

Summer 2026

AROUND OUR COUNTY



ASHLAND COUNTY

A PUBLICATION AND MEMBER BENEFIT OF ASHLAND COUNTY FARM BUREAU

So what does “grassroots” mean anyway?

Summer is here and with that comes...policy development! Yes, this is the time of year when County Farm Bureaus collect feedback from members to prepare for the upcoming annual meeting in late summer. Farm Bureau has a “grassroots” structure which means that the organization’s policies and activities are led from individual member action that is carried up through the Federation - County Farm Bureau to Ohio Farm Bureau (OFB) to American Farm Bureau (AFB).

Policy Development

This process happens year-round with an emphasis on collecting feedback in the spring and early summer. County Farm Bureaus host local resource meetings with elected officials and county leaders to discuss community issues. A survey was shared with members in the winter newsletter to help direct concerns directly to the committee. The policy development committee meets several times throughout the summer to prepare policy recommendations for the County Farm Bureau annual meeting.

Policy proposals are reviewed, discussed and voted on at the County Farm Bureau annual meeting. Approved state and national policies are proposed for consideration by the 350+ member delegate body at the OFB Annual Meeting, which takes place in December. Policies closely reflect the mission of Farm Bureau which is to “Working together with Ohio’s farmers to advance agriculture and strengthen our communities.”

Political Action

County Farm Bureau leadership and OFB’s Public Policy staff engage elected officials and legislators, when necessary, for policies that require legislative action. Both OFB and AFB are often asked to take positions on proposed legislation. Before any position is considered, the first step is to review the policy books that the delegate body put together and approved. Existing policy will dictate what position, if any, the organization will take.

Take Away Message

Farm Bureau’s policy positions are derived from individual member feedback given to the County Farm Bureau’s policy development committee. One person’s feedback CAN and DOES make an impact on local, state and national policy development. The best way for members to engage with this process is by submitting feedback to the policy development committee (through a survey, call to the office, etc) and by attending the annual meeting. Opportunities abound for members who are interested in a leadership or policy development committee position as well!

The policy development committee is still considering submissions so please share feedback by filling out the survey or giving the office a call!



Growing Tomorrow Grant - Application deadline of July 31

This grant is the brainchild of Mike Boyert, a former Ohio Farm Bureau board trustee, and his wife Patti. Mike and Patti, residents of Medina County, remember well the struggles they encountered when they started their farming careers, and the difficulties they faced in starting, growing, and sustaining their farming business. The Growing Tomorrow Grant program is Mike and Patti’s way of ensuring that creative young farmers can access opportunities they did not have, and enabling these young professionals to use their skills to alleviate the difficulties facing agriculture today, including a lack of public education regarding the importance of farms within the US food system and the significant economic hardships facing rural communities and farm workers.

Who is eligible? Young professionals and entrepreneurs who are looking to secure startup funds for a new business or seeking funds to enhance the impact of an existing business are encouraged to apply! Grant recipients should have a solid business plan and sustainable solution to one or more of the four challenges listed above. Please review the detailed requirements to apply for this grant at ofbf.org/foundation.

What are the size of the grants awarded?

The Growing Tomorrow Grant program intends to award up to \$100,000 among the top finalists in late 2026. For questions regarding the Growing Tomorrow Grant, please contact Ohio Farm Bureau at thicks@ofbf.org.



2026 Scholarship Recipients



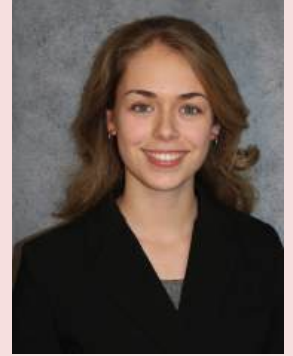
Emmalee Connelly- Emmalee is the daughter of Kirk and Stephanie Connelly of Jeromesville. She is a 2026 graduate of Northwestern High School and plans to major in Agricultural Education and Political Science. "I plan to become an agriculture educator or go to law school and become an agricultural lawyer. I am extremely passionate about agriculture, and I hope to teach agriculture for future generations to come. If I become an agricultural lawyer, I will advocate for agriculture at the local, state, and possibly national level. I plan to become a leader in the agricultural field and support the agriculture industry." We wish you the best of luck, Emmalee!



Makenna Connelly- Makenna is the daughter of Kirk and Stephanie Connelly of Jeromesville. She is a 2026 Northwestern High School graduate with plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall. "In the future, I hope to have a full-time career in journalism or agriculture communications, using my education to inform and advocate for the agriculture industry. I would also like to start my own goat operation, raising and selling livestock to 4-H and FFA members who are interested in showing at fairs. I also plan to stay involved in FFA and 4-H through alumni activities and by volunteering at livestock shows." Congratulations Makenna!



Clare Hahn- Clare is the daughter of Evan and Kelly Hahn of Perrysville. She is a 2026 graduate of Loudonville High School and Heartland Tech Career Center (studying Animal Veterinary Science). Clare plans to attend Redlands Community College in El Reno, OK. Clare will major in Agribusiness and participate with the Beef Cattle Show Team. "I plan on working in ag sales specifically for a feed company. This job would give me the opportunity to not only work with kids, but also family farms and ranches. Feeding an animal is the most important part of any project or farm. This career choice will give me the ability to connect with families and give them the opportunity to become the best they can." Best wishes, Clare!



Haley McNaull- Haley is the daughter of Greg and Julie McNaull and is a 2026 graduate of Ashland High School. She plans to major in Horticulture and Crop Science while minoring in Agribusiness at The Ohio State University. "In college, I plan to gain career experience through internships at horticultural trial centers and greenhouse production facilities, and graduate with honors distinction. While working towards these goals, I will continue to plant seeds of positive change, water them with teamwork, and watch them sprout under the light of a community's spirit." Good luck, Haley!

Hummel Group named 2026 Select Partner



SELECT PARTNER



Hummel Group: Premier Farm Certified with Nationwide

Evan Hershberger and Olivia Lang (farm insurance)

ehershberger@hummelgrp.com and

olang@hummelgrp.com | 330-893-2600

Karl Schlabach (financial advisor)

kschlabach@hummelgrp.com | 330-684-5913

Chris Gertz (health insurance)

cgertz@hummelgrp.com | 330-893-2600

Nationwide is the #1 insurer of farms and ranches in the nation and is Ohio Farm Bureau's approved insurance and financial services provider. The following agencies are appointed with Nationwide and have been strong partners of your county Farm Bureau. Ohio Farm Bureau members receive a discount on some insurance products.

Ashland Co Farm Bureau Seeking Trustee Candidates

The nominating committee is currently accepting nominations for trustee candidates whose elections would take place at the annual meeting in August.

Benefits/Opportunities:

- Service as a trustee gives you the ability to serve as a voice for your township, district and county on agricultural and community-related issues.
- Networking with other trustees across the county and members as well as public officials. Several opportunities throughout the year to network with other trustees within the district (Medina, Wayne, and Summit counties).
- Leadership development opportunities - access to opportunities to grow in leadership development such as advocacy at the local, state, and national level.
- Service as a trustee gives you the opportunity to better understand the Farm Bureau Federation and its member benefits.
- Service as a trustee is a great resume builder!

Basic expectations:

- Individual needs to be a member of Ashland County Farm Bureau.
- If serving in a district seat, you need to live in or operate a business in that district.
- Board service would begin at the September 14, 2026 board meeting.
- Board meetings are held on the second Monday of the month around 7 PM at Trinity Lutheran Church (no board meeting the month of May, August (due to the annual meeting), October and December.). Meetings typically last 1.5 - 2 hours.
- Board members are not expected to attend every meeting but are expected to attend the majority.
- In addition to providing input at board meetings, board members are asked to participate in 1 ad hoc committee and 1 event committee. Time spent on committees vary by committee but, generally, take 2-4 hours.
- The term of service for the district seats are 3 years with the option to rerun for a second 3 year term. The term of service for the at large seat is 1 year with the option to rerun as well.

Interested in nominating yourself or another member? Please call our office or reach out to an ACFB trustee to share your recommendation by July 1.

Upcoming Events

Ashland Co Farm Bureau Annual Meeting - Aug 27

Location: Oak & Ivory Event Center (1626 Twp Rd 1455, Ashland)

Time: Dinner/social hour 6:30 - 7:30 PM. Business meeting to follow.

Additional details and RSVP instructions will be shared later this summer by postcard.



Please note that our annual meeting is not taking place in conjunction with Ashland Soil and Water Conservation District. Ashland SWCD will be holding their annual meeting on Monday Nov 8 at Mount Vernon Estates in conjunction with their November Conservation Chat "From Flask to Forest". Please look to their newsletter or website for details later this year.

Fair Kickoff Picnic - Sept 19

Ashland County Farm Bureau invites 4-H & FFA exhibitors and advisors to the 3rd annual Fair Kickoff Picnic located in the Coliseum. Stop by anytime between 5 and 7 PM to grab a quick dinner. All Farm Bureau member families of livestock exhibitors and advisors are welcome. Non-member families are welcome with a donation.

Food available as long as supplies last. Want to help? Give us a call or email ashland@ofbf.org!



3rd Grade Farm Tour - Oct 1 & 2

Members of Ashland Co Farm Bureau are in the midst of preparing for the annual 3rd grade farm tour.

This year's host will be Mills Dairy in Perrysville. We are seeking volunteers who are willing to lead or co-lead agricultural stations on 1 or both days. The time commitment is approximately 8:30 to 2:30 each day.

Please email ashland@ofbf.org if you are interested in helping!



Ashland Co Farm Tour

The next Ashland County Farm Tour will take place in late September/early October 2027 (the weekend between the Ashland Co Fair and the Loudonville Street Fair). We are seeking volunteers to serve as hosts on the tour in the southern half of the county. Please reach out to our office if you are interested or have a farm to recommend!



Twilight Tour

The Wayne/Ashland Dairy Service Unit has announced that there will not be a 2026 Twilight Tour but their intent is to have one in 2027.

2026 Ag Toy Drive - Save the Date!

Tuesday, Nov 24

Event updates will be shared on our website in the month leading up to the event.

Other Community News

America 250 Celebration - July 4, 2026

*info copied from exploreashlandohio.com

10 AM: America's 250th Birthday Bash Parade

Kicking off the day will be our spectacular America's 250th Birthday Bash Parade through downtown Ashland and we encourage local businesses, organizations and families to deck their floats in red, white and blue to commemorate this momentous occasion. The parade will kick off around 10:00 a.m. at Claremont Avenue and College Avenue, travel North and turn onto E. Main Street and continue through to Union Street.

2 PM: Freedom Park & Monument Dedication

Following the Independence Day parade will be the dedication ceremony of a historic Freedom Monument in the Pump House District, a testament to America's founding principle and a lasting symbol of liberty for generations to come.

5 PM: America's 250th Birthday Party & Fireworks Celebration

You're invited to the most patriotic birthday party in town! Freer Field will come alive around 5:00 p.m. with live music entertainment, food trailers, a live radio show with area leaders and special guests, and of course the grand finale featuring the largest fireworks display in Ashland County's history! Parking and seating areas will be available onsite.

Junior Fair Sales/Auction Coordinator Job Opportunity

The Ashland County Fair is seeking applicants for the Junior Fair Sales/Auction Coordinator. The Junior Fair Sales/Auction Coordinator is responsible for the planning, organization, managing and the execution of the Junior Fair Livestock Sale at the Ashland County Fair. This role works closely with Livestock Superintendents, the Sales Committee, exhibitors (including 4-H and FFA members), buyers, and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth, transparent, and successful auction process that highlights youth agricultural achievements. This position is mostly part-time with flexible hours (exception during the weeks during the weeks surrounding the fair). A full description of the position is available at the Ashland County Junior Fair Livestock Sale Facebook page. Questions and resumes can be directed to ashctyfairsale@gmail.com.

Recorder's Office Seeking Century Farms

Does your family have a farm that's been in operation for at least 100 years? Erin Beebe, Ashland Co Recorder, is seeking volunteers who are willing to feature their farms in a display at their new office as well as at the Ashland Co Fair. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to their office at 419-282-4270 or eebeebe@ashlandcounty.org.



Farm Tire Collection Event - August 11

Event is open to Ashland County farms only. Pre-registration required by calling the Ashland County Solid Waste District at 419-282-4338. Registration window is July 20 - Aug 7.

Tires will not be accepted from those who do not have a confirmed registration and time. Tires cannot be on the rim. Cost per tire ranges from \$2 to \$10 and is dependent on size. Full event details are available at the Ashland County Solid Waste District's website.



Thank you to our business partners!



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 Ltournoux@ofbf.org

Jennifer Fatheree, County Office Administrator
 Jfatheree@ofbf.org

Don't forget to save the date for the Annual Meeting - Aug 27!