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### **Composting at Southern State Thursday**

This Thursday, March 20, will be the date for the Brown Co. Master Gardener's Monthly gardening program at the South Campus of Southern State Community College. Join Master Gardener, Susan Barber, at the Fincastle campus on Thursday and learn about composting. All seminars are free and open to the public starting at 6:00 p.m. and running until 7:30 p.m. in Room 104.

### **Agronomy Series Part 3**

The third part of the Agronomy Series will be held on Thursday, March 27 at the Ponderosa Steakhouse in Hillsboro. This session will be held in the restaurant beginning at 10:00 a.m. Registration details are in the Dates to Remember below.

### **Are Your Bulls Ready?**

Last week, at the Farm and Family Night, there were several options when it came to sessions to choose from, for the over 900 who attended. One of the sessions was involving Beef Nutrition and another addressed Beef Minerals among the over 40 sessions available. These two sessions provided some of the information that one should consider for the herd bull or bulls as we near the breeding season. The breeding season may vary very close for some, but two or three months for others.

Is there a more important animal in a beef operation, or any other species, than the sire? Half of the genetic makeup of the next group of calves, lambs, pigs, or other is from the sire. With that said, we need to do a good job in selection, but that is only the beginning. The nutrition and health of that animal is very important, too.

That animal needs to be in good body condition to work when the time comes. Making sure the proper nutrition is available in the weeks leading up to breeding season is essential for peak performance. In addition to energy and protein in the diet, there is also a need for proper minerals and vitamins. Do not underestimate the importance of a good mineral program in the weeks or months prior to breeding season. A good quality free choice loose mineral is recommended. White salt or a mineral block will most likely not provide anywhere close to the proper amount of minerals needed for peak performance.

In addition to nutrition, the need for a BSE (Breeding Soundness Exam) should be high on the list of things to do prior to breeding season. This will check for the bull's ability to breed cows. The exam will include the overall health of the bull, evaluating his eyes, teeth, feet and legs, scrotum, penis, body condition, and a bull's ability to mate. A semen check is also performed to evaluate the percentage of live and normal sperm.

This takes some time to get the bulls checked. With proper handling facilities this can be completed by your local veterinarian at the farm. However, most veterinarians will also have facilities that will allow you to haul bulls to them to have the BSE performed. The cost will vary, but in most cases it will be in the \$50 range per bull. With the value of feeder calves today, is it worth the risk of turning out a bull that may not be able to get the job done?

### **Farm to School Program**

The first-ever Southwest Ohio Regional Farm to School Workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 to 7:00 PM in the Mt. Orab Elementary School, 474 West Main St., Mt. Orab, OH. The workshop is designed to bring local farmers, produce growers, and school food service personnel together to learn more about the Farm

to School program. The workshop is free and includes dinner, but you must register ahead of time to attend (no walk-ins), and the registration deadline is April 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Farm to School (F2S) program is built on the idea that if school food products are fresh, locally grown, and picked at the peak time for flavor AND if those food choices are backed up with learning activities, students will choose healthier foods, including more fruits and vegetables. So with this idea in mind, F2S programs seek to link schools with those farmers located within or near their own communities. These programs can open up new markets and increase both revenues and customer base for local farmers.

The April 30<sup>th</sup> F2S workshop has several cosponsors: The Ohio State University Extension; Ohio Department of Education; Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Healthy Ohio, Creating Healthy Communities Program; Ohio Proud/Ohio Department of Agriculture; and Ohio Action for Healthy Kids-Zone 6. Topics to be covered include an overview and update on Farm to School in Ohio, ways of purchasing local foods, food safety, making connections with local producers, the education connection, and what's working in Farm to School. For a workshop registration flyer or more information, please contact either Jenny Even at OSU Extension-Hamilton Co. (Ph: 513-946-8987; email: [even.2@osu.edu](mailto:even.2@osu.edu)) or Sue Basta at University of Cincinnati AHEC Program/HEALTH-UC in Georgetown (Ph: 937-378-4171; email: [Susan.Basta@UC.edu](mailto:Susan.Basta@UC.edu)).

### **Dates to Remember**

- March 27                      Part 3 of the Agronomy Program – Insect ID and Damage in Row Crops. Please call Tami at the Highland Co. Extension Office to register for this free program, 393-1918.
- Marcy 27                      Adams Co. Cattlemen's Annual Meeting and Banquet begins at 6:30 p.m. Contact Caleb Grooms at 544-3276 by March 24.
- April 2                         Highland Co. Cattlemen's Annual Meeting and Banquet at 7:00 p.m. at the Hillsboro Elks. Tickets are available at the Union Stockyards.
- April 10                        20th Annual Southwest Ohio Perennial School in Owensville at the Clermont Co. Extension Office located on the fairgrounds. Registration information and other details can be found at <http://clermont.osu.edu> or you can call the Extension Office at 513-732-7070.

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Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration; Associate Dean, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Director, Ohio State University Extension; and Gist Chair in Extension Education and Leadership.

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