

August 23, 2016
 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 David Dugan
 OSU Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources
 Adams/Brown/Highland Counties
 Ohio Valley Extension Education Research Area

Being a Good Neighbor

When you live in a rural setting the definition of being a good neighbor is a little different than it might be in an urban setting. The real different situation is most likely when you are on the border between the two. There are lots of things that go into being a good neighbor in a rural setting or if you are on the border. I will leave the urban neighbors for another day.

In a rural setting there are often livestock and fences to deal with. There is an old saying that goes something like this, Good Fences make Good Neighbors. Fences are often a part of discussion that is not always pleasant. Who is responsible for the fence? Who is responsible if a tree falls on the fence? Who is responsible for keeping bushes from growing up in the fence? This list of questions could go on for a while.

The Ohio Fence Line Law can be found online or at the OSU Extension Offices. The factsheet explains most of the situations concerning the questions above. In some cases someone may have to mediate the situation as explained in the factsheet. In some cases it can get complicated. The factsheet address is: <http://aglaw.osu.edu/sites/aglaw/files/site-library/The%20New%20OH%20Line%20Fence%20Law.pdf>

In most cases, probably 99 percent or more, there are little to no problems. Neighbors work together to build line fences. In some cases they agree to each build half. In some cases one neighbor buys the materials and the other party does the construction. When it comes to trees and controlling brush in the fence, they simply agree to do their part.

On another note, concerning fences and neighbors who have a home that is surrounded by farmland, but do not farm themselves. There can be some things happen that is in no way meant to cause ill feelings, but it is a lack of thinking the situation all the way through. This is the part that I intended to write about when I started, but the fence line law just kept coming off of my fingertips as I continued to type.

There have been cases where someone just wants to “feed” the cows. They trim the shrubs in the yard and throw them over the fence to the cattle. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE DONE.** Some evergreens are deadly to livestock. Whenever a new family moves into a place where I have cattle running next to the yard fence, this is discussed in the “welcome to the neighborhood” visit.

Another issue is the fruit trees limbs. This was where my “visits” began. It has been several years ago, but as I drove through the pasture to check cattle one evening after a mild storm I noticed a scrape on the ground that led up over the hill. As I followed I began to see what looked like cherry tree leaves. As I followed I was able to confirm this as there was a pretty good size cherry tree branch



laying in the woods. The branch had fallen out of the tree so the guy just wanted to get rid of it. Taking it to the woods was much better than just tossing it over the fence, but it was a cherry tree. Cherry trees with fresh leaves that begin to wilt are highly toxic to livestock (deadly). So, again communication will help prevent such situations that can be tragic.

Now, back to just over the fence. This is the one that probably happens most between neighbors that seems to be harmless. A few branches fall out of a tree during a storm and the home owner picks them up out of the yard and throws them “AWAY”. I had a college professor that taught conservation of natural resources and he talked often about simply throwing stuff “away – the place that appears on no maps”. Getting the braches out of the well-groomed lawn is a priority. However, sending it over the fence (away) into your neighbor’s field is not always acceptable. Consider this, if it is a pasture field that is mowed with a bush hog, small limbs would just be chewed up, but a sizable block might get wedged in the machine and cause expensive damage. Some bush hogs are well over \$10,000.

If it is a hay field it could be worse. The cost of hay equipment that is NOT made for grinding up tree limbs and brush cost more than a bush hog. Then you have the baler that can tolerate even less. If you bale up a block of wood that tears up a baler, not only are you looking at major money for repairs, but you also have hay that you can’t get baled. Good communication can prevent this, too. Most farms will have a brush pile somewhere. Most farmers would be OK with the neighbor taking the limbs and brush to that pile. That might just be part of being a good neighbor.

Adams Co. Jr. Fair Beef BBQ

Hard to believe school has started and August and summer are winding down quickly. In fact I saw two people wearing jackets today. Well as August comes to an end, September always brings us the Adams Co. Jr. Fair Beef BBQ. As is tradition, the event is always the first Thursday in September. This year it falls on September 1 and will be held at the Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center (formerly known as the Vocational School). Come out and enjoy a good meal. Eat in or carry out starting around 4:30 p.m. and going until 7:00 p.m.

Dates to Remember

Aug. 26	Beef and Forage Field Night at Jackson Research Farm
Sept. 1	Adams Co. Beef BBQ
Sept. 3 -10	Highland County Fair
Sept. 20-22	Farm Science Review
Sept. 26 – Oct. 1	Brown Co. Fair