio* magazine.

The radio campaign reached

more than 200,000 listeners on WCOL-FM (country), WLZT-FM (adult contemporary), WNCI-FM (pop) and ABN stations. OLC also ran ads on the Web site of NBC4-TV in Columbus for four weeks.

OLC tracked the number of people visiting its Web site, www.ohiolivestock.org, and recorded a 67 percent increase in visitors during the ad campaign.

"Doing what's right for our animals, for our environment and for our consumers."

~A slogan featured in OLC's campaign

Before the launch of the ad campaign, OLC redesigned its Web site to reflect the organization's new look and priority messages.

The organization also designed hundreds of new posters that highlight the livestock industry's animal care standards. The posters, which have the slogan "doing what's right for our animals, for our



environment and for our consumers," are being distributed this month to state fair managers so they can be hung throughout junior livestock buildings in Ohio.

"We want to get as many educational tools out there that make the connection between farmers and consumers," Kuhn said.

OLC's annual meeting will be held April 6 at Der Dutchman Restaurant & Conference Center, 445 S. Jefferson St., U.S. Route 42, Plain City. Registration fee is \$30 per person if paid in full and postmarked by March 27; the cost after that is \$40 per person. Registration and continental breakfast begins at 9 a.m. with a buffet lunch at noon. The meeting ends about 1:30 p.m.

Topics include "Animal Welfare Activities at the OSU Vet School," "OLC's 2009 Industry Image Campaign" and "Becoming an Animal Agriculture Activist: Channeling Your Passion." The meeting also will feature the 2009 Environmental Stewardship Awards and 2009 Neighbor of the Year Awards.

For more information, visit www.ofbf.org or contact Amy Hurst at 614-246-8262 or ahurst@ofbf.org



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