

Knox County Ag News

March - April 2021



All programs and services are offered regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

Adult Beef Quality Assurance

Options:

1. Recertify online at bqa.org
2. Conduct an on-farm assessment. Forms are available at our office and Extension Educator Sabrina Schirtzinger will help you with the process.
3. Attend an in person county training

County Trainings: (class size is limited)

- Pre Registration is **required!**
- **No walk –ins will be permitted.**
- Masks are required.
- If you are experiencing COVID like symptoms we ask that you do not attend!
- Call our office at 740-397-0401 to register .

Dates:

Monday, March 8, 2021, 6:30 pm
Monday, March 15, 2021, 6:30 pm
Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 9 am

Pesticide & Fertilizer Recertification Dates and Information

Due to COVID-19 the following changes will occur this year:

- Facemasks will be required.
- Maximum capacity 40 people.
- You **MUST** pre-register & pay (\$35.)
- Contact the Extension Office to register 740-397-0401.
- **No walk-ins will be accepted.**

Dates:

March 1st, 2021 8 AM to 12 PM
March 11, 2021 5:30 PM to 9:30 PM
March 25, 2021 1 PM to 5 PM



Corn, Soybean and Wheat Enterprise Budgets - Projected Returns for 2021 Increasing Fertilizer Prices May Force Tough Decisions

Barry Ward, John Barker OSU Extension

The profit margin outlook for corn, soybeans and wheat is relatively positive as planting season approaches. Prices of all three of our main commodity crops have moved higher since last summer and forward prices for this fall are currently at levels high enough to project positive returns for 2021 crop production. Recent increases in fertilizer prices have negatively affected projected returns. Higher crop insurance costs as well as moderately higher energy costs relative to last year will also add to overall costs for 2021.

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>

Considerations of a Flexible Lease Arrangement

Thousands of Ohio crop acres are rented from landowners by farmers. While the most common is likely a cash agreement, the flexible lease may be worthy of consideration for some farmers. This article will provide a broad overview of the flexible lease option, including advantages, disadvantages, and structure.

The information provided here is only a summary from the *Fixed and Flexible Cash Rental Arrangements for Your Farm* published by the North Central Extension Farm Management Committee. Anyone interested in learning more about flexible leasing arrangements is encouraged to read more about this topic at this site: <https://aglease101.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NCFMEC-01.pdf>.

What is a Flexible Lease?

Because of uncertainties with prices, yields, and input costs, some farmers and landowners are apprehensive about entering into a fixed long-term cash rental arrangement. From the perspective of the farmer, the concerns include poor yields, commodity price declines, or sharp increases to input prices might impact cash flow if there is a long-term fixed arrangement. In times like we are experiencing now, landowners want to capitalize on high commodity prices or high yields.

Therefore, the operator and landowner may turn to the use of a flexible cash rent of one kind or another. The idea of a flexible cash rent usually pertains only to the rent charged for cropland.

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>

What to do about trespassing snowmobilers on the farm?

Peggy Hall, OSU Extension

Ohio landowners have seen it before: when the snow flies, so do the snowmobilers. Landowners are forced to watch snowmobilers crossing their fields and driveways and cutting through woods and homesteads, without permission and apparently without concern for property damage. Two common questions from landowners arise at this time: what can I do about them, and will I be liable if there's an accident? While the answers aren't always satisfactory to landowners, several Ohio laws try to address these two questions.

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>



Herbicide Resistance in Ohio Waterhemp Populations

Mark Loux, OSU Extension

Waterhemp populations across the Midwest continue to develop more complex variations of herbicide resistance. Multiple resistance to an increasing number of herbicide sites of action is the norm in many populations in states west of Ohio. Waterhemp has on the whole developed resistance to seven sites of action, including the following:

Group 2 – ALS inhibitors – chlorimuron, imazethapyr, etc

Group 4 – Synthetic auxins – 2,4-D, dicamba, etc

Group 5 – Photosystem II inhibitors – atrazine, metribuzin, etc

Group 9 – EPSP synthase inhibitor – glyphosate

Group 14 – PPO inhibitors – fomesafen, flumioxazin, sulfentrazone, etc

Group 15 – long chain fatty acid inhibitors – metolachlor, pyroxasulfone, etc

Group 27 – HPPD inhibitors – mesotrione, isoxaflutole, topramezone, etc

Individual populations with resistance to three or more sites of action are common. Mutations are occurring that confer resistance to several of these sites of action simultaneously, through a resistance mechanism that enhances the metabolism and inactivation of the herbicides by the plant. For example, there appears to be a linkage in the resistance to mesotrione and atrazine, where resistance to one means it's likely that resistance to the other occurs also. Weed scientists have concluded that this weed is capable of developing resistance to any herbicide site of action used against it. We aren't actually sure what the correct recommendation is for stewardship of herbicides once a single mutation can confer resistance to multiple sites of action. Which is the reason we stress the need to take steps in mid to late season to prevent seed from plants that survive management strategies.

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>

Summary of Multi-State State Research on Soybean Row Width, Planting Date, and Plant Population

Dr. Laura Lindsey, OSU Extension

With funding from the United Soybean Board, soybean agronomists across the US came together to summarize soybean row width, planting date, and seeding rate research trials. (Ohio-specific research trials were funded by Ohio Soybean Council.) Here's what we found:

Row width: Soybean row width varies across the US. In Ohio, most farmers plant soybean in 7.5, 15, or 30-inch row widths. Across the US, narrow rows (7 to 15 inch) out-yielded wide rows (≥ 30 inches) 69% of the time. Narrow rows tend to out-yield wide rows due to earlier canopy closure which facilitates light interception and drives photosynthesis. For the full report on row spacing: https://soybeanresearchinfo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FINAL-2700-002-20-Row-Spacing_Science-for-Success-Dec-22_v1.pdf

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>



Corn and Soybean School: Q and A on Corn Disease Management with Fungicides

Dr. Pierce Paul, OSU Extension

On Feb 11, 2021, I gave a talk entitled “**Management of *Gibberella ear rot and Vomitoxin in Corn with Fungicides: Lessons Learned from Head Scab***” as part of the 2021 Virtual Corn and Soybean School. I summarized years of fungicide efficacy research on head scab, a disease of wheat caused by the same fungus (*Fusarium graminearum* [*Gibberella zeae*]) that causes *Gibberella ear rot* (GER) in corn. Head scab and vomitoxin in wheat have been more widely studied than GER and vomitoxin in corn, as a result, a lot more is known about fungicide efficacy against scab/vomitoxin than against GER/vomitoxin. I therefore used lessons learned from head scab research, coupled with data from a limited number of GER fungicide efficacy studies to provide guideline on GER and vomitoxin management in corn. More than 220 people attended the 40-min-long program, asking questions covering various aspects of corn pathology. Below are more complete responses to several of these questions:

Q: How do you explain high vomitoxin levels in grain with no apparent ear rot observed? Can drought stress alone be a culprit?

A: Infection of the ear, development of visual symptoms (**ear rot**), and contamination of grain with vomitoxin all depend on weather conditions during the weeks after silk emergence. Once the fungus enters the ear via the silks (infection) and begins to colonize the developing grain, it produces vomitoxin, even if subsequent weather conditions are not favorable for mold and ear rot to develop on the outside of the ear. This is particularly true if infections occur late and conditions become relatively dry and unfavorable for visual symptoms to develop.

Q: It looks like the triazoles are doing the work on VOM, more than strobies, is this correct?

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>

Health and Safety Recommendations for On-Farm Grain Bin Facilities

Source: Wayne Dellinger, Dee Jepsen, OSU Extension

In the ten-year period from 2009 to 2018 Ohio had 9 fatalities in grain handling and grain storage facilities. Five of these fatalities were from suffocation and 2 were from falls from the structure, while the others involved auger entanglements. Purdue University reported 38 grain entrapments across the U.S. in 2019. Twenty-three of these entrapments resulted in a fatality.

February 21st begins Nationwide Insurance Grain Bin Safety Week. Being the season when dry grains are being hauled to market and bins are being emptied, it is appropriate to provide winter safety reminders for the primary concerns at your on-farm storage facilities.

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>





Grow with Us- Become a Master Gardener Volunteer

Knox County Master Gardener Volunteer training will be held May-June 2021.

Becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer is an ongoing process. Your contributions to the community start during the initial course. Afterwards, you will have the skills and knowledge necessary to strengthen your relationship with the environment and the community.

To become a Master Gardener Volunteer, you will have the opportunity to complete 50 hours of classroom training and make a difference in your community by donating 50 hours of your time to service. Once you have completed these hours you will then be an official Master Gardener Volunteer.

In addition to learning the various topics, you will be able to practice your skills through many volunteer opportunities. You will have exposure to information from current research and success to specialists at The Ohio State University.

As **Master Gardener Volunteers**, we provide several resources and events for the community to help educate the public on the importance of horticulture and the issues surrounding it.

We provide annual programming for the community including events and workshops.

As **Master Gardener Volunteers**, we explore our deep horticultural roots to learn about the land on which we live the importance of preserving its beauty. We do not take without giving back, whether its form the Earth or in our own community. We strive to preserve the natural beauty of our community while sharing our love of gardening.

If you are interested in becoming a Knox County Master Gardener Volunteer, please contact Extension Educator Sabrina Schirtzinger at Schirtzinger.55@osu.edu or

740-397-0401





Strawberries ~ A Valuable Small Fruit

By: Julie Divelbiss—Knox County Master Gardener

Strawberries (*Fragaria x ananassa*) are an easy fruit to grow that will reap many rewards with minimal investments of time and space. Crop production begins one year after the initial planting and continues for two-three years thereafter. Nutritionally, one half cup of berries will provide about 10% of the adult Daily Value of Vitamin C, plus the phytonutrient anthocyanin, deep red color pigments, act as antioxidants. And what's not to like about eating shortcake, drinking smoothies or preserving jam!

Select disease resistant cultivars from the two main types:

June bearing ~ produce berries over a 2-3 week period in early summer

Everbearing ~ produce berries consistently from late spring through fall

Consult nurseries and resource guides to help make selections. My favorite cultivar is Jewel, a June bearing midseason variety with large fan-shaped, juicy fruit, good flavor and excellent keeping quality. It is a reliably healthy, taller plant that keeps berries upright; fruit is easy to pick off of strong stems.



In Ohio, dormant-dug bare rootstock should be planted as soon as the soil can be worked (April 15 – May 15). Choose a sunny spot, with fertile, well-drained soil, and good airflow, then set the plants about a foot apart with the crown at soil level. Keep the soil line in the MIDDLE of the crown; roots straight down, not curling or cutting. Water, then re-examine the crown position and then repeat several days later. If space is limited, plants can be incorporated into edible landscapes and also do well in raised beds, containers or hanging baskets.

In the first season, remove blossoms of June bearing varieties the entire year and for Everbearing varieties until July 1. This is so tempting to not do, but necessary to support root growth! Mulch with straw 1" – 2" deep to conserve moisture (1" - 2" rainfall or equivalent is necessary per week in the summer months) and to help control weeds. In early December, pull the straw over the plant to prevent the crown from heaving out of freezing/thawing soil over winter.

In subsequent seasons, the straw can protect blossoms from late spring frosts as well as help keep berries clean. Contact with the soil can cause rot. Strawberries propagate by sending out runners. Clip them off to keep the plants productive or allow a few to remain guiding them to grow into an established matted row. Matted rows require renovation. To learn more about this process or more information about growing strawberries consult the following Ohioline Fact Sheet. <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/hyg-1424#:~:text=In%20Ohio%2C%20the%20ripening%20season,the%20second%20in%20early%20fall.>



The Battle for Some Flowers in My Yard

by Kay Everett—Knox County Master Gardener

Since moving out to the country, I have been fascinated by all the critters that populate the property and for the most part, I give them the freedom to come and go as they like. I had moved here from an area too long settled by humans. The only animals I saw were a neighbor's cat or dog. Moving here was a unique and delightful experience for me.

Somewhere around the fourth year here, I began missing all the flowers that I was able to grow in abundance in my fenced garden. I had tried planting a few of my favorite flowers but they consistently disappeared overnight eaten by the local voracious nocturnal wildlife.

I looked around at my neighbors well-tended yards and saw that they were able to grow hostas, day lilies, geraniums, cornflowers and tick seed flowers. I created a few small flowerbeds while leaving most of my yard to the local fauna. I went to a plant nursery and bought the plants I deemed successful in my neighborhood. I purchased and planted most of the plants – lots of bright yellow and red which I like. When I got up the next morning only the coneflowers had survived. Not only were the flowers bitten off the tops of all the plants I had in the ground, but the critters had also gone around and bit off the tops of all the plants I had not yet planted.



Not wanting to hurt the resident animals that live here, I got on the internet to find a deterrent that would allow them to live on my property but also allow me to grow a few flowers. I found an article that said that chili pepper flakes were a good deterrent that would not harm the animals. It seems to have worked but I had a small problem -- rain. Here in Ohio it rains a lot. I noticed that as soon as the rain came, I had to reapply the chili pepper. I believe that chili pepper likely works best in dry desert-type locals like Arizona or California. Chili pepper flakes may be a too expensive proposition for Ohio with all the rain we get (even though I was buying it in 10-ounce containers at Costco).

But if you still decide to try chili pepper, make sure to wear gloves when you spread it and never ever rub your eyes until washing up!



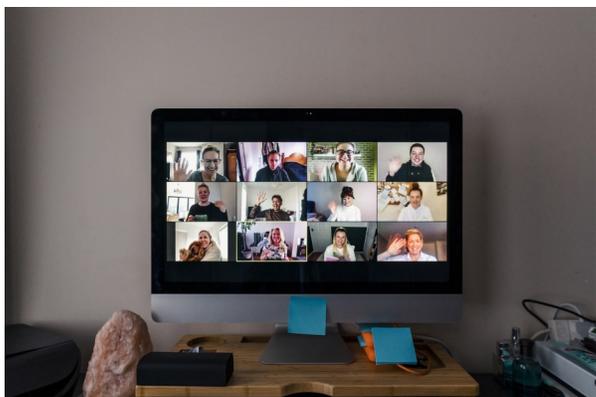
Using Zoom Well

By: Kristina Sullivan—Knox County Master Gardener

New ways to learn are in the air, for all of us. You may have watched your kids or grandchildren go to school on their computers, but you are also invited to use new tools for educational credits in the Master Gardener program. And your friends and relatives may be inviting you to be part of distanced "meetings." One of the most popular agents for these meetings is the Zoom software. Information follows on what Zoom can do, and how to take advantage of it and communicate effectively.

Using Zoom from Home

Zoom is a software program now very popular, allowing users to communicate using computers, electronic tablets, or cell phones. Zoom users can record sound and pictures or video, and share computer screens. The company has invented some specialized terms that are likely to become part of our common language, such as "Zoom Meeting," a conference using smart phones or computer cameras. Another term we see in business settings is the "Zoom Room," a room all wired, connected, and organized for Zoom Meetings, usually only possible for big companies.



Most of us are using Zoom from home. Plan for good communication, for sound and sight. Block your Zoom space from household noise as much as possible; it can interfere with your own effort to contribute to a meeting. Close the room door, or ask housemates to keep it quiet until after you are finished. Plan a light on your face, from the side if possible, so that others can recognize you. Check your own background for your picture to be sure there is nothing showing that you would rather keep private. Make a space for paper and pencil in case you want to keep notes or write down a name, title, phone number or Web address (URL). If you are making a report or presentation, remember the visual lessons you learned

from video taping: have neat hair, dark clothing (bright white makes a glare on camera), and sit up straight.

If the meeting is expected to be a long one, more than 45 minutes, set up a glass of water or other beverage in a handy spot. Keep tissues handy for sneezes. When you speak, speak up! The microphones cannot fix whispers or mumbling.

Make a listening space in your mind, clearing out other thoughts and concerns. Most of the OSU lecturers available to us have spent many years studying and developing their knowledge of a range of topics, and we will benefit most from them by listening well.

The person organizing the meeting or lecture sends you an invitation in the form of a URL in an email. By clicking on the URL, you send a signal that you are ready to join the meeting, and you will be admitted. Log on early and look at the screen. You can participate by sound only by muting the microphone icon (click on it); it is actually a good idea to mute the microphone except when you are talking. This blocks your dog barking noise, and helps others to hear better. You can also block your picture. You can record or tape the meeting. There are several features Zoom can do, some of which are only for the organizer and some available to everyone on the call, such as screen sharing.

Read More At: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>

CFAES

Knox County Quality Assurance Update – February 3, 2021

OSU Extension – Knox County

Knox County Junior Fair Quality Assurance Update

Andrea Rees – rees.139@osu.edu, 740-627-1374Samantha Beheler – knoxcountyjfair@yahoo.com, 740-751-9545

Livestock & Equine Quality Assurance

Livestock Quality Assurance Zoom Training Sessions: This option allows livestock exhibitors to register and attend an online Zoom meeting, during which QA training materials would be presented. Sessions will be limited to a total of 40 members.

- Livestock Quality Assurance will be offered by Zoom on the following dates:

February 22 – 6 p.m.	February 27 – 9 a.m.
March 4 – 6 p.m.	March 24 – 6 p.m.
March 30 – 6 p.m.	April 8 – 6 p.m.
April 19 – 6 p.m.	April 24 – 1 p.m.
May 8 – 9 a.m.	May 18 – 6 p.m.
May 26 – 6 p.m.	
- Youth members will need to access the following survey: <https://go.osu.edu/2021livestockqaregistration> to sign up for the session they would like. Each session will be limited to 40 members.

Horse Quality Assurance Zoom Training Sessions: This option allows horse exhibitors to register and attend an online Zoom meeting, during which QA training materials will be presented. Session will be limited to 20 members.

- Horse Quality Assurance will be offered by Zoom on the following dates:

April 12 – 6:30 p.m.	April 18 – 6:30 p.m.
April 21 – 6:30 p.m.	May 10 – 6:30 p.m.
May 19 – 6:30 p.m.	
- Youth members will need to access the following survey: <https://go.osu.edu/2021horseqaregistration> to sign up for the session they would like. Each session will be limited to 20 members.



Horse Quality Assurance Designations

All members attending the Knox County Junior Fair with their horse and/or other species will need to complete at least one Quality Assurance session for 2021 in order to be eligible to show at the fair this year (plus other criteria).

- 1st Year horse exhibitors with only a horse will need to complete a Horse QA session
- 1st Year horse exhibitors with a horse and a market animal will need to complete a Horse QA session **and** a Livestock QA session
- Youth with only a horse (2nd year+) will need to complete a Horse QA session
- Youth with a horse (2nd year+) and a market animal will need to complete a Livestock QA session

Livestock & Horse Quality Assurance Online Test Out: This option will be for youth that are ages 15 and older. This would be a test-out for the remainder of their 4-H/FFA career (multi-year certification) just like Andrea offers at the end of regularly attended QA session. Members need to contact Andrea at 740-397-0401 or at rees.139@osu.edu to schedule an appointment to take the test. Should they not pass the test, they would be required to complete one of the other training options.



USDA Extends General Signup for Conservation Reserve Program

The USDA is extending the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Signup period, which had previously been announced as ending on Feb. 12, 2021. USDA will continue to accept offers as it takes this opportunity for the incoming Administration to evaluate ways to increase enrollment. Under the previous Administration, incentives and rental payment rates were reduced resulting in an enrollment shortfall of over 4 million acres. The program, administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for 10 to 15 years for land devoted to conservation purposes, as well as other types of payments. Before the General CRP Signup period ends, producers will have the opportunity to adjust or resubmit their offers to take advantage of planned improvements to the program.

This signup for CRP gives producers an opportunity to enroll land for the first time or re-enroll land under existing contracts that will be expiring Sept. 30, 2021. All interested producers are encouraged to contact their [FSA County office](#) for more information.

USDA Announces Increase to Certain Incentive Payments for Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is increasing incentive payments for practices installed on land enrolled in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is upping the Practice Incentive Payment for installing practices, from 5 percent to 20 percent. Additionally, producers will receive a 10 percent incentive payment for water quality practices on land enrolled in CRP's continuous signup. FSA administers CRP on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Under continuous CRP, producers can enroll environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices with signup available at any time. FSA automatically accepts offers provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the number of acres FSA is allowed to enroll in CRP, which was set by the 2018 Farm Bill.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended primarily to control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. The program marks its 35-year anniversary this month.



For more information on CRP, visit fsa.usda.gov, or contact your FSA county office.



Transitioning Expiring CRP Land to Beginning, Veteran or Underserved Farmers

CRP contract holders are encouraged to transition their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to beginning, veteran or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP provides annual rental payments to the landowner or operator for up to two additional years after the CRP contract expires.

CRP contract holders no longer need to be a retired or retiring owner or operator to transition their land. TIP participants must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to lease long term (at least five years) land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to a beginning, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher who is not a family member.

To be considered eligible, veteran, beginning, or SDA farmers and CRP participants must enroll in TIP during the period beginning 2 years before the CRP contract expiration date and before August 15th of the Fiscal Year that the CRP contract is scheduled to expire. The TIP application must be submitted prior to completing the lease or sale of the affected lands. New landowners or renters that return the land to production must use sustainable grazing or farming methods.

For more information on TIP, contact your Knox County FSA office.

Requesting Copies of CRP Contracts for Ohio CAUV Program

The Ohio Department of Taxation will be updating property values in Ohio due to a legislative change in how land used exclusively for conservation practices is valued under the Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV) program. County auditors may reduce the value of acreage enrolled in conservation programs to \$230 per acre.

The county auditor will need a copy of the CRP-1 contract and map for each landowner. FSA will only provide a copy of the contract and map directly to the individuals on the contract unless a third party authorization is signed allowing FSA to provide the documents directly to the county auditor.

To request a copy of your CRP contact and map or to complete a third party authorization, please contact the Knox County FSA office at 740-392-0891.

February 2021 Loan and Interest Rates

Farm Operating Loans, Direct	-- 1.375%	Farm Storage Facility Loan, 3 year	-- 0.250%
Farm Ownership Loans, Direct	-- 2.625%	Farm Storage Facility Loan, 5 year	-- 0.375%
Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment	-- 1.500%	Farm Storage Facility Loan, 7 year	-- 0.750%
Emergency Loans	-- 2.375%	Farm Storage Facility Loan, 10 year	-- 1.000%
Commodity Loans	-- 1.125%	Farm Storage Facility Loan, 12 year	-- 1.125%



Proper Management of CRP Grass Cover

In the past, aesthetic mowing of CRP grass cover was a widely accepted practice by many participants. Today with more research and understanding, it has been shown that properly managed grass cover will reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and is more beneficial to wildlife than annually mowed grass covers.

Wildlife, especially grassland birds including pheasants and quail, and pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, view properly managed CRP cover as a source of food and habitat suitable to raise their young. Wildlife will not be attracted to CRP cover if plants are not allowed to mature. Game birds and bees are disappearing because of habitat loss.

Properly managed grass cover does not include noxious weeds such as thistle and teasel or woody species like trees and multiflora rose. These noxious weeds must be controlled. This can be done in several ways. Mowing of CRP cover, not to exceed 20% of the total CRP acres in a field, is permitted. This activity must be included in your conservation plan and be conducted outside of Ohio's primary nesting season (**March 1st – July 15th**). The location of this mowing shall be changed from year to year. Another option to control noxious weeds is by spot mowing affected areas or spot spraying of an approved herbicide. These treatments will have a minimal effect on the CRP practice cover's ability to meet the purposes of erosion control, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

Unauthorized disturbance of CRP cover is considered a violation of the terms and conditions of the CRP contract and conservation plan. Violations could potentially result in hefty penalties including contract termination and refund of all contract related payments.

Properly maintained CRP cover can be very attractive if noxious weeds and invasive species are controlled and grasses and wildflowers are allowed to mature. Please scout your CRP fields before weeds go to seed. Contact your local FSA office for permission to spot treat your CRP grass cover during Ohio's primary nesting season (**March 1st – July 15th**). Plan to have your CRP cover assessed for the need of management activities that are designed to enhance your CRP cover for wildlife. Management is a contractual obligation that is outlined in your CRP-1 Appendix and conservation plan.

Contact the FSA office for more information on proper maintenance and management of CRP practice cover.





March 15 Deadline for Enrollment for 2021 ARC and PLC

ARC and PLC provide income support to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

Although 1,033,310 contracts have been completed to date, this represents less than 59% of the more than 1.7 million contracts anticipated by the Agency. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears.

Producers who do not complete enrollment by close of business local time on Monday, March 15 will not be enrolled in ARC or PLC for the 2021 crop year and will be ineligible to receive a payment should one trigger for an eligible crop.

ARC and PLC contracts can be emailed, faxed or physically signed and mailed back to FSA. Producers with level 2 eauthentication access can electronically sign contracts. Service Center staff can also work with producers to sign and securely transmit contracts electronically through two commercially available tools: Box and OneSpan. You can learn more about these solutions at farmers.gov/mydocs. Producers may also make arrangements to drop off signed contracts at the FSA county office. Please call ahead for local mailing or drop off information and options for submitting signed contracts electronically.

Producers are eligible to enroll on farms with base acres for the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium- and short-grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Yield Data and Web-Based Decision Tools Available

FSA recently updated the [annual and benchmark yields](#) for ARC/PLC program years 2019, 2020 and 2021. This data is useful to producer in choosing to participate in either ARC or PLC.

For added assistance with ARC and PLC decisions, USDA partnered with the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University to offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

[Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), the University of Illinois tool that offers farmers the ability to run payment estimate modeling for their farms and counties for ARC-County and PLC.

[ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), the Texas A&M tool that allow producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2019 and 2020. Producers who have used the tool in the past should see their username and much of their farm data will already be available in the system.

Crop Insurance Considerations

Producers are reminded that enrolling in ARC or PLC programs can impact eligibility for some crop insurance products. Producers who elect and enroll in PLC also have the option of purchasing Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) through their Approved Insurance Provider. Unlike SCO, RMA's Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) is unaffected by participating in ARC for the same crop, on the same acres. You may elect ECO regardless of your farm program election.



Cover Crop Guidelines

The Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) worked together to develop consistent, simple and a flexible policy for cover crop practices.

Cover crops, such as grasses, legumes and forbs, can be planted: with no subsequent crop planted, before a subsequent crop, after prevented planting acreage, after a planted crop, or into a standing crop.

Termination:

The cover crop termination guidelines provide the timeline for terminating cover crops, are based on zones and apply to non-irrigated cropland. To view the zones and additional guidelines visit nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/landuse/crops/ and click "Cover Crop Termination Guidelines."

The cover crop may be terminated by natural causes, such as frost, or intentionally terminated through chemical application, crimping, rolling, tillage or cutting. A cover crop managed and terminated according to NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines is **not** considered a crop for crop insurance purposes.

Reporting:

The intended use of cover only will be used to report cover crops. This includes crops

that were terminated by tillage and reported with an intended use code of green manure. An FSA policy change will allow cover crops to be hayed and grazed. Program eligibility for the cover crop that is being hayed or grazed will be determined by each specific program.

If the crop reported as cover only is harvested for any use other than forage or grazing and is not terminated properly, then that crop will no longer be considered a cover crop.

Crops reported with an intended use of cover only will not count toward the total cropland on the farm. In these situations, a subsequent crop will be reported to account for all cropland on the farm.





Are You Recording Your Fertilizer Applications????

We'd **LIKE** to think your answer to that question is "yes", but in reviewing the applications for the Knox SWCD Cover Crop program from last year where one of the scoresheet sections was based on having fertilizer application records, we were alarmed to see that many times that answer was "no".

As a gentle reminder... Section 901:5-4 of the Ohio Administrative Code requires anyone applying fertilizer (except starter fertilizer) for agricultural production on fifty (50) acres or more to keep detailed records of their fertilizer applications.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE HARD! Local farmers can use a mobile device application developed by the Knox SWCD and Knox County Farm Bureau to help track their fertilizer and manure applications and ensure compliance with regulatory record keeping requirements for fertilizer applications.

The ONMRK app features drop-down menus that make it easy and quick for farmers to record their fertilizer or manure application. The app automatically records the current weather conditions and forecast for the next 24 hours (a requirement of 901:5-4 OAC). Those records can then be printed through an internet portal.

After setting up the ONMRK app on their mobile device, farmers can easily record what nutrients they apply on their farms and fields. It uses the device GPS system to pinpoint exactly where farmers are on their acreage and give an accurate report instantly. The app will also warn you if weather conditions aren't favorable to apply fertilizer or manure nutrients.

The web account which instantly links farmers' data and updates records whether they are recorded through a mobile device or from a computer can be set up at onmrk.com. [The mobile device app can be downloaded to your Android or Apple mobile device from both Google Play and the App Store. You must set up your web account before you can utilize the mobile device application.](#)

For questions on the record keeping requirements or the ONMRK app you can call the SWCD office at 740-393-6724.





April is Ohio Native Plant Month

Brian Hackett, Wildlife Specialist, Knox SWCD

In the gray doldrums of winter many people look forward to the spring and heralding in warmer, longer days. April and May, for many in Central Ohio, is the season for planting and spending more time outdoors. Back in 2019, Governor DeWine officially dedicated April as Native Plant Month in Ohio. In doing so, the Buckeye state became just one of a small handful of states to recognize the importance of these plants in our environment.

Why native plants? The short answer is that our ecosystems *need* them. The long answer is that there exists a deep connection between our native plants and insects. The energy that flows through all living organisms on Earth is derived, in some form, from the sun. Plants are the catalysts of this energy transfer. All animals get their energy directly from plants, or by eating something that has eaten a plant. The group of animals most responsible for passing energy from plants to other animals is insects.

A key concept to remember is that plants do not want to be eaten, so they create chemicals as a biodefense mechanism. These chemicals make the plant unappetizing to would be consumers. Over time, insects have evolved ways around these specific chemical defenses. However, much like humans specialize on a trade to excel at it, nearly all insects specialize on certain plants. This is an evolutionary checks and balances. The plant doesn't get overrun by hungry insects and the insects create niches. The only issue is that when you specialize in something, your livelihood depends on it.

As humans expanded their global trade, ornamental plants from other countries were brought here intentionally and accidentally. As some of these species escaped from our yards and into our natural areas they became invasive. These invasive species out compete our native plants and suppress their regeneration. Combined with a larger human footprint, introduced diseases, increased browsing pressure, and herbicide use there has been a steady decline in the biomass of native plant species across the country.

This April, head out to one of Central Ohio's great native plant nurseries such as Leaves for Wildlife in Sunbury, Natives in Harmony in Marengo, or Riverside Native Trees in Delaware. Many Soil & Water Districts have a native plant sale in the spring as well. For additional information on native plants and Native Plant Month, check out ohionativeplantmonth.org or the 'Plant Native Initiative' page on the knoxswcd.org website. The Central Ohio water quality group *Be the Change for Clean Water* has a list of Soil & Water District plant sales under the 'Get Involved' tab on their website, bethechangeforcleanwater.org.

Feel free to reach out to our office for ideas on which native plants would suit the lighting and soils that you have on your property. We can tailor recommendations based on your goals such as; wildlife habitat, plants for pollinators, nut/seed production, timber production, or aesthetics.



Native Plant Spotlight!

Each newsletter, I will be highlighting an Ohio native perennial, shrub, and tree.

Perennial –

Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)

This beautiful perennial is one of the first wildflowers to bloom in the spring. The showy lavender colored flowers appear in late April or early May and persist until July. It is one of the first plants to feed emerging pollinators. Long lived and clump forming, when allowed to fill an area it works great as a low groundcover. Found naturally in woodlands, it does prefer partial to full shade although it can tolerate full sun if the soil doesn't dry out.



Shrub –

Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

A superb native shrub with year-round interest! Black chokeberry is a great replacement for invasive burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) as its leaves turn spectacular shades of red, orange, and yellow. It blooms in mid-spring, small clusters of white flowers that give way to glossy black fruit. The flowers are visited by pollinators and the fruits are typically gobbled up by birds. A very hardy and dependable shrub that grows 3-8 feet tall and 3-6 feet wide, it can adapt to wet and dry soils. This shrub prefers full to partial sun.



Tree –

American Plum (*Prunus Americana*)

This is a small, fast-growing tree that tends to have colony-forming tendencies in the wild. In early spring it is covered by small white flowers before the leaves emerge. Fruit is sweet, edible plums with a pink to red skin, about 1 inch in diameter usually appearing in late summer. It is a great tree for all types of wildlife. American plum can be paired with Eastern redbud for a gorgeous spring showing of white and magenta flowers. At maturity it can grow to be about 15-20 feet tall. It tolerates a range of soils and is drought resistant when established. Prefers full to partial sun.



Eastern White Pine Packet



(25 seedlings 2yr. 3"- 5") \$15/packet

(5 seedlings 4yr. TP 2-2, 8"- 12") \$13/packet

These seedlings are large conifers with needles 5 to a cluster and 2 to 5 inches long. This is an excellent shade and ornamental tree. Our best pine for lumber and a rapid growth rate.

Norway Spruce Packet



(5 seedlings 4yr. TP 2-2, 12"- 18") \$10/packet

(25 seedlings 2yr. 10"- 14") \$15/packet

A medium to rapid growing evergreen of conical form. Cones are pendant and the needles usually have four sides. Stiff and sharp to the touch. Good drainage is necessary.

White Flowering Dogwood Packet

(3 seedlings 18"- 24") \$9/packet



This is a small tree growing to approximately 25 feet in height. It is one of the finest ornamental trees in the Eastern United States. Slow growing, long lived and tolerates either sun or shade on a dry or well-drained soil.

Nut Tree Packet (8 seedlings/2 varieties) \$13/packet



American Hazelnut: Grows 8 to 10 feet in height. Well aerated and light soils such as loamy sands, sandy loams, and loams support vigorous growth. Flowers in March and April; the fruit ripens from July to September. This uniquely flavored nut is eagerly sought by many wildlife species.



Chinese Chestnut: A prolific bearer of delicious nuts, similar to the American Chestnut, but is blight resistant. Smaller than the American Chestnut. With plenty of room to grow, it will resemble the shape of an apple tree. The chestnut, like the oaks, holds its leaves during the fall and winter.

Fraser Fir Packet (5 seedlings/ 15"- 20") \$9/packet



This is a classy tall fir tree that has short dark-green needles with silver undersides. It is among the most classy of the conifers. A great ornamental and Christmas tree because of its density and compactness. Fraser Firs will grow in most locations but must have good drainage. Fraser Fir is a medium-sized tree, 40 to 70 feet high and one to more than two feet in diameter.

Hardwood Packet (15 seedlings/3 varieties) \$21/packet



Sugar Maple: A favorite shade tree with reliable fall color. Valued for its hard dense, fine-grained and difficult-to-split wood. Trees in open grow to 80 feet tall and 40 feet wide. Requires a fertile, well drained soil and ample moisture. Full sun or partial shade. Performs poorly in compacted soil with limited root space.



Tulip Poplar: Oval to round crown. Beautiful yellow, tulip-like flowers attract honey bees. Bright green foliage turns yellow in fall. Needs full sun and plenty of space. Grows 70-90 feet with a spread of 35-50 feet. Good to use to fill in vacant spots in tree plantings.



Pin Oak: Takes its names from the many short, pin like twigs that clutter the horizontal or downward sloping branches. The leaf has five to seven deep lobes with long teeth; it is dark

Red Oak Packet (10 seedlings 12"- 18") \$12/packet



This wide, massive, long-lived shade tree is fast growing reaching 80 to 90 feet at maturity. It's lustrous green leaves change to russet red in the fall. It is commercially valuable timber and provides acorns for wildlife.

Plantskydd Soluble Powder Deer Repellent

Proven effective in commercial applications, this 100% natural product is now available to the home gardener and landscape professional. Animals avoid treated ornamentals, shrubs, perennials and annuals. The Plantskydd can last up to six months over winter on dormant ornamental shrubs and three months on most other succulent /broadleaf plants. The smell of the blood meal base powder deters the deer and wildlife. For more information visit www.plantskydd.com



Knox Soil & Water Conservation District

160 Columbus Road, Mt. Vernon (740) 393-6724

“Serving Our Community and Touching the Earth”



The Knox Soil and Water Conservation District conducts a Wildlife Packet program each year that is designed to meet a specific need by landowners to acquire small numbers of trees and shrub stock. This stock is suitable for use in backyards, odd corners, steep banks, or for the development of wildlife land. Transplanting is not necessary and with reasonable care a fine planting can be developed. All stock is state and federally inspected. It may be necessary for us to make reasonable substitutions based on availability of certain species; however, we guarantee that only first quality plants will be used.

The deadline for ordering your packets is April 2nd, 2021 or until our supply is exhausted. There is no limit to the number of packets ordered, however, payment must be included with your order and orders will be processed on a first come basis. In April, you will receive notice when the packets may be picked up at the Knox SWCD office at 160 Columbus Road. We cannot deliver or mail packets. Purchasers must pick up their orders as we cannot be responsible for packets not picked up, therefore please pick up your order promptly when notified.

Planting instructions, as well as a guide to plant, will accompany your packet at the time of pickup. Payment can be made through a money order, personal check, or cash and must accompany the order. Please remember that these plants are seedlings and the packet will be about the size of a small bag of groceries. You will be notified of the pickup time with a postcard and/or email. Pick up time should be around the third week of April. The District will not be responsible for condition of seedlings if not picked up promptly. If you do not receive a postcard during the second week of April, please contact the Knox SWCD at (740) 393-6724 for pickup times.

KNOX SWCD WILDLIFE PACKET ORDER FORM

Item	Seedling/ Packet	Qty		Price		Total
Eastern White Pine- 3yr	25		x	\$15.00	=	
Eastern White Pine- 4yr	5		x	\$10.00	=	
Norway Spruce- 2yr	25		x	\$15.00	=	
Norway Spruce- 4yr	5		x	\$10.00	=	
White Flowering Dogwood	3		x	\$9.00	=	
Nut Tree	8		x	\$15.00	=	
Hardwood	15		x	\$21.00	=	
Red Oak	10		x	\$13.00	=	
Fraser Fir	5		x	\$9.00	=	
Marking Flags	100		x	\$8.00	=	
Plantsydd- Powder	1 lb		x	\$20.00	=	
Plantsydd- Granular	3 lb		x	\$22.00	=	
Plantsydd- Liquid (RTU)	1 qt		x	\$16.00	=	
Grand Total					\$	

Receipt # (office use only)



Deadline
April 2nd, 2021
 *or until supply
 is exhausted

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (for pick up notification): _____

SEND PAYMENT WITH CHECKS PAYABLE TO: KNOX SWCD, P.O. BOX 270, MOUNT VERNON, OH 43050

Upcoming Important Dates

From USDA Office

- March 1—Primary Nesting Season begins
- March 5—Deadline to apply for QLA Program
- March 15—Deadline to purchase
- March 15—Deadline to obtain 2021 NAP coverage on spring crops and hemp crops
- March 15—ARC/PLC signup deadline for 2021 Program Election and Enrollment Class
- April 23—Deadline for CRP Grasslands

From OSU Extension Office

- March 1st, 11th, and 25th - Pesticide recertification classes. Must call to register.
- March 8, 15 and April 6th Adult Beef QA
- March 14th - Farmers Market Vendor Applications due
- March 15 - 4-H Enrollment Deadline
- March 18—GAP Training
- April 11— 2– 4pm Victory Garden/ Free Seed Packet Distribution

From Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District

- April 2nd –Tree Packet Orders are due
- May 1st— Scholarship Deadline. More information at knoxswcd.org

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OSU Extension Knox County
160 Columbus Road
P.O. Box 1268
Mount Vernon, OH 43050