

FAIRFIELD FEATURES



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The Fairfield Features is published quarterly by the Fairfield Soil & Water Conservation District
831 College Avenue, Suite B, Lancaster, Ohio 43130 (740) 653-8154

80TH ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

This year marked the 80th anniversary of the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual meeting was held on September 7, 2023, at the Fairfield County Ag Center. The evening started off with a Board of Supervisors election. Gregg Pontius was re-elected and Cheyenne Erb was elected to serve three-year terms beginning January 1, 2024. Dr. Aaron Wilson, Ag Weather and Climate Field Specialist with OSU Extension, gave a presentation on the effects of climate change on Ohio weather.



*John & Katrina Hutton
(Hutton Farms)*



*Lee Kohler
(Marodore Farm)*

The 2022 Cooperator of the Year Awards were presented to Lee Kohler (Marodore Farm) and John Hutton (Hutton Farms). Cathy Jerbic was chosen to receive the 2022 Conservation Partner of the Year Award. The 2022 Conservation Educator of the Year Award was given to Adam Philpott & Adam Salbert (not in attendance) with Pickerington High School.



Cathy Jerbic

Congratulations to all of our award winners!



Adam Philpott

Happy Holidays!

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE SELLING TIMBER WORKSHOP

DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2024
Back up: Wednesday, February 28, 2024
TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Fairfield County Ag Center
831 College Avenue, Lancaster OH
COST: FREE

RSVP TODAY!
740-653-8154

PRESENTERS:

Bob Mulligan, Forest Hydrology Mgr.

- Timber marketing
- Planning logging jobs
- Using master loggers
- New BMPs for Erosion Control booklet

Stephanie Downs, Cooperative Forest Mgmt. Admin.

- Role of ODNR Service Foresters

Jonathan Ferbrache, FSWCD Sr. Resource Specialist

- Timber harvest plan process

Displays with:

William Ray - Master Logger Program Mgr.
Carrie Brown - OSU Extension Educator, Ag & Natural Resources



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FORESTRY**
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT FORESTRY AND LOGGING?

Check out our friends at the Ohio Forestry Association at ohioforest.org. If you are considering a timber harvest and you are looking for a Master Logger that understands erosion and sediment control, they maintain a list you can review.

The Ohio Forestry Association, Inc. (OFA) maintains a safety training and voluntary certification program for logging contractors and their employees known as the Ohio Voluntary Master Logging Company Program. The program involves training loggers in chainsaw safety, Best Management Practices (BMP) for soil and water protection, and first aid and CPR.

Through the certification program each logger must complete periodic recertification keeping the logger up to date on new innovations, techniques, industry issues, etc. The logger is also required to be a member of a local loggers' chapter. The chapters are regionally organized groups of loggers and representatives associated with logging practices in Ohio. Their joint mission is to develop programs and projects to promote the specific and general welfare of loggers through information, education and legislative action.

Also, as a requirement of the program, each company must undergo BMP monitoring inspections. The inspection team is comprised of an ODNR Division of Forestry representative and a loggers' chapter representative. The inspection is done on an active site and a closed site with the intention of making sure the logger is following the Best Management Practices guidelines and to provide feedback to the OFA and Logging Standards Council (LSC) regarding the effectiveness of training as measured by implementation in the field.

The OFA maintains company records and administers the program while the LSC develops rules and enforces the procedures for the program. The LSC alone is responsible for decertification by a majority vote only. The LSC can revoke status for non-compliance with established standards or failure to complete recertification training or documentation within three months of expiration date. If a company is decertified it must retake all the initial training specified under certification requirements.

AVAILABLE NRCS PROGRAMS

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers protect the environment while promoting agricultural production. Through EQIP, NRCS experts provide both technical and financial assistance to implement environmentally beneficial conservation practices on working agricultural land. A producer is reimbursed after a conservation best management practice (bmp) is implemented. This is a competitive process; all applications in Fairfield County are ranked and highest scores receive funding until dollars are used. A number of best management practices are more favorable than one to achieve better scores.

- Common bmps: livestock watering and animal waste facilities, heavy use pads, fencing, invasive species control, pollinator seedings, cover crops.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives>

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): a land conservation program administered by Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract, usually 10 years. Cost sharing is provided to construct or plant vegetative cover. FSA handles contracting and payments, NRCS writes the conservation plan, and Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical assistance/engineering design if needed.

- Common bmps: grassed waterways, filter/buffer strips, whole field, wetlands/pollinator

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/index>

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): helps farmers build on existing conservation efforts while strengthening operations to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat. NRCS employees can customize a plan to help eligible landowners meet those goals either through additional conservation activities or by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. Farmers receive an annual payment to maintain existing conservation systems or practices on the lands while also providing funding for at least one additional resource concern. Eligible land: crop, pasture, woodland

- Common bmps: cover crops, conservation crop rotation, no-till, wildlife plantings, timber stand improvement

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/csp-conservation-stewardship-program>



Through one-on-one, personalized advice, NRCS can work with you to find solutions for your conservation goals and farm needs. Contact Dave Libben, NRCS District Conservationist at 740-415-3921 to discuss these programs.

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY: IF YOU DETECT IT, COLLECT IT!

By: Carrie Brown, Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator, OSU Extension, Fairfield County

Chances are you have heard of our newest invasive pest, Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). With confirmed infestations in 11 counties throughout the state, including Franklin and Muskingum counties, SLF is getting closer. The good news is that SLF is not an outright plant-killer and can be managed when detected early.

SLF is a sap-sucking planthopper. Though it poses no risk to humans, it damages plants by using piercing mouth parts to feed on the sap of woody plant tissue including stems, branches, and trunks. Though SLF will feed on many types of plants, its favorite host is also an invasive species and a common weed tree called *Ailanthus altissima*, AKA tree of heaven. In fact, *Ailanthus* can be useful in monitoring for this pest, and its removal can be handy in helping to reduce the food source for SLF in infested areas. Unfortunately, SLF will also feed on a handful of our agricultural specialty crops and have shown a strong preference for grapevines. As such, vineyard owners (and winery go-ers!) should especially be on the look-out for this pest.



SLF looks quite different at various stages of its one-year life cycle, so what to look out for is dependent on the time of year. In November, adult SLFs are focused on reproduction. Females will lay their eggmasses on virtually any surface (trees, vinyl siding, railroad cars...your minivan) before dying. SLF overwinters as eggs until hatching in April-May. The nymphs that emerge are small, black, and spotted and slightly resemble ticks. They develop red patches as they grow before emerging in their familiar adult form in late summer.

More times than not, it is the public that finds this pest first, so WE NEED YOUR HELP! If you think you've spotted this pest, take a photo or collect a sample and report it immediately. You can call ODA's Spotted Lanternfly hotline at 614-728-6400, or call/visit the Fairfield Co. OSU Extension Office at 740-653-5419.



WINTER BIRD FEEDING

By: Lauren Vires, Wildlife & Education Specialist

The winter season brings with it many challenges for our local bird populations: cold temperatures, decreased food availability, and finding appropriate shelter from the elements. While many species fly south for the winter because of these challenges, there are many other species that tough it out right here in Ohio. For these overwintering species, we can play a part in their survival by providing a bird feeder. Bird feeders not only act as a reliable food source, but they can also be a lot of fun to watch!

One thing you'll notice while birdwatching is that some birds prefer one kind of feeder style or food type over another. This can be due to adaptations such as the shape of their beak or feet, their natural diet, or their behavior. Here are a few options you can choose from when making your bird feeder selection.

Tube feeders, just as it sounds, have a refillable tube that is made for holding seed. Along the tube are multiple access points with a little perch for the bird to comfortably sit on. Seed options to consider are black oil sunflower seeds, cracked corn, millet, milo, or a mixed bag with a little bit of everything. These seeds are a favorite meal of many different bird species such as the northern cardinal, black-capped chickadee, tufted titmouse, finches, sparrows, grosbeaks and many more! Many of these birds, like the northern cardinal, have cone shaped beaks perfectly built for cracking open those seeds.

Suet feeders are small wire cages that hold a suet cake. Suet cakes are made up of animal fat mixed with numerous combinations of nuts, seeds, grains and sometimes fruit. These are favorites of our woodpeckers like the hairy, downy, red-bellied, red-headed, and pileated woodpeckers. These birds have zygodactyl feet, meaning they have two toes in the front and two in the back, that allow for easy grip on the sides of trees and suet feeders.

Platform feeders provide a flat elevated surface that's conducive to spreading out seed, peanuts (unsalted), mealworms and more. The open concept of this feeder allows all birds big and small to come to the table. Blue jays and crows in particular love to snatch up the shelled peanuts and will aggressively prevent other birds from stealing their meal. Dried mealworms are a favorite of eastern bluebirds as they forage for insects throughout the summer.

Some birds even prefer to simply forage on the ground, picking up leftovers from the feeder above: Mourning doves, American robins, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, and others. If you are lucky enough, you might even spot the dark-eyed junco, a bird who migrates down to Ohio from Canada for the winter.

For a more comprehensive list of feeder food options and the species that enjoy each variety, check out the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project Feederwatch Common Feeder Birds bird list at feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds.

If you enjoy monitoring your bird feeders all winter long, consider becoming a citizen scientist and participating in Project Feederwatch through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants' recorded data will contribute to conservation of these bird species. For more information, check out their homepage at feederwatch.org.

LOCAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

If you are interested in applying for the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program for 2024, sponsored locally by the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners, we



ask that you declare your interest by completing a simple form available in our office no later than **Friday, January 19, 2024**. We may not know the results of the applications for six months.

The biggest decision you need to make prior to application is how much money you require to have an agricultural easement purchased on your property.

To avoid any conflict, you must tell us in writing the lowest price per acre you are willing to accept to have the easement placed on the property. The program will never pay more than \$2,000 an acre per applicant farm and maximums based on funding distribution capacity in Fairfield County, which is unknown at this time. All applicant properties will be reviewed by the County Engineer for adequate road right-of-way and adjacent intersection alignment.

We encourage you to make a business decision as to the lowest price you can accept. Please contact Jonathan Ferbrache at (740) 415-3925 if you have interest in applying or questions about the program.



On Thursday, September 7th, the Lancaster-Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce joined the Fairfield SWCD in celebrating their 80th anniversary with a ribbon cutting prior to the SWCD Annual Meeting.

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AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Landowners can enroll in an agricultural district with their county auditor. The land must be at least 10 acres, or if less than 10 acres, have an average gross income of at least \$2,500 from agricultural production. While the requirements are the same as for the Current Agricultural Use Value program, a landowner must enroll in each program separately. Agricultural districts must be renewed every 5 years.

Agricultural district registration affords important benefits to landowners, including an affirmative defense in certain nuisance suits that might be filed against landowners for their agricultural activities. Other benefits concern assessments for water, sewer and electric and eminent domain review.

If land is in a municipality, the agricultural district enrollment must be approved by the city's legislative body and the benefits of the agricultural district program can be modified. Contact Greg Forquer at the Fairfield County Auditor's Office at (740) 652-7036 for more information.

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

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