

Weekly Article

4-24-2023

Supporting Your Local Farmer

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. Time continues to fly as another month comes and goes! The month of April is wrapping up and May is on its way. The old saying April showers bring May flowers has different meanings. The month of April is most normally a wet and cool month which allows soil moisture reserves to build up slowly and warm up gradually allowing perennial wildflowers to slowly break winter dormancy and begin budding in May. This natural process is just like many things in nature that don't go by the textbook rules and that is the case for 2023! My personal opinion is that Mother Nature is about a month ahead of schedule with many of the natural flowers blooming in late March and early April and soil temperatures incredibly warm for this time of year. The month of April has actually been right on par temperature-wise, but the moisture level has been running behind. Crop fields and pastures were at their driest condition since last autumn and many producers have been concerned about potential spring drought. This is a valid concern with expected below-average precipitation levels predicted for the summer growing season. With the dry conditions, many farmers couldn't resist the urge to get out and plant some crops. Many acres of corn and soybeans have been planted and much field work was accomplished this past week before Friday night's rain event that brought 1.5-2 inches of needed rain across the county.

Farming is an occupation of love and challenges, and some people (call me crazy) love the challenge! From weather unknowns to market variability farmers is an occupation that keeps you on your toes and keeps the world afloat. Farming has always taken thinking forward and outside the box mentality but in today's world it is more important than ever. The demand for fresh farm products has grown tremendously in the last several years but really ramped up after the Covid-19 pandemic when food supplies became low or unavailable in grocery stores. This created much stress on both the consumer and producer, with this stress came opportunity to get back to the basis. The farming boom really got growing in 1862 with the homestead act allotting farm families 160 acres of land to farm by 1910 90% of the us population was involved in farming or lived in a rural area. As the population grew combined with the great depression and the dust bowl of the Dirty 30's the agricultural population dwindled to 50% by the late 1950s. Today farm families make up 1% of the population and those living in rural areas hover around 20% of the U.S. population. As one can see things

change and sometimes for good and for bad. One might look at the numbers and be terrified asking, who in the world is going to be feeding the world one day? Another might look at the numbers and see opportunities galore! If you are a farmer, I challenge you to see the opportunities of the future, 98% of the population needs (the keyword is **NEEDS** you and the ever-growing trend of buying directly from you are not slowing down. Be creative in how you market your product and advertise your farm. In my years of visiting different farm operations across the county, one thing holds true, not one is the same and they all have something different to offer. As planting season ramps up and the field slowly fills up with the world's lifeline take time to visit your local farmer and say thank you for all they do, take it from me it will be well received!

Happy farming and happy eating to all!

Other information:

- Crop Revenue Loss Assistance through the second phase of the Emergency Relief Program (ERP), the deadline is June 2nd. To learn more, call your Local Farm Service Agency.
- Grassland Reserve Program sign up April 17th- May 26th, 2023, call your local Farm Service Agency for details.
- Farm Friday Lunch on May 5th at the Farm Service Agency West Union office, stop in and say hi to the ladies!

Ag Educator Words of encouragement – Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

2 Corinthians 9:6