

Hello, Ashtabula County! Last Friday, May 11 nearly 1,050 members of the class of 2029 descended on the Ashtabula County Fairgrounds to participate in Ashtabula County's "Ag Day." This program was sponsored by OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau with the goal of educating first graders on where their food comes from and to showcase all the different types of agricultural commodities which are being grown in Ashtabula County. This is the seventh year for this program and I think it gets better every year! During this interactive day, students were able to get up close and personal with farm animals, crops, fruits, and vegetables at interactive stations relating to our county's agriculture. During the day, the 1st graders learned about all the different types of farm animals in our county. They learned about dairy cows, sheep, horses, beef cows, fish, goats, pigs, alpacas, chickens, ducks, and turkeys. Each student was able to make their own home-made butter with the PV FFA Chapter and try their hand at milking a cow. Best of all, every student received a Northeast Ohio Agriculture OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties 11 great chocolate milkshake from the Ashtabula County Holstein Club. I saw a lot of milkshake mustaches! The youth also learned how seeds are planted to give us an array of tasty fruit and vegetables. They learned how these fruits and vegetables are processed into foods that we enjoy. For instance, they learned how cucumbers are transformed into pickles and how tomatoes are turned into ketchup, salsa and spaghetti sauce. They also learned about root crops like carrots and potatoes and how grains are made into bread. They also learned how honeybees are important to agriculture and were able to touch and smell fresh Christmas trees. They also learned how maple syrup is made and how Miscanthus grass can be made into paper products. They also saw how different tractors are used on local farms. Each child was also able to plant a Sweet 'n Neat miniature tomato plant with the Ashtabula County Master Gardeners. These one foot plants will give the kids tasty cherry tomatoes later in the summer. It was fun watching the enthusiasm on the kids' faces as they explore our great industry of agriculture. There were a lot of oohs and ahs heard all over the fairgrounds. It was a wonderful event! This event was a major undertaking by OSU Extension and Farm Bureau. I would like to thank Abbey Averill, OSU Extension Program Assistant, and Mandy Orahod, Organizational Director for Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, for providing the leadership to this event. I am also appreciative of entire planning committee. Special kudos are extended to Stephanie Marous, Suzanne Westlake, Lynn Frank and Ann Marrison who spearheaded the activities in the barnyard and food & environment areas. Thank you! I would also like to thank the over 250 volunteers who donated their time to teach at one of the activity centers, serve as a classroom guide, or work behind the scene to make the day flow smoothly. This program would not have been possible without the help of each of these volunteers. I would like to send out our sincere appreciation to the Lakeside Functional Skills class and their teacher Mrs. Kendzerski. These students were an incredible assistance as they stuffed all the Ag goodie bags for the first Northeast Ohio Agriculture OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties 12 graders prior to the event and were very valuable in helping to man the water stations and getting all the goodies for the kids on the school buses. They were awesome! I would also like to thank the many sponsors of this event. The cost of hosting this event was over \$15,000 and without the support of many this program would not have been possible. For the sixth year, we were able to cover the transportation cost for each school. Our other donors were also important as they donated program materials and dollars to support the day. Thank you to our platinum sponsors: Bill & Ruth Service Foundation, Centerra Co-op, Albert M. Ford Charitable Trust, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, OSU Extension-Ashtabula County and the Ashtabula County Fairboard. Our gold sponsors were: Ashtabula County Holstein Club, John & Nancy Patterson, Katherine S. Riedel – Attorney, Ann Marrison, Erie Bank, Jefferson Garden Club, Saybrook Raider's 4-H

Club, Linda Springer, Red Eagle Distillery, Western Reserve Animal Clinic, and Wright Farms, LTD Our silver sponsors included: Andover Bank, Ashtabula County Market Animal Committee, Ashtabula County Township Association, Ashtabula County Commissioners, Barb Schaab, Ashtabula County Recorder, Bortnick Tractor Sales, Bossy's Way – The Zaebst Families, COBA Select Sires, Inc., Farm Credit Mid-America, Grand River Cellar Winery & Restaurant, Grand Valley FFA Chapter, Crosswinds Grille at the Lakehouse Inn, Larry & Cassie Korland, Capri Cafaro and Tony & Sue Stocker. Our bronze sponsors were: ARMS Trucking Company, Ashtabula County Beekeepers Association, Ashtabula County Prosecutor Nick Iarocci, American Legion Post 151 – Conneaut, Ashtabula County Soil & Water Conservation District, Bissell Maple Farm, Robin & Debbie Boggs & family, Brant's Apple Orchard, Butler's Lots-A-Leche-Dairy Farm, Cherry Valley Slaughtering & Processing, Comp Dairy Farm, Debonne Vineyards & Debevc Frms, Countryside Vet Clinic, Roger & Shirley Corlett, Easton Culligan, Eddie's Grill & The Sezon Family, Ferrante Winery, Debbie Friedstrom, Brian & Jean Forman, Honey Hollow Herbs, Tracey L. Housel, John & Judy Kampf, The Jefferson Milling Company, Jefferson Grange #1311, Joe & Encie Moroski, The Ohana Farm, Piper Processing, Northeast Ohio Agriculture OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties 13 Pat & Ralph Pankowski, Roll'N B Cowboy Café, Springer Dairy Farm, Valley Feed Mill, Inc, SCI Company, Sherrie Tersigni, and Dan Whitmire Our friends of ag day sponsors were: Bob & Kristen Brown, Cheryle Chiamonte, Covered Bridge Gardens, Geauga Credit Union Inc., Mike & Wendy Gruskiewicz, Mary Howe, Ruth Anne Jesionowski, Kalas Dairy Farm, Kassay's Greenhouse, Manner's Christmas Tree Farm, Mechling's Maple Farm, Pymatuning Valley Primary PTO Inc., Pymatuning Valley FFA Chapter, Sheffield Star Grange #1610, Tree Tyme Nursery Inc. and Larry & Donniella Winchell. We are already planning for next year's event. We welcome feedback from anyone who participated in this year's program and are looking for committee members to serve on the 2019 planning committee. We are so excited on how this program helps open agriculture world to our county's youth! If you are interested in helping with next year's program, please contact Abbey Averill at 440-576-9008. To close today's column I would like to share a quote from Kailash Satyarthi who stated, "The power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people." Have a good and safe day!