

## Field Day Podcast Ep. 28 Carbon 101 with Julia Brown.mp3

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:00:01] Welcome to Episode 28 of the Field Day podcast brought to you by the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, I am your host, Jordan Hoewischer, director of water quality and research with Farm Bureau. Today we are talking about carbon. Carbon 101. So we're going to go through the journey together of learning about all things carbon sequestration and what farmers can do to pull carbon out of the atmosphere and put it into the ground permanently. This will be episode one of a series of interviews. Today we have Julia Brown from the Ohio Soybean Association. Ohio Soybean has put together a pretty comprehensive website on all the different programming and all the different facts and questions that are out there about carbon. It's a very fluid topic right now. If you're involved with agriculture, it's something that you probably hear every day. You know, some publication somewhere, some radio show, some article every day is telling you something about carbon. So we're going to kind of go through the paces here. We're going to talk about some of the questions that pop up, some of the facts that pop up and just try to work our way through it. It's something that I hope to at least provide some sort of baseline of information for the audience and, you know, kind of bring us all together.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:01:15] At the same time. I've been tasked Farm Bureau to learn more about it and to be our lead person on carbon. So this is you experiencing the journey that I'm going through as well. So I'm going to give you a brief information on what and why we are doing this. And then we're just going to go through some questions and I'll throw some answers out there. The series of episodes that follow this will be with different people from different companies that provide programming for carbon sequestration and payments to farmers. So some of these answers may be repeated during that. Or maybe you'll find there's answers that are different, depending on which company that you talk to. And that's all part of this process, is learning who's out there, what are they paying? What does the program entail and what the expectations are from the farmer and how and for how long, which is a big, big key. So we're going to get started with just going through a bunch of information and then we will roll into an interview with Julia from Soybean and go from there. Enjoy.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:02:22] All right, well, we'll get started here. Well, you're just stuck with me for the moment, so we'll level set on a little bit of my background. Obviously, you know that I work for Farm Bureau. My undergraduate degree was in turf grass science. So I was studying to be a golf course manager or just something adjacent to agriculture. I grew up on a hog farm in western Ohio and thought I would, you know, just go in some sort of direction, some sort of excuse to go to Ohio State. And major in something close to agriculture, minored in animal science, because I was really interested in, you know, hog production and things like that from growing up. And then I got a job at Scotts Miracle-Gro and Marysville as a research specialist there, kind of developing products and then got my master's while I was there from the University of Illinois and then found my way to Farm Bureau. So kind of run the gamut of, you know, gardening and lawn products and now, you know, with farming. So that's a little bit of my background.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:03:23] And, you know, we've primarily been focused on water quality with me here at Farm Bureau. And now it's kind of had that with an addition of carbon sequestration, climate change, just trying to kind of wrap our hands and our heads around all the things that are going on. And so that's kind of what we're going to do today is kick off, what's carbon, what's carbon sequestration, what's out there for farmers. So I guess the biggest thing is why carbon. Carbon refers to carbon dioxide, which is the most common greenhouse gas emitted by human activity. So it's the one that has been

determined that we have the most effect on. And so it traps the heat in the atmosphere. So if you remember from early July, late June, where there was you know, they called it a heat dome that was dropped over the Pacific Northwest where we had temperatures of 110, 115 that's contributed to widely contributed, I guess, to carbon in the atmosphere. So it kind of puts a cap on the atmosphere where heat doesn't escape. I often use the anecdote. You know, it's not scientific. This is this is my 'when I was young' story. But I remember going to the state fair in August. You know, you would have those 80, 90, 100 degree days. And then in the morning you'd be wearing a sweatshirt because it was, you know, 58 degrees, 60 degrees. And I really don't feel like you have that as much anymore. You know, we wake up with overnight temperatures in, you know, the low 70s a lot of times, and you wake up and it's already kind of stifling. It's humid, it's muggy. And it's not even a day where it's going to rain or it did rain. It's just kind of the way it is sometimes. And so I think that can be contributed to that carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. And that's a big deal.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:05:02] You know, we talk about global warming and it's really mistaken for high temperatures. It's not just like the searing heat all the time, but it's the average temperature. It's that those higher overnight low temperatures that are really pulling the average up. So when it's 97 degrees during the day and it doesn't dip below 70, a lot of things happen. You know, obviously plants in our ecosystem really suffer from that or at least have to evolve to adapt to that type of change. Disease is more prevalent and crops, you may have a little bit more activity, but that's usually a time for the plants to rest and recover and unfurl their leaves and take in the dew or whatever else to kind of survive. And that's not really that respite. It's not there as much as it used to be. And so it's just something to watch out for. But farming plays a huge role. That CO<sub>2</sub> is naturally stored or sequestered into the biomass and the soil that we are active on and then tilling that soil or removing plants that store carbon in the tissues, then release that carbon back into the atmosphere. And so a lot of things that you'll see that we're focused on here is no tillage and keeping things in the ground as much as possible.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:06:20] What role does ag play in all of this? Well, it's actually a relatively young sector in carbon markets. Farmers play a role in carbon sequestration through the management of their farm. The few practices that may sequester carbon or cover crops, reduce tillage or no tillage, precision nutrient management. And I'm sure there's going to be more that emerge over time. A carbon market allows individuals and companies to invest in the environmental projects that reduce carbon emissions. So there's these back and forth between companies that want to offset some of the things that they're doing that maybe are releasing carbon in the atmosphere and they want to pay farmers then to put it back into the ground for farmers. These programs facilitate the sale of the carbon credits that the farmers can generate. And so it's a rare opportunity for us to be able to maybe do the same things that we've been doing and get paid for it. Or maybe this allows a little bit of money to actually pay for the things you've always wanted to do, like maybe switching to no-till. So that's just something to take of note. As you know, maybe using this, you know, say you don't believe in climate change, maybe you don't really understand this. It's still a market that you can maybe take advantage of to push your farm forward into the next stage.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:07:39] So what type of programs are out there? We're going to talk about a handful of programs over time. Everyone's going to be different. There's ones that are coming at us from every different angle. So usually you have a broker or a group that's kind of facilitating the program. And then above them is a bigger company that has dictated what they want. You know, say it's Google or Apple or Amazon or whoever says,

hey, we want to buy some credits. We want them to do X, Y and Z and be for X, Y and Z. And that's kind of what dictates the program. One of the questions is, can you stack programs with other programs that compensate for conservation practices? Generally not. Say you're in H2Ohio and/or EQIP and a carbon program comes and says, hey, we want to pay you for the no-till that you're being paid for through another program, then that's usually not the case. What is the minimum field size or acreage that's available to participate? Again, it's dictated by the program. That's probably one of the annoying things that you'll hear from me through this whole thing is it depends on the program. I'll have to say that a lot, because that's truthfully what's going on. Contract length is generally, some years. It's not year to year all the time. There's some five year. There's some 20 year. But those will be kind of explained through each program and what's needed to facilitate that program.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:09:11] One of the questions is, can you remove a field from the program and go back later? Can I drop out of the program entirely? Again, that depends on the program. Generally, the rule of thumb is they want fields to be enrolled in the program and then be consistently managed the way that they signed up for the period of the contract. So I would not enroll myself into a program if you are not quite sure how that field's going to be managed in the future.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:09:40] Does it matter if you're not the landowner? What happens if the land ownership changes hands? A lot of times they just want that management practice to continue. So if you feel like you're not in a secure spot with the kind of the decision rights of that farm, then maybe you shouldn't be enrolled in the program. But if you're pretty secure or you have a good relationship with the landowner, then I think that shouldn't be a problem to get that into the field.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:10:06] One question is, is there a limit to the number of credits per acre? That'll be determined by the type of practice that you're enrolling in and then just the type of performance that your field is having in that and then the way that they measure it.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:10:20] What is the cost to the farmer? Will you need to invest in new technology or platforms? Possibly. The new technologies is definitely something that you may have to pay for. Again, maybe it's something that you've been doing in the past or have been doing and you're just getting paid for it. But the cost to you, to the farmer is going to be dependent on the practice. It's going to be dependent on how far you need to come from, where you are on that new practice that's storing carbon.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:10:46] How is carbon measured? Will the farmer have to pay for verification or the carbon program cover those costs? So carbon is measured either by the amount of carbon stored per acre or they may just pay by acre to just say, OK, we understand that if you're doing this on this acre, then it's worth this much. There will be verification. There are some data programs and stuff that you will have to put information in. They will verify. But again, it depends on the project. It depends on the parameters of the program that you've enrolled in.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:11:27] What happens if I'm not able to implement the new practice due to the weather or due to any other circumstances? Obviously these programs are understandably in partnership with Mother Nature. I'm not sure what the results would be, but I would assume there's some flexibility there to get practices down or maybe there'll be a delay in that payment or delay in the start of that contract.

**Jordan Hoewischer [00:11:52]** Are any other ecosystem services broken by the companies, such as water quality credits? You will find some credits that are stacking programs that this isn't their first foray into conservation. So you may see that some companies have other programs that you can attach to your farms so that will be something to keep an eye on. Probably one of the bigger things, this next topic is, what data is needed, how much recordkeeping, will I have to do? How often does the data need to be reported? That's a big deal. There needs to be verification. There needs to be a baseline of where that field was and where it's going. And there will be some data that's necessary to kind of get into the program and then verify that you're doing what you're saying you're going to do. So if you're a little leery about data collection or giving up soil test information, then maybe these aren't for you or if you have long-term soil testing information and you understand what's going on in each acre, then I think you'll be well prepared to kind of jump right in.

**Jordan Hoewischer [00:12:59]** Who owns the data and what can the aggregator or data manager do with your data? These companies aren't out to sell your data. They obviously understand that it's a sensitive topic for farmers. But that's something you have to make sure that's not in your contract or is in your contract to make sure that your data is secure. It's not being sent out anywhere else. And then you go from there. And again, one of the questions is, will they share my data with anyone? You know, up to them, but you would hope that they would be able to make it secure so no one else has any access to it.

**Jordan Hoewischer [00:13:35]** What type of practices qualify is the next section here. Which practices do you need to implement in your fields to be eligible for enrollment? Like we said before, it's going to be determined by the program. But mostly it's which way can you get carbon in the ground undisturbed for a long period of time. So no-till, cover crops, anything that you can get to make sure that that the biomass and the carbon that's in the ground is undisturbed. How long will you need to adopt or maintain these practices again? Could be yearly. Could be five years. Could be 20 years. So it just depends on which project that you determine. If you're already doing those practices in the field, will the same fields be eligible? There's the rare instance where there's a look back period, you know, or like there's a we'll pay you for what you've done the previous five years or so. But most of it is forward focusing. So it's how can we change from this baseline soil test information or this baseline practice and then add to it, get practices that were conventionally tilled into no till. And so unfortunately, there's not as much out there for those who have been doing it for a long period of time. It's not to say that you should till your field up and then start over. But I think there is some opportunity there for those who've been doing it for a long time. But this is really just trying to get people into the market, into doing those types of practices.

**Jordan Hoewischer [00:15:09]** What specific criteria being verified to show performance of practices. So, again, there's going to be that data collection. There's programs that you put your information in that will spit out what you are doing on that field. What's your what's your carbon sequestration number, all that stuff. So there's programs that are available for them to verify the effect of the practices that you put on your field.

**Jordan Hoewischer [00:15:32]** What does payments look like? So what is the total amount paid? The portion that you get and the portion that the aggregation data manager gets? I mean, obviously in any of these situations, the aggregator is the one that's trying to siphon off money for their administrative fees and just trying to continue to provide programing. But again, it's all depending on the market that you go into or the program you

sign up for. You know, in this market, they're definitely going to continue to go up and up. The projects that we're doing are pretty new. And as the industry matures and there's more activity, I think we'll see a higher market for those carbon credits. You'll see in one of the interviews later on from one of the companies, I think it was Nory said that they actually will buy back your credit if you want to put it back on the market and find a higher price or do something different. Their only concern is that they just want you to be a part of storing carbon. So I thought that was kind of cool.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:16:38] How I know the amount carbon credits are selling for? Again, there's going to be a contract with the standard of what you've signed up for. Again, it's going to be a volatile market there for a while. And so, you might be able to get more from it later on. But I think you'll see again that the market matures. How will payments for carbon sequestration be made, dollars or other currency? I think generally dollars. I don't think we'll get into anything else. You know, any other denominations are like Bitcoin or anything like that.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:17:09] Payment scheduling The payment schedule is generally determined by the program like anything else. But I would imagine there'll be some upfront and then some money may be paid upon at certain stages.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:17:25] Some companies are using holdbacks or a percentage taken off the top to cover their role in the process. Are there any other fees for this program? You may have some data verification fees. It just depends on the program and depends on what they're asking. The aggregators are going to take some money off the top. It's just not a one for one. But you will figure that process out. You know, it's kind of the wild, wild west in the carbon world. And I think that's the role of Farm Bureau. That's the role of your other commodity organizations, is to give you the information, make sure that you're not getting played by somebody who's doing something nefarious. Very similar to the oil and gas industry, you want to make sure that you're prepared when that white truck comes down the lane to ask you to sign on the dotted line, that you're prepared with all the questions that you need. You should never sign a contract on the hood of the truck, the gravel farmyard. You should make sure that you take that information back to a lawyer or somebody you trust and go from there.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:18:27] So that's some of the questions that I have rattled off. I'm sure you guys will have more as you listen to the future episodes. We will complete this episode with my interview with Julia Brown from soybean. And then we'll go from there.

**Julia Brown** [00:18:51] So my name is Julia Brown and the communications manager for the Ohio Soybean Council. I grew up in Sunbury, in Delaware County, not on a farm. I make my really terrible joke that my literal ag background is the soybean field that is behind my parents' house. But didn't grow up in farming, kind of ended up in agriculture kind of on a whim. But I've definitely enjoyed it. I love working for farmers. I've drank the Kool-Aid I'm in now, but I love it. Every day is different and I really enjoy it now.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:19:24] It's great. And, you know, we were talking before the show and I'm the inverse of you, so it's always fun to meet someone not of your age, but also your background, because I think, you know, just dealing with different farmers and different things from your vantage point is pretty interesting because your level of knowledge of farmers and who they were and the make up of our industry was probably pretty low.

**Julia Brown** [00:19:47] Yeah, definitely. I mean, you know, I had this perception of farming is like the red barn and the guy in the overalls with the pitchfork. So I definitely had no idea how technologically advanced farming was and how much it affects Ohio's economy and how much it affects the world economy. I really had no understanding of any of that. So it's been really cool to learn.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:20:08] So now as you keep learning more about farming, you're going to, as you're watching TV shows and movies, you'll be able to roll your eyes along with us.

**Julia Brown** [00:20:16] Yeah, exactly. Like I always joke, I probably annoy my roommate. I come home every day with a new ag fact. So I'm spreading the knowledge. I'm gathering disciples for agriculture now.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:20:30] It's funny. So I guess I wanted to bring you on today as part of a kind of a Carbon 101 episode. Let's talk about what Ohio Soybean is doing for the carbon market, the carbon topic. Do you want to give us a runthrough of what you guys have been working on for information on carbon for your members?

**Julia Brown** [00:20:47] Sure. So start a little bit kind of the history of how this all kind of came about. So back at our March 2021 board meetings, both of our boards, the checkoff and the association, decided to form a joint committee on carbon. You know, they said this is a brand new thing. There's not a lot of information out there about it. We want to make sure that our farmers know what's going on. So they had some members from both boards come together. And some of the direction we got as staff from that joint committee was we need to create a resource for farmers that has kind of this basic information where farmers can go start to learn about these carbon markets, not be influenced, but really just get that basic knowledge and start to compare and contrast these different programs. Because what we came to find out is every single program is totally different. You know, they all have different ways of paying and they all have different ways of measuring the outcomes and they all have different ways that they're going to use your data. So we really wanted to create kind of a basic resource that farmers could go to. So that's what we did.

**Julia Brown** [00:21:49] We made a website where farmers can go. So that's [soyohio.org/carbon](http://soyohio.org/carbon) markets. And again, like I said, we just want to get that basic information. So we've got kind of a glossary of terms. There were things that we ran into as staff as we were researching. We had no idea, what does additionality mean? What actually is a carbon credit, that kind of stuff. Then we sort of moved into our FAQ which were questions that we felt comfortable answering as not the carbon experts, but through our research, some questions that we felt comfortable answering. We've got another section about the questions that we think farmers need to ask before becoming involved in a program. Before signing on that dotted line, here's what you need to know and the questions that you need to ask to protect yourself and your operation. And then finally, we've just got a comparison where farmers can go see the different programs that are available in Ohio, compare all of those different categories that I mentioned earlier and really get a feel for, if you want to participate in a program, which program might make the most sense for your operation?

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:22:50] Yeah, I think with some of my experience talking to other carbon industry folks, I mean, the biggest deal is the information, right? Do the farmers have enough of the information that the programs need in order to get that next step of the program? And so I think this is huge. I mean, I think this is a nice kind of comprehensive

look at the information that a lot of it's probably going to change, you know, and maybe already has changed. But I think that's the biggest deal, is just pointing them in the right direction and say, OK, here's what's there to offer and kind of choose your adventure.

**Julia Brown** [00:23:24] Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's what we discovered as staff. It took us the better part of two weeks, several of our staff members, to put this website together. Farmers don't have that kind of time to devote to going to all these separate websites. So really, let's bring all that information together in one place so that a farmer has kind of a one stop shop to get a basic understanding of what's going on in these programs.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:23:47] Yeah, that's what I was going to ask: what was your main sources? Was just the programs' websites or Ohio State? What did you guys do?

**Julia Brown** [00:23:53] So Ohio State was a great resource for us. I think they'd be a great resource, an additional resource, for farmers to reach out to. Talk to your Extension agent. What do they know about this? They can probably point you to more resources about this. We looked at the individual program websites. The American Soybean Association had actually pulled together a chart similar to this, not quite as comprehensive, but that was a great jumping off point for us as well. But, yeah, a lot of it was just digging through ag news and media and then the individual program websites.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:24:25] So what's the general feel -- put you on the hot spot to represent your whole company about what's the general feel from your board members on carbon, climate, weather change, all that stuff?

**Julia Brown** [00:24:37] Yeah, I think I'll start with carbon. That's a pretty big question. Carbon specifically, I think our board members are really wary. And I think that's representative of some of the other farmers in Ohio. This program is very new. And I think it's had kind of a meteoric rise, right? It went from zero to 60 overnight. So I think they have a lot of questions. How is my data going to be used? What kind of data is going to be collected? How am I going to be paid? Who's buying these credits? Are farmers going to get credit for the work that they are doing? Are these companies, let's say 10 years down the road, if we haven't reversed climate change completely, so to speak, are farmers then going to be blamed for not doing enough or are these companies going to turn around and say, well, we bought the credits. It's the farmer's fault now for not doing enough. So I think they have a lot of questions that still need to be addressed. And then as far as kind of out beyond that, I think a lot of our farmers acknowledge that the climate is changing. You know, we've had super wet springs here of late. I think we've actually been pretty fortunate here in 2021. We haven't had the wetness that we've had in some past springs. But the climate is definitely changing. I mean, we talked to Aaron Wilson at Ohio State and he talks about all the time, give it 50 years and we might not even be farming corn and soybeans in Ohio. We might be farming cotton. The climate might change that much. And again, these are all predictions. But I don't think you can deny and I don't think our farmers would deny that there has definitely been a shift in recent years toward wetter, warmer weather.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:26:25] Yeah, I think it's what we're seeing here, too, at Farm Bureau. I think there's obviously two sides of the climate change debate. There's mitigation and then there's blame or causation, I guess. And so I think those have been really separated quite, quite far now than they used to be. And so I think it's a lot easier for our members to wrap their heads around, OK, the climate has changed. It could be something

that China is doing or it could be something that is naturally happening. Whatever their theories are, I think it's easier for them to wrap around. OK, now we have to mitigate for it. We're going to have warmer overnight temperatures. We're going to have larger rain events, you know, whatever that is. I think it's really made things like carbon markets and concerns about CO2 more logical to incorporate in their regime, I guess.

**Julia Brown** [00:27:18] Right. And I think the really great thing about these carbon programs is that the practices that farmers are being asked to implement are already practices that a lot of farmers here in Ohio are already doing because they kind of line up with the research that we've done around water quality, you know, reduced tillage, cover crops. Those are things that help reduce runoff and keep your soil and your nutrients where they're supposed to be. So it's not only good for sequestering carbon, but it's also good for water quality. So I think that those two aspects can kind of go hand in hand. And I think that is really important for our organization to see that both of those can kind of work together.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:28:00] Yeah, that also allows us to piggyback on the strides we've made with OACI. With having environmental groups and conservation groups combined with commodity groups to do certain programming. And so I think it really helps continue to strengthen that bridge that we've created to make sure that everyone on all sides are speaking the same language and really pushing for the same programs.

**Julia Brown** [00:28:23] Absolutely. And I think before we hit record, you were talking about kind of the data that farmers need to collect in order to participate in some of these carbon programs. You need historic data to kind of prove that when you start implementing these practices, you're actually making a difference in the amount of carbon that's sequestered. So I think, a resource like OACI where you're already doing a lot of record keeping, you're already inputting a lot of historical data, I think goes hand in hand with a carbon program.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:28:56] Do you think Soybean will always be an information provider or do you think you guys have any aspirations to be in the carbon market world at all, or is that too far out?

**Julia Brown** [00:29:09] Well, we need somebody with more technical knowledge than I have for sure. I'm just a communicator. I am not I'm not a scientist. I'm not a researcher. So I think we need somebody with, we would need somebody with more technical knowledge than I have. But I think we'll probably end up leaning pretty heavily on Ohio State. I know this Farm Policy Institute that they're looking to start up is, part of that is looking into carbon markets and supporting farmers as they start to investigate carbon markets. So I think we were maybe out in front just because our farmers wanted us to get some information out there to start helping those early adopters. But I think we'll start to rely pretty heavily on those folks that have more of the business knowledge, more of the technical knowledge than we do on our staff.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:29:59] Yeah, and I think you'll see a lot of farmers jumping across, bridging that gap too to be the next round of consultants. Because I don't think it's hard for farmers to wrap their head around carbon practices. You know, the regime changes or paradigm shifts or whatever in the past have been way more drastic than this. Going from horse to tractor or glyphosate resistant beans where you're literally spraying the thing that everyone told you kills everything else on something that you don't want killed. I mean, that's way more drastic than what we're talking about here and even

transitioning in to no-till and whatever else...this is really something that is the most win-win in terms of regime changes that I can think of in the recent history of farming.

**Julia Brown** [00:30:52] Yeah, and I think something that we would like to see as an organization is maybe some analysis into carbon sequestration over the lifetime of a soybean. So, you know, not only is it about what goes on in the field, but then if that bean goes on to be used in biodiesel, think about how much carbon is not being emitted from using biodiesel. So I think that's something that's maybe phase two of this carbon investigation, I guess you could say that we're doing is, maybe we can look into once it leaves the field, how are soybeans affecting carbon and maybe we can factor that into some of these carbon programs and the benefit to farmers.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:31:36] Yeah, that's really cool, because I think just off the top of my head, I feel like soybean farmers are probably in the best position in terms of all the commodities. Just the fact that no-till is a little easier. You can double crop still after wheat harvest. And I guess that's one of, I'll attribute it to climate change, is wheat just getting off a little bit earlier. And so, we're getting soybeans in the ground a little earlier than we used to, because I remember at least when I was growing up, I'm becoming the old man now. You know, it was like Fourth of July baling straw. And now a lot of times it can be in June for some people, depending on where you're at. So I feel like soybean especially is really in a good spot to kind of capitalize on this movement.

**Julia Brown** [00:32:22] Yeah, definitely. We have those, I think, in the field advantages. And then like I was talking about, you know, kind of some of the off the field advantages of biodiesel, bio-based products, the kind of the green check mark for those. I think soy is really well positioned kind of in this sustainability carbon industry.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:32:42] What do you think the biggest concern is? I mean, I know we've brushed on a couple of things, but is it data privacy? Is it length of program? What do you think the biggest concern is for farmers?

**Julia Brown** [00:32:52] Length of program definitely is a huge one. I think that's something that varies greatly between different programs. I saw one on our chart that has you're in this program for 20 years or there's some others where maybe you're in for 10 years. But as part of your contract, you also have to keep doing those practices 10 years beyond that. I think another concern for farmers is the payment. Is the payment actually worth the time, resources, energy that you're putting into implementing these practices? How many more passes are you going to have to do in order to plant these cover crops? That takes time, energy, money. Is it actually worth it to only get, let's say, \$9 an acre, if that's what it ends up being? So I think that's another huge concern. We've heard from folks. And I don't want to speak out of turn here. Again, I'm not the carbon expert, but we have heard from folks that potentially in the future, once the Wild West kind of calms down a little bit, that carbon could actually be worth more. So I think a lot of our farmers are in kind of a holding pattern right now, sort of a wait and see to see if that number might shoot up and might actually be worth it to implement these practices on their on their farms.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:34:06] Yeah, that's what's cool. I think at least one or two of the programs have a sliding scale or like a buyback program where you can shop your credit to somebody else... Because I think there's other motives in play. These people want to want to make enough money to continue to buy credits. But ultimately, they're in it to put a carbon into the ground. And so if you stay in that practice by getting a bigger number, then so be it. And then they'll use their money to buy the next round. And so I think that's been

really cool to see that there's some flexibility there and not just nope, it's \$20 an acre and it's going to be that way for 10 years. We'll definitely see a sliding scale. And I think that'll help farmers feel like there's a little bit more flexibility for them to come in and kind of move things around a little bit.

**Julia Brown** [00:34:57] Yeah, definitely. I think another concern of are that we've heard in our organizations is this concept of additionality. And for those of you out there listening, if you don't know what additionality is, it's this idea that these have to be new practices that you're implementing. So if you've been no tilling for 20 years, those historic practices might not count in some of these programs. And I think from what I have seen, the longest look back period that they'll have for historic practices is only five years. So if you've been at this, if you if you've been doing these conservation practices for a long time and been, quote unquote, a good actor, a good steward, you're not benefiting from these new programs. So I think that's a big concern for us is moving forward. You know, these farmers that have been at this for a long time, what is the benefit to them? Can we reward them in some way and not just reward these folks that are doing this for the first time? You know, it's great that they're doing it and that they're getting involved, but how can we reward the folks that have been at it for a really long time?

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:36:03] Yeah, that's an interesting question that's come up is the carbon credit shouldn't matter one way or the other. If you're preventing someone from tilling and releasing it or you're encouraging someone to start no tilling, I would say the one that's the most harmful is tilling up a long term no till field.

**Julia Brown** [00:36:23] Yeah, exactly. And I think that's a concern of ours is, you know, these folks that have been at it, let's say we'll take no-till for an example, if you've been at it for 20 years, but you need to implement new practices, does that mean you're going to go out, till your field, turn up all of that carbon just so you can participate in a program like this? We don't want that to, that's going to release more carbon than if you just pay somebody for historic practices so that they don't feel the need to go out until in order to get involved.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:36:51] Yeah, and I'd like to think that, you know, if you have committed the time and the money in no-till that \$20 an acre or whatever is not going to do it. But I think that it is a boogeyman man out there just to a certain degree. But I think it's enough to spark the conversation of how do we continue to keep some of these fields that way? And then another wrinkle I feel like is 50% of the farmland is owned by the person who doesn't farm it. And so how do we work that into an agreement between the farmer and the landowner if they have one at all? And how do you commit to these sometimes fickle relationships? Because it takes a big portion of it out of the pool of potential carbon people. So I think there needs to be more education on that side, too, where you have maybe some sort of agreement like some people have yield shares and splits. So maybe you could do something with programing and conservation because there's just a lot of stuff out there that they can take advantage of.

**Julia Brown** [00:37:50] Yeah, absolutely. And I think something interesting that we have also heard from some of our farmers that they've actually suggested is that enrolling in a program like this might actually make you more attractive to potential, to people you might want to rent from. You can say, well, I'm certified carbon neutral or whatever it is and say, hey, this proves that I'm a good steward. I'm going to take care of your land. I'm a more attractive renter. So I think it's a very complicated conversation when you get into talking about rented land. But I think it could go both ways. You know, I think you'll have

landowners that don't want to participate and don't want their farmers to participate in something like this. Then you might also have landowners who say, well, yeah, you know, you're doing the right thing. You're keeping my soil in place. You're doing right by the earth. That makes you a more attractive renter to me. So it'll be really interesting to see how that plays out.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:38:48] I think it's an interesting conversation. Well, is there anything that I've missed that you think is just. Burning a hole from your pocket or

**Julia Brown** [00:38:56] I don't think so. I encourage farmers to do your own research. Again, feel free to check out our website: [soyohio.org/carbonmarkets](http://soyohio.org/carbonmarkets). But don't let that be the only research that you do. Like I said, we definitely are not the experts, but we are the aggregators. And I encourage you, talk to your CCA, talk to your Extension agent. Talk to some of those other folks who are involved in this. Talk to your soil and water folks. Get all of the information that you can so that whenever, if or when you do decide to get involved in a program like this, you can do so confidently.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:39:32] That's great. That's a good, good thing to end on. Thanks for coming.

**Julia Brown** [00:39:36] Yeah. Thanks for having me.

**Jordan Hoewischer** [00:39:38] And that was Julia Brown from the Ohio Soybean Association. Thank you for following along with my carbon one on one. I'm sure as these future episodes rattle off, you'll learn more and more from the sources themselves as I interview them. But if you have any questions or suggestions for topics, please email me at JHC WASC H.E.R of Big. And if you have any questions about what Ohio Farm Bureau does or interested in becoming a member or seeing what benefits that are out there, please visit. Thank you.