



Community Council Newsletter

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Hello Everyone,

Current weather conditions are in the news. Let's take a minute to look at an issue that's impacting a lot of Farm Bureau members, our friends and neighbors.

Ohio Farm Service Agency Requests Disaster Declarations

As we publish this edition, the latest USDA-NASS crop progress numbers for Ohio show only half of the state's corn planted and just over 30% of soybeans sowed. Although those figures lag behind every other corn and soybean growing state in the U.S., there are parts of northwest and northeast Ohio that are well behind the state averages.

After meeting with farmers in the most impacted areas of the state and after collecting cropping data, gathering planting history and taking photos of the wide-ranging acres of unplanted fields, Ohio FSA is officially requesting USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue to make Disaster Declarations a number of counties across Ohio.

"This development speaks to how serious of a situation we're seeing with the lack of planting progress in Ohio," said Jack Irvin, senior director of state and national affairs with Ohio Farm Bureau. "Often Disaster Declarations aren't even considered until harvest time to see just how the planting and growing season transpired. Obviously you won't have a crop if you can't get the seeds planted, and that is the case for many of our members."

OFBF is strongly requesting farmers who are having difficulty planting their 2019 crops share their situation with the county FSA office as soon as possible. The information provided will assist them in determining if a Disaster Declaration request would be applicable for that county.

More information on Farm's Bureau's work on the issue can be found at:

OFBF Website – Ohio FSA Requests Disaster Declarations: <https://ofbf.org/2019/06/14/ohio-fsa-requests-disaster-declarations/>

The enclosed packet has two new discussion guides; both feature issues briefings directly from American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) policy. These topics that should give your group a few options for their meetings into late summer. Topics for discussion include:

Neonicotinoids & Pollinators

Developments over the last two decades have drawn increased attention on the health of managed honey bees and how this may relate to pesticide use. Some activists have used reported honey bee

declines to target pesticides (in particular a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids) as the principal cause of the decline in honey bees. They have called on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to restrict neonicotinoids and/or suspend their registration under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

Insect pollination is a vital component of U.S. agriculture. Economically, honey bees contribute more than an estimated \$15 billion to the agricultural economy. At the same time, farmers depend on pesticides to help produce their crops efficiently and economically. Where can farmers “strike a balance” when it comes to this issue?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *OFBF Website – In Full Buzz: Young Beekeeper Spreads Word about Pollination:* Williams County Farm Bureau member, Bethany Carlson operates Liberty Honey, a successful beekeeping business. Discover more about its challenges and rewards by visiting: <https://ofbf.org/2016/08/23/full-buzz-young-beekeeper-spreads-word-pollination/>
- *ScienceDirect Website - Neonicotinoids, Bee Disorders and the Sustainability of Pollinator Services:* In less than 20 years, neonicotinoids have become the most widely used class of insecticides with a global market share of more than 25%. A transition to pollinator-friendly alternatives to neonicotinoids is urgently needed. Continue reading about the issue at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877343513000493>
- *Ontario National Post Website – The Bees are Dying, but can we Really Blame Neonicotinoid Pesticides for a Global Epidemic:* Ontario is the first North American jurisdiction to heavily restrict the pesticide’s use. One expert explains what’s wrong with bees and why there’s no quick fix. More information at: <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/the-bees-are-dying-but-can-we-really-blame-neonicotinoid-pesticides-for-a-global-epidemic>

National Monuments, Parks and Federal Lands

National Monument designations, under the Antiquities Act of 1906, are meant to ensure the proper care and management of historic landmarks and other objects of historic or scientific interest. In recent decades, Presidents of the United States from both parties have used the power of the Act that some say goes beyond the scale that Congress originally intended.

What ramifications do you see if the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and/or the Wayne National Forest were given National Monument status? What does your group see as potential impacts, positive or negative, on agriculture and local communities in the area?

Additional information/materials on this subject:

- *OFBF Website – Thousands Flock to Spicy Lamb Farm:* Spicy Lamb Farm is located in the 33,000-acre Cuyahoga Valley National Park. In 2007 Laura Minning signed a 60-year lease on an old farmstead through the Countryside Initiative, a program that preserves and protects the rural landscape and century-old buildings in the park. The program has about a dozen farms, which draw more than 100,000 people into the park each year. Find out more about Laura Minning and the farm at: <https://ofbf.org/2016/11/03/thousands-flock-spicy-lamb-farm/>
- *National Park Service Website - Cuyahoga Valley National Park:* Though a short distance from the urban areas of Cleveland and Akron, Cuyahoga Valley National Park seems worlds away. The park is a refuge for native plants and wildlife, and provides routes of discovery for visitors. The

winding Cuyahoga River gives way to deep forests, rolling hills, and open farmlands. Find out more at: <https://www.nps.gov/cuva/index.htm>

- *USDA Forest Service Website – Wayne National Forest:* The Wayne National Forest is a patchwork of public land that covers over a quarter million acres of Appalachian foothills of southeastern Ohio. The originally forested land was cleared for agricultural and lumbering use in the late 18th and 19th century, but years of poor timbering and agricultural practices led to severe erosion and poor soil composition. The Wayne National Forest started as part of a reforestation program.

The area is not a national park under the National Park Service; but managed by the USDA – Forest Service. The agency’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Forest, divided into three units, is managed out of two Ranger District offices located in Nelsonville and Ironton, with a field office in Marietta. More Information can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/wayne/>

Remember, you are not limited to these materials - Feel free to discuss additional topics and issues generated from the local newspaper, other publications and/or key events happening in your neighborhood. Additional information on possible discussion topics and resources can be found on the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation website at <https://ofbf.org/2015/11/23/what-are-community-councils/>

Keep in Touch with Farm Bureau

Need some additional help? Contact your county Farm Bureau office for assistance. The council rosters, meeting summary sheets and activity sheets can be found at <https://ofbf.org/tag/community-councils/>. If you have any other questions contact Amy Hurst via e-mail at ahurst@ofbf.org or by phone at 614.246.8262. Remember to send your council meeting forms and correspondence directly to your county Farm Bureau.

Many of Farm Bureau’s action plans started with conversation around a kitchen table, living room or front porch; lively discussion continues to develop using web applications, too. Your participation as a community council member makes sure that our organization continues to focus on critical issues, create better policy and helps people work together to get things done.

We look forward to visiting with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DALE R. ARNOLD" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dale Arnold
Director, Energy, Utility & Local Government Policy
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation



Neonicotinoids & Pollinators

AFBF Issues Briefing

Developments over the last two decades have drawn increased attention to the health of managed honey bees and how this may relate to pesticide use. Some activists have used reported honey bee declines to target pesticides (in particular a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids) as the principal cause of the decline in honey bees. They have called on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to restrict neonicotinoids or ban them outright. In the past, federal legislation has been introduced to require EPA to suspend the registration of certain neonicotinoid pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and some states have considered similar measures. In May 2015, the President's Pollinator Health Task Force, co-chaired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and EPA, issued its final report that contained three principal recommendations: (1) reduce overwintering losses of managed honey bees to no more than 15 percent in 10 years; (2) increase the population of the Eastern monarch butterfly to 225 million by the year 2020; and (3) restore or enhance 7 million acres of pollinator habitat over the next five years. The report also included actions EPA may undertake on neonicotinoid pesticides.

Policy Background

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a phenomenon in which otherwise healthy hives apparently suffer a precipitate and fatal loss of adult bees, leading to the death of the hive, first surfaced over a decade ago. While the causes of CCD have not been clearly identified, there are documented instances—some dating to over a century ago—in which honey bee hives have faced sudden, nearly inexplicable losses. According to USDA: "The scientific literature has several mentions of honey bee disappearances—in the 1880s, the 1920s, and the 1960s. While the descriptions sound similar to CCD, there is no way to know for sure if those problems were caused by the same agents as CCD. There have also been unusual colony losses before. In 1903, in the Cache Valley in Utah, 2,000 colonies were lost to an unknown 'disappearing disease' after a 'hard winter and a cold spring.' More recently, in 1995-96, Pennsylvania beekeepers lost 53 percent of their colonies without a specific identifiable cause."

One factor that is an undeniable threat to colony health is the Varro mite (*Varro Destructor*). This parasite, which occurs worldwide and was first discovered in the U.S. in the late 1980s, can devastate bee hives. Not long after Varro came to the U.S., in the 1990s, farmers began to use a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids. This group of pesticides are predominantly used as a treatment for seeds and are widely regarded as a vast improvement over previous chemical formulations. US EPA, took additional steps to ensure that label directions governing their use take into account the potential impact on bees.

Other factors contributing to stresses on honey bees include habitat loss, other pathogens and viruses, and beekeeping practices. For instance, it is estimated that roughly 1.6 million colonies of honey bees are used each year to pollinate the California almond crop, an amount totaling almost 60 percent of all U.S. beehives. These hives can be trucked to California from as far away as Texas or even greater distances, after which they may be used to pollinate other crops in other states. USDA annually reports on overwintering losses, which can vary.

According to USDA, however, beekeepers with more than five colonies reported Varro mites as the leading stressor affecting colonies.

Insect pollination is a vital component of U.S. agriculture, with 90 or more crops dependent on insect pollination. Economically, honey bees contribute more than an estimated \$15 billion to the agricultural economy. At the same time, farmers depend on pesticides to help produce their crops efficiently and economically. Treated seeds have helped reduce the use of older, less safe chemical formulations. Additionally, foliar applications of certain neonicotinoids are indispensable for combatting citrus greening, a devastating disease that is an ongoing threat to the citrus industry. Without neonicotinoids, it would be nearly impossible for citrus growers to protect crops. For other crops as well, neonicotinoids are important crop protection tools.

The causes of CCD and honey bee decline have not been identified, and it is clear that many factors beyond pesticides are involved. A wide range of stakeholders—beekeepers, federal and state regulators, farmers and ranchers, agricultural producers, academic researchers—are all engaged in the effort to identify the causes of honey bee decline and to find a solution.

AFBF Policy

AFBF supports the responsible use of pesticides and opposes a ban on neonicotinoids. We support the development of state-based pollinator plans and adherence to EPA pesticide labels in the application of pesticides. Cooperative, constructive efforts among federal and state regulators, beekeepers and other agricultural producers, coupled with ongoing research by USDA, offers the most promising means of finding an answer to this problem.

OFBF Efforts

OFBF has been active supporting additional pollinator habitat. As solar farms are established throughout the state, the organization has worked with the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) and energy developers to negotiate specific program stipulations and orders establishing pollinator plantings in every project statewide. Similar agreements are established on pipeline right-of-way agreements. These programs will provide several thousand additional habitat acres for honey bees and other pollinators over the next few years.

Discussion Questions

1. *You're a farmer, you must know something about this...* How many of your council members have been approached by a friend, neighbor or community member about honey bee, Monarch butterfly and other valuable pollinator insect population trends? Do the questions stem from the person wanting some additional information/insight you might be able to provide, or in some way do they feel you have some responsibility for impacting (positive or negative) the issue?
2. What farming and agribusiness operations in your area have a link to pollinator activity as a key factor for the success of their operation? Do they have bee hives and pollinator friendly habitat on site? Do they rent or contract placement of bees on their property?
3. Given agriculture's need for effective pest management tools and pollinators for crop production, what type of "balance" would you recommend in maintaining effective farm management?
4. Besides the energy development projects detailed above, what other land use/redevelopment projects in your neighborhood could be used to propagate additional pollinator friendly plants and consequent habitat? What would be the impact (positive or negative) on local agriculture?



National Monuments, Parks and Federal Lands

AFBF Issues Briefing

For more than a century, the President of the United States has had the power to unilaterally designate federal lands as a National Monument without the consent of Congress, local governments or affected citizens. National Monument designations, under the Antiquities Act of 1906, are meant to ensure the proper care and management of historic landmarks and other objects of historic or scientific interest. The Act also states that the monuments shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects.

In recent decades, presidents from both parties have used the power of the Act to designate hundreds of thousands of acres, and in some cases millions of acres, at a time. This scale of designation goes far beyond the executive authority that Congress originally intended. Such abuse restricts or even prohibits economic opportunity and removes decision making from the states and private citizens. These designations have affected water rights, grazing rights and access to state and private lands.

Policy Background

Use of the Antiquities Act for large tract designation does not provide reasonable notice to the public, and has gone well beyond Congress' original intent to designate the smallest portion of land needed to protect certain objects of genuine historic and scientific interest. Because there is no requirement to determine what the impact of the designation would be on communities and the local economy, these executive actions can lead, and in fact have led, to devastating reductions in economic activity and the loss of jobs in resource-dependent communities.

While many monuments have been quite small, several presidents have established large monuments, some reaching into the millions of acres. IN the latter part of the 20th century, several large marine monuments were designated, all in the millions of acres range, too.

While there are no National Monument designations in Ohio, the federal government has created the Cuyahoga Valley National Park along the Cuyahoga River between Akron and Cleveland. The National Park Service manages over 32,000 acres, as well as coordinates programs and development activities in cooperation with city park districts and private businesses.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) manages the Wayne National Forest. Located in parts of twelve southern Ohio Counties, the area covers over 240,000 acres under direct federal ownership and has proclamation rights over an additional 832,000 privately owned aces that may be obtained through potential landowner sales in the future.

The National Forests are managed lands focusing on reforestation, natural resource management and soil & water conservation. While many areas accommodate recreational opportunities, they are working ground. USDA staff work with state counterparts and private landowners to develop projects that compliment effective agriculture and minerals resource management in the region.

AFBF Policy

Farm Bureau urges the executive branch to discontinue designation of any national monument under the Antiquities Act until the proposal is first vetted and approved by Congress, landowners and local governments affected by these decisions. The Antiquities Act should be amended to revoke the executive branch's ability to designate national monuments; giving Congress, with the approval of state and local governments, the ability to make this designation.

Farm Bureau supports the multiple-use concept of federal lands, recognizing that definable land areas have dominant-use capability, which should be recognized with the concept of multiple uses without the total exclusion of other uses.

OFBF Policy

We encourage USDA to stay with its 10-year timber harvesting plan, recognize its responsibilities to maintain line fences and work with adjoining landowners to provide natural resources and related economic benefits to local communities. The Wayne National Forest should utilize funds for development of recreational facilities instead of acquisition of additional land.

Discussion Questions

1. How familiar are your council members with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and/or the Wayne National Forest in Ohio? What benefits and/or challenges do you see (environmental, socioeconomic, aesthetic etc.) in operating and maintaining these areas? What should be agriculture's leadership role in effective local management?
2. What other areas of Ohio having significant environmental, socioeconomic and/or aesthetic value could be considered for some type of federal land status?
3. What ramifications do you see if the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and/or the Wayne National Forest were given National Monument status? What does your group see as potential impacts, positive or negative, on agriculture and local communities in the area?
4. While some community stakeholders see some form of federal land designation as an opportunity to enhance conservation and manage effective development, others see it as a way to wield stricter control over an area. How do you find a balance between the two points of view?