

COSHOCTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**March 24 Issue (Edition #87)**

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Hello Coshocton County! Yesterday, we celebrated National Ag Day. Thank you to the Coshocton Soil & Water Conservation District, Wen Mar Farms, and Farm Credit Mid-America for their sponsorship of the Ag Day Take-out meals catered by Schumaker farms. It was great to see so many of you again and we were pleased that over 150 meals were picked up and enjoyed by farm families here in Coshocton County.

It is also great to see a lot of field activity gearing up with this week's warmer weather. Lots of fertilizer is being spread or knifed in across the region and it is good to see our wheat, hayfields and pastures greening up.

Enjoy this week's warmer temperatures!

Sincerely,

David L. Marrison

Coshocton County OSU Extension ANR Educator



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Celebrating National Ag Week in Coshocton County

By David Marrison, Coshocton County Extension Educator

Written for the March 25, 2021 Beacon Newspaper

Hello Coshocton County! This week we are celebrating National Ag Week and on Tuesday, March 23, farmers across our nation celebrated the 48th edition of National Ag Day. This celebration sponsored by the Agriculture Council of America gives us time to pause and to celebrate our great industry of agriculture.

If you are like me, you love food which ties into this year's Ag Day theme which is "Food Brings Everyone to the Table." I believe that 2020 National Ag Day essay winner Eli Mittermeyer from Illinois summed it up best when he wrote, "The food we enjoy at our table exists because of the dedication of America's farmers and ranchers. Our farmers embrace constantly evolving challenges and minimize environmental impacts while maximizing food production. They must embrace new technology while respecting old traditions and their business requires not only a significant financial investment, it requires an investment of blood, sweat and tears while battling frustrating working conditions, weather hardships, economic challenges, and more."



Here in Coshocton County, we have a lot to be proud of with regards to our agriculture industry. We have over 2,100 individuals who have a hand in managing 1,191 farms. The average age of our farmers is 54.4 years of age and it might surprise you that only 37% of our producers are classified as full-time farmers.

Indeed, small and part time farms are on the rise. Thirty-nine percent of Coshocton County operations farm under 9 acres with another 39% farming between 10 and 49 acres. That means 78% of our operations have 50 acres or less with our average farm size being 153 acres. Only 6% of our operations farm over 500 acres. Additionally, we rank in the top ten in Ohio for female operators at 38%.

Most of our farmers are also not getting rich from their farms. According to the 2017 Ag Census, 47% of our farms sell less than \$5,000 worth of commodities with the average net farm income per farm at \$20,966. However, this is just an average. There is a lot of variability with regards to net farm income from one operation to another.

Our farm families manage almost 183,000 acres of crops, pasture, and woodland. Do you know that our farmers raise over 29,000 acres of hay, 28,000 acres of corn, 21,000 acres of soybeans, 2,000 acres of wheat, 1,300 acres of silage, 500 acres of fruits and vegetables, and over 50 acres of Christmas trees?

Our farmers also manage nearly 40,000 acres of pasture for our cattle, sheep and goats to graze on. Hay is the commodity which is the most common crop grown by our farmers as 720 farms or 60% raise hay. In comparison, our second leading crop, corn, is grown by only 20.8% of our farm operations.

With regards to animals, Coshocton County has great diversity. You will most likely find a cow on our farms as 45.5% of our farms have cattle. We have over 21,000 cattle which includes 8,200 beef cows, 3,200 milk cows, and almost 10,000 replacement beef and dairy animals.



On any given day, you will find a total of 900,000 meat chickens, 76,000 layer chickens, 71,000 pigs, 3,500 sheep and lambs, 1,800 horses, 1,300 goats, and over 100 turkeys, donkeys and alpacas on our farms. Our

bee industry is also buzzing along as we now have over 40 farms raising 169 colonies of bees.

Our poultry sector is the one sector that continues to grow by leaps and bounds as over 7.2 million meat chickens are raised and sold each year here in Coshocton County. In fact, new barns have been added since the 2017 Census was conducted. So, this number is already low. Besides poultry, our farmers market on the average 151,000 pigs, 10,000 head of cattle, and 800 goats each year.

The Census of Agriculture also tracks farm machinery. Do you know there are almost 2,700 tractors, 150 combines, 800 hay balers, and 1,500 farm trucks in Coshocton County? This machinery when coupled with our land and farm buildings has an estimated value of over \$1 billion dollars. That is a huge investment in bringing food to your table and mine!

So, I encourage you to join me in thanking our Coshocton County farmers during National Ag Week. I encourage you to pick up your phone or drop a note to the farmers in your life and say thank you. Thank you, Coshocton County farmers for all you do!

To close, I would like to share quote from James Wesley who stated, "I still believe in amber waves of grain, man on his knees praying for rain. That grew this country strong and keeps us moving on. They get tougher as they live, their lives keep gettin' harder. Oh, I think it's time we all thank a farmer." Have a good and safe day!

Selecting Forages for Your New Seeding

By: [Christine Gelley](#), OSU Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, Noble County

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2021/03/24/selecting-forages-for-your-new-seeding/>

The spring seeding window for the most popular forages in our region is quickly approaching. Producers looking for guidance on how to choose the best forage for their system should always start with a soil test rather than a seed catalog. Whether you have farmed your site for decades or days, soil testing is essential for success.

Once you know the characteristics of your soil, you can formulate a timeline to adjust fertility if needed, sow your selected seed, and set realistic expectations for production. Soil testing should be conducted when site history is unknown, when converting from a different cropping system (row crops, woodlands, turfgrass, etc.), or on a three-year schedule for maintenance.

Additional factors worthy of consideration prior to purchasing seed include site drainage, sunlight exposure, weed competition, forage harvest method, and feed value for the end user. Choosing a forage that is adapted to the conditions of the site may be more effective than adapting the site to fit an appealing forage.

Confronting the limitations of the planting site and implementing corrective action may take a whole season or more before the conditions are well-suited for establishing a new forage stand, but the results are worth the wait if you expect long-term success. It is ideal to begin preparing for planting in the growing season prior. Sometimes using a transitional forage crop for the short-term can provide both improved forage production and help resolve current challenges. This can be especially helpful when site history is unknown.

Most Ohio forage producers looking to plant in the springtime have plans to establish a perennial cool-season forage stand. These forages will typically need planted by the beginning of May into a weed-free, well-drained, and firm seedbed. After germination they require two to three months before subjection to frequent mowing or grazing. If soil conditions are saturated past the ideal planting time or weeds take hold prior to seeding, it may be best to re-evaluate your plans. Most perennial cool-season forages have a second window for planting in late-summer or early-fall.

In a situation where spring planting is less than ideal, but you have already committed to planting something new, you can consider the use of a summer annual forage planted in late-spring or early-summer instead. These forages will grow quickly and die with first frost. Most can be harvested within 60 days of germination

and produce two to three forage harvests. The forage manager can choose to terminate the summer annual prior to seeding a cool-season perennial in the fall or drill into the existing residue if weeds are suppressed. Another option is to follow the summer annual with a winter annual forage and pursue spring planting of a perennial stand again in the following year.

When establishing a stand that is a combination of grasses and legumes, proceed with caution regarding weed prevention and suppression. Treating weeds in a mixed stand is exceedingly challenging compared to grass-only or legume-only stands. Also be mindful of herbicide residual that could remain in the soil or plant matter from the previously grown crop. It may be ideal to establish the grass species first and frost-seed or inter-seed legumes after the first growing season to allow for the control of broadleaf weeds.

Recommendations for planting timeframes, seeding depths, seeding rates, site preferences, fertility requirements, and care during early establishment for various forage crops can be found in the Ohio Agronomy Guide. A partial selection of commonly requested information is included in the following table.

Forage Crop	Seeding Rate (lb./ac.)	Planting Dates Northern Ohio	Planting Dates Southern Ohio	Planting Depth (in.)
Cool-Season Perennial Grasses				
Kentucky bluegrass	10	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/30	3/5 - 4/15 8/10 - 9/15	0 - ¼
Orchardgrass	10	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/20	3/5 - 4/20 8/1 - 8/30	¼ - ½
Perennial ryegrass	24	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/20	Not Recommended	¼ - ½
Reed canarygrass	10	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/15	3/5 - 4/20 8/1 - 8/25	¼ - ½
Smooth brome grass	16	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/20	3/5 - 4/20 8/1 - 8/30	0 - ½
Tall fescue (Novel Endophyte Avoid KY-31)	15	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/20	3/5 - 4/20 8/1 - 8/30	¼ - ½
Timothy	8	3/20 - 5/1 8/1 - 10/5	3/1 - 4/20 8/1 - 10/15	¼ - ½
Cool-Season Perennial Legumes				
Alfalfa	15	4/1 - 5/1 8/1 - 8/15	3/20 - 4/25 8/1 - 8/30	¼ - ½
Birdsfoot trefoil	9	4/1 - 5/1	3/20 - 4/25	0 - ¼
Red clover	11	2/1 - 5/1 7/20 - 8/10	2/1 - 4/25 8/1 - 8/20	¼ - ½
White clover	5	2/1 - 5/1 7/20 - 8/10	2/1 - 4/15 8/1 - 8/20	0 - ¼
Warm-Season Annual Grasses				
Pearl millet	20	5/15 - 7/10	5/1 - 7/20	½ - 1 ½
Sorghum-sudangrass	23	5/15 - 7/10	5/1 - 7/20	1 - 2
Teff grass	5	5/25 - 6/25	5/15 - 7/1	1/8 - ¼

After choosing the forage type that best suits your management style and site limitations, browse varieties available from reliable seed dealers. Varieties of the same species may be better suited for hay than for grazing, mature at different rates, differ in nutritional value, and/or expected yield. Look for details on seed tags and compare production dates, germination rates, and pounds of pure live seed as indicators of quality. If planting a legume, be sure that the seed comes inoculated or with an inoculant packet of the appropriate rhizobia (soil bacteria).

Once you have settled on your best-case scenario, make a contingency plan, just in case Mother Nature has something up her sleeve that counteracts your ideas. Then, be patient for the right conditions to plant and

allow adequate time for your new seeding to establish a healthy root system before first harvest. For more information on forage selection and site preparations, contact your local Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Educator, visit <https://forages.osu.edu>. A video on this subject can be found at: <https://youtu.be/ODnH7ncVSik>

Minerals for Beef Cattle Recording Available

By Garth Ruff and Steve Boyles

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2021/03/24/minerals-for-beef-cattle/>

Proper mineral and vitamin nutrition contributes to strong immune systems, reproductive performance, and calf weight gain. However, when it comes to selecting mineral supplementation to use for your beef herd it can often be a confusing decision as not all mineral mixtures are the same.

To help better understand what minerals are needed for beef cattle, OSU Extension in Coshocton County offered a webinar titled “Minerals for Beef Cattle” on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. During the session, participants learned the ball-park levels for mineral supplements for beef cows on forage-based diets, and discussed macro minerals, trace minerals, and best practices for mineral supplementation. Sample mineral tags were reviewed, and participants learned what to look for and how to fine tune mineral supplementation based on their hay sample analysis. The program featured Dr. Steve Boyles, OSU Extension Beef Specialist, and Garth Ruff, OSU Extension Field Specialist for Beef Cattle, and can be accessed at: <https://youtu.be/c2eY1XgRuY0>

Weighing the Options

By: [Christine Gelley](#), Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, Noble County OSU Extension

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2021/03/24/weighing-the-options/>

American taxpayers have begun receiving another round of stimulus dollars recently and it seems everyone has an opinion on what you should or shouldn't do with the funds you receive. This week I'll propose some ideas from my perspective for you to consider. Take them or leave them; agree or disagree; here is some advice from me for agriculturalists:

- Save the money to pay your taxes. After filing your 2020 taxes, you may have payment due rather than a refund. If you are a landowner, you will have property taxes to pay at some point, too. If either of these are burdens to address on an annual basis, you could use these dollars toward paying any applicable taxes or fees.
- Invest the money in an account that accrues interest to benefit you later. A little patience can offer big rewards.
- Pay off pending invoices for services rendered. Timely payment to people who help you with tasks outside of your skillset is crucial for building and maintaining good working relationships long-term.
- Settle outstanding debt. Debt is a prevalent burden for many people. Your stimulus payment may not seem to make much of a dent to significant loan balances but paying extra where you can reduces the amount of interest you accrue and will save you money in the end.
- Purchase equipment that will provide a clear return on investment to improve farm safety, management, and income.
-

In conversation with agriculturalists, I am consistently surprised by how few have their own set of scales to weigh materials or livestock. Whether your materials are large scale or small scale; living or non-living; for sale or for recreation; a scale is a must have for farm business.



Through our Extension programming in ANR we frequently repeat the statement- “You cannot manage what you do not measure.”

To follow that statement, you cannot take measurements without an element of scale and you cannot track change without keeping records.

If you raise livestock, grow crops, or sell anything metered by volume or weight, a set of reliable scales and metered containers to measure dry and liquid volume are must haves that will provide a return on investment. Guessing about volume and weight leads to error in our calculations. Whether selling baked goods, livestock, or crops, error on our measurements leads to profit loss. Having a set of good measuring tools and keeping records is truly instrumental for agricultural operations.

Information about different types of scales and agricultural use can be found from farm equipment suppliers. The appropriate scale for your operation could be one of the following:

- Bench scale
- Crane scale
- Platform scale
- Floor scale
- Sorting scale
- Bin scale

There are scales of many sizes and precision abilities on the market to choose from. Any scales used for retail purposes must abide by state regulations enforced by the Ohio Department of Agriculture – Division of Weights & Measures. My advice about stimulus investments is choose wisely and weigh the options of how your dollars can be used for growth to aid your family and community. A set of scales is one of many possibilities.

March 1 Cattle on Feed Inventory Up

By: Kenny Burdine, Livestock Marketing Specialist, University of Kentucky Cattle

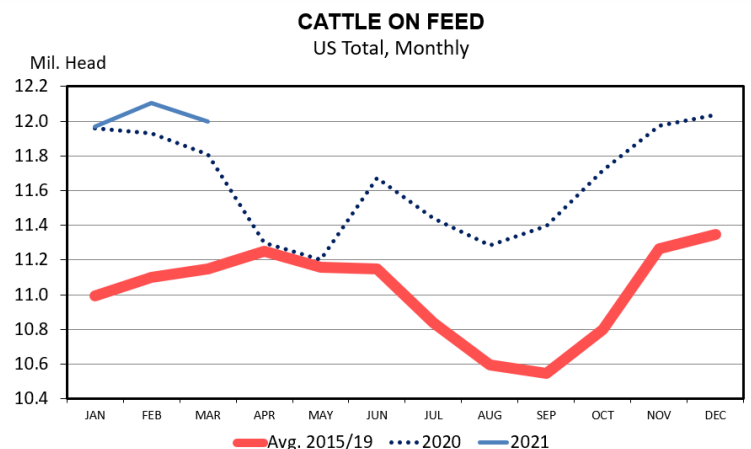
Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2021/03/24/march-1-2021-cattle-on-feed-inventory-up-1-6-from-2020/>

Cattle on feed reports are key indicators of beef supply in the coming months and have implications for fed and feeder cattle prices. Each month, the USDA surveys feedlots with capacity exceeding 1,000 head and provides an estimate of the total number of cattle on feed at the beginning of the month. Estimates are also provided for placements and marketings from the previous month, as well as a number of other measures. A quick comparison of January 1 estimates from the USDA January Cattle Inventory report and January's Cattle on Feed report suggest that the monthly survey of these 1,000+ head capacity feedlots likely represents a little over 81% of total cattle on feed in the US.

The February weather challenges across much of the country's major cattle feeding areas left a bit more anticipation than usual for Friday's Cattle on Feed report. It was unclear how much winter weather impacted sales and transportation of feeder cattle and fed cattle last month. We definitely saw fewer cattle move through markets in the region and most expected some impacts to be seen at the feedlot level.

As of March 1st, total cattle on feed inventory was estimated to be up 1.6% from 2020. This was largely in line with pre-report expectations.

Weather challenges were likely the reason why there was a wider-than-usual range of pre-report estimates for February placements and marketings. Both came in down around 2% from February 2020, which was likely the result of weather impacts this year. Feedlot



Data Source: USDA-NASS
Livestock Marketing Information Center

C-N-10
03/19/21

inventories typically increase through winter and spring and then decline through early fall.

It will be interesting to watch cattle on feed patterns through 2021. As we have discussed previously, the 2020 calf crop was smaller than 2019, and 2021 will be smaller still. Plus, sharply higher grain prices tend to encourage the placement of heavier feeder cattle and decrease the number of days that cattle are fed. Holding everything else constant, both of these factors tend to reduce the number of cattle on feed at any given time. Remember too, that year-over-year comparisons will be very strange in the coming months as spring 2020 placements and marketings were drastically impacted by COVID. This was the focus of [last week's Cattle Market Notes Weekly](#).

The Use of Wool in Compost and other Alternative Applications

By: Dr. Cate Williams, Institute of Biological, Environmental & Rural Sciences (IBERS), Aberystwyth University
(Previously published by [Business Wales.gov: July 23, 2020](#))

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/sheep/2021/03/23/the-use-of-wool-in-compost-and-other-alternative-applications/#more-4315>

How many of you still have wool on hand from last years wool clip? Have you decided when, where, and how you will sell it if at all? For those that are unsure, perhaps you could consider implementing a few of these alternative applications that would greatly benefit your operation this year and for many more to come.

- Sheep's wool offers many benefits when used in a mixture as compost or mulch: as a source of slow-release nitrogen and other trace elements, in weed and pest control, moisture retention and temperature regulation.
- Wool may be used as a sustainable, renewable, and environmentally friendly alternative to peat.
- Other alternative uses include in thermal and noise insulation, particularly in the construction of new "eco-houses".
- Further research is needed to establish optimum composting strategies and mixtures as well as how to upscale the process.



(Image Source: Wind Valley Farms)

As the market for wool declines, producers may be looking for alternative ways to make use of their fleeces, particularly daggings and dirty or low-quality wool. A couple of companies already commercially produce several 'wool and bracken' composts, a sustainable, environmentally friendly, peat-free alternative to some others. Sheep's wool replaces the peat element of other composts by increasing water retention and acting as a source of slow-release nitrogen. Peat extraction and use are problematic for several reasons, peat acts as a significant, natural carbon (C) store and so its removal decreases the land's C storage capacity whilst increasing the risk of floods, impacting water quality and damaging wildlife habitats. Anecdotal evidence suggests that wool and bracken compost has a similar soft and crumbly texture to peat-based formulations with good nutrient profiles and water-holding capacity. Wool may also be included in mulch or mats where it has been shown to reduce predation by slugs and snails, eliminate weed growth, and reduce soil temperature variation. Wool has historically been used as an effective thermal and sound insulator and would be well suited to use in eco houses constructed using green materials. As a biodegradable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly material, wool has plenty of uses outside of the textile industry, especially in light of increasing concern regarding the world's climate.

The problem with peat

Peat is a naturally occurring accumulation of decaying organic matter – consisting mostly of plants and vegetation. It is labelled as the [most efficient carbon sink](#) on the planet as surrounding plants capture the atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) originating from the decaying matter in the peat. A peatland or peat bog takes thousands of years to develop but can be destroyed by mining and harvesting in a fraction of that time,

rendering it a non-renewable resource. Peat extraction [releases large amounts of CO2, methane, and nitrous oxide](#), all potent greenhouse gases, as well as damaging wildlife habitats and increasing the risk of floods. Nevertheless, peat remains a key ingredient in the majority of commercially produced composts due to its water holding capacity and ability to effectively retain soil nutrients. Several other alternatives to peat have been explored, including [biochar](#), wood, coconut fiber, and indeed, sheep's wool.

Wool in compost

Whilst wool is fully biodegradable, this process takes a relatively long time – depending on the wool itself and the external environment [this varies from 3 months](#) to 2 years. This is a great advantage when composting, as this ensures a slow and steady release of nitrogen (N) into the surrounding soil – especially considering wool contains on average [10-11% nitrogen](#), more than some commercially available composts. Daggings are ideal as they contain dirt and fecal matter, which make for excellent compost material due to organic matter content. Wool offers a unique spectrum of trace elements too, studies have found [comparatively high levels of potassium \(K\), sodium \(Na\), iron \(Fe\), and phosphorous \(P\)](#). The very high concentration of K in sheep's wool is due to a certain type of wool grease – suint. Whilst levels are not as high as N and K, P is also present in sheep's wool, making up the full complement of essential, key nutrients found in fertilizers (N, P, and K). Some studies have found that [wool may not need to be composted](#) – results from trials using container-grown plants suggest that raw wool may be used as a nutrient source and growth medium, with roots growing directly and preferentially on wool fibers.

Wool in mulches and mats

Wool may be used below plants to prevent water and nutrient runoff, a method dating back to the 1900s. [The presence of lanolin](#) and other waxy substances on the outer surface of the wool makes it water repellent. However, the interior cortex is more delicate and contains a [matrix of sulphur-rich proteins](#) that attract water and make wool highly absorbent – a feature that is particularly important for dyeing.

As a mulch, used to surround plants above ground, sheep's wool provides a porous shield that helps to [reduce weed growth](#) whilst regulating soil temperatures – keeping soil cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Numerous studies have shown the efficacy of wool mats used to quash weed growth with one noting that [wool fabric nearly eliminated all weed growth](#), promoted daughter plant rooting and increased fruit yields in strawberries when compared to plants that were manually weeded and treated with a standard herbicide (chlorthal-dimethyl, DPCA). A similar study evaluating the use of wool mulch treatment in strawberries found that maximum temperatures were consistently lower and minimum temperatures consistently higher than those without wool. [Overall, temperature variation was significantly lower](#) for soil under the wool mulch. This study also agreed that wool mulch (single- and double-ply) is an effective barrier to weeds. Although not detailed in the scientific literature, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that wool pellets [might also deter slugs and snails](#), as some wool fibers have microscopic barbs which may act as a physical barrier.

Wool may be composted with a large variety of different materials, or for some uses may not need to be composted at all. Alternatively, wool may be processed into pellets – the pellet structure may allow for better soil aeration and porosity. Studies investigating composting strategies suggest that on a large scale, [25% wool, 25% horse muck, and 50% grass clippings](#) may provide the best results. When compared to combinations with manure and woodchips and food waste and woodchips, the compost containing manure and grass clippings had the most appropriate moisture content, pH, temperature, and composting time. Most studies [recommend the separation of wool](#) before composting as it is prone to clumping and can become compacted when left in bundles which can lead to a high percentage of solids. Future research may look to mechanically separate compacted waste wool bundles before large scale composting. Overall, there is little research detailing optimum composting strategies for wool, with most anecdotal guidelines stemming from social media and small, private gardens. There will likely be variations depending on the breed of sheep from which the wool is sourced as wool fibers are highly variable in diameter and length. This may affect wool composition (e.g. trace element levels) which would have a knock-on effect on both its behavior in composting and value as a compost. [Commercially available wool-based composts](#) utilize wool from hill breeds of sheep [coarse wool], such as Herdwicks. The coarse wool from these breeds doesn't degrade as quickly as finer wool which gives a better structure and texture to the end product as well as ensuring a slow release of nutrients and maintained

moisture retention. Hill [coarse] wool is also often too coarse for use in textiles, so this also helps to support local farmers. Such commercially available wool composts also use bracken as a base which provides a good source of potash, helps to retain moisture and is freely available from the surrounding British countryside. Furthermore, bracken is well known for causing problems, overpowering and inhibiting the growth of surrounding plants [using toxic chemicals](#). Such chemicals are broken down during the composting process making it safe and effective for use in compost. As bracken is invasive and problematic yet a renewable material (recovering in approximately 4 weeks) this makes it an attractive ingredient.

Wool in thermal and noise insulation

Wool has long been used as an effective insulator in terms of both sound and heat, but is now experiencing renewed interest due to its natural, sustainable, and renewable nature. In light of increasing attention concerning climate change and the environment, these qualities are becoming more and more important to consumers. There is also [increasing interest in “eco-houses”](#), designing and building homes with minimal carbon footprints. To do so, houses must be well insulated to ensure good energy efficiency, so to this end, renewable and sustainable materials such as wool and indeed hemp and straw have been explored. Due to natural variation in wool, density can be inconsistent, meaning that [a larger amount of wool is needed](#) to produce comparable thermal effects to fiberglass, however, wool offers a myriad of advantages over fiberglass (e.g. sustainability and environmental impact, safety and toxicity, fire retardancy, and better noise insulation). Studies have found that wool effectively isolates vibrations and can reduce noise by up to 6 decibels, [outperforming mineral wool](#). A recent study has found that coarse, low-quality wool [performs just as well](#) in insulation, offering the potential for diversion of this waste stream of less marketable and valuable wool into green building material which may offer some benefit to sheep producers. When [comparing wool with polyester fibers](#), a study found that a 50:50 mix of the two performed best, absorbing over 70% of noise, displaying good moisture resistance under high humidity, and 65-70% biodegradation. The 50:50 mix outperformed both 100% polyester fiber and 100% wool, although it is worth bearing in mind that polyester is not biodegradable so 100% wool would likely be the more environmentally friendly option albeit not the most effective.

Summary

As the wool market continues to decline, particularly for hill breeds with coarse wool, alternative uses need to be explored. The use of wool in compost or mulch is a fairly novel concept, with only a couple of commercial producers of wool and bracken compost. Nevertheless, wool (soiled wool in particular) provides an excellent slow-release source of nitrogen in addition to a variety of other trace elements as it biodegrades. Wool offers further benefits in terms of soil temperature regulation, moisture retention, soil structure, and is an effective weed and pest control. Wool presents a sustainable, renewable and an all-round environmentally friendly alternative to peat, which is so often used in composts. Other applications for wool include in thermal and noise insulation, especially relevant in light of increased interest in sustainable and environmentally friendly eco-houses, constructed primarily from renewable and green materials.

ODA to Offer Pesticide Testing in Coshocton County

OSU Extension in Coshocton County is pleased to announce the Ohio Department of Agriculture will be holding two additional pesticide and fertilizer applicator testing sessions in Coshocton County on and April 14 (**sold out**) and May 12 from 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. each day. These exam sessions will allow individuals to take a private or commercial pesticide applicators examination. The testing will be held in Room 145 in the Coshocton County Services Building with COVID-19 safety protocols enforced. Pre-registration is required and can be made by accessing the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Regulatory program at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/oda/divisions/plant-health/pesticides>
More details can also be by calling 614-728-6987 (option 1) or via email at: pesticides@agri.ohio.gov

“I still believe in amber waves of grain, man on his knees praying for rain. That grew this country strong and keeps us moving on. They get tougher as they live, their lives keep gettin’ harder. Oh, I think it’s time we all thank a farmer.”
James Wesley