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New Poll Finds Broad Bipartisan Support for Labeling GE Food



At OEFFA's conference this winter, keynote speaker Dr. Doug Gurian-Sherman spoke about the negative environmental impacts from farming that relies on crops that are genetically engineered (GE) to tolerate synthetic pesticides and herbicides.

National opinion polls have consistently found strong support for labeling GE food. To assess the level of concern about this issue in Ohio, OEFFA hired Public Policy Polling to conduct a poll of 520 registered Ohio voters in February about their opinions about GE food. The representative poll found that **Ohioans overwhelmingly support GE labeling and a majority disapprove of the use of this technology** in food production. Interestingly, the poll found no connection between voters' views on the issue and their political affiliation. Poll results include:

There is strong support in Ohio for labeling GE food.

- ◇ 87 percent of voters think GE food should be labeled.
- ◇ 92 percent of women say GE food should be labeled.
- ◇ 89 percent of Republicans, 88 percent of Democrats, and 85 percent of Independents think GE food should be labeled.

Disapproval of GE food cuts across political lines.

- ◇ 64 percent of Republicans disapprove of GE food.

- ◇ 63 percent of Independents disapprove of GE food.
- ◇ 57 percent of Democrats disapprove of GE food.

Public knowledge about GE food is increasing.

- ◇ In the past, many Americans were not aware that they were consuming GE ingredients in everyday foods. This has changed.
- ◇ 75 percent of Ohio voters know GE food is on the market now.

Clearly, Ohioans want more information and choices about the foods they eat and feed their families.

OEFFA's GE work group is using the detailed information provided by the poll in our education campaign. We will be reaching out to communities across the state to galvanize support for a GE label and sharing the results with Ohio legislators to demand they take action on the issue and respond to the concerns of their constituents.

Go to <http://policy.oeffa.org/gepoll> to find a two page paper detailing the results of the poll, an infographic, an online petition to Ohio legislators, and more. If you would like to use this information in a meeting with your state or federal representative, contact Amalie Lipstreu at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 208 or policy@oeffa.org.



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OEFFA is recognized as a nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and donations to OEFFA are deductible as a charitable contribution to the fullest extent of the law.

OEFFA shall be a democratic association of chartered grassroots chapters, existing within state bylaws, working together to create and promote a healthful, ecological, accountable, and sustainable system of agriculture in Ohio and elsewhere.

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Farmers Open Barn Doors to the Public This Summer

In May, OEFFA and our partners will announce the *2015 Sustainable Farm Tour and Workshop Series*, which features free public tours of some of Ohio's finest sustainable and organic farms, along with hands-on educational workshops on a variety of topics.

The tours run from late May to October and will feature a diverse sampling of farms across Ohio, including:

- ◆ **Ann's Raspberry Farm** in Knox County will take guests on a tour of their raspberry high tunnels and Brussels sprouts fields and discuss their value-added artisan products;
- ◆ **Rock Dove Farm**, a Madison County farm specializing in roots and greens, will discuss their weed management strategies;
- ◆ **Turnow Ventures**, a grain and alfalfa farm in Sandusky County, will describe their cover crop and weed control methods; and
- ◆ **End of the Road Farm** in Miami County will demonstrate how their field work is done with draft horses, including squeezing sorghum cane into sweet syrup.

Members will receive a farm tour brochure and notification by email this May with the complete list of tours, including dates, times, farm descriptions, and directions. The tour schedule will also be available at www.oeffa.org. Tours are free and open to the public.



Director's Letter

Carol Goland Executive Director

Valuing Ohio's Farmland

In the last few months, the financial, and in many cases emotional, health of Ohio farmers have been threatened by updated property tax assessments under the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program.

If you aren't familiar with CAUV, here's what it is: The Ohio Department of Taxation allows farmland to be valued according to its current use rather than at its "highest and best" potential use. CAUV normally results in a substantially lower tax bill for working farmers than would otherwise be the case if their land were valued, say, for housing developments.

The complicated formulas used to calculate the land value are not for the faint of heart! It includes soil type, crop yields, crop prices, production costs, and capitalization rates. As you can imagine, the high prices of corn in some recent years, in particular, has led to an increased valuation of land using this method. Those high prices have not been sustained, which makes the tax bill based on earlier prices painful, to say the least.

The Department of Taxation has recently suggested a fix for this problem. But what's not been considered as part of the discussion about CAUV reform is that the best, most productive soils are taxed at higher rates than are poor soils. At one level, it makes sense as a progressive tax: the more you make (by virtue of your good soil) the more you pay.

What made me start thinking differently, though, were the panicked outcries of farmers who saw their property taxes doubled or even tripled from last year to this. I heard some who wondered, legitimately, if the narrow per acre profit margins on which they operate could withstand that increase or whether they would be forced out of farming, their land destined for development.

As a society, we ought to value farmland more. I don't mean "value" in the sense of putting a higher price tag on it, but rather in terms of assigning importance to it. What if farm property taxes were structured in a way that taxed the best farmland at the lowest—rather than the highest—rates?

Locally, we should recognize that we want Ohio farmland growing the food we eat. Shouldn't we encourage preservation of the best farmland by recognizing all that it provides us? At a broader scale, recent headlines grimly predict a prolonged and widespread mega-drought. We are going to need Ohio's farmland as the irrigated Great Plains and western lands go dry. We should recognize that maintaining prime *rain-fed* farmland should be a matter of national security.

The CAUV shockwaves ought to jolt us all into a new understanding. We need to recognize the value of farmers and farmland by supporting them in our communities and paying them fair prices for the work they do, and by advocating for policies that keep them and life-giving good farmland in production for the benefit of us all.

2015 OEFFA Board Election Results

Two OEFFA board members were elected at the members' meeting, held during OEFFA's 36th annual conference in February. All members were elected to at-large positions; officers will be determined during the board's spring meeting. Board members serve three year staggered terms. In addition to statewide members, the board also includes regionally-elected chapter representatives. The OEFFA Certification board is comprised of those board members who do not have holdings in any entity certified by OEFFA.

We welcome **Rachel Tayse Baillieul** of Columbus to the board. She and returning board member **Mardy Townsend** of Windsor will serve three year terms beginning in April and will join:

Members At-Large (term expires):

Perry Clutts, Circleville (2017)

Mary Ida Compton, Cincinnati (2016)

Mike Laughlin, Johnstown (2017)

Darren Malhame, Upper Arlington (2016)

Chapter-Elected Board Members

Grain Growers Edward Snively, Fredericktown (2017)	Lake Effect Jake Trethewey, Auburn Township (2018)
Real FOOD Bill Boyer, Wooster (2016)	Heart of Ohio Bryn Bird, Granville (2016)
Little Miami Randy Moore, Wilmington (2017)	Capital Gary Cox, Columbus (2018)
MOON Lara Osborne, Oxford (2017)	Athens Area Tom Redfern, Athens (2018)
Southwest Ohio Steve Edwards, Cincinnati (2016)	OK River Valley Judy Sauer, Cincinnati (2017)



OEFFA is Invested in Agriculture!

Helping mobilize additional sources of capital is, for OEFFA and for everyone who supports a healthier food system, an opportunity to build the supply and availability of local, sustainably grown fresh food in Ohio, enhance farm and farm-related business viability, and encourage expansion of ecological agricultural practices.

We operate two programs that help farmers and others working in sustainable food enterprises access the capital they need to grow their business:

The **OEFFA Investment Fund** promotes sustainable agriculture in Ohio by making flexible and affordable capital available to farmers and farm-related businesses.

OEFFA has also partnered with **Kiva Zip** and is able to serve as a Trustee to endorse zero percent interest loan requests from individual borrowers to Kiva's community of lenders. The purpose of this program is to help entrepreneurs access the financial services and lower fees and interest rates they need to make borrowing affordable, and cultivate community between borrowers and lenders.

For more information, or to apply, go to www.oeffa.org/invest or contact Carol Goland at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 202 or oifinfo@oeffa.org.

Should Energy Development Trump Environmental Protection, Public Health, and Right to Know?

The passage of Ohio Senate Bill 315 in May 2012 marked the beginning of a race to extract natural gas from the state's shale, unfettered by environmental regulation. Landowners, farmers, and communities are increasingly concerned about the impacts to Ohio's air, water, and soil. Since 2012, there have been at least 17 "fraccidents" across the state, including earthquakes, explosions, and fires.

Fracking requires massive amounts of fresh water that are returned to the surface tainted with radioactive chemical cocktails. This contaminated "flowback water" can be classified as brine and used as a road deicer or stored in open pits or injection wells. To make matters worse, Ohio accepts fracking waste from other states.

In addition to the water and soil contamination risks associated with both the waste disposal and extraction process, production wells, compressor stations, and pipelines release methane—a greenhouse gas roughly 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide—into the atmosphere. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, gas well emissions in New Mexico have resulted in a methane "hot spot the size of Delaware" which is visible from space.

An Unregulated Industry

Surely, we have state and federal laws to protect the public and our environment, right?

Sadly, the 2005 Energy Policy Act, called the "Best Energy Bill Corporations Could Buy" by nonprofit group Public Citizen, releases the fracking industry from most oil and gas regulations. The act exempts fracking construction activities from the *Federal Water Pollution Control Act*, severely limits the ability of local communities and states to challenge the siting of liquefied natural gas facilities, and excludes a broad range of oil and gas exploration and drilling activities from public involvement and impact analysis under the *National Environmental Policy Act*.

The oil and gas industry is also exempt from the *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act* also known as the "Superfund Program."

In addition, Congress amended the definition of "underground injection" under the *Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)* to specifically exclude "the underground injection of fluids or propping agents (other than diesel fuels) pursuant to hydraulic fracturing operations related to oil, gas, or geothermal production activities." Under this exemption, oil and gas companies can now inject anything other than diesel in association with fracking operations without having to comply with SDWA provisions intended to protect our nation's water supplies.

Now, the last firewall of defense—the *Environmental Protection and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA)*—is also under threat. EPCRA was enacted in 1986 after several serious chemical releases in an effort to protect the environment and increase the public's knowledge and access to information on chemicals and releases into the environment. The law established state emergency response commissions (SERC) and local emergency planning committees to receive all chemical release notifications and inventory reports. A bill pending in the Ohio Legislature would undermine this process and give this authority to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) instead.

After a 2015 well pad fire in Monroe County, it took days for emergency responders and water utilities to learn what chemicals were stored at the site, in part because Ohio law prohibits ODNR from releasing trade secret chemical information to first responders. SERC is currently the repository for chemical information from all other industries; it should be for the oil and gas industry as well.

A Web of New Pipelines

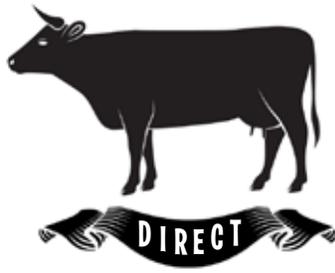
The latest impact of fracking has come in the form of two large interstate and international pipeline projects, which may impact 25 Ohio counties. The proposed Nexus and ET Rover pipelines would transport gas from Ohio, through Michigan, and into Canada. Private property in the pipeline corridors could be taken through eminent domain, which was created for projects that serve the public interest, not international oil and gas markets or private corporations' bottom lines. There are many other environmental, social, and economic concerns about these projects as well. Both pipelines are currently under review by the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission (FERC). With so much on the line, let FERC know how these proposals could impact you and local food systems in your community. Learn more and take action at <http://bit.ly/1LeOmGn>.

Get Involved

Now is the time to send a message to the Ohio legislature: we need to protect our families and the environment from the negative effects of fracking.

Please send a letter to the editor to your local newspaper. Visit <http://policy.oeffa.org/advocacytoolkit> to find our letter to the editor guide. Then, call your local representatives and tell them we deserve better and that the environment and public health need not be sacrificed in the name of energy extraction and corporate profits.

If you would like to be more involved or need a little help with writing a letter or making a call to your legislator, contact Amalie Lipstreu at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 208 or policy@oeffa.org. We are here to give you the tools you need to make a difference!



By John Wiley

Raising the Steaks: What to Know About Direct Marketing Meat in Ohio

Are you on the fence about retailing meat at a farmers' market in Ohio? Wondering what's required? Here's what you need to know about navigating government and market rules, to get from thinking about direct marketing to standing behind the table in your own booth ready to make your first sale.

To begin with, get to know your local county health department. No matter where you sell, you will be under the jurisdiction of the county where you live and farm.

The Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code outlines the requirements you must follow. In broad strokes, the code asks that you have meat processed and frozen at a state-inspected processor, pick the meat up frozen, and keep it frozen without interruption until the moment you put it in a customer's hand. This law is pretty straight forward and reasonable.

Oddly, though, the code is administered and interpreted at the county level. Since each county does so differently, this makes your county health department the wild card. Call and tell them you are looking to sell meat at a farmers' market and want to know how they would handle your application for a Mobile Retail Food Establishment License, which regulates you transporting meat (home from the processor, and to and from market) and holding meat while at market.

For one thing, each county decides how much to charge for the license. Some charge as little as \$100, but others can charge as much as \$400.

More significantly, your county might trust you to keep product frozen at market using plastic coolers (which will cost you about \$30) or they may require you to use a commercial freezer (which costs around \$700) connected to a generator (roughly \$500) if electricity is not available at your market.

No matter what equipment is prescribed, you will be inspected at market by a simple "touch test." If the meat is frozen hard, you pass. You'll also need to have your license with you.

Your home freezers (where you store your meat) constitute a "food warehouse," under the jurisdiction of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). The ODA is easy to deal with and registering your "facility" costs only \$50 a year. When ready, call them at (614) 728-6201, ask for the Food Safety Division, and say you need to register a couple of freezers in your garage. They will review the requirements with you on the phone to see if you are ready for inspection. The requirements are minimal, but be sure to ask them whether the freezers must be commercial grade.

The ODA will send inspectors out who, if satisfied with your setup, will issue registration papers on-site. Thereafter, you can renew annually by mail but will not need to undergo a yearly inspection. However, the ODA reserves the right to inspect your "facility" at any time, with no prior notification. In my case, they have come once in three years. They will want your freezers to be accessible by an exterior entrance to your home, so they do not have to pass through your residence.

Of course, you'll want to apply to a farmers' market and be approved as a vendor before getting licensed. Selecting the right market is important. Ask fellow farmers and visit to see for yourself. Saturday morning markets tend to be the busiest. Market fees are always a bargain. Mine are less than 1 percent of my income!

There's an approval process you need to go through to get into a market. If you were a baker wanting to sell cookies, I would say your odds are slim at the largest markets. But grass-fed meat? You're the applicant they are hoping for. Don't assume you cannot get into markets where other vendors are already selling meat. Competition is a good thing and the best market managers invite it.

Most farmers' markets will require that you have liability insurance. Shop around. Meat vending is a red flag for insurers (much more so than produce) and few offer coverage. As a comparison, I currently pay \$350 per year. Such insurance is not only for selling meat. It also covers general liability in the event that, for example, someone trips on your extension cord at the market, falls, and breaks a wrist.

That's how you get yourself set to retail meat to the public in Ohio. In general terms, I would say selling six cows' meat is a threshold for absorbing the annual overhead. Scaling up from there begins to build profit.

The advantages of direct selling don't come easy, but they are significant. Being able to consistently sell out of product at full retail price to a ravenous public, with no middleman, can provide a steady cash flow. You'll also be rewarded by the lively affection and goodwill of so many customers who will appreciate your work and celebrate your farm.

John and Marie Wiley of Up the Lane Farm raise grass-fed beef near Johnstown. They have direct marketed grass-fed beef at the Worthington Farmers' Market year-round for six years. They can be reached at upthelane@hotmail.com.





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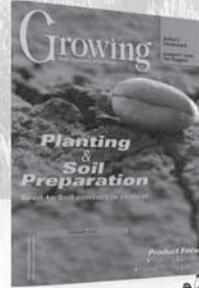
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OEFFA 36th Annual Conference 2015

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: RENEWING OHIO'S HEART AND SOIL

▼ Volunteers from Local Matters led a cook off during the Kids' Conference



Jeannie Seabrook leads a cheesemaking workshop ▼



More than 1,100 people joined together in February to attend keynote presentations by Alan Guebert and Dr. Doug Gurian-Sherman, approximately 100 workshops, and other activities at OEFFA's annual conference. Thanks to everyone who came and made this year's conference a success, especially the many volunteers, workshop presenters, sponsors, and exhibitors who made it possible.



▲ Dr. Doug Gurian-Sherman delivers the Sunday keynote address

"My first of many to come! I was so impressed with the collective knowledge, and the willingness to share it. What a warm and professional group." – Sasha

Conference Evaluation Prize Winners

Thanks to everyone who turned in their conference evaluation form! We value your feedback and will use the comments and ideas to help us plan for next year. Completed evaluations were entered into a prize drawing. This year's winners are Michelle Kozak and Erik Peterson. Congratulations!

Conference Recordings Available

Dove Conference Services is selling conference workshop and keynote recordings on CD and MP3. To order, call (800) 233-DOVE or go to www.dovecds.com/oeffa.



Growers Tools was one of more than 70 vendors in the Exhibit Hall ▲

Workshop Applications

Planning has already started for the 2016 conference! We are taking suggestions for workshop topics, presenters, and keynote speakers. If you are interested in presenting at next year's conference, don't wait to apply! Every year we have to turn down quality workshop proposals because our slots have already been filled. Contact Milo Petruziello at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206 or milo@oeffa.org.



▲ The Exhibit Hall featured vendors with an array of food, books, products, information, and services

"It was a great conference. My first time attending. Soooo much information to absorb from the workshops I took. Lots of emotions...excited, overwhelmed, but most of all grateful for the opportunity to attend." – Carolyn

Photos by George Remington

Nutrient Management Legislation Moving Through Ohio Statehouse

The Ohio Legislature started the 131st session by quickly taking up nutrient management legislation, designed to avoid another water crisis like the one in Toledo last year caused by toxic algae. Both Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 61 would limit the application of fertilizer and manure on frozen or saturated ground and under certain weather conditions. There are some exceptions to those restrictions, and they would only apply to Lake Erie's western basin. The bills have passed in the Senate and House. House and Senate committees will need to reconcile differences in the bills before the legislation can be signed by the Governor. OEFFA provided interested party testimony in support of good management practices. To read OEFFA's testimony, go to www.ohiosenate.gov/committee/agriculture (see February 10 committee documents).



Local Food Systems Continue to Grow

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service has issued *Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems: A Report to Congress*. ERS found that producer participation in local food systems is growing. In 2012, almost eight percent of U.S. farms were marketing foods locally. Of these farms, 70 percent used only direct-to-consumer (DTC) marketing channels and the number of farms with some DTC sales increased by 17 percent between 2002 and 2007. However, the value of face-to-face food sales dropped by one percent in real dollars from 2007 to 2012—a stark contrast to the vigorous 54 percent growth in sales the previous 10 years. Drops in farmers' market sales may be reflective of a growing number of farms selling to restaurants, grocery stores, distributors, food hubs, and schools. From 2007 to 2012, the number of food hubs increased by 288 percent and since 2006, the number of school districts with farm-to-school programs jumped by 430 percent.

Pesticide Residues Found on More than Half of Food

The USDA's 2013 *Pesticide Data Program Annual Summary* concluded that more than half the food tested for pesticide residues showed detectable levels of pesticides, although most residues were at levels considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Of the nearly 10,000 samples analyzed, 24 percent had one pesticide present and 36 percent had more than one pesticide residue. Residues exceeding EPA tolerances were detected in only 23 samples, 17 of which were found on imported food. The USDA does not test for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup and one of the most widely used herbicides in the world.

Pollinator Decline to Impact Children in Developing Countries

The global decline of pollinators due to habitat loss and widespread pesticide use will have a devastating impact on the nutritional health of people in developing countries, especially children, according to a new study from scientists at the University of Vermont and Harvard University published in the journal *PLoS ONE*. Based on data on crop pollination requirements, food nutrient densities, and actual human diets, the study found that if pollinators are removed, up to 56 percent of children in Zambia, Mozambique, Uganda, and Bangladesh would become newly at risk of vitamin A deficiency. Up to 23 percent would become at risk of folate deficiency, and up to five percent of children would become at risk

of calcium, iron, and zinc deficiencies. According to the study, micronutrient deficiencies already affect more than one in four people around the globe and vitamin A deficiency alone causes an estimated 800,000 deaths in women and children each year. Vitamin and mineral deficiencies can cause increased risk of maternal mortality, a variety of chronic and infectious diseases, reduced IQ, and other health problems.

New York State Bans Fracking

New York officials have banned fracking in the state, citing the high potential for health and environmental impacts. The ban came in response to an issue ordered by the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and a cautionary report from the New York Department of Health, which noted the lack of comprehensive scientific studies about the long-term safety of hydraulic fracturing.

Eating Fast Food Linked to Lower Test Scores

Researchers from the Ohio State University (OSU) and University of Texas have released a new study showing that fast food consumption leads to lower test scores in reading, math, and science. The study of nearly 12,000 students analyzed fifth and eighth grade test scores and questionnaires about their food consumption in the fifth grade. Twenty nine percent of children had no fast food the week prior to filling out the questionnaire and 20 percent of children reported eating fast food more than four times per week. The researchers, who controlled for factors including exercise, TV viewing, and socioeconomic status, found that children who ate the most fast food had notably lower gains from fifth to eighth grade compared to children who did not report eating any fast food. Previous studies have shown that diets high in fat and sugar impede learning and cognitive processes.



Senate Bill Would Cap Crop Insurance Subsidies

In February, Senators Shaheen (D-NH) and Toomey (R-PA) introduced legislation to cap crop insurance subsidies at \$50,000 per entity. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this payment limit would save the federal government \$2.2 billion over 10 years while impacting less than three percent of producers. Since 2000, premium subsidies have risen from 37 percent to an average of 62 percent, and crop insurance is now the largest and most costly of all the farm subsidy programs. The program has considerably decreased the risk associated with growing corn, soybeans, rice, cotton, and wheat, which receive the vast majority of the subsidies. As a result, farmland has been consolidated by the largest producers, land prices have increased preventing new and beginning farmers from accessing land; and farmers have been encouraged to develop more marginal land.

House and Senate Agriculture Committees Names New Members

Earlier this year, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees named their new members for the 114th Congress. Two Ohio representatives serve on the House Agriculture Committee: Bob Gibbs (R) and Marcia Fudge (D). Ohio Senator Sherrrod Brown (D) continues to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Ohio Farmer Named by White House as Food Policy Czar

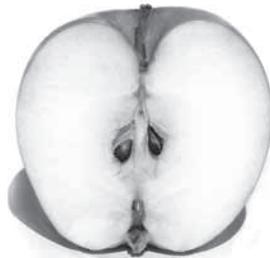
Organic farmer and OEFFA member Debra Eschmeyer has been named Executive Director of Let's Move! and White House Senior Policy Adviser for Nutrition Policy. Eschmeyer co-founded Food Corps, an AmeriCorps program that places service members into schools to promote healthier eating through school gardens, cooking classes, and improved school lunch menus. Eschmeyer has served as a W.K. Kellogg Food and Community Fellow and as Communications and Outreach Director of the National Farm to School Network.

ODNR Releases Fourth Quarter Oil and Gas Production Numbers

During the fourth quarter of 2014, Ohio's horizontal shale wells produced 3.6 million barrels of oil and 164 billion cubic feet of natural gas, according to figures released by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). In the past two years, there has been a 200 percent increase in oil production and a 350 percent increase in gas production. The new report lists 828 wells, 779 of which reported production. ODNR issued roughly 700 new horizontal shale permits in 2014 and 583 new permits in 2013.

GE Artic Apples Gets the Green Light

The USDA has approved another biotech crop for production, distribution, and consumption. Okanagan Specialty Fruits, based in British Columbia, has genetically engineered (GE) Granny Smith and Golden Delicious apples to resist browning when sliced. These apples were produced using a relatively new method known as RNA interference, which silences the target gene.



Opponents argue that browning is an important indicator to consumers in determining the freshness of an apple and that the silenced gene is important to the plant's natural defense against pests and pathogens, which could lead more growers to rely on chemical treatments to ward off pests and disease.

Ohio Sustainable Agriculture Educator Elected President of NACAA

Mike Hogan, an OSU associate professor, Extension educator, and State Coordinator for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program has been named president of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. The 6,000 member association works to strengthen and support the work of Extension educators and to promote the agriculture industry.

Antibiotics, Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Airborne from Feedlots

A new study in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* concludes that antibiotics and antibiotic-resistant bacteria from feedlots are dispersed by air, increasing chances of human exposure through inhalation. Air samples near feedlots were tested for the presence of antibiotics and antibiotic-resistant bacteria. All samples collected downwind of feedlots contained significantly more antibiotics and antibiotic-resistant bacteria, including some that are known to infect humans. The rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is commonly attributed to the use of antibiotics in livestock, which are administered at low levels on a regular basis to enhance growth.

Participation in 4-H May Lead to Improved Academic Success

A study published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* indicates that participation in 4-H programs can improve student standardized test scores. Using data collected over five academic years from Florida students reveals that standardized test scores in math and reading are higher in school districts, grades, and years that saw more 4-H participation. More than six million students participate in 4-H clubs, day camps, and school enrichment programs. The researchers suggest test score improvements may be by-products of positive youth development and the programmatic focus on science, engineering, and technology.

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Avoiding the Mud Shames: Advice for Pastured Pig Farmers

By Lyndsey Teter

We made it.

From 16 degrees under a foot of snow and ice, at long last, the Great Thaw has begun. The thaw reveals many treasures (“Hey! There are those pliers I’ve been looking for since Thanksgiving!”) and teases us with the promise of green things ahead. But for a pastured pig farmer, this can be one of the most challenging times of the year.

The plows mounted on the front end of your bacon are eager to get back to work, but the saturated soils make way for quick destruction. The tasty stuff is still under the ground and has yet to blossom up top. And spring rains compound the problem. All of this can leave you with a case of the Mud Shames. The good news is that it’s a necessary first step toward improving your situation and that of your livestock.

They say pigs love mud, but let’s be honest: Mud can breed diseases like mastitis and hoof rot and it can leave your soils with long-term compaction, erosion, and drainage issues. Not to mention, it is the number one cause of misery for man and beast. Some rooting is good for the soil and it’s good nutrition for the animals. Pigs sunk to their knees in soup is neither. Here are some ways to avoid the Mud Shames:

1.) Whatever you do, don’t cry.

Your tears will only add more moisture to the soil.

2.) Plan ahead.

Unfortunately, most of the battle against springtime mud happens in the fall. If you don’t start amassing an army well before an attack, you might find yourself outmatched. Your best weapon in the fight against mud is carbon, and lots of it.

Beginning in the late summer or fall, we select a sacrificial spot that drains well on a slight incline that is “big enough” to hold the animals we plan to overwinter. Then we work—a trailer load at a time—to lay down a generous foot or three of carbon that will absorb the moisture and the nitrogen and keep everybody high and dry smelling barnyard fresh. Some folks use hay or straw or corn fodder bales, but the gladiator in our mud army is by far the mighty woodchip.

3.) Find a lumberjack.

Beg, borrow, and steal your way into the heart of a lumberjack. Check with local government resources and extension agents. Call tree service places or the electric company, email corporate offices, or crowdsource on Facebook. Do whatever you need to do in your area to find a constant, steady supply of woodchips to refresh your sacrificial areas. In our county, we are lucky to live a mile from the free community mulch pile. All winter long, when replenished, the wood chips release composting heat to warm the pigs’ bellies, improve drainage, and prevent pig soup. A nice layer of fermenting hay on top makes a perfect deep bedding pack that will last well into the growing season.

Once the pigs move on, your woodchip paradise becomes a perfect weed-free raised bed pig garden for growing pumpkins, sunflowers, corn, sorghum, radishes, and forages that will feed your swine crew next fall and winter.

4.) Outrun the mud.

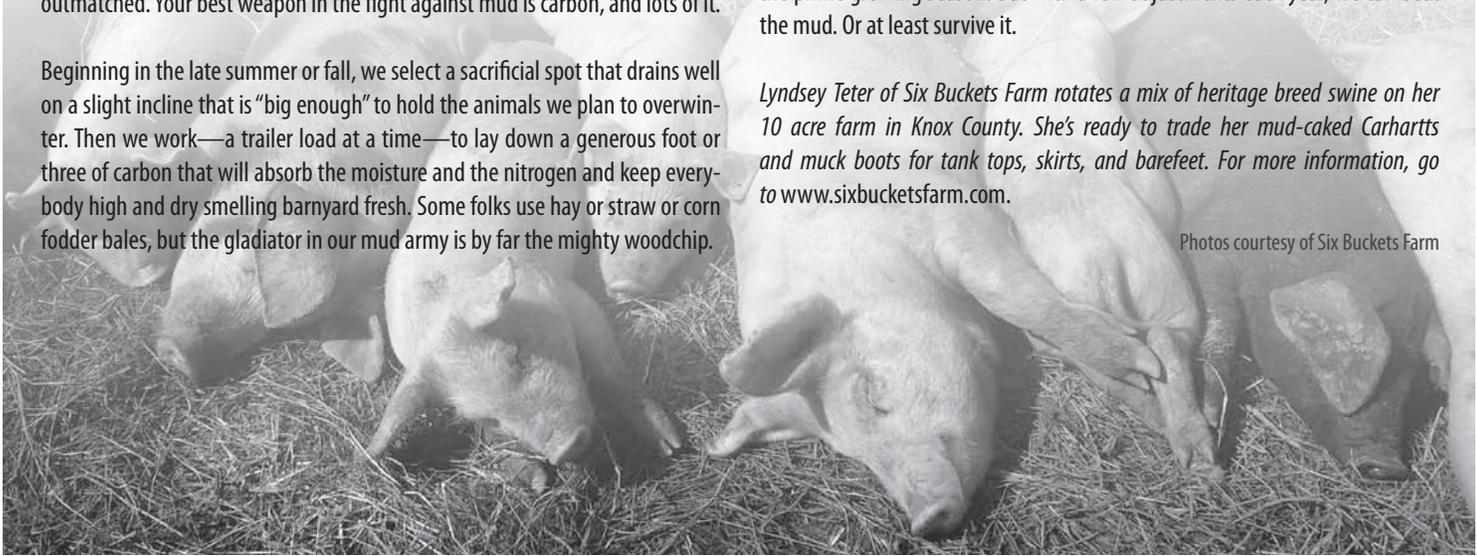
What’s that you say? You didn’t plan ahead and now you’re in a mudhole hell? Staying ahead of the mud feels like running from a twister, and just about as effective, but it is possible to rotate your way out of this mess. Take a look at your farm. Do you have any scrubby, fallow areas that need reseeding? Do you have brambles and hard-to-reach places that could use moonscaping and then reseeding after? Now is the best time to contract your pigs to work for you. By late summer, these areas could transform into some of your finest pasture if moldboarded with pig snouts now and reseeded after.

5) Be better next year.

Pigs are one of the hardest animals to manage on pasture—especially outside the prime growing season. But with a few adjustments each year, we can beat the mud. Or at least survive it.

Lyndsey Teter of Six Buckets Farm rotates a mix of heritage breed swine on her 10 acre farm in Knox County. She’s ready to trade her mud-caked Carhartts and muck boots for tank tops, skirts, and barefeet. For more information, go to www.sixbucketsfarm.com.

Photos courtesy of Six Buckets Farm



Global Organic Market Estimated at \$72 Billion

According to the latest data on organic farming and sales, the global organic market in 2013 reached \$72 billion dollars, which included \$35.1 billion in U.S. sales. Germany, France, and China followed the U.S. with the next largest organic markets. According to the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements, 2 million of the world's 1.5 billion farmers are now producing organically—a new high—with 200,000 organic farmers becoming newly certified each year. Nearly 80 percent of organic farmers are based in developing countries. Despite strong sector growth, the 94 million acres of certified organic land in production represents less than 1 percent of total global agricultural land.

Nearly Half of Ohio Organic Farms Near Drilling or Injection Wells

According to a new report by FracTracker, 11 percent of all organic farms in the U.S. share a watershed with oil and gas activity, and 31 percent are in the path of future wells in shale areas. The national analysis found Ohio's organic farms are at particular risk. Out of Ohio's 703 organic farms, 220 organic farms are near current drilling activity, 105 are near waste disposal injection wells, and 510 are within a U.S. shale basin. The full report is available at <http://www.fracktracker.org/2015/03/organic-farms-near-drilling-1/>.

Consumer Knowledge About Organic on the Rise

According to a new survey by the Organic Trade Association, knowledge, familiarity, and trust in the USDA organic seal continue to increase, along with the number of families who purchase organic products. Nearly half of the 1,200 U.S. families surveyed are "very familiar" with the organic seal, compared to 27 percent six years ago. Almost 70 percent of parents say they are extremely well informed or know "quite a bit" about organic. Eighty-three percent of U.S. families say they buy organic, and more than half surveyed said they have increased their organic purchases from a year ago.

Eating Organic Reduces Body's Pesticide Residues

People who eat an organic diet have lower levels of pesticides in their bodies than those who eat conventional fruits and vegetables, according to a new study published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*. Scientists studied nearly 4,500 people from six U.S. cities and examined long-term dietary exposure to 14 common organophosphate pesticides. The scientists found that people who reported eating organic produce at least occasionally had significantly lower organophosphate residue levels in their urine compared to people who almost always ate conventionally grown produce.

NOP Clarifies Allowance for Biodegradable Bio-Based Mulch Films

In January, the NOP released a memo clarifying how certifying agents should re-view biodegradable bio-based film mulches, which must meet American Society for Testing and Materials International definitions. In fall 2014, the USDA organic regulations were amended to allow the use of biodegradable bio-based mulch film; however, currently, no such films on the market meet the requirements for use in organic production.



NOC Welcomes New Executive Director

Earlier this year, Abby Youngblood was named the new Executive Director of the National Organic Coalition (NOC), a coalition of farmers, ranchers, processors, and nonprofits—including OEFFA—dedicated to advancing organic practices and regulations. Youngblood succeeds Liana Hoodes, NOC's founding director who had served since 2002.

Organic Regulations and Handbook Now Available in Spanish

The National Organic Program (NOP) is now providing Spanish versions of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) organic regulations and program handbook for Spanish-speaking farmers, handlers, and certifiers. The regulations are available at <http://1.usa.gov/1C0vtUm> and the handbook is available at <http://1.usa.gov/1AD1n9R>.

Gap Closing Between Organic and Conventional Yields

Organic farmers are coming close to matching conventional yields, according to a meta-study by the University of California at Berkeley published this March in the Royal Society's *Proceedings B*. Organic yields overall are about 19 percent less than conventional yields; however, organic farms that practice crop rotation or multi-cropping had significantly smaller yield gaps—between eight and nine percent, respectively. The results were based on a review of 115 studies, more than three times the amount of studies considered in any previous meta-analysis.

"These promising results, based on robust analysis of a larger meta-dataset, suggest that appropriate investment in agroecological research to improve organic management systems could greatly reduce or eliminate the yield gap for some crops or regions," the report summary states. The full paper is available at <http://bit.ly/1FnKqBR>.

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MAKING SENSE OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM

A series where OEFFA staff answers frequently asked questions and offers suggestions for working within the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations.

OEFFA staff attended the fall 2014 National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, and also plans to send staff to the spring 2015 meeting in La Jolla, California. Here's what you need to know about the NOSB, how it impacts the organic food and products you produce or enjoy, and what role OEFFA and our members can play in the process.

What is the NOSB?

The board is a volunteer Federal Advisory Committee. NOSB members are nominated by the organic community and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The board is made up of the following:

- ◇ Four farmers or growers
- ◇ Three environmentalists or resource conservationists
- ◇ Three consumer or public interest advocates
- ◇ Two handlers or processors
- ◇ One retailer
- ◇ One scientist specializing in toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry
- ◇ One U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) accredited certifying agent

Board members also serve on the NOSB's six subcommittees: Crops; Livestock; Handling; Materials; Policy; and Compliance, Accreditation, and Certification.

What Does the NOSB Do?

The NOSB advises the NOP about standards and policies. The NOSB researches and debates issues, and offers its recommendations to help the NOP grow and adjust to changes in agriculture and the organic industry.

The NOSB meets twice each year to discuss current issues and vote on their final recommendations. At the spring meeting in La Jolla, the NOSB will set its work plan for the year, by debating broad organic topics and setting priorities.

Subcommittees meet between the semi-annual public meetings to develop recommendations and proposals for the full board's consideration. The board invites both advance written and in-person oral public comments to gain additional perspectives before making their recommendations.

All NOSB meetings are free and open to the public. NOSB meetings embody the values of transparency and public input established in the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. The amount of public input and dialogue generated by the NOSB's role and process makes the NOP unique among federal agencies.

NOSB committees first publish proposals with a request for public comments. During meetings, the NOSB hears and considers public comments, asks clarifying questions, discusses various substances and policy topics on the agenda, and then votes in a public forum. Finally, the NOSB submits its final recom-

mendations to the USDA who develops them into guidance for certifiers and certified operations, or integrates them into the NOP regulations (after further public comment). The USDA may or may not act on all recommendations. In these cases, the NOSB's recommendations help to influence future policy changes and guide practices within the organic industry.

One prominent function of the NOSB is to advise the NOP regarding which substances should be allowed or prohibited in organic farming and processing based on criteria in the Organic Foods Production Act. In general, synthetic substances, such as vaccines or newspaper used for mulch, are prohibited unless specifically allowed, and non-synthetic (natural) substances, such as arsenic, are allowed unless specifically prohibited.

The NOSB must review each substance on the National List every five years to confirm that it continues to meet all required criteria. Over the course of its next two meetings in 2015, the NOSB will review the majority of crop, live-stock, and handling inputs currently allowed for use by certified organic operations. Inputs will be reviewed by the NOSB based on their sunset timelines (October 2016 or 2017), and may not be renewed if new information indicates these substances are incompatible with organic production.

The NOSB also makes recommendations on a wide variety of topics such as animal welfare in organic systems, natural resource conservation, and organic inspector qualifications.

Why Do We Care?

OEFFA respects the transparency and democratic process inherent in the unique role of the NOSB. We appreciate the role it plays in maintaining the rigor of the organic standards and playing an advisory role to the NOP. Our certification program references recommendations made by the NOSB to help clarify existing organic standards and to plan for future changes and additions to the rules. We think it's important to participate in the public dialogue, represent our clients' interests, and listen to different perspectives regarding organic standards.

Get Involved

This spring, OEFFA collected feedback from our members to help inform our comments to the NOSB. We welcome your ideas and thoughts throughout the year about the organic standards and how they impact you. For future NOSB meetings, we also encourage you to submit written comments to the NOSB directly or attend the meetings to provide oral comment. For more information, or to share your feedback, please contact Julia Barton at (614) 359-3180 or julia@oeffa.org. Written feedback can also be mailed to OEFFA Certification c/o Julia Barton, 41 Croswell Rd., Columbus, OH 43214.

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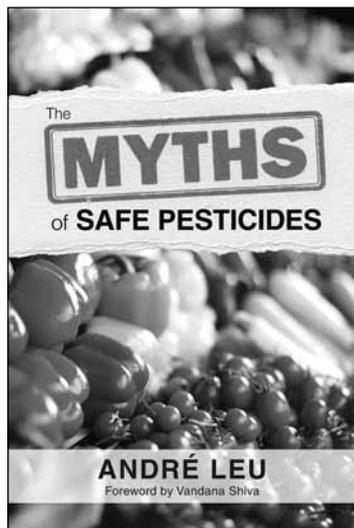
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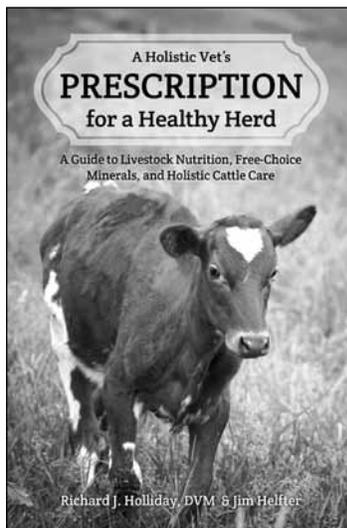


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Ohio's Seasonal Flower Movement is Blooming

By Susan Studer King



Susan Studer King, with mother Kay, of Buckeye Blooms

It's an annual rite of spring: farmers and gardeners obsess about the weather and anxiously count down the days until they can start planting their garden plots and farm fields. Then the barrage of questions begins: How cold is it supposed to get tonight? Do you think the soil will be dry enough to till? Is it safe to

plant my tender annuals? After another bitterly cold and long winter, there seems to be an extra urgency to get outside and start digging in the dirt again.

Among the many crops Ohio farmers will be planting this year will be heirloom nasturtiums, amethyst basil, pineapple mint, shiso, and sage. But rather than being infused into fine culinary fare, many of these edible flowers and herbs will find their way into floral bouquets.

Edible-infused bouquets are just one of many specialty designs being created as part of the burgeoning seasonal flower movement. Unusual varieties, such as daucus carota, and old fashioned favorites like fragrant sweet peas, fluffy peonies, dahlias, hellebores, and heirloom zinnia varieties are in strong demand. They are showcased in high-end design workshops and have even inspired Instagram hashtags.

The meteoric rise in popularity of farm-to-table events and the local food movement has paved the way for many other locally-produced products. Taking a page from the slow food movement, a "Slow Flowers" book and website (www.slow-flowers.com) is dedicated to the intentional, sustainable, and local production of flowers. Conscientious consumers and eco-conscious brides increasingly care what's on their table—from locally-grown heirloom vegetables on their plate, to Ohio-made craft spirits and sodas in their glasses, and seasonal, locally-grown flowers in their centerpieces.

Some of the nation's top floral designers, such as Saipua, Amy Merrick, Floret, Ariella Chezar, and Martha Stewart are also fueling the demand for local, seasonal flowers. Martha Stewart, in particular, has promoted locally grown flowers and helped shine a bright light on farmer-florists, the term used to describe operations that grow flowers and offer floral design services. For example, she awarded one of the nation's leading farmer-florists with her coveted American Made Award.



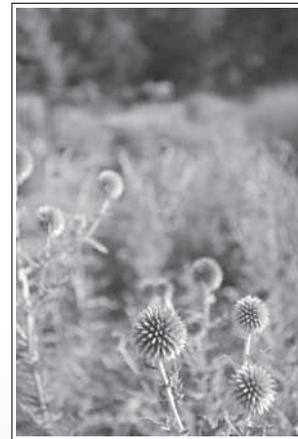
Thai basil, which is used for anise flavor in cooking, is also a versatile cut flower



An Ohio grown wedding bouquet

There has been a renaissance of new and expanding flower farms, including many in Ohio, which have benefited from this high profile attention. The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers, based in Oberlin, has documented a steep rise in the number of new farms and members in just the past two years.

On the heels of the OEFFA Conference, the first ever meeting of Ohio Flower Farmers attracted a capacity crowd of growers from all four corners of the state. Most of the flower farmers in attendance sell their fresh blooms at farmers' markets and directly to select florists. A few offer on-farm sales and CSA-type weekly flower "shares," while a growing number of operations, like Buckeye Blooms, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Mile Creek Farm, and others offer wedding flowers including full floral design services and/or bulk flowers by the bucket for do-it-yourself designs.



Globe thistle adds a pretty blue textural element to bouquets

If you're looking to purchase fresh-from-the-farm local flowers, you have lots of options. Although no one source is totally complete, there are a number of websites that list flower growers and purveyors including Field to Vase (www.fieldtovase.com), The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (www.ascfg.org), and OEFFA's Good Earth Guide (www.oeffa.org/geg). Following the Ohio Flower Farmers meeting, we made a map depicting the farms in attendance, along with other OEFFA members and many of the flower farms represented on the various sites. It is available at www.tinyurl.com/OHflowerfarms.

Most flower farms are small-scale, but utilize intensive growing methods to produce dozens—sometimes even hundreds—of varieties of cut flowers throughout the growing season. While some flowers are direct-seeded in the fields, most are started early indoors before being transplanted out after all danger of frost has passed. When that date might be this year is anyone's guess—but until then, you can bet farmers we'll anxiously await that time and obsess over weather apps. As the late Robin Williams said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"

Susan Studer King is co-owner of Buckeye Blooms, a small flower farm and design studio she operates with her mother on their fourth generation family farm near Lima. She splits her time between the farm and her solar-powered home in Granville. If you'd like to receive information about upcoming Ohio Flower Farmers meetings, email buckeyeblooms@gmail.com.

Photos courtesy of Buckeye Blooms



Say Cheese: *Mozzarella 101*

By Jeannie Seabrook

Equipment

Thermometer—A basic kitchen thermometer with a range of at least 0-120 degrees will do.

Long stirring spoon—I like to use a stainless steel spoon, but sometimes I just use my hand-held colander for everything.

Slotted spoon or hand-held colander—The bigger the scoop, the better! It can take a long time to sift the curd out. Alternatively, you can drain the curds through a bowl colander.

Long bladed knife—Mine is really dull, but it doesn't matter. You will use it to cut through curd that is similar to the consistency of yogurt.

Large stainless steel pot—Avoid aluminum, as it may leach into the cheese.

Microwavable dish—A glass pie plate works well.

Rubber gloves—These aren't a must, but they do help when stretching hot cheese.

Ingredients

2 quarts whole milk—I have found that ultra-pasteurized* milk makes okay ricotta and lousy mozzarella. I do not make a habit of using unpasteurized milk, but if you have it, use it! Local dairies offer pasteurized whole milk, often non-homogenized, which will produce excellent results. Goat milk and sheep milk may also be used; the flavor of the cheese will reflect your milk choice.



¾ tsp. citric acid—Citric acid sours the milk and raises the acid level.

¼ tsp. liquid rennet—Rennet can be purchased at wine and cheese making shops, or online. There are several options, including vegetable or animal-based, and liquid or tablet. One teaspoon liquid rennet usually equals one tablet, but check the package to be sure.

1 tsp. fine salt—You can purchase cheese salt or you can make your own. To make your own, use a spice grinder or mortar and pestle to grind non-iodized salt to a powdery dust. Iodine interferes with bacteria growth, so choose Kosher or canning salt.

Herbs and spices of choice (optional)—I like adding a couple of cloves of crushed garlic and/or 2-3 teaspoons dried crushed herbs such as oregano, basil, or savory. I have even used crispy bacon to flavor the cheese!

Some things just sound scary. Like jumping out of an airplane, or touching a big fat spider. In the kitchen, my students tell me some of the old arts like making cheese are on that list too. Mozzarella and other soft cheeses are surprisingly simple to make, however. All it takes is half an hour and a small amount of patience. Here's what you'll need:

Process

Warm your milk over medium-high heat to 55 degrees. Your refrigerator is about 38 degrees, so this won't take long. Add citric acid and stir to dissolve. Continue to heat the milk to 90 degrees.

Take the pot off the heat and add rennet. Stir gently in an up-and-down motion for 15-30 seconds, then let the pot rest for 5 minutes. The curds will form during this time and resemble an unstirred cup of yogurt.



Use your long knife to cut the curd in a checkerboard style, in about 1 inch squares. Be sure to go completely to the bottom of the pot. This action releases the whey from the curd, and the more even the cut, the more consistent the finished product is.



Place the pot back on the stove over medium-high heat. Heat the separating curds and whey to 105 degrees, stirring gently. Remove from heat and stir 2-5 minutes; the longer you stir, the firmer the cheese.



Using your colander, remove the curds from the whey and place the curds in a microwavable dish. Drain off the excess liquid. Sprinkle the salt and any optional herbs over the cheese. Microwave for 1 minute, and get your gloves on. Remove the cheese from the microwave and alternately stretch and knead it to form a ball. Drain the excess liquid, place it back in the microwave for 30 seconds, and then stretch and knead again. When the cheese looks shiny and

feels elastic, it is finished. If needed, continue to place it back in the microwave for 30 second intervals until this stage is reached. Form it into your choice of shape, and enjoy! This cheese is best eaten fresh, but will store in an airtight container for 2-3 days.

The most common error in making soft cheese is over-stirring the pot; the best remedy is to use slow, deliberate motions, and stop stirring at each stage sooner rather than over-mixing.



If the curds do not come together into mozzarella in the end, it is often because of the chosen milk. Next time, switch milk brands. Not to worry! You will still have an excellent cheese product to serve by straining the excess liquid and using the soft curds as a dip or to melt on a dish.

Don't throw the nutritious whey out; use it to make smoothies, ricotta cheese, or pour it over your oats like in Sweden.

Jeannie Seabrook owns and operates Glass Rooster Cannery in Sunbury, where she offers classes on cheese-making, food preservation, and other topics. For more information, call (614) 499-2958 or go to www.glassroostercannery.com.

*Ultra-pasteurization flash heats the milk to higher temperatures than traditional pasteurization, thus killing additional bacteria needed for coagulating in the cheese process.

Need Advice? Ask a Farmer!

OEFFA's Farmer Information Network connects individuals with specific questions about sustainable and organic food production and marketing with experienced farmers who have the answers. To ask a question of a fellow farmer, or to volunteer to be a part of the network, call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or email eric@oeffa.org.

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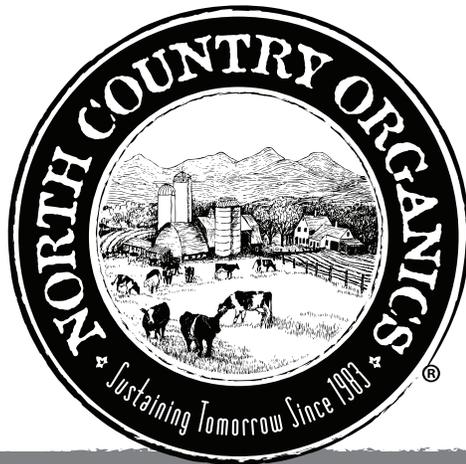
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RESOURCES

Weed Identification Guide—The Ohio State University has released its *2015 Guide to Weed Identification*, a 205 page guide with information on the basic principles of weed identification and full-page, high resolution color photos of the most common Midwestern weeds at different stages of maturity. The guide is available as a free eBook.

 www.digitalbookstore.osu.edu/book/ohio-state-university-guide-weed-identification

USDA Research Search Engine—The National Agricultural Library has unveiled PubAg, a free, public search engine providing access to more than 40,000 full-text journal articles by U.S. Department of Agriculture staff.

 <http://pubag.nal.usda.gov>

Graduate Student Grants—The North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) is now accepting proposals for Graduate Student Grants. Students can submit proposals of up to \$10,000 to fund sustainable agriculture projects. Proposals are due May 5.

 www.northcentralsare.org/Grants/Our-Grant-Programs/Graduate-Student-Grant-Program

Ohio Women in Agriculture Learning Network—Part of a national Extension initiative, the Ohio Women in Agriculture Learning Network is designed to help women in agriculture improve their farm businesses and balance family and personal obligations by providing them with resources like workshops, e-newsletters, webinars, technical assistance, and more. Join by calling (513) 732-7070 or email neal.331@osu.edu.

 www.extension.org/womeninag

Seed Search Engine—Pick A Carrot is a free, customized search engine that helps farmers and gardeners search and compare varieties of seeds from dozens of catalogs. The site features a dedicated search tool that focuses on organic seeds.

 www.pickacarrot.com

New Records Management System—FARMDATA, a new records management system for produce farmers, is available for free download and accessible by both smartphone and desktop computer. The web-based database system allows growers to enter and report production records, including seeding, transplanting, harvesting, input applications, packing, distributing, and customer invoicing.

 www.sourceforge.net/projects/farmdata/

Want to learn more? OEFFA's online Resources section includes links to dozens of websites, publications, and organizations on a wide-range of topics including organic production, food safety, livestock, soil fertility, and more. Go to www.oeffa.org/resources.

Yes Organic! No Genetic Engineering!

In the OEFFA's winter newsletter we asked for tagline ideas for our genetic engineering (GE) educational campaign. Kimberly Zerkle is the winner for her suggested tagline, "It matters from the ground up." Thanks to Kimberly for her suggestion and offer to help out! If you would like to be part of our GE outreach campaign, contact Amalie Lipstreu at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 208 or policy@oeffa.org.

... from the ground up



Chapter Spotlight

Heart of Ohio Chapter

OEFFA's Heart of Ohio Chapter is sponsoring a farm visit to Cat Run Ranch Flower Farm on May 11 from 6:30-8 p.m. Owners Mark and Karen McVay sell flowers to local retail stores and at local farmers' markets which they grow in their greenhouse, hoop house, and raised bed gardens. In addition to flower farming, Mark and Karen will discuss their solar system and water saving techniques. For more information, see pg. 21.

OK River Valley Chapter

Earlier this year, OEFFA's OK River Valley Chapter co-sponsored the eighth annual Local Food Seminar in Georgetown. There were seven workshops and a keynote speaker who talked about food deserts and increasing access to fresh produce.

The chapter had an information table at Farm and Family Night at the Maysville Community and Technical College. Chapter members led a presentation and discussion at that event on genetically engineered food.

The chapter usually meets the third Saturday of each month at a member's house. The meetings include short educational presentations, a work project, and eating good food.

Southwest Chapter

At the final 2014 meeting, OEFFA's Southwest Chapter decided that they would form a Core Team of volunteers which started meeting monthly in January. Several new members are joining long-time SWOEFFA members on the team.

The chapter also discussed what is needed to create a robust regional food system: business training for farmers, good markets, farmer cooperation, a family-farmer friendly food distribution system, reasonably priced farming inputs and equipment, strong consumer commitment, educated consumers, and product differentiation. Using these desired outcomes, the chapter chose the following topics for three 2015 meetings: the finances of farming, a growers and buyers meet-up, and a consumer-focused event. More details will be announced soon.

Little Miami Chapter

Mark your calendars! OEFFA's Little Miami Chapter will meet August 23 at 2pm. Location and additional details will be announced soon.

Lake Effect Chapter

In January, 24 OEFFA Lake Effect Chapter members and others met at the Kent State Geauga campus with Hunter Morrison of the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC) and Grace Gallucci from the Northeast Ohio Area-Wide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). The chapter learned the results of NEOSCC's three-year study of development patterns in northeast Ohio and what citizens say they want for future development. Hunter highlighted the relevance of the findings to small farms, indicating that "the region's prime farmland at the edges of urbanization is too often seen as 'land for future development' and not generally valued as a unique and irreplaceable resource of significance to the region. This underestimates the significance that our farmers and rural communities play in our region's economy and quality of life. We address that issue—and the companion issue of permitting urban agriculture in cities experiencing widespread abandonment." The report, available at www.vibrantneo.org, offers initiatives that protect farmland and support and expand local and regional food initiatives and systems. Hunter offered to meet with Lake Effect members in the 12 counties studied to learn more.

On March 10, chapter members met for their third annual Growers Round Table hosted by Andy and Laura Miller at their farm in Middlefield. OEFFA Policy Program Coordinator Amalie Lipstreu updated the chapter about OEFFA's policy work. Members in attendance re-elected Jake Trethewey as the chapter's board representative. The large group conversed about everything from Mexican bean beetles to local food initiatives to all-things-chickens-and-ducks. Upcoming tentative meetings include an introduction to beekeeping on April 25 and a harvest social at a member farm.

For more information about OEFFA's chapters, see pg. 2 or go to www.oeffa.org/chapter.

In Remembrance

Paul Dutter, 61, of Greenville, died April 4, 2015. Paul was a contract inspector visiting OEFFA certified farms and served as OEFFA Certification Livestock Specialist from 2009 to 2011. Paul was a life-long farmer and had a deep understanding and commitment to organics. He will be missed by his many friends and colleagues at OEFFA. Condolences for the family may be submitted at www.zecharbailey.com.

Gerald "Jerry" Brunetti, 63, passed away on December 20, 2014. Jerry was a popular lecturer and speaker on soil fertility, animal nutrition, and livestock health. He founded Agri-Dynamics in 1979 and served as a board member for the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and the Weston A. Price Foundation. Memorial gifts can be made to PASA at www.pasafarming.org/donate or mailed to PASA-Jerry Brunetti Memorial, PO Box 419, Millheim, PA 16854.

OEFFA Apprenticeship Program: Linking Green Thumbs with Green Hands

OEFFA encourages you to consider our Farm Apprentice Program, where host farms and apprentice farmers can connect. Whether you're a farmer or an apprentice, spring is an excellent time to consider listing your facility as a host farm or to connect with farmers planning for the 2015 season.

To create an apprentice or host farm profile, go to www.oeffa.org. Host farms simply create a listing through the *Good Earth Guide*, then create a profile in the Apprenticeship Program, both of which have links on the home page. Apprentice applicants can create a profile through the Apprenticeship Program link, and approved profiles will be posted for viewing only by registered host farms. For assistance or to learn more, contact Eric Pawlowski at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 209 or eric@oeffa.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For a complete calendar of events go to www.oeffa.org/events

Exploring the Small Farm Dream

Wednesday, May 6–Wednesday, May 27—6–9 p.m.
Crown Point Ecology Center • 3220 Ira Rd., Bath, OH

This four-session course led by Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy will take participants through the process of setting personal and farming goals, assessing available resources, and developing an action plan. The class will feature speakers from Breakneck Acres and Breezy Hill Farm and a tour of Trapp Family Farm. Cost: \$75–\$100/person. For more information, call (330) 657-2542 or go to www.cvcountryside.org/countryside-u-classes.

Glass Rooster Cannery Spring Open House

Saturday, May 9—9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Glass Rooster Cannery • 1673 S. State Rte. 605, Sunbury, OH

The open house will feature tours of the farm, dozens of Ohio crafters, antiques, and food. For more information, call (740) 815-4324 or email susie@glassroostercannery.com.

Cat Run Ranch Flower Farm Tour

Monday, May 11—6:30 p.m.
Cat Run Ranch Flower Farm • 1485 Sportsman Club Rd., Newark, OH

OEFFA's Heart of Ohio Chapter and Mark and Karen McVay will host a tour of their flower farm and discuss commercial and backyard flower growing. For more information, call (740) 877-8738 or email sunbeanfamilyfarm@gmail.com.



Franklin County Local Food Council Meeting

Tuesday, May 19—4:30–7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, July 21—4:30–7:30 p.m.
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission • 111 Liberty St., Columbus, OH

The Franklin County Local Food Council holds public meetings every other month and seeks to promote a resilient local food system in central Ohio. For more information, email fcolfc@gmail.com.

Beekeeping Webinars

Wednesday, May 20—9–10 a.m.
Wednesday, June 17—9–10 a.m.
Wednesday, July 15—9–10 a.m.

OSU Extension offers a free, monthly webinar series on beekeeping. Upcoming sessions feature "American Foul Brood" with Jim Tew of Alabama Cooperative Extension, "Social Insects: An Overview" with Joe Raczkowski of OSU, and "Effect of Tank-Mix Pesticide Combinations on Bees" with Reed Johnson of OSU. Webinars are recorded and archived. For more information, go to <http://u.osu.edu/beelab>.

Botanical Home Health Weekend

Saturday, July 11–Sunday, July 12
Mockingbird Meadows Herbal Health Farm • 16671 Burns Rd., Marysville, OH

Led by Dawn Combs, this course will provide an introduction to using plant-based health in the home and feature topics including basic medicine-making techniques; holistic medicine; herb planting, harvesting, and processing, and more. For more information, call (614) 354-5162 or go to www.mockingbirdmeadows.com.

FIVE-DAY SOLAR ELECTRIC WORKSHOPS

Monday, June 15 – Friday, June 19

OEFFA Office, 41 Crosswell Rd., Columbus, OH

Monday, October 12 – Friday, October 16

Local Roots Market and Cafe, 140 S. Walnut St., Wooster, OH

With prices for photovoltaic (PV) systems falling and demand exploding, solar energy is becoming economical for nearly every home or farm. If you have ever wanted to make your farm energy independent, take your homestead off the grid, or start your own business installing PV systems, now is a great time!

Join OEFFA and Annie and Jay Warmke of Blue Rock Station for a five-day training course where you will learn how to design and install PV systems. The course will be equally divided between lectures and hands-on labs. You will learn with a working PV system, dismantling and reinstalling it, troubleshooting, and testing its proper operation. You will also learn how to integrate a working wind turbine into the PV system. At the end of the week, you will have the opportunity to sit for an internationally recognized certification Level 1 examination offered by the Electronic Technicians Association (ETA), which allows you to receive a respected industry credential demonstrating your knowledge.

Cost: \$930 for OEFFA members, \$970 for non-members. The cost includes ETA fees, an installation toolkit, and a course workbook. Lunch is provided on each class day. Contact OEFFA if you would like to discuss installment options. All attendees must be paid in full by the beginning of their first class.

Registration: Registration is limited to 10 students. Register online at www.oeffa.org by Wednesday, June 10 for the Columbus workshop and Wednesday, October 7 for the Wooster workshop. To register by mail, send a check made out to OEFFA along with the names of all attendees, addresses, phone numbers, and emails to OEFFA Solar Workshop, 41 Crosswell Rd., Columbus, OH 43214. For more information, or to register by phone, please contact Milo Petruziello at (614) 421-2022 Ext. 206 or milo@oeffa.org. For more information about Blue Rock Station, go to www.bluerockstation.com.



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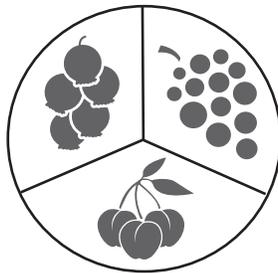
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 Mary Ewalt
 Brenda Franks
 Courtney George
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WELCOME NEW OEFFA STAFF!



Erin Kanuckel, OEFFA's new Member Care Associate, is a familiar face to some members. For two years, Erin worked as a Program Assistant for OEFFA Certification. She left for Maine in fall 2013 to run a bed and breakfast, but fortunately for OEFFA, circumstances have brought her back to Columbus. Erin hails from Howard, Ohio, and had worked as Milwaukee Urban Gardens' Executive Director prior to coming to OEFFA. We are glad you are back Erin, and that our membership service is in such capable hands!

OEFFA is also pleased to welcome **Jen Kindrick**, our newest Certification Specialist, to the team. Jen has a diverse background in sustainable food production, customer service, and marketing. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from The Ohio State University and comes to OEFFA with a spirited passion for sustainable food systems and traditional cooking. Welcome aboard, Jen!

NOW HIRING Diversified, four-season farm seeks full-time paid worker for 2015. Bluestem Farm is in northern Michigan. Send resume to Mary at bluestemfarmers@gmail.com.

LAND AVAILABLE Family seeks a farmer to live and farm on property. Potential own or rent to own land (5 - 300 acres), buildings, equipment, and homestead. Comes as a package. Call Karen in Erie Co. at (419) 433-7612.

LAND WANTED Looking to start a small farm? Let's buy land together, then subdivide to reduce costs. Organizer looking at loamy soils in Lorain and eastern Erie Co. Contact Ben at loraincountylansseekers@gmail.com.

FARM FOR SALE Cut flower farm and greenhouse for sale. Twenty acres of sandy loam, 8800 sq. ft. greenhouse, 2 wells over 50 gpm, outside irrigation, coal and natural gas heat, 3 BR 2 1/2 BA house. Suitable for vegetables. 30 mi. east of Cleveland. Owner wants to retire. Call Carter at (440) 543-4340.

CLASSES AVAILABLE City Folks' Farm Shop in Columbus, easily accessible from I-71, seeks students for upcoming classes. Topics include permaculture, worm composting, urban chickens, and more! View the calendar and register at www.cityfolksfarmshop.com/calendar.

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Un-classified ads are free for members and \$5 for non-members. Submissions no longer than 30 words are due by June 15 for the summer issue. Call (614) 421-2022 Ext. 203 or email newsletter@oeffa.org.

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OEFFA Announces 2015 Stewardship and Service Award Recipients

During OEFFA's 36th annual conference, Bill Dix and Stacy Hall of The Brick Dairy Farm in Athens County were named the recipients of OEFFA's Stewardship Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the sustainable agriculture community. John Sowder of Franklin County received the Service Award, which recognizes outstanding service to OEFFA.

2015 Stewardship Award Winners — Bill Dix and Stacy Hall



In 1992, Bill Dix and Stacy Hall started Big Rumen Farm, a 300 acre pasture-based dairy farm in Athens County, with a small herd of Jersey heifers and a milking parlor. In the years that followed, they joined a regional network of dairy farmers known as "Prograssinators," which in conjunction with Cornell University, helps producers compare financial information to improve the management and profitability of grass-based dairy operations.

Bill and Stacy also purchased a second farm outside of Albany, called The Brick Dairy Farm, named for its red, clay soil. By focusing on grazing rather than confinement, the couple has been able to build top soil and make the land productive.

They worked with Warren and Victoria Taylor to create Snowville Creamery in 2007, a small-scale dairy processing plant located on The Brick Dairy Farm. Fresh, grass-fed milk from Bill and Stacy's 250 cross-bred dairy cows is minimally processed and packaged on-site. Today, Snowville's milk, yogurt, and other products are available in more than 125 retail locations.

2015 Service Award Winner—John Sowder



Photo by George Remington

Long-time OEFFA member John Sowder of Columbus served on OEFFA's Board of Trustees from 1992 to 2015, including multiple terms as board treasurer. John helped to grow OEFFA, develop new administrative systems, and provided dependability and financial guidance during lean years in the organization's history.

He regularly lends his catering and event management skills to OEFFA, helping to organize farm-to-table events and OEFFA's conference meals, which are locally sourced and made from scratch. He can be found each year in the kitchen at the OEFFA conference, where he helps to serve more than 2,000 meals to attendees. He has also helped encourage his peers within Ohio's catering and food industry to serve more local food from Ohio producers.

"John's commitment to OEFFA and central Ohio's local food movement is unquestionable. Always quick to smile and laugh, John has played a leading role in OEFFA's growth and success, though, in John's modest way, it's often behind the scenes and out of sight to most people," said OEFFA Executive Director Carol Goland.

For a full list of past Stewardship and Service Award winners, go to www.oeffa.org/news/?page_id=484.