

Weekly Article

5-2-2022

Preparing for The Future of Agriculture

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. May is here and that means spring has truly sprung (I sure hope so). The last week of April ended on a cooler than average note but on the flip side it also featured less precipitation than expected leading to much field work being accomplished across the county. This past week I was able to get much field scouting accomplished and witnessed much field work being accomplished from planting corn and soybeans, working ground, and even first cutting hay ledge being made, farmers were busy as beavers! I have also been trying to keep records of forage growth across the county to estimate forage dry matter yields if you would like to enter your pasture or hay field forage height you can always email me the heights in inches at Purdin.19@osu.edu . The week of April 25th through the 30th I measured 4 different fields, here are a few results:

- Pure Alfalfa = 19 inches or 4,275lbs/ac dry matter yield.
- Tall fescue-based pasture = 16 inches or 3,360lbs/ac dry matter yield.

This week I also had the honor to help with Kindergarten Ag Day at Peebles Elementary School. It was a wonderful day teaching the children about plants and soils and their importance. It was a pleasure working alongside the farm business management and Ag Mechanics students from the Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center, these hard-working students put together a great program and I have great confidence in the future of Agriculture after working with these talented young people. Speaking of young Agriculturalist, I want to discuss a few things to consider when transitioning or planning for the future of your farm or property. According to the 2017 NASS Ag Census the average age of the American farmer is 57 years of age compare that to 52 years of age in 1992. The trend is farmers are getting older and there are fewer young people taking over the farm operation. This is due to many factors such as higher capital investments, competition from other occupations off the farm, higher land prices, and finally poor succession planning. Preparing the next generation is critical for the farm's future and have a transition plan in place will allow for a smooth transition, here are some steps you can take now to prepare a farm succession plan.

1. **Have a family meeting-** Communication is critical, farm transitioning can be a hard discussion, but it is necessary to honest and open with everyone involved in

the family operation. Discussions should also include family members that are not involved in the day-to-day operations, this helps avoid any hard feelings and miscommunications.

2. **Take a hard look at the business** – Is the farm profitable? Reviewing the operations financials at this time can allow for family input and critical discussions about changes that can be made to improve future farm management strategies. Once again make sure to allow all input from every family member be a part of the discussion.
3. **Planning the transfer of assets** – Farm businesses have a lot of assets, and they can be split between tangible assets such as structures, machinery, and livestock. There are also intangible assets such as farm records, land lease agreements, feed and fertilizer accounts, and legal documents. This portion of transition plan should involve the farms attorney and or tax preparer. This is also a good time to allocate duties and discuss who oversees what duties such as purchases and bill payments.
4. **Develop a retirement plan**- I have heard all my life that farmers don't retire, you work until the very end! This type of thinking is unrealistic and should be avoided. Discussion should include how much money the retiree needs and how much of the finds will be required from the farm income? Retirement housing, accounts, and medical needs are all factors to consider.
5. **Develop a contingency plan**- Life is full of unexpected events, plans should consider all potential events such as unexpected death, divorce, disability, or health issues. Start planning how the operation will absorb the loss or compensate for the unexpected event.
6. **Create an implementation plan**- Start laying out a timetable for events such as transfer of ownership, management obligations, income, and labor.

Some other details to go over

- USDA Conservation Stewardship Program Signup (CSP) application deadline is set for May 13th, 2022. Call the USDA NRCS office at (937) 544-2033 option 3.
- May 13th, 2022, Conservation Reserve Program Grasslands signup deadline. This program allows producers to keep their land in agriculture production by keeping the land in permanent grass cover, actively graze, produce hay. In turn the program provides an annual rental payment to landowners.
- Crop planting certification with USDA FSA – July 15th.