

Building Community

Ohio Farm Bureau believes that strong relationships lead to success within the organization, in local communities and in public policy. Here are some examples of how we worked to expand relationships in 2012.



Grow & Know

Through its Grow and Know event series, Ohio Farm Bureau connected farmers with Ohioans who are passionate about food and agriculture through learning opportunities and on-farm events. In 2012, there were 55 Grow and Know events that reached an estimated 33,000 people.

A FOCUS ON CONVERSATIONS

Ohio Farm Bureau's Leadership Conference placed emphasis on county Farm Bureaus reaching out to their communities to have constructive conversations about food and agriculture. During the event, farmers were able to enjoy breakfast with dozens of nonfarmers, providing an opportunity to ask each other questions about current food issues. Farm Bureau members also took part in the EASE program, which stands for Engage, Acknowledge, Share, Earn Trust. The program was developed by the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance and offers tips and insights on having meaningful conversations about food production.



Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted chats with AgriPOWER class members about his role overseeing elections.

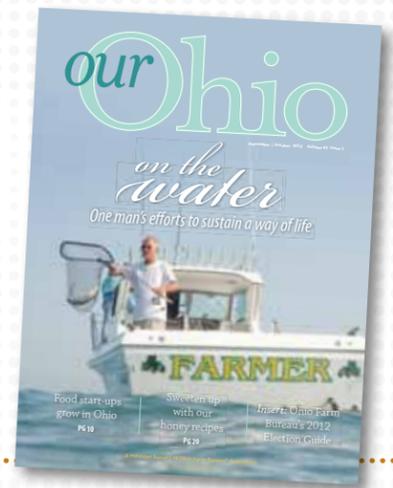
AgriPOWER

Ohio Farm Bureau's AgriPOWER Institute program is designed for highly motivated young farm leaders and professionals. It focuses on public policy issues confronting agriculture and the food system. The program consists of seven multi-day institutes (17 days total) and covers public policy matters facing local communities, Ohio, the nation and the world.

The program has been effective in preparing participants to move into leadership positions in state organizations, local boards, churches, state and county Farm Bureau boards and chambers of commerce. The number of applicants continues to increase with several on a waiting list for the most recent class.

WATER QUALITY

Through educational programs and outreach, Ohio Farm Bureau connected farmers as they worked together to solve water quality challenges. Ohio Farm Bureau represented members as it weighed in on a state report that makes dozens of recommendations on how to decrease the impact of agricultural nutrients entering Ohio's streams and water resources. Ohio Farm Bureau was also among several groups supporting a water quality credit trading pilot project that aims to reduce pollution in the Ohio River.



Animal Ag 202

Ohio Farm Bureau and Ohio State University Extension teamed up to host more than 150 first-responders at the Animal Agriculture 202 seminar, which focused on proper handling of large animals in times of crisis. The program was part of Ohio Farm Bureau's ongoing effort to build relationships and address public expectations regarding animal care issues.

Political Engagement Pays Off

In this year's election, the high success rate of Farm Bureau endorsed candidates was a point of pride for the organization. 121 of the 127 candidates (95 percent) who were named either "Friends of Agriculture" or "Friends of Farm Bureau" won their races on Election Day.



Ohio Farm Bureau works throughout the year to cultivate relationships between farmers and policy-makers. This includes annual trips to Washington, the Ag Day at the Capitol event in Columbus and local community forums.

Farmers speak out in Washington

When the Department of Labor proposed regulations that would have restricted many of the jobs that youths could have performed on farms, Ohio Farm Bureau compiled hundreds of member stories and comments. Volunteers traveled to Washington to provide the comments to Ohio's congressional delegation and federal regulators. The administration eventually dropped the plan.

Ohio Farm Bureau's Young Ag Professionals rallied in Washington, D.C. to make lawmakers aware of the importance of passing a farm bill.

As the U.S. EPA sought to expand federal authority from "navigable" waters to all waters and take control away from state and local governments, Ohio Farm Bureau compiled more than 600 photos and comments from members to share with lawmakers and regulators.

After Farm Bureau members in Ohio and nationally raised concerns about a new broadband service that would likely disrupt GPS signals used for precision agriculture, the Federal Communications Commission stopped the project.



Getting Results

Farm Bureau's long history of putting ideas into action continued in 2012. Here are a few ways the organization created positive outcomes for members on issues they said were important.



At the Statehouse

Working together through Ohio Farm Bureau, farmers were able to shape public policies that impact how they do business.

Among Ohio Farm Bureau members' state legislative victories, the Great Lakes Compact provided a way to balance protection of water resources with farmers' water use needs. The state's agricultural linked deposit program was expanded, providing more financing opportunities to farmers. And a bill paved the way for voluntary marketing agreements that could help farmers work together to set uniform standards for their products.

Other Ohio Farm Bureau member legislative efforts protected opportunities for on-farm energy production, supported agricultural deer production, helped fund the Ohio Expo Center and fought scrap metal theft.

Supreme Court



The Ohio Supreme Court ruled that the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) acted properly in approving the construction and operation of a wind farm in Champaign County, a finding that had been encouraged in a brief filed by Ohio Farm Bureau. In another case, the court's ruling was consistent with Ohio Farm Bureau's position on CAUV. Ohio Farm Bureau filed a brief supporting the inclusion of land using conservation practices and land enrolled in federal conservation programs in CAUV.



KEEPING AN EYE ON ELECTRICITY RATES

In response to more than 1,000 complaints filed about increased rates, including comments from Ohio Farm Bureau, the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio rejected American Electric Power's electric security plan, which had raised rates for farms, small businesses and residential energy consumers.

New opportunities for meat producers

This year, Ohio was the first state to join the interstate meat shipment program created by the 2008 Farm Bill. Ohio Farm Bureau had long been advocating for the program, which for the first time provides an opportunity for state-inspected meat and poultry processors to ship their products across state lines, helping these small businesses access new markets.



Ohio's Livestock Care Standards



In late 2011, animal care standards issued by the Ohio Livestock Care Standards board went into effect. Ohio Farm Bureau remains engaged with the board to ensure farmers' interests are being represented along with all Ohioans. The successful implementation of the board is a hard won victory for many Farm Bureau members who advocated for a more comprehensive discussion of animal care policy.



The Clintonville Farmers' Market used a foundation grant in its effort to increase access to fresh, nutritionally dense food.

Photo courtesy of the Clintonville Farmers' Market

Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation

The Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation continues to develop programs helping smaller, community-based groups and awarded \$29,000 in Agricultural Action and Awareness Grants in 2012. The competitively awarded grants support programs and projects focusing on agricultural education and ecological and/or economic development.

Moser Scholars

Ohio Farm Bureau sponsored an event in which the food and farm community raised nearly \$900,000 to support students in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The event was the first step in a \$5 million fundraising effort to support the newly launched Moser Scholars Program, which celebrates the accomplishments of longtime dean Bobby Moser and his wife Pat.

Valuable Resources

Being a member of Ohio Farm Bureau gives you access to knowledge, resources and opportunities. Here are some ways Ohio Farm Bureau worked to be a resource for members this year.



Helping you help yourself

Ohio Farm Bureau provided information to thousands of Farm Bureau members through numerous meetings on oil and gas exploration, the CAUV program and other local issues. Ohio Farm Bureau also developed a new guide that helps farmers navigate truck regulations.

Our Ohio survey

In July, 3,000 Ohio Farm Bureau associate members were surveyed about their opinions of *Our Ohio* magazine. Member responses show that *Our Ohio* is very well received. Highlights of the results show that:

- 88% of members said they read all or most of the issues in a year
- 71% of members said they read all or most of the articles in each issue
- 65% of members said their overall impression of the magazine is excellent
- 53% of members said they have renewed their membership as a result of the magazine



Member Savings

Eric Prysi of Tuscarawas County won this Chevy pickup truck through Ohio Farm Bureau's Every Member Sign A Member promotion, which celebrated the organization's longstanding belief in neighbors talking to neighbors about the value of working together. Every Farm Bureau member has the opportunity to get a \$500 rebate on qualifying GM vehicles as well as discounts on Nationwide Insurance, access to Medical Mutual of Ohio health coverage and much more. Visit <http://ofb.ag/fbsavings> to see the complete list of member savings.



STATE FAIR

This year marked the 12th year for the "Land and Living" exhibit at the Ohio State Fair. Guests visiting the building enjoyed their photo taken for free, checking out the gardening area and flower planting, and the "Agriculture in Our Backyard" county Farm Bureau horticulture contest. The Agriculture is Cool program continued to grow with more than 300 teachers preregistered for the program. Special guests to the exhibit included U.S. Sens. Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown, Congressman Bob Gibbs, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and Ohio First Lady Karen Kasich.



Blog Workshop

Ohio Farm Bureau held its first-ever Farm Blogging Workshop to help Ohio farmers be part of a growing online conversation about food and agriculture. Participants shared insights on why they blog, how to blog, best strategies and tips to engage readers and more during the full-day workshop.

4-H Support

Bob Evans Farms, Inc., Ohio Farm Bureau and JD Equipment partnered to purchase the Grand Champion Barrow at the Ohio State Fair's Sale of Champions. This year's Grand Champion Barrow, raised by Lea Kimley of Clark County, sold for \$35,000. The proceeds of the sale of the barrow went to both Kimley as well as the Youth Reserve Program which provides youth exhibitors with funding for various programs.



TOWN HALL OHIO

Ohio Farm Bureau continued to bring thoughtful conversations about issues facing Ohio to its members through the Town Hall Ohio Radio show. Guests this year included Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Dave Daniels, Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor as well as debates between Senate candidates Sherrod Brown and Josh Mandel. Pictured here is a debate on the Issue 2 campaign on legislative redistricting.

BFN eNews

In an effort to provide more real-time news to members, Buckeye Farm eNews was created this year. It is a weekly e-newsletter sent to more than 12,000 Ohio Farm Bureau members as an exclusive member benefit. Each issue contains timely Farm Bureau news from county, state and national levels. Topics include public policy, membership, events and other important issues

Getting through the drought

As farmers faced one of the worst droughts in memory, Ohio Farm Bureau created a web page that was updated daily with information directly from farmers as well as news outlets and Ohio State University Extension. Ohio Farm Bureau also set up an online poll to collect data from farmers on the impacts of the drought to provide accurate information to the media and policymakers.