OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN COSHOCTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER







May 22, 2024 (Edition #182)

- Kill Poison Hemlock Now!
- Adapting to New Challenges in the Beef Cattle Business
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- Pledge to Prepare the Next Leader of Your Farm Operation

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Hello Coshocton County!

Several people have been asking about a local option for **Beef Quality Assurance Recertification**. I've invited Christine Gelley, the Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator in Noble County, to teach BQA Recertification on Thursday, June 27 from 6:30-8:00 PM in Room B100 of the County Services Building. Please call our office to register at 740-622-2265.

Also, ODA will be back again with **Pesticide License Exams** on Monday, July 29 at 10:00 AM in Room 145 of the County Services Building. You will need to register for this directly through ODA at <u>pested.osu.edu</u>. You can find study materials online, or we do have Private study materials available for purchase in our office.

I've noticed that **Poison Hemlock** has really taken off in the last couple of days. The first article in this issue is from Christine about addressing this now- she mentions being in the vegetative stage in Noble County when she wrote the article – but it has certainly bolted around here.

Have a safe and healthy day!

Sincerely,

Emily Marrison

Extension Educator



Kill Poison Hemlock Now!

By: Christine Gelley, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, Noble County OSU Extension Source: https://u.osu.edu/beef/2024/05/22/kill-poison-hemlock-now-2/

While hemlock may still be vegetative today, it will soon look like this.



Poison hemlock has already emerged in a vegetative state around Noble County and beyond. Soon it will be bolting and blooming on stalks 6-10 feet tall. All parts of the plant are toxic to all classes of livestock if consumed and is prevalent along roadsides, ditches, and crop field borders.

It is a biennial weed that does not flower in the first year of growth but flowers in the second year. The earlier you can address poison hemlock with mowing and/or herbicide application, the better your control methods will be.



Note the purple spots on the stem.

Poison hemlock is related to Queen Anne's lace, but is much larger and taller, emerges earlier, and has purple spots on the stems. Another relative that is poisonous is wild parsnip, which looks similar to poison hemlock, but has yellow flowers. Giant hogweed is another relative of poison hemlock that is also toxic. All of these plants have umbel shaped clusters of flowers.

According to Joe Boggs of OSU Extension, "Poison hemlock plants contain highly toxic piperidine alkaloid compounds, including coniine and gamma-coniceine, which cause respiratory failure and death in mammals. The roots are more toxic than the leaves and stems; however, all parts of the plant including the seeds should be considered dangerous. The toxins must be ingested or enter through the eyes or nasal passages to induce poisoning; they do not cause skin rashes or blistering. Regardless, this plant should not be handled because sap on the skin can be rubbed into the eyes or accidentally ingested while handling food."

Treatment for poison hemlock includes aggressive mowing to prevent flowering and seed production or herbicide application. Some commonly available herbicides that are generally effective on this weed include glyphosate, 2, 4-D, Remedy Ultra, and Crossbow. All treatment methods are most effective when employed while plants are less than 2 feet tall. Don't let poison hemlock gain ground on your property this season! If you see it, take steps to eliminate it.

Adapting to New Challenges in the Beef Cattle Business

By: Ted Wiseman, OSU Extension, Perry County (originally published in Ohio Farmer on-line)
Source: https://u.osu.edu/beef/2024/05/08/adapting-to-new-challenges-in-the-beef-cattle-business/#more-16149

In the ever-changing world of beef cattle production, recent years have brought new challenges for us as producers. While we've seen record-high prices, the rising costs of inputs have also become a significant concern. Every spring, I typically become optimistic with the anticipation of a successful calving season, pastures greening up, and the beginning of a new growing season.

While traditional concerns such as grazing management, nutrition, and reproduction remain important, it's crucial to acknowledge and address emerging challenges. Pest control and disease outbreaks pose continuous threats to herd health and productivity. Flies have long been a nuisance, and the emergence of new tick species only adds to our concerns. Additionally, reports of avian bird flu have caught our attention, prompting us to remain informed and follow scientific information closely.



As beef producers, we've always had to adapt to the ever-changing conditions nature throws our way. Some factors are within our control, while others require us to adjust our approach. In this article, my intention isn't to dwell on the negative, but rather to emphasize the importance of being observant and proactive in our cattle management this year.

As beef producers, one area that warrants our attention is our working facilities. They don't have to break the bank, but they do need to be functional. Efficient and well-designed working facilities are needed for effective disease management and pest control in our beef cattle operations.

By investing in enhancements like properly designed chutes, crowd pens, and holding areas, we can minimize animal stress, decrease the risk of injuries to both our cattle and us, and enhance the accuracy and efficiency of our management practices. Additionally, having facilities for isolating animals that require treatment not only saves time but also helps prevent the potential spread of diseases within our herd.

As producers, focusing on pasture improvements can greatly benefit our beef cattle operations. Well-maintained pastures provide nutritious forage for our animals, supporting their health and productivity. By investing in pasture improvements such as soil fertility management, weed control, and rotational grazing infrastructure, we can enhance our pastures, ultimately leading to healthier cattle.

As producers, we shouldn't overlook the importance of water as a vital nutrient for our cattle. Having access to clean and reliable water is crucial for their health and well-being. Implementing well-designed water systems that offer continuous access to fresh water prevents dehydration, especially during hot weather conditions. Additionally, a comprehensive mineral program tailored to the specific nutritional requirements of our herd is essential for promoting overall health and growth.

These are just a few reflections I've had while assessing our own operation. I encourage you to take a close look at yours and consider making changes that will enhance profitability, safety, and the overall health of your herd. Increasing the frequency of scouting or watching your herd closely can help identify issues early and prevent potential problems. Here's to wishing each of you a successful season ahead.

Base Acre Updating in the Next Farm Bill

By: Gary Schnitkey, Nick Paulson, Jonathan Coppess, and Bruce Sherrick (Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois) and Dr. Carl Zulauf (Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics, Ohio State University

This article was published on May 7, 2024 in farmdoc daily (14):87. Source: https://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/2024/05/base-acre-updating-in-the-next-farm-bill.html

Updating base acres will again receive attention in upcoming farm bill deliberations. Both the <u>House</u> and <u>Senate</u> committees have released proposals that included limited updates targeted at producers with no base acres or limited resource farmers. Those proposals would aid a subset of producers while not addressing two larger issues associated with updating:

- base acres of individual program crop do not match actual planted acres on farms. Even on farms that have bases acres, base acres of individual crops can vary substantially from how they are planted, and
- 2. total of all base acres does not match total plantings of program crops on farms. Even on farms that have base acres, total acres planted to program crops can differ notably from total base acres on the farm, with many farms having substantially higher planted acres than base acres.

A primary challenge with revising base acres is the impact on Federal outlays associated with updating. "Voluntary" updates, which allow farm owners to make choices, typically are more politically palatable than mandatory updates, which require base acres to reflect recent plantings of crops. However, voluntary updates increase federal outlays more than under mandatory updating schemes. Furthermore, individual farmers may see the value of current support decline under mandatory updates. Those losses will vary by region.

Current Base Acres Relative to Current Plantings

The Commodity title makes payments on 23 "program crops" through two programs: Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC). Both PLC and ARC pay on base acres, not on planted acres. Base acres are specific to a Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm and do not change over time unless authorized by Federal legislation, usually through a farm bill.

Current base acres trace to the 1996 Farm Bill; a watershed bill often referred to as the "Freedom to Farm Act" (see, *farmdoc daily*, <u>July 20, 2023</u>). This Act eliminated set-asides and allowed planting decisions to be made according to market signals. If ARC or PLC payments are triggered those payments are made on 85% of the base acres rather than acres planted to the crop. Base acres were granted to seven program crops (corn, wheat, cotton, rice, barley, oats, grain sorghum) using historical plantings from 1981 to 1985 (see <u>CRS, May 31, 2023</u>). Notably, the 1996 Farm Bill did not authorize base acres for peanuts, soybeans, and other oilseeds. Since 1996, base acres have changed through several legislative acts:

- 1. The 2002 Farm Bill added new base acres for oilseed and pulse crops and allowed producers to make voluntary changes to their base acre allocations. Those changes were implemented through a series of choices given to FSA owners (see *farmdoc daily*, <u>August 30, 2002</u>, for a discussion of how those were implemented on Midwest farms).
- 2. The 2014 Farm Bill removed cotton as a program crop to resolve a World Trade Organization (WTO) case brought by Brazil and four other countries against the U.S. over cotton subsidies. The 2014 Farm Bill also allowed the potential to reallocate base acres by providing landowners two general options: a) keep old base acres or b) reallocate acres based on considered planted acres from 2008 to 2012. Under this voluntary reallocation, total base acres did not change, but allocation of acres to program crops depended on the landowner's chosen options.
- 3. The most recent change came in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, which reinstated cotton as a program crop.

Since the 1996 Farm Bill, the number of acres planted to program crops in the U.S. has changed. According to data on planted acres from the National Agriculture Statistics Services (NASS),

- 1. Corn acres in the U.S. increased by 20% from 75.8 million acres in 1991 through 1995 to 91.1 million acres from 2020 to 2023,
- 2. Soybean acres increased by 40% from 60.5 million acres to 86.4 million.
- 3. Wheat acres decreased 30% from 70.7 million acres to 46.7 million,
- 4. Cotton acres decreased 20% from 14.1 million acres to 11.9 million,
- 5. Peanut acres decreased 10% from 1.7 million to 1.6 million, and
- 6. Rice acres decreased 20% from 3.1 million to 2.6 million.

Adding to discrepancies between current planted and base acres were voluntary updates in 2002 and 2014. Historically, per acre payments from the six major crops from largest to smallest are peanuts, long-grain rice, seed cotton, wheat, corn, and soybeans (see *farmdoc daily*, November 7, 2023). That order largely continues in Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projections for 2024 to 2033, released in February 2024 (see second column of Table 1). Of the six crops with the most commodity title payments, peanuts have the highest projected payment (\$101 per base acre), followed by rice (\$52), seed cotton (\$26), corn (\$21), soybeans (\$9), and wheat (\$7). When given the opportunity, many farm owners chose the allocation with the highest expected commodity title payments. For farmers in the southern U.S., those allocations usually have more peanuts and rice acres. For Midwest farmers, allocations with more corn were chosen.

Table 1. Projected Payments, Base Acres, and Considered Planted Acres, Program Crops CBO 2023 Considered Projected Base Planted Acres 2 Payments 1 Acres 3 Difference 4 Program Crop (\$/base acre) (acres) (acres) (acres) 93,117,000 92,909,000 -208,000 Corn 21 9 52,824,000 85,237,000 32,413,000 Soybeans 7 Wheat 62,227,000 49,982,000 -12,245,000 Seed Cotton 26 8,396,000 11,781,000 3,385,000 Rice (long-grain) 52 3,875,000 2,256,000 -1,619,000 **Peanuts** -845,000 101 2,433,000 1,588,000 Barley 1 5.350.000 2.787.000 -2.563.000 1,455,000 2,291,000 Canola 19 836.000 Chickpeas (Large) 9 71,000 209,000 138,000 Chickpeas (Small) 0 21,000 44,000 23,000 0 Crambe 2,000 -2.000Dry peas 4 433,000 1,206,000 773,000 Flaxseed 15 228,000 274,000 46,000 167,000 Grain Sorghum 11 8,533,000 8,700,000 15 Lentils 279,000 609,000 330,000 Mustard 0 24.000 165,000 141,000 Oats 2 2,072,000 2,147,000 75,000 Rapeseed 0 2,000 9.000 7.000 Rice (Japonica) 496,000 479,000 -17,000 na Rice (medium grade) 170,000 319,000 149,000 na Safflower 11 75,000 154,000 79,000 Sesame 0 5,000 101,000 96,000 Sunflower 27 -81,000 1,620,000 1,539,000 Totals 243,708,000 264,786,000 21,078,000

na payment estimates were not available.

farmdocDAILY

Table 1 illustrates current discrepancies. Base acres enrolled in 2023 total 244 million acres. Farmers who receive program payments report acres to the FSA. From 2020 to 2023, the number of acres considered planted (i.e., planted and prevented planted) averaged 265 million. Overall, farmers planted 21 million more acres to program crops than base acres enrolled in the programs. Among the six major crops, discrepancies are:

 Corn considered planted acres of 92 million are 1 million acres lower than the 93 million base acres. Corn planted and enrolled areas are the closest of any major program crop.

¹ Average of projected payments from 2024 to 2023 made by the Congressional Budget Office in its February 2023 estimates of mandatory spending.

² Reported by Farm Service Agency.

³ Summarized from Farm Service Agency recorded for the four years from 2020 to 2023. Considered planted acres include planted and prevented planted acres.

⁴ Difference equals considered planted acres minus 2023 base acres.

- Soybeans considered planted acres of 85 million acres are 32 million higher than the 53 million base acres. Soybean acres have increased over time. Moreover, farm owners often were not incentivized to switch allocations that contained more soybean base acres as soybeans have very low program payments.
- Wheat considered planted acres of 50 million acres is 12 million less than the 62 million base acres. Wheat acres have declined over time. Previous allocation decisions often favored wheat over soybeans.
- Seed cotton considered planted acres of 12 million are 4 million more than the 8 million base acres.
- Rice considered planted acres of 2.2 million acres are 1.7 million lower than the 3.9 million base acres. Voluntary updating decisions favor keeping rice base acres because of their high per-acre payments.
- Peanuts considered planted acres of 1.6 million are 0.8 million less than the 2.4 million base acres. Voluntary updating decisions favor keeping peanut base acres because of their high peracre payments.

Issues with Base Acre Updating

Any consideration by the committees to update base acres in a 2024 reauthorization will likely raise the following issues:

Base acres do not match planted acres across crops: The current commodity title programs are premised as risk management tools. PLC makes payments when market year average (MYA) prices are below reference prices. ARC makes payments when revenue is below county benchmarks. More closely matching base to planted acres improves the risk management function of the programs. Therefore, the current discrepancies in base acres to program acres further reduce the risk management benefits of the programs.

Total base acres are below planted acres: Due to the increase in planted acres of program crops, base acres are below the current level of planted acres in program crops. Farms with fewer planted acres than base acres, often called under-based farms, do not receive the risk management benefits from PLC and ARC that match their acres. Furthermore, some FSA farms have no base acres, usually because of decisions made by individuals who are no longer involved in the farming operation. The House proposal suggested an emphasis on those acres. However, that proposal would address a limited subset of farms.

Federal budget costs: Any change to base acres will have impacts on Federal spending. Budget rules require that spending offsets must be found for any projected increases in Farm Bill programs, while decreased spending projections can be used to offset increased costs elsewhere. CBO estimates will depend on two main issues:

- 1. Will a base acre update be voluntary or mandatory? A voluntary update typically gives a farm owner a choice between 1) keeping current base acres or b) updating acres based on recent plantings. Voluntary updates normally increase Federal outlays. A mandatory update typically causes base acres to better reflect recent plantings. Typically, mandatory updates have lower Federal outlays than voluntary updates.
- 2. Will base acres be added? Adding base acres increases Federal outlays but reduces the discrepancy between base and planted acres.

CBO estimates the costs of both PLC and ARC to be \$43.7 billion over the eleven years from 2024 to 2033 or roughly \$4.0 billion for each year of the program. The following sections address how costs and other issues are impacted by different types of base acre updates (mandatory vs. voluntary; total base acres increased vs. held fixed at current levels)

Voluntary Update, No Increase in Total Base Acres: A voluntary update could be similar to the 2014 reallocation in which farm owners decided to keep current base acres or reallocate relative to recent plantings. This voluntary update is politically palatable because no farm owner "loses" in the update. However, as no farm owner is made worse off by the update, Federal spending will also increase. The 2014 update can be used as a guide for the impacts (see *farmdoc daily*, September 26, 2022):

- 1. Program crops with increased planted acres will increase base: corn and soybeans,
- 2. Program crops with higher expected payments will increase base: peanuts, rice, seed cotton, and corn,
- 3. Program crops with relatively low payments and lower planted acres will lose base: wheat.

A *farmdoc* analysis showed that the update increased costs by 4.8%. Given a similar increase, the federal government would be expected to increase outlays by \$2.2 billion over the entire 2024-2033 period (\$2.1 billion = \$43.7 billion total spending x .048). This type of update would:

- Not equalize base acres relative to planted acres, leading to a higher number of program acres in crops with high expected program payments.
- Keep base acres at current levels, still leaving concerns about under-based farms.
- This approach would not add farms with no base or address issues associated with limited resource farmers.
- Increase costs by at least \$2.1 billion over 2024-2033.

Voluntary Update, Increase in Total Base Acres: A voluntary update could be instituted, allowing farms to add base acres for underplanted acres. Overall, FSA's annual acreage report has, for the US, 10% more considered planted acres than base acres. Even more acres could be added as:

- 1. FSA data only includes acres reported to FSA. Some farms are not in USDA programs and do not have to report acres to FSA. From 2020 to 2023, NASS reported 1.3% more planted acres than reported by FSA.
- 2. Farms that have more base acres than planted acres are not required to reduce acres since it is a voluntary update.

Hence, a minimum increase is expected to be 10%. Given that a voluntary update occurred on remaining acres, Federal spending increases would be estimated at \$6.6 billion over 2024-2033 (\$2.1 billion for mandatory increase + (\$43.7 billion + 2.1 billion) x .10 for increase for added acres). Relative to the previously mentioned issues, this type of update would:

- Not equalize base acres relative to planted acres, with more program acres in crops expected to receive higher program payments.
- Allow base acres to increase to current program crop planting levels.
- This update could allow base acres to be added for farms without base.
- Increase costs by at least \$6.7 billion over 2024-2033.

Mandatory Update, No Increase in Total Base Acres: Farms could be required to update their current base acres to reflect recent planting. Doing so would not increase total base acres. Given that the proportion of program acres equal 2020-23, and total base acres remain the same, updating to considered planting from 2020 to 2023 would decrease costs by \$1.8 billion. Costs decline because commodities with higher commodity payments are replaced with commodities with lower premiums Relative to the previously mentioned issues, this type of update would:

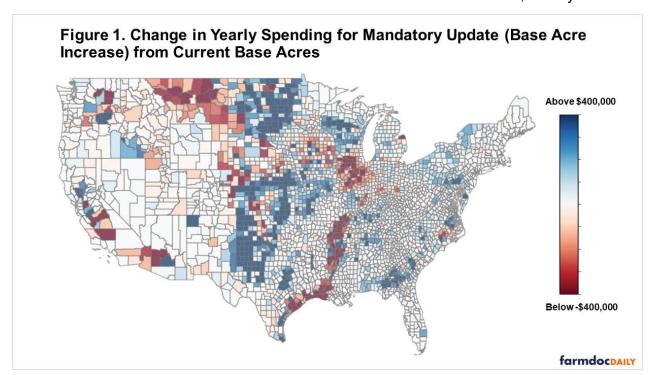
- Base acres would more closely match planted acres in proportional terms.
- Keep base acres below current planting levels.
- This update would not address those farms without no base acres.
- Decrease costs by \$1.8 billion over 2024-2033.

Mandatory Update, Increase in Total Base Acres: Acres could be required to equal recent considered planted acres. If farms were needed to update to 2020-2023 planting, Federal spending would be estimated to increase by \$1.6 billion. Relative to the previously mentioned issues, this type of update would:

- Cause base acres to match recent plantings.
- Allow base acres to increase to current program crop planting levels.
- This proposal could allow for acres to be added for those with no base acres.
- Increase costs by \$1.6 billion over 2024-2033.

Overall, the increase in Federal outlays are relatively small when compared to alternatives that increase reference prices across crops. The main disadvantage would be that some farms would lose funding because of changes in base acres. Farms with lower payments would occur across the country but would follow general geographical distributions. Figure 2 shows changes in commodity title spending by county with a mandatory update that allows total base acres to increase to 2020-2023 planting levels. Areas where producers would be expected to have lower payments are:

- 1. The Midwest will loss as corn acres are replaced by soybean acres.
- 2. The lower Mississippi Delta region through the Texas gulf coast as program acres decline, with that decline particularly pronounced for current rice base acre.
- 3. Montana and the western Great Plains due to a loss in total base acres, mainly for wheat.



Summary

Voluntary base acre updates will not reduce discrepancies between base acres from current planting. Solving under-based issues with a voluntary update can occur, but Federal spending will increase. Mandatory updates can more effectively reduce differences between base and planted acres. Moreover, adding base acres with a mandatory update is possible at lower costs than with a voluntary update. However, mandatory updates will cause some farms and regions to lose commodity title support relative to current levels.

A mandatory update is likely needed in the future to cause base acres to be more reflective of actual planted acres. The 1981-1985 period used to set base acres in the 1996 Farm Bill is forty years in the past. The 1996 Farm Bill is 28 years ago. As the 1990s become further in the past, base acres likely will continue to diverge from planted acres, especially if more voluntary updates occur. Not having a closer match between planted and base acres raises equity concerns.

The House and Senate Bills do not seem to suggest a change in base acres on most farms. As a result, increase in Federal outlays may be relatively low. However, that approach would leave the larger matching and under-based issues unresolved. Moreover, the choosing of farms to receive updates seem arbitrary. Why are farms with no base or limited resource farmers allowed to increase base. There are many farms with base acres that are under recent plantings that would not be benefited by the current House and Senate proposals.

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Pledge to Prepare the Next Leader of Your Farm Operation

By: David Marrison, OSU Extension Field Specialist- Farm Management This article was originally published in the Farm and Dairy Newspaper

Hello, Northeast Ohio! During the past winter, one of the farm management workshops OSU Extension conducted across Ohio was the "Planning for the Future of Your Farm" series. These workshops were a great way for families to learn how to develop a farm succession plan and to begin to have crucial conversations about the future.

Each farm family is different regarding its goals for succession planning. Family dynamics, physical resources, financial position, and managerial styles vary from operation to operation. One of the most difficult issues is determining how to be fair to off-farm heirs without jeopardizing the future of the heirs who have remained with the family business. Other decisions include deciding who will manage the business in the future, how to distribute assets, how and when the senior generation will retire, and how the family will deal with the unexpected.

One of the major succession planning oversights is not adequately preparing the next generation to manage all aspects of the business. After all, we are going to live forever, right? Think of it in the context of if you were to die tomorrow. What are the most crucial management functions that will be needed to continue to run the business at a successful level?

When my dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2010, we only had seven weeks with him before he passed away. I can tell you a lot of learning was done by our family in those 52 days. Could you be ready to hand over the management keys to your operation in a similar time window?

A strategy we share in our workshops is for the senior generation to pledge to teach one thing per day to the next generation. Just imagine how better equipped your son or daughter will be 3-5 years from now if you follow this pledge.

Your knowledge transfer pledge could include lessons on financial record keeping, maintenance on equipment, marketing, taxes, employee management, making cropping and animal nutrition decisions, and much, much more. A great strategy is to write your daily "lesson" on a calendar or in a journal. This will help keep you purposeful in the mission to train up the next generation.

Make sure to ask your children for their opinion on what they need to learn. What would they be the most concerned about if they had to take over the business today? You might be surprised on the good ideas they might have for you. Have you taken the time to ask them and to listen? Use their responses to help craft your teaching list.

Your pledge could also include teaching where all the property borders and underground electric, water lines, and drains are. I found out where the underground electric line at the farm was the hard way! Yep, we hit it with a backhoe digging up a waterline. The location of this electric line was one thing I was not able to learn from my dad before he passed. After all, we never had a problem with it, so we never discussed it.

For my successors, I am developing two notebooks. The first notebook is a farm resource book. This notebook includes maps, pictures, and measurements of where all the different water, electric, drainage and septic lines are. Included in this notebook are the tile maps for the farm as well as specifics on the history of the barns, farm equipment, and water wells. Also included in the notebook are the crop leases, Farm Service Agency paperwork and copies of the oil and gas leases.

The second notebook I am creating is an estate notebook. This notebook includes copies of my advanced directives, will, trust, life insurance policies, property deeds and copies of all my financial accounts. Our Farm Office Team is in the final development stages of a new estate spreadsheet which will help you in the creation of this notebook. If you would like to receive a copy of this resource when it is completed, you can sign up at: go.osu.edu/excelwithfarms

I hope you make a pledge to better prepare the next generation to manage and lead your family's farm into the future. The investment in teaching and preparing the next generation will go a long way in ensuring the legacy of your farm.

To close I would like to share a quote Billy Graham who stated, "The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith. Have a good and safe spring planting season!

David Marrison is Professor and Field Specialist, Farm Management, Ohio State University Extension. Mr. Marrison can be reached at 740-722-6073 or marrison.2@osu.edu