

# Weekly Article

4-4-2022

## Dealing with Black Vultures this Spring

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 mother nature playing an April Fools joke on us? This is the question I had on the first day of April as I made my farm visits and scouting in snow flurries!! This week I was able to get a weather report/update for the month of April from Jim Noal (service coordination Hydrologist with the National Weather Service. The report was a little on the depressing side with expected wet and cool conditions expected to dominate most of the month of April. With these expected weather conditions, farmers will most likely see delays in planting row crops and harvesting forages. Spring so far has been a halfway productive one as producer. I have been able to get out and accomplish some field work as soil conditions firm up and the grass begins to grow. This is also a busy time for many cattle producers as calving season is in full swing. It is a wonderful thing to see a newly born calf, lamb, kid, colt, or even pigs on the farm. It is a true sign of spring. There is also the dark side and a growing problem flying above creating one more challenge for livestock producers these days. The Black vulture has become more of an issue for livestock producers especially during birthing season where young livestock are born on open pastures.

Recently the Ohio Department of Natural Resources obtained a statewide depredation permit for black vultures through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Through a partnership between USDA wildlife services and Ohio department of Natural Resources, sub-permits can be issued to livestock producers experiencing issues with black vultures. Sub-permits will cover commercial livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, swine, and horses. These sub-permits will be free to producers allowing them to remove up to five birds following all rules and regulations required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Sub-permit applications can be obtained by contacting Thomas Butler at [Thomas.p.butler@usda.gov](mailto:Thomas.p.butler@usda.gov).

Here are some important facts and considerations before applying for a permit:

1. Populations are growing- In the past 30 years Black Vulture populations have doubled in numbers and range areas has expanded more northward. Black Vultures have been very known to adapt to changing environments and landscapes and have little fear of human activity. Once to be a sign of spring,

black vultures would migrate farther south but as winter climates have become warmer black vultures can be seen even in winter months.

2. Black Vultures are angry birds! - Black vultures are known to be very aggressive compared to their red headed turkey vulture counterparts. Black Vultures have been known to attack live animals and kill young and older livestock. Turkey Vultures on the other hand are more scavenging type that primarily eat dead material such as roadkill and other dead species, therefore they are important for the environment.
3. Black vultures don't like to hang around their own dead- If producers receive a permit to kill black vultures, it is recommended to hang the dead birds up in effigy, this can be in a tree or fence post.
4. Remove their roosting site- Black Vultures like to roost in open branched/dead trees, older unused barns, and abandoned houses. If you have these on your farm removing them will help prevent Black Vulture from making a home on your farm.
5. Don't forget that these birds are protected species- As a producer myself I often think, why in the world would anyone protect this nuisance of a creature! The reality is that they are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, this means that they cannot be harmed without the use of a permit. Use of pyrotechnics, loud noises, flashing lights, lasers, and guard dogs or donkeys have seen some success. There have also been some signs that grazing management practices such as rotational grazing on stock grazing can reduce animal injury. The theory is that animals are kept in groups and protection is in numbers, eliminating pregnant females or babies to go off by their self away from the rest of the herd.

Some other details to go over

- April 13 6:00-8:00pm Small Ruminant School hosted by W/C Milling LLC. Event location will be held at the Seaman Community Center 17806 State Route 247 Seaman, Ohio 45679. Please RSVP by April 6<sup>th</sup> by calling the Adams County Extension office at (937) 544-2339.
- April 20<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:00pm Forages for Horses Pasture walk located at David and Kimberly Baker Quiver Heart Preserve 2655 Steam Furnace Road Peebles, Ohio 45660. Cost is \$15, please RSVP by April 15<sup>th</sup> with OSU Extension Adams County at (937) 544-2339.
- USDA Conservation Stewardship Program Signup (CSP) application deadline is set for May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Call the USDA NRCS office at (937) 544-2033 option 3.