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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Ohio Tobacco Museum

The history over the last century, and beyond in Southern Ohio has mostly revolved around agriculture. In the past few years, the agricultural economy was strong while things were not so good off the farm when discussing the economy. In the past decade or two, what was once a major part of agriculture in Southern Ohio has pretty much dwindled to a memory for many farms, especially in Adams and Brown Counties. These two counties ranked one and two in Ohio for tobacco production and the amount of income was significant. Don't misunderstand, there is still tobacco grown in southern Ohio, but not near what was grown in the 1980s and 1990s. Some farms produce many more pounds than they did in the big years, but there are so few producers. In the late 1900s nearly every farm and farmer was producing tobacco.

When tobacco production was in its heyday, probably for the past 75 to 100 years, the tobacco market was a special place. Ripley was the only place in Ohio to market tobacco in my memory. There were four tobacco warehouses and the town was a buzz from late November until late January or early February. Opening Day was not just a term used to begin a baseball season. Opening Day meant the opening of the annual tobacco market. It was a big day in Ripley and the surrounding farming communities. Tobacco was the crop that paid many of the bills, paid for farms, sent children to college and of course Christmas presents.

Tobacco has been good to many producers, but it is no secret that tobacco has a black eye. Health issues from the use of tobacco products are well documented. What was once a pretty special festival in Ripley in August (The Ohio Tobacco Festival) is now gone. Tobacco sponsors were strong when the festival began back in the early 1980s. The town of Ripley was packed for 4 days every year. As time went on and tobacco became not a "good thing" for sponsors the festival faded.

During the festival something else grew up in Ripley. The Ohio Tobacco Museum which is located on US 52 across from the cemetery and next to the New Farmer's Warehouse is still there. Remember the 4 warehouses, the Farmer's, the OK, the Independent and the Union? Only two are still standing. Do you remember the rows of tobacco on the floor? Remember when it was hand tied and how much pride there was in presenting a good crop on the floor on sale day?

These memories and more can be seen and remembered in the Ohio Tobacco Museum. However, I recently discovered a problem. The Ohio Tobacco Museum is in economic trouble. For years Eddy and Eddie Fath kept the museum open, both opening the doors and at least in part paying for some of the operation. They both passed away a few years ago and the museum is not in a good place from an economic side of things. This place is the history of tobacco. This is a place that shows our heritage.

The plan is to hold a reverse raffle to try to raise funds to keep the Ohio Tobacco Museum open for years to come. There is also the possibility of donations that will help, too. Some donations have



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already been made. The raffle is scheduled for April 8 in Ripley at the elementary school near the museum. The raffle committee is still finalizing details and I will share them in the next few weeks. If you would like more information you can e-mail me at [dugan.46@osu.edu](mailto:dugan.46@osu.edu) or call 937-515-2314 and I will pass the questions on to the committee. I can tell you this about the raffle, the tickets will be \$100 each and there will be only 300 tickets. The ticket will include a meal from the Scioto Ribber. The last ticket drawn will win \$8000.

## **The Presidential Election and Rural America**

In no way shape or form am I going to start talking politics in this column, but I did read an article that was posted in today's Beef Blog (Tuesday Dec. 20) that originated in Hoosier Ag Today from Indiana. You can find the entire story, written by Patrick Pfungsten, by going to: <http://TheBeefBlog.com>

The information included how rural America had voted and for Trump and the urban areas voted for Clinton. It also discussed populations in states like Indiana, Michigan and Ohio that all have cities like Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Detroit that are all basically surrounded by corn and soybean fields. I thought it was a good read, but the take home is the last paragraph, and here it is.

Moving forward, farmers and small town residents may be happy with the populist economic message of the new President-Elect, but they must speak up to elected officials on important agriculture issues. So, as we prepare to move from campaigning to governing, put the numbers of your elected officials in your phone. Call them often, tell them how things are going, and what they can do to help you. Don't let your elected officials take rural areas—and voters—for granted.

## **2016 Corn, Soybean and Forage Performance Trials**

Every year OSU Extension Specialists are involved in research that compares varieties in performance trials in several locations throughout Ohio. The data is collected at harvest and then compiled into a neat package with the Ohio Country Journal. We have these results in all 3 county offices if you would like to stop by and pick one up. They are free.

## **Dates to Remember**

January 9	Pesticide testing at noon, Old Y Restaurant, every month, second Monday.
January 12	Small Farm College in Owensville.
January 17	Ohio Beef School starts at 7:00 p.m. Plan is for two locations with one being confirmed as Hillsboro HS Agriculture classroom. The second location is TBD. There are 2 additional dates of Feb. 7 and Feb. 28, same locations and time.
January 18	Three-hour Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training for those people who do not currently hold a Pesticide Applicator License. Southern State Community College in Hillsboro at 12:30 p.m. or North Adams HS in Seaman at 5:30 p.m. Seating is limited at SSCC so pre-register early by calling Cindy at the Brown Co. Extension Office at (937) 378-6716.

- January 26 Three hour Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training and Pesticide Re-certification at OSU South Centers in Piketon. Call to pre-register at the Pike County Extension Office at 740 289-4837.
- February 1 Ohio River Valley Agronomy Day at the Mason Co. Extension Office.
- February 4 Brown Co. Cattlemen Annual Banquet.
- February 7 Beef School.
- February 8 Two-hour Fertilizer Certification and three-hour Pesticide Re-certification at North Adams HS with Fertilizer starting at 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. meal, then Pesticide Re-certification 7:30 until 10:30 p.m. Pre-registration is REQUIRED. Call Cindy at the OSU Extension Office at 937-378-6716.
- February 9 Two-hour Fertilizer Certification and three-hour Pesticide Re-certification at Southern Hills Board Office in Georgetown with Fertilizer starting at 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. meal, then Pesticide Re-certification 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration is REQUIRED. Call Cindy at the OSU Extension Office at 937-378-6716.
- February 14 Start of Grain Marketing School at the Southern Hills Board Office in Georgetown on five Tuesdays. (Feb. 14, 21, 28, March 7 and 21) The classes will begin at 1:00 p.m. and go until approximately 4:00 p.m. Charge is \$25 and the same class will be offered on Wednesday evenings (the next day) in Chillicothe.
- February 15 Two-hour Fertilizer Certification and three-hour Pesticide Re-certification at Southern State Community College in Hillsboro with Fertilizer starting at 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. meal, then Pesticide Re-certification 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. Pre-registration is REQUIRED and space is limited at this location. Call Cindy at the OSU Extension Office at 937-378-6716.
- Feb. 28 Beef School.
- March 3 Agriculture is Everyone's Business at SSCC in Hillsboro.
- March 7 Farm and Family Night at Maysville Community and Technical College.
- March 10-11 Southern Ohio Small Farm Conference at Wilmington College. This will include another 3-hour Fertilizer Training.