

Weekly Article

What Has Changed in Ohio Agriculture in 20 years?

3-9-2021

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of Agriculture. Is Spring here to stay? This is a question on many producers minds these days, the 10-day outlook sure looks convincing that spring has sprung. But history tells me that it is way too early to put the coveralls up for the year. For those farmers that follow the farmers almanac the prediction is to have a warm and wet spring for this area of the United States. Just like the use of the farmers almanac there are many things that have changed in the world of agriculture. Researchers from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences explored 20 years of data from the U.S. Ag census and compiled the data to produce a report explaining how agriculture has changed in Ohio from 1997 to 2017. I wanted to share some interesting results and data that was collected to compile the report.

- Ohio Agriculture is big business- Roughly \$9 billion worth of agriculture products are sold in from 77,805 farms generating 900,000 jobs!
- Currently 50.5 Ohio farms produce Dairy products.
- Ohio Farms are smaller these days- The average Ohio Farm is 179 acres. This is 8 acres less than in 1997. The largest growth in the farming sector is from small farms, medium unconsolidated farms are disappearing.
- In 2017 on 5.3% of farms were considered Large farms producing 80.3% of total farm sales.
- In the last 20 years less farmers farm full time – 3 out of 5 farmers work off farm jobs.
- Ohio farmers are getting older – in 2002 45.6% of farmers were age 55 and up, this number changed to 62% in 2017.
- Corn is no longer King- corn production has decreased 37.6% since 1997 and poultry production has increased 149%!
- Inputs have gone up – in 2017. Ohio farms brought in \$10 billion in gross income, the production expenses made up \$7 billion meaning the net income equaled \$2 billion.

In summary the world of agriculture is always changing, and farmers need to be aware of changes and trends. Out of all the data collected for this report there is one data point that stands out to me as interesting or even concerning. The older population of farmers seems to be a growing trend. It is important to involve the next generation in

farming and cultivate knowledge and interest in farming because the future of farming depends on the young guns!

Some other details to go over:

- USDA will continue taking applications for the Quality Loss Program to April 9th. This program assists producers who suffered crop quality losses due to qualifying 2018 and 2019 natural disasters, call (937) 544-2033 for information.
- CRP Grasslands signup will begin March 15th, 2021 and conclude April 23rd, 2021. Contact the farm service agency for assistance in signing up for these programs.
- Ohio Beef Expo is a go and yes, it is in person, March 17th -March 21st at the Ohio Expo Center in Columbus Ohio. Go to ohiobeefexpo.com to learn more.
- Thursday, March 25 – Live online Private Pesticide (AM) and Fertilizer (PM) Recertification Webinars. To register for this training opportunity, you can go to <https://pested.osu.edu/OnlineRecertPrivate#PrivateRecertReg>

From the field

- Winter wheat, rye, and other small grains are greening up growth stage Feekes 2-4. (tillering stage of growth)
- Poison Hemlock rosettes have broken winter dormancy, time for an herbicide treatment.
- Winter annuals such as common chickweed and purple deadnettle have broke dormancy and will begin to flower soon.
- Manure applications are taking place.
- Frost Seeding clover (good time to get that done!)
- Spring calving in full swing some producers are finished.
- Producers beginning to top dress winter wheat, consider split applications.
- Some gardeners have started hot beds for cool season crops.