

Knox County Ag News

January- February 2021



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.
- First priority will be given to Knox County residents.
- Out of county residents may attend if there is space available.
- Zoom options may be available.
- Subject to change depending on COVID-19 restrictions

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

Knox County Ag Agencies need your help to help promote conservation by establishing a long-term, resource – conserving plant species such as approved grasses or trees covers to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and develop wildlife habitat. Knox County used to be a forerunner in CRP. We were the first to implement strip farming, held the most CRP contracts in the state for years, and have always been conservation minded. You can contribute to the legacy!

CRP has a lot to offer. Maybe you have looked into CRP before and decided it didn't have application on your farm. Maybe your conservation needs were not completely apparent at the time. Let's look again especially after all the rain we have received this last year. Maybe it was too much to establish the practice initially. Did you know **we pay up to 50%** to establish a practice? Perhaps past cash rent values have been too good to tie ground up. Do you need to revisit the cost benefit analysis since cash rents are no longer artificially inflated? Do you not want ground tied up for 10 years? We offer a succession plan, Transition Incentives Program. Did you put an offer in and didn't get in? Offers are competitive bids. Let's revisit and modify your offer to add some points.

Be a part of the largest private lands conservation program in the U.S. Originally, CRP was intended to control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity but provides a variety of conservation and economic benefits.

- CRP has prevented more than **9 BILLION tons of soil** from eroding. That's the equivalent to 600 million dump trucks!
- **Reduces nitrogen and phosphorous run off** relative to annually tilled cropland by **95%** and **85%** respectively.
- Sequestered an annual average of **49 million tons of greenhouse gasses**. That is like taking 9 million cars off the road.
- Created more than **3 million acres** of restored wetlands and more than 175,000 stream miles with buffers. That is enough to go around the world 7 times!
- Benefited bees and other pollinators and increased populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, quail, and other birds.
- Paid **\$2 BILLION** to the American farmer.
- Enrolled **24 million acres** in conservation and 5.7 million acres in wildlife habitat
- Paid **\$1,192,514** to Knox County farmers with the 2014 Farm Bill (2014-2018)
- Enrolled **2,287 acres** under CRP in **275 contracts**



Winter Programming 2021

Extension Educators and Specialists from throughout the state have worked together to develop a series of educational meetings that you can access via zoom from the comforts of you home or shop this winter.

When we are able to meet again, we will host many of these zoom meetings at the new Ramser 4-H Activity Center on the fairgrounds.

You will need to call (740-397-0401) to register and attend.

The Dirt on Soil Health: Investing Below the Surface.

In this weekly series, farmers, industry, and academic experts will weigh in on practical steps to improve soil health and measure impact on crop yield and farm profitability. Thursdays, January 14 – March 18, 8am-8:30am.

Register: <http://go.osu.edu/soilhealth2020>

- **January 14 - Does Soil Health Pay?** Farmer Panel, Nathan Brown, Matt Falb, and Les Seiler
- **January 21 - What Can Soil Health Tests Tell You?** Steve Culman
- **January 28 - Can Improving Soil Health Improve Yield?** Jordon Wade
- **February 4 - Cover Crop Management,** Hans Kok
- **February 18 - Compaction Solutions,** Scott Shearer
- **February 25 - Soil Health in Ohio,** Elizabeth Hawkins and Steve Culman
- **March 4 - What's the Return on Investing in Soil Health?** Rick Clark
- **March 18 - Programs and Funding to Support Soil Health**

Crop Diversity to Improve Your Bottom Line.

This series will look at practices and considerations to successfully incorporate alternative grain crops into your rotation to diversify your operation. Thursdays, January 14 – March 4, 9:00am-10:30am.

Register: <http://go.osu.edu/cropdiversity>

- **January 14 – Specialty Small Grains,** Winter Malting Barley (Greg McGlinch), White Wheat (Dennis Pennington), Wet Wrapped Oats (Al Gahler), Triticale (Jason Hartschuh)
- **February 4 – Seed Production,** Corn and Soybean Seed Production (Fred Pond), Cover Crop Seed Production
- **March 4 – Non-GMO Crop Production,** Best Practices for High Yielding Non-GMO Soybean Production (Laura Lindsey), Weed Control (Mark Loux), Insect Management: The Forgotten Corn Pests (Chris DiFonzo)



Winter Programing for 2021 Continued

Farming in Weather Extremes.

This series will present practices and technology farmers can utilize to adapt to challenging growing seasons with increasing extreme weather events. Thursdays, January 21 – March 18, 9:00am-10:30am.

Register: <http://go.osu.edu/adapt>

- **January 21 - Disease Management Options for Today's Weather**, Pierce Paul and Aaron Wilson
- **February 18 - Managing Water in Today's Wet and Dry Growing Seasons**, Aaron Wilson, Eileen Kladivko, Larry Brown, Lyndon Kelley
- **March 18 - 2021 Growing Season Weather Outlook and Changing Climate Patterns**, Aaron Wilson

Corn College and Soybean School.

Best management practices and important updates for the 2021 growing season. Speakers include Peter Thomison, Steve Culman, Pierce Paul, Laura Lindsey, Mark Loux, Anne Dorrance, Andy Michel, and Kelley Tilmon.

Register: <http://go.osu.edu/agronomyschools>

- **February 11 - 9:00 am-12:00pm (Corn College)**
- **February 11 - 1:00-4:00pm (Soybean School).**

FARM OFFICE LIVE" WINTER WEBINAR SERIES. "Farm Office Live" returns virtually this winter as an opportunity for you to get the latest outlook and updates on ag law, farm management, ag economics, farm business analysis and other related issues from faculty and educators with the College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University.

Topics to be addressed this winter include: Outlook on Crop Input Costs and Profit Margins, Outlook on Cropland Values and Cash Rents, Outlook on Interest Rates, Tax Issues That May Impact Farm Businesses, Legal trends for 2021, Legislative updates, Farm business management and analysis updates, Farm succession & estate planning updates.

January 13th 7:00 – 8:30 pm

March 10th 7:00 – 8:30 pm

January 15th 10:00 – 11:30 am

March 12th 10:00 – 11:30 am

February 10th 7:00 – 8:30 pm

April 7th 7:00 – 8:30 pm

February 12th 10:00 – 11:30 am

April 9th 10:00 – 11:30 am

Who's on the Farm Office Team? Peggy Kirk Hall -- agricultural law; Dianne Shoemaker -- farm business analysis and dairy production; David Marrison -- farm management; Barry Ward – farm management and tax

Register at <https://go.osu.edu/farmofficelive>



Agricultural Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage for the 2021 Crop Year

Enrollment for the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2021 crop year opened in October, with the deadline to enroll and make amendments to program elections on March 15, 2021. This signup is for potential payments for the 2021 crop.

If changes are not made by the March 15th deadline, the election defaults to the programs selected for the 2020 crop year with no penalty. While it is optional to make changes to program elections, producers are required to enroll (sign a contract) each year to be eligible to receive payments. So, even if you do not change your program elections, you will still need to make an appointment at the Farm Service Agency to sign off on enrollment for the 2021 crop year by that March 15th deadline.

Producers have the option to enroll covered commodities in either ARC-County, ARC-Individual, or PLC. Program elections are made on a crop-by-crop basis unless selecting ARC-Individual where all crops under that FSA Farm Number fall under that program. These are the same program options that were available to producers during the 2019 and 2020 crop years. In some cases producers may want to amend program election to better manage the potential risks facing their farms during the 2021 crop year.

As you consider amending your program choices, here are some important reminders:

Read more at: <https://u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/>

Winter Into Spring Outlook

Source: Jim Noel, NOAA

La Nina remains in full swing, the cooling of the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. Typically the impacts kick in for Ohio by late December or January.

You can keep up on La Nina and ENSO at the links below:

<https://www.climate.gov/enso>

<https://mrcc.illinois.edu/pubs/pubsElNino.jsp>

Therefore, the climate pattern supports big swings for temperatures for the rest of winter through early spring with the tendency toward above normal temperatures. This will also support snow that comes and goes for most of Ohio. This can expose winter wheat to temperature changes with limited snowpack.

As for rainfall and precipitation, expect above normal conditions to ramp back up for later January into February and March. Northwest Ohio subsoils remain drier than normal but the expectation is for wetting up to continue late winter into early spring.

Going forward through spring, the wetter conditions typically shutdown at some point and that varies for each La Nina event but often it is by May or June.

We will have to watch an expansive drought area in parts of the central and western U.S. to see if that shifts east for summer. That can happen during La Nina events where we go from wet in winter and spring to dry in summer.

For winter into spring expect wetter in the eastern corn and soybean area while drier in western areas. By late spring and summer that dryness can shift east.





Let the 2020 eFields Report Help You Reach Your Farm's New Year's Resolutions

High quality, relevant information is key to making the right management decisions for your farm. The eFields program at The Ohio State University was created to provide local information about critical issues for Ohio agriculture. The 2020 eFields Research Report highlights 218 on-farm, field scale trials conducted in 39 Ohio counties. Research topics included nutrient management, precision crop management, cover crops, and forages. Other information about crop production budgets, planting progress, and farm business analysis was also included. New in 2020 was the addition of soil health and water quality trials.

The 2020 report is now available in both a print and e-version. To receive a printed copy, contact your local OSU Extension office or email digitalag@osu.edu. The e-version can be viewed and downloaded at go.osu.edu/eFields with the online version readable using a smartphone or tablet device.

The eFields team has planned weekly webinars every Tuesday at 10AM EST in January and February. The events in January are replacing the annual Precision U event. This year's theme focuses on "Tackling Spring Operations with Reduced Working Days." For more information, visit go.osu.edu/PrecisionU.

The events in February are focused on eFields research projects and will provide the opportunity to discuss results and gather information about research interests for 2021. More details are available at go.osu.edu/AgTechTues. There is no cost to attend any of the webinars so please plan to join us for one or all!

We would like to sincerely thank all our 2020 collaborating farms and industry partners. The eFields team enjoys working with each of you and we are looking forward to continuing to learn together in 2021.

How Do You Become a Mount Vernon Farmers Market Vendor?

Are you interested in becoming a vendor at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market for the 2021 season? Applications are now being accepted! Individuals interested in selling need to fill out an application online by creating a Manage My Market account. Application fee, vendor payment, license and certifications are all due by March 14, 2021. The 2021 market season begins the first Saturday in May.

Types of vendors needed for the market are:

- Meat and egg sellers
- Vegetable Producers
- Fruit Producers

For more information about selling at the Mount Vernon Farmers Market contact the

OSU Extension Office or email Extension Educator, Sabrina Schirtzinger at Schirtzinger.55@osu.edu



mount vernon

**farmer's
market**

May through October 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.



Knox County Local Food Directory

Do you grow produce? Selling locally raised meat and eggs? Grow herbs for spice packets? Can fresh fruits into jams and jellies?

Then we need you to fill out a survey to be listed in the Knox County Local Food Directory. This directory will be available online and in paper copies for Knox County residents to be able to find and get local products year-round.

Go to this website <https://go.osu.edu/knoxlocalfood> or call our office to get signed up to listed in the county directory!

Beef Quality Assurance

2021 Recertification dates and registration details will be mailed to individuals needing recertification by the end of January.

Registration will be mandatory as class size is limited. If you would like to recertify online visit bqa.org and register for the course.

Spotted Lanternfly

By: Knox County Master Gardener Volunteer Carolyn Waggoner

Several news accounts of this new invasive pest, commonly called the spotted lanternfly, scientifically known as *Lycorma delicatula*, (Order Homoptera; Family Fulgoridae) have appeared over the past few months in various news sources.

In October, this pest was spotted in Mingo Junction, Ohio, located just across the Ohio River from West Virginia. It has been spreading throughout Pennsylvania over the past few years, including egg masses found in that state at the Norfolk Southern's Conway Rail Yard last year. The adult found in Mingo Junction was found near railroad tracks as well. It was first found in Pennsylvania in 2014, but has since spread to nearby states. Those states include Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia, and West Virginia.

It has been documented that the adults do not really fly far or well, but are more likely to jump or glide their way to new areas, hence the slower spread, unless helped by man. And, man has helped, providing rides on trains or other modes of transportation, as well as shipping items across miles.

Although the name is lanternfly, they are not flies, but are planthoppers!

The adult's unusual brightly spotted wing coloration, make them hard to miss or mis-identify once spotted. The immatures are also, brightly colored, with red bodies, black stripes, and white dots in summer, when easiest to spot.

So, why should we care about another invasive species of insect? Although these insects prefer *Ailanthus* trees, also known as tree of heaven, they can attack many fruit trees as well as blueberries, grapes, and several hardwoods. Feeding on stems and leaves by both the adults and immatures injures the plant, ending in plant death.

(references – The Ohio Department of Agriculture, The Columbus Dispatch).





African Violets

By Knox County Master Gardener Volunteer Karen McDonald Smith

If you are looking for a houseplant that blooms most of the year and will not outgrow their surroundings and like the same temperature and humidity that you do, you might consider an African Violet.

African Violets come in a variety of colors and styles of blooms and foliage types. They are inexpensive and easy to propagate to create more.

African Violets are Saintpaulias and belong to the family Gesneriaceae which includes several other houseplants. African violets were discovered in Tanzania and found by a German by the name of Baron von Saint Paul in 1892. Originally there were 10 selections or types. Today there are hundreds of colors of blooms and foliage and bloom types. Some blooms are a solid color others are edged with lacy colors or splashed with colors. Foliage can be various colors of green or even variegated. Hybridizers have been busy developing new types including miniatures and trailers.

If you supply what violets like, you will be rewarded with blooms.

Sunlight- East or West windows are the best. Avoid excessive extremes in heat versus cold. If a plant is not blooming, the leaves grow in elongated shapes or if the crowns stretch or get leggy, more light is needed. Turn the plants a quarter turn every week or so. This will allow all leaves to receive equal shares of light.



Fluorescent Lights are a good alternative for light as it can be controlled. The lights need to be a foot above the plants and left on 12-14 hours a day.

Soil-A commercial mix for African Violets is best and can benefit with extra perlite.. You can mix your own soil by combining a light and porous soilless mix of peat, perlite and vermiculite. The perfect acidity will benefit the plants. Repot once or twice a year. A ph of 6.4 to 6.9 is ideal. Soil needs to be sterilized to help guard against disease.

Water- Use water at room temperature. Moist but not soggy is the rule. Violets can be watered from the top or bottom. Take care to keep water off the foliage and especially the crown. Water until the saucer fills. Allow to sit for 30 minutes and then empty the saucer. If watering from the bottom, any salts in the water will accumulate in the soil and can damage the roots. So periodically, water from the top and discard water. Wick watering can also be used and is an easy way to include a diluted fertilizer solution.

Temperature-Violets prefer 65-75 degrees. Good air ventilation is important. However, no drafts.

Humidity-The best range is 40-50 percent. Plant trays filled with water will help provide humidity when the air is too dry. Plastic bags can also be placed over plants to increase humidity. Do not allow the plant to come into contact with the plastic.

Pot Sizes- 2 inch is the best for starter plants. A 4 inch pot works for a violet that is 9 inch in diameter.

Pot types- Either clay or plastic will work. Just make sure there is good drainage and a saucer. Clay pots dry out more quickly. Make sure pots have been cleaned before using.

Fertilizer- The three major elements for healthy growth are nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Most commercial fertilizers for violets contain the correct amounts of each. 10-10-5 is an example. Too much nitrogen can provide beautiful plants but little blooms. Phosphorus is needed for blooms. Fish emulsion can also be used in addition.



Beautiful Buttonbush

By Knox County Master Gardener Volunteer Lori Cook

Looking for an attractive native bush? Do you have a wet area in your yard where it's hard for anything to grow? Then consider the Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). In the wild this bush can be found in swamps and along streams and ponds. It grows fairly quickly and can reach a height up to 10' tall.

This semi-aquatic bush offers many unique qualities. Because the Buttonbush prefers wet areas, it can withstand flooding. It also can help prevent erosion along the sides of streams and ponds. Its distinctive ball-like flower and fruit heads not only catch your eye but attract 24 species of birds (including hummingbirds), bees and many butterflies. The fruit which matures in the fall is a favorite of mallard ducks, turkeys and deer. As the Buttonbush matures, it offers a protective location for nesting birds.



Because the Buttonbush is a fast-growing bush, it's ideal for naturalizing a wet area. It prefers sun to part shade. Its long, pointed, green, waxy leaves make for an attractive bush especially in the fall when the leaves turn yellow. The tiny, white tubular flowers are lightly scented. The 1-inch ball-like fruit lasts throughout the winter providing an interesting winter contrast against the snow.

This attractive and unique bush is not commonly found in retail stores or at your garden centers but can be found in seed/plant catalogues. There are two types to choose from. One is called Sugar Shack Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) which is a shorter version reaching around 3-4 feet tall and produces a reddish fruit. The other type is called Sputnik Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis bieberichii*) which grows 8-10 feet tall and has yellow leaves in the fall. The best time to plant them is in the spring when there is plenty of rainfall to help get them started. Once planted, the Buttonbush is easy to maintain. Try this unique native plant that offers many interesting qualities all three seasons long!

New Faces in the OSU Extension Office

Jana Mussard, 4-H Educator, has worked in Knox County for just over a year. As a 4-H Alumni of Fulton County, she participated in dairy cattle projects, leadership club and various still projects. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University. Jana and her husband Martin Mussard reside in rural Mount Vernon with their four children. They live on a farm where they raise angus beef cattle, boer goats, corn and soybeans. She is excited to be part of OSU Extension.

Sarah Chain, Office Associate, has been with Knox County for almost a year. Chain is a native from Ross County, Ohio. She is also an Alumni of Ross County, 4-H where she participated in Beef Cattle Projects, Clothing Projects, and Leadership focused projects. Chain recently got married this past summer to her husband, Cody McClain of Nevada, OH and now live in Marion, OH. Sarah is not new to OSU as she has held different roles through out her now 6 years of being with the College of Food, Agriculture, Environmental Sciences. She is excited to now be back at the County level here in Knox.



Knox County 4-H Getting Ready for 2021!

Andrea Rees and Jana Mussard are hard at work preparing for the 2021 4-H Year. While they are unsure on how the year is exactly going to look, they are preparing to have all of the same positive 4-H youth development opportunities as in years past. Some may be done virtually compared to in-person, but the same great impacts will remain.



The 4-H year always starts out with the **4-H Volunteer Kickoff**. This has always been the time for our volunteers to come together, receive new updates for the year, and learn from each other. Andrea and Jana will be conducting sessions for established volunteers and then sessions for brand new volunteers. For the veteran volunteers, they will be holding five opportunities. We ask that volunteers please hold one of the following dates to attend the yearly mandatory 4-H Volunteer Kickoff: Wednesday, January 20 from 6-8 p.m., Thursday, January 21 from 5-7 p.m., Saturday, January 23 from 9-11 a.m., Wednesday, January 27 from 6-8 p.m., or Thursday, January 28

from 5-7 p.m. For volunteers that are new for 2021, they ask that they reserve the one of the following mandatory dates: Tuesday, February 2 from 5-7 p.m. or Tuesday, February 9 from 6-8 p.m. More details will be following soon if these will be held in person or face to face.

For 2021, the **4-H Enrollment Process** will have a new look. Ohio 4-H has rolled their 4-H Online program to a newer version called 4-H Online 2.0. As in 2020, all 4-H members and volunteers will need to enroll online but through a new website: <https://v2.4honline.com/>. The look is going to be different but the information that you need to provide is all the same. We will be sending out an updated version of a how to sheet for guidance. The Knox County 4-H Enrollment deadline to be signed up with a club will be March 15, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.

Quality Assurance for all livestock exhibitors will look a lot like it did in 2020. Andrea received a lot of positive feedback from exhibitors and parents that they enjoyed the virtual QA sessions. They liked the variety of times and the interaction that was held with a smaller group. They felt the members were more attentive compared to sitting in a large room with 100+ individuals. So she has decided to keep that format for 2021. Exhibitors can go ahead and mark one of the following dates on their calendar to attend a QA session: February 22 from 6-8 p.m., February 27 from 9-11 a.m., March 4 from 6-8 p.m., March 24 from 6-8 p.m., March 30 from 6-8 p.m., April 8 from 6-8 p.m., April 19 from 6-8 p.m., April 24 from 1-3 p.m., May 8 from 9-11 a.m., May 18 from 6-8 p.m., and May 26 from 6-8 p.m. At the beginning of February, a link will be sent out for exhibitors to enroll for the session that they want. Sessions will be limited to 40 households each time.





Facility Loan Program Expanded: New/Used Equipment, Structures, Trucks, Grain Trailers, Semi's and more!

The Farm Storage Facility Loan program has been expanded to include a number of exciting changes! Farm Service Agency (FSA) can now loan on **new or used, portable or permanently affixed** storage and handling equipment. Loans can be on

- **New or used bins, dryers, pits, and auger system**
- **Portable augers, grain carts, and grain trailers**
- **Round hay bale grabber attachments, hay spear attachment and hay trailers**
- **Skid loaders and wheel loaders are eligible if they are used to move a commodity produced on the farm.**
- **Storage and handling TRUCK, SEMITRAILERS (NEW!!)**

Hay storage buildings, grain bins, grain handling and drying equipment, cold storage for fruits and vegetables, maple syrup and sap, egg washers, honey storage, bunker silos, milk bulk tanks, Semi-trailers, and more! Don't see it, just ask!

Facility loans of \$50,000 or less can be considered microloans with the following terms:

5% down payment

Interest rates are LOW (**0.625%** for a 7-year loan approved in December)!

3, 5, or 7-year term on new equipment

3 or 5 years on used equipment

Facility loans over \$50,001-\$500,000 are non-micro loans with the following terms

15% down payment

\$100,000 3, 5, or 7-year term

\$100,001 to 250,000 3, 5, 7, or 10-year term, over \$250,001, up to 12 year

\$100 application fee, updated Balance Sheet & Statement of Cash Flows, completed CCC- 185 Application are due at application. *LOANS MUST BE APPROVED BEFORE CONSTRUCTION CAN BEGIN or PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT*

FSA Can Help with On-Farm Propane Storage

Did you know that FSA can provide assistance for farmers that need to store propane through the [Farm Storage Facility Loan \(FSFL\) program](#) which provides funding for on-farm liquified petroleum tanks?

FSFL low-interest financing can be used to build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment, storage and handling trucks. Liquified petroleum tanks are covered for eligible commodities for the use of fuel for grain dryer equipment.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement. Loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.



Frost Seeding a Viable Option for Some Forage Stand Improvements

– Start Planning Now By: Rob Clendening

The SWCD office gets numerous inquiries each fall regarding rental of the SWCD drills for late forage plantings (after August 15th, sometimes WAY after August 15th) to strengthen/improve stands in pasture and dual-use pasture and hay areas. Our advice on these seeding attempts is always the same, unless this is a grass only seeding, in which case August 30th is still ok, it would be best to just wait. Options for improving forage quality on pasture areas that may have suffered due to overgrazing in the past year can be limited. Direct seeding without a burn down can provide fair results as long as the existing vegetation can be kept in check as the seeding establishes, and as long as normally acceptable seeding dates are observed. That means as late as August 15th if seeding grass/legume mixes and August 30th for grass only mixes. In many instances, the best answer may be to totally renovate the pasture or hay area by killing it and starting over. Often though, it seems that landowners are more interested in a minor “renovation” rather than a total rehabilitation of their pasture areas.

Another, perhaps better, option can be frost-seedings, which are really just late winter broadcast seedings. Frost seedings are a viable option in many instances to do that moderate rehab for your pasture. If you are considering a frost-seeding in 2021 to improve a pasture area you have until about the middle of March to get it done. As with any seeding, fertility is important and you should soil test the area where you will be working. Now is a good time to get that done! Another important consideration for frost-seedings is that you will be counting on the repeated freezing and thawing cycles we normally encounter in late winter to “incorporate” the seed and provide adequate seed to soil contact. For this reason frost seedings should normally be attempted only on pasture areas where the existing vegetation has been grazed quite close or that have been heavily trampled.

Seeding can be accomplished with any manner of broadcast equipment, even a hand carried broadcast spreader may be sufficient on small areas of an acre or less. Keep in mind that hard legume seeds (clover, etc.) will “throw” farther than most grasses and your application pattern will need to accommodate those differences. For the same reason, it may be advisable to apply grass seed and legume seed in separate applications. Also, just as in normal seedings, legume seeds may need to be inoculated, a “wet” or “damp” inoculation process should be used to aid in inoculant adhesion since you will be broadcasting the seed.

Be realistic with your expectations when attempting a frost-seeding on an existing pasture. Regardless of your efforts, the results are not going to equal those of a complete reseeding or renovation. It is also true that the frost seeding technique is more effective for legumes than it is for grasses. For grasses you should consider the use of a coated seed to aid in the broadcasting process. Coated seeds will also fall down through the vegetation into the soil better. Additionally, your grazing management through the first season will have a significant impact on the success of the seeding. “Hybrid” frost seedings where the seed is actually “drilled” into the frozen pasture area, or, where a very light disking is performed prior to and just after broadcasting can be more effective where vegetation is heavier.

If you are interested in doing a complete pasture renovation, or are establishing a new pasture area, the Knox SWCD has no-till drill equipment available to aid you in that task. You can contact the Knox SWCD office at 393-6724 for more information or individual assistance.



USDA to Open Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program and CRP Grasslands in Early 2021

USDA announced the 2021 signup periods for general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and CRP Grasslands offers. General signup for CRP will be open from **January 4, 2021 to February 12, 2021**; signup for CRP Grasslands runs from **March 15, 2021 to April 23, 2021**. Both programs are competitive and provide annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

CRP and the many focused programs that come under it, like CRP Grasslands, are some of the most critical tools to help producers better manage their operations while conserving natural resources. CRP has proven to protect the Nation's valuable resources. Next year's signup gives farmers and ranchers an opportunity to enroll in CRP for the first time or continue their participation for another term. Producers may apply by contacting their FSA office.

FSA is Accepting CRP Continuous Enrollment Offers

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting offers for specific conservation practices under the [Conservation Reserve Program \(CRP\) Continuous Signup](#).

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and to plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. The program's long-term goal is to re-establish valuable land cover to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length. Under continuous CRP signup, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Offers for continuous enrollment are not subject to competitive bidding during specific periods. Instead they are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements and the enrollment levels do not exceed the statutory cap.

Subscribers Can Receive Important Program Updates through SMS Messages

Farmers can sign up to receive notifications from their county office through text messages on their cell phone.

Whether producers are in the field, or on a tractor, this service enables FSA customers and stakeholders to receive notifications while on the go. Producers will receive text messages regarding important program deadlines, reporting requirements and program updates.

To enroll, producers must text a keyword consisting of the 2 letter state abbreviation and the county name from which they want to receive alerts to FSNOW or the numeric keys (372669) on your cell phone.

For example, producers wishing to receive alerts from KNOX County FSA would text the keyword OHKNOX to 372669.

Producers interested in enrolling in a different county would need to text OH and the county name to 372669 to begin to receive alerts from their FSA County office. Producers will receive a system generated reply if they have successfully enrolled. Standard text messaging rates apply. Contact your wireless carrier for details associated with your particular data plan. Participants may unsubscribe at any time.

Please contact our FSA office if you have questions regarding FSA's email news service or the new text message option.



CRP Participants Must Maintain Approved Cover on Acreages Enrolled in CRP and Farm Programs

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are responsible for ensuring adequate, approved vegetative and practice cover is maintained to control erosion throughout the life of the contract after the practice has been established. Participants must also control undesirable vegetation, weeds (including noxious weeds), insects and rodents that may pose a threat to existing cover or adversely impact other landowners in the area.

All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Ohio is March 1 through July 15. However, spot treatment of the acreage may be allowed during the primary nesting or brood rearing season if, left untreated, the weeds, insects or undesirable species would adversely impact the approved cover. In this instance, spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment. The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover.

Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.

Breaking New Ground

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils are required to apply tillage, crop residue and rotational requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure the proposed actions meet compliance criteria, such as clearing trees to create new cropland. These areas may need to be reviewed to ensure such work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators complete the form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify the proposed action and allow FSA to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for further review is necessary.

To learn more about FSFLs and how these loans can help with your on-site propane tank storage needs, contact your local FSA county office.





Enrollment Begins for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs for 2021

[Agricultural producers can now make elections and enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage \(ARC\) and Price Loss Coverage \(PLC\) programs](#) for the 2021 crop year. The signup period opened Tuesday, Oct. 13. These key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety-net programs help producers weather fluctuations in either revenue or price for certain crops, and more than \$5 billion in payments are in the process of going out to producers who signed up for the 2019 crop year.

Enrollment for the 2021 crop year closes **March 15, 2021**.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price.

Covered commodities include 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.

- **2021 Elections and Enrollment**

[Producers can elect coverage and enroll in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the entire farm, for the 2021 crop year. Although election changes for 2021 are optional, enrollment \(signed contract\) is required for each year of the program.](#) If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2021, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

If an election is not submitted by the deadline of March 15, 2021, the election defaults to the current election for crops on the farm from the prior crop year.

For crop years 2022 and 2023, producers will have an opportunity to make new elections during those signups. Farm owners cannot enroll in either program unless they have a share interest in the farm.

- **Web-Based Decision Tools**

[In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University 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 allows producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2021. Producers who have used the tool in the past should see their username and much of their farm data already available in the system.

[Ohio State University Extension](#) webinar was recorded and is available from OSU Extension's Farm Office Website at: <https://farmoffice.osu.edu/events/archived-videos> and available from YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7sd_rdeEf0.

- **More Information**

For more information on ARC and PLC, including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#).



Low Interest Commodity Loans Provide Options for 2020 Crops– Deadline 5/31/2021

Marketing Assistance Loans (**MAL's**) are marketing tools available to producers beginning upon harvest and provides interim financing at harvest time to help meet cash flow needs without having to sell their commodities until favorable market conditions emerge. With the current market conditions producers who have access to on-farm storage or warehouse storage should consider a Marketing Assistance Loan.

Loan Rates are as follows:

\$2.19 per bushel for corn

\$6.31 per bushel for beans

The interest rate charged for commodity loans is set at one percentage point above CCC's cost of borrowing from the U.S. Treasury at the time the loan is made. **The commodity loan interest rate is 1.125% for December 2020.**

MAL's mature on the last day of the ninth calendar month following the month in which the MAL is approved. A producer may settle an outstanding MAL:

- Before maturity period by repaying the MAL or;
- Upon maturity by forfeiting the commodity to CCC.
- For loan eligible commodities a producer may repay a MAL any time during the loan period at the lesser of the:
 - Loan rate plus interest or;
 - Alternative loan repayment rate determined by CCC. This is referred to as the Posted County Price (PCP). Prices would have to drop considerably more for this option to be viable and can be discussed further by calling or visiting your county FSA office.

The producer is responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

Farm-stored grain that is the collateral cannot be removed or disposed of without prior county office staff authorization or repayment, a release. The county office staff may issue release authorizations based on a telephone or in person request when you are ready to move the grain. A loan violation is subject to monetary and administrative penalties, such as repaying the loan at principal plus interest, liquidated damages, calling the loan and denial of future farm-stored loans and loan deficiency payments.

All commodity loans are subject to spot check. Locking in a market loan repayment rate is not a marketing authorization. If you are planning to move CCC loan grain, **call** the Knox county FSA office staff, **before you HAUL!**

Applications for FSA Loans

Farmers that intend to apply to the Farm Service Agency for loan assistance for the upcoming crop year are encouraged to file their applications as early as possible. Filing early will help ensure that your loan is processed and approved as early as possible so that planting decisions can be made. Not applying early can re-



Benefits of Native Trees for Wildlife

Brian Hackett, Knox SWCD Wildlife Specialist

Trees have always brought people immeasurable benefits ranging from the oxygen we breathe to picturesque serenity that relaxes us. They teach us to stay rooted while growing to new heights. Trees evoke various reactions and meanings for different people, but most can agree they are strong, peaceful, and resilient. They represent life, growth, and wilderness. Trees have inspired some of the greatest minds in history, as John Muir once said “between every two pines is a doorway to a new world.”

Trees provide numerous benefits for nearly every ecosystem, which support all life on our planet. They are a foundation of the food web, clean water by filtering runoff, and help regulate temperatures in streams and on the forest floor. Tree roots hold the soil together reducing erosion. They maintain and improve soil health by adding organic matter through their fallen leaves and decaying wood. Hollowed tree trunks provide shelter for many organisms, allowing them to survive harsh winters. Trees can even be used as natural light, sound, and wind barriers for homes and businesses. However, within an ecosystem not all trees are created equal.

Trees native to a particular region have significantly more benefits to the local ecosystem than trees that are brought in from faraway places. Those species that have adapted to live in a particular environment share an evolutionary history with native wildlife from insects to mammals. One of the most important ways this can be seen is by how many larvae from native pollinating insects use that species as a host plant. Oaks are the kings of growing caterpillars of moths and butterflies. Here in Ohio, oak species are linked to over 450 different species of caterpillars, which is the #1 food source for terrestrial birds raising their young. Other native caterpillar powerhouses include cherries, willows, birches, poplars, maples, and hickories. In contrast the non-native ginkgo hosts zero caterpillar species.

Plants are the foundation of the food web. They are how energy from the sun is captured and sent through all living organisms. Insects are next on the pyramid. Without trees that support insects like moths, butterflies, bees, flies, and beetles those insects face population declines. In turn, so do the birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals that depend on them for food and reproduction.

When you are selecting trees for your home’s landscaping, consider visiting one of central Ohio’s great native plant nurseries or a Soil & Water District tree sale for locally grown native trees. Larger nurseries and home improvement stores typically carry cultivars of a few native plants as well as ornamentals. While these native cultivars usually do not have a negative impact on the environment, they are often sterile. This sterility leads to little nectar and pollen produced in the flower, as well as no fruits for birds and mammals.

Always keep in mind functionality for the local ecosystems when creating your landscaping. Limit or eliminate herbicide and pesticide use. Be tolerant of native insects. Our native trees can withstand the browsing by their larvae. Humans need healthy, functioning ecosystems to survive as well. With a majority of land in private ownership it is up to homeowners and business owners to make sure our wildlife has the resources it needs to not only survive, but thrive.



NEW FACES AT SWCD

McDonald Elected to SWCD Board

Chad McDonald from Monroe Township has been elected to serve a three-year term as a Supervisor on the Knox SWCD Board beginning on January 1, 2021. Chad joins 4 other local residents to govern the activities of the local conservation agency. Other members on the governing board include Terry Randall - Wayne Township, Jerry Mickley – Howard Township, Bill Buskirk – Clinton Township and Rendall Shira – Wayne Township.

Mr. McDonald farms with his family just north of Mount Vernon in Monroe Township. They have a diversified farming operation that includes the production of beef, poultry, and organic dairy and hay. Their farming operation is completely grassed based for the dairy and beef herds. The poultry operation produces broiler chickens that are utilized in the retail restaurant industry throughout the mid-west. The farm's conservation program includes normal pasture and hay land management practices, nutrient management and managed rotational grazing.

The Knox SWCD Board oversees a conservation assistance program that serves landowners of Knox County and has an annual operating budget of \$450,000. Members elected to the SWCD Board are considered public officials under Ohio law, but serve without pay except for reimbursement of direct expenses. For more information you may contact the SWCD office directly at 740-393-6724.

Thank you to Jeff Levering who leaves our board of supervisors at the end of 2020 for your many years of service and commitment to the conservation practices in Knox County.

Hackett New Wildlife Specialist March 2020

Brian Hackett is a native Ohio son, coming to us from Westerville. He received his Bachelors of Science degree in Natural Resource Management and Animal Science from The Ohio State University in 2013. Brian has always had a tremendous passion for wildlife. Growing up he spent countless days at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. A volunteer in ZooAIDES and was a dedicated seasonal zookeeper in the Shores and Australia regions. In 2018 Brian began working for Madison Soil & Water Conservation District as a District Technician. He loves spending time outdoors assisting local landowners with conservation practices. Learning that Knox SWCD had an open position and knowing he and his fiancé' were looking to purchase a house east of Columbus, he knew this could be a perfect fit. In his free time he enjoys hiking, kayaking, craft beer, fishing, grilling and will soon be adding gardening and landscaping to his list. A big fan of the Ohio State University, Cincinnati Reds, Chicago Bears and professional golf. Brian is excited to begin this new journey with Knox County's wildlife, natural resources and is looking forward to meeting and working with our landowners.

Dye New Administrative Assistant February 2020

While Althea Dye is no stranger to SWCD, she is a new face to our office staff. Many will recognize her from local retail shopping places such as Wal-Mart, store manager at Kirlin's Hallmark and most recently at Rural King. A 32 year member of the East Knox Lions Club, she serves as their club's secretary. The other hat she frequently wears is with Knox County Pheasants Forever, where she serves as chapter secretary and event coordinator. Althea is a firm believer in being passionate about the things you do and supporting locally. Especially conservation education, wildlife habitat and outdoor experiences with youth. She's excited about the challenges of her new position and can offer some day to day farming insights from farm life with husband Chris.

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

- **1/4/2021– 2/12/2021**- General CRP Sign Up
- **3/15/2021-4/23/2021**– Grassland CRP Sign Up
- **Through 3/15/2021**– 2021 Agricultural Risk Coverage/ Price Loss Coverage Sign Up
- **5/31/2021**– Marketing Assistance Loan for Corn and Bean Deadline

From OSU Extension Office

- March 1st, 11th, and 25th - Pesticide recertification classes. Must call to register.
- March 14th - Farmers Market Vendor Applications due
- See Page 2 and 3 for Agronomy and Farm Management Trainings

From Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District

- April 2nd –Tree Packet Orders are due

OSU Extension Knox County

160 Columbus Road

P.O. Box 1268

Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Non-Profit

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OSU Extension-Knox Co.

Mount Vernon OH 43050

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