

>>> THE WAYNE COUNTY <<< AG SUCCESS TEAM

Securing farms and farmland for future generations

FROM THE GROUND UP

You may often hear “Wayne County is home to prime farmland” or “we have some of the best farmland in the County”, but how do we know that to be true? Well...science.

Folks working with the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) spread out across the country...literally digging in the ground to get samples and documenting what they find. This vast amount of information is then collected and made available through resources such as websoilsurvey.usda.gov. This data is used by agencies such as Wayne Soil & Water Conservation District to help farmers make decisions....and even plays a part in the how the Wayne County Auditor calculates your CAUV taxes!!

“Dig deeper” and you can find how these prime soils got here as well as the other factors that make Wayne County an agricultural powerhouse. In his recently written paper “Oasis in the Desert”, retired Ohio State IPM Program Coordinator Ron Becker explains how the landscape and soil composition that we depend on were created during the last ice age...and cannot be replaced if destroyed.

Read more about these topics and new help coming for agricultural businesses growing “from the ground up” below. And, if your interest in soil is piqued, check out the Soil Agronomy Workshop with Neal Kinsey at Greenfield Farms in December.

Happy Harvest!

BALANCING ACT STUDY LOOKS AT PRESERVING FARMLAND AND HOUSING NEEDS

Wayne Economic Development Council (WEDC) has engaged with Next Move Group in cooperation with the Wayne County Commissioners, the City of Wooster, and the City of Orrville on a county-wide housing assessment project. The study will gather information about the types of housing needed, determine the best locations for new developments, and consider transportation options needed. The findings can help guide new developments inwards towards cities and villages with central utilities instead moving of out into productive ag land. This is a three-phase process and will be completed in the first quarter of 2024.



FARMERS CONSIDERING ASA



Landowners in the Jentes Road area north of Wooster are working to connect to neighbors who would like to join together to create an Ag Security Area (ASA).

ASAs create areas specifically designated for agricultural use for a 10-year period. During this time, the owners may receive tax incentives for investments in agricultural infrastructure projects.

Contact AgPlan@WayneOhio.org to learn more.

LOCAL APPOINTED TO SERVE ON STATE BOARD

Ag Success Team member Barb Lang was selected to serve on the Ohio Department of Farmland Preservation Advisory Board dedicated to the preservation of farmland.

The board consists of 12 voting members appointed by the ODA Director. Ohio Revised Code 901.23 lists the interests that must be represented on the board, which include one farmer from each quadrant of the state. Barb is the Northeast Ohio farmer representative, stepping in for longtime member Lucille Hastings. Members serve a 3-year term and provide guidance on the easement purchase program and other statewide farmland protection measures.

Barb grew up on her family's dairy farm in Congress Township with five siblings before earning degrees at University of Akron, Orrville and Kent State University.

She and her husband operate a 200-cow dairy in northwest Holmes County just south of Shreve.

"Placing all our woodlots and ag land in a permanent easement is a lifetime goal," Barb says. They currently hold easements on three farms totaling 347 contiguous acres and also have the only ASA in Holmes County including all eight of their contiguous farms.

Barb also serves on the boards of American Dairy Association Mideast and Friends of Ohio Barns.

"My appointment to the advisory board of the Department of Farmland Preservation is a great honor and opportunity to help shape the future of the program," she said.

Barb is hosting a Farmland Preservation workshop at the Buckeye Ag Museum on November 2.

Preserving Your Family's Farm

Thurs.
Nov. 2

Doors
Open
5pm

Buckeye Ag Museum & Education
Center: 877 W. Old Lincolnway, Wooster
Across from the fairgrounds

Call Barb at 330-464-0624 for more info.



Informational sessions begin at 5:30pm with:

- **Robert E. Moore**, Attorney OSU Agricultural & Resource Law Program discusses the proactive steps that can be implemented to keep farmland in the family.

Then, learn about different Farmland Preservation options from:

- **Andy McDowell**, VP of Western Field Operations, Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- **Jessica Eikleberry**, Wayne County Farmland Preservation Specialist
- **Tate Emerson**, Executive Director of Killbuck Watershed Land Trust
- **Barb Lang** will be available with information about the *Ohio Department of Ag's Historic Family Farm Program*.

Museum will be open till 9pm. Donations appreciated.

This Event is
FREE
& open to all!

SUPPORT FOR AG INNOVATORS

3

OSU SECURES FUNDING TO CREATE FARM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Northeast Ohio is home to the highest concentration of small and medium farms in the state. These types of farms often produce products that can be sold for a premium when processed, or “value-added”. But starting a new business, or developing a new product, can be hard...especially when you’re trying to farm at the same time!

While there are many business development services available, they are often spread out and hard to find. This makes the already complicated work of starting a business even more time consuming and frustrating. Too often, good, farm-supporting business ideas never make it off the kitchen table.

Wouldn’t it be nice to have all the resources that you need to start your business in one place? Ohio State associate professor, Dr. Shoshanah Inwood thought so.

With a little help from a \$1.5 million USDA grant, Inwood and other Ag Success Team members will be bringing a new “one stop shop” for business development services to the OSU Wooster campus called the Northeast Ohio

Agriculture Innovation Center (NEO-AIC). The NEO-AIC will have services like business planning support, information on where to find funding, and advice on legal and regulatory issues. The services offered will be tailored to the special needs of the value-added agriculture community.

But most importantly, there will be someone to talk to.

NEO-AIC will have a team-based model that mimics the best patient care practices used in hospitals. It all starts with a personalized Client meeting to discuss needs and goals. Then each case gets reviewed by a Support Team with specialized, and complementary, knowledge. Together, the Team can design the best solution and offer holistic advice for each Client’s situation. With this kind of support at the beginning of a project, a start up business can save time and money and increase their chances of success.

Work will begin on project this winter and the NEO-AIC will be ready to serve Clients later in 2024.

For more information, contact Project Director Shoshanah Inwood at inwood.2@osu.edu

WHAT DOES “VALUE-ADDED” MEAN?

The USDA defines Value-added Agriculture (VAA) as:

- A change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam).
- The production of a product in a manner that enhances its value, as demonstrated through a business plan (such as organically produced products).
- The physical segregation of an agricultural commodity or product in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of that commodity or product (such as an identity preserved marketing system).

As a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

From: [USDA Ag Marketing Resource Center](#)

DIG IN TO AGRONOMY AT GFF

4

GREEN FIELD FARMS HOSTS WORKSHOP WITH AGRONOMIST NEAL KINSEY

As part of our ongoing commitment to provide education and resources on sustainable farming to farmers and landowners, we are bringing world-renowned agronomist Neal Kinsey to our community. Neal brings a lifetime of experience in agronomy and problem-solving in a vast number of different soil conditions.

This three-day Advanced Soil Agronomy Workshop is designed to teach growers and consultants how to use the Albrecht/Kinsey Soil Fertility System to produce healthy, resilient soil systems capable of supporting healthy, high-yielding crops.

All of the curriculum will be provided in a printed format for those in attendance. This will include the proper formula to use for finding the answer to each soil in question and will be your resource to take along home.

To get the most benefit from this course, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the materials covered in the introductory courses offered by Neal Kinsey and/or read Neal's book, Hands-On Agronomy available at Green Field Farms™.



REAL HEALTH FROM THE GROUND UP

SOIL AGRONOMY WORKSHOP

By Neal Kinsey

December 12-14, 2023

Workshop will be hosted at Berlin Grande Hotel in Berlin, Ohio.
Breakfast and lunch included with attendance fee.

1-Day Workshop December 12, 2023

The perfect workshop for farmers and agronomists wanting to maximize on-farm resources of manure and compost. Learn how to improve soil fertility with minimal investment.

\$350

3-Day Advanced Workshop December 12, 13, 14, 2023

Day 1: The perfect workshop for farmers and agronomists wanting to maximize on-farm resources of manure and compost. Learn how to improve soil fertility with minimal investment.

Day 2-3: This workshop will take a deep dive into soil agronomy. Attend to gain a deeper understanding of how to balance soil with the correct major nutrients and trace minerals for better yields and long term sustainability.

\$980

Neal has done soil consulting since 1973, after completing a program of study developed and taught by Dr. William A. Albrecht. He consults with clients that have small gardens up to large farms, including soils from over 75 countries. His program is based on the system of providing the soil nutrients to correct the soil's physical structure and allowing biology to flourish.

CALL OR WRITE TODAY TO REGISTER!

6464 Fredericksburg Road, Wooster, OH 44691 | info@gffarms.com | **330.263.0246**

Workshop location:

Berlin Grande Hotel, 4787 Twp. Rd. 366
Berlin, Ohio 44610 Phone: 330.403.3050

Ask for Green Field Farms™ Group Rate

Please note that the group rate ends on November 12th!

Wayne County is currently home to a diverse range of agricultural products and livestock with approximately 253,000 total acres of land designated as commercial agriculture.

Ohio law permits qualified land to benefit from reduced property taxes based on its Current Agricultural Use Value, or CAUV.

CAUV was designed to lower the taxable value of land used for commercial agriculture to allow farmers to continue farming. Auditor Jarra Underwood wants to notify Wayne County farmers of upcoming changes to their CAUV soil rates and prepare them for what is ahead.

"The most basic qualification for CAUV is the requirement of land to be used for commercial agriculture. Buildings, homesite acres and any other use of land that is not for commercial agriculture does not qualify for this reduction. In Wayne County the rural areas dotted with farms, create a beautiful landscape in which to live and raise our families. My office works closely with the Wayne County Farm Bureau to assist and educate the agricultural community. This partnership provides a great source of support and information for our farming community." said Underwood.

Every three years counties are required to update their soil values as calculated by the Ohio Department of Taxation. The soil values that will affect tax bills in 2024 have been finalized. Most soil types will see an increase in value next year according to the Wayne County Auditor's office. Each soil type has a rate assigned based on the income approach to value. This is a commonly accepted appraisal method based on the profitability of farming that takes into consideration crop prices, crop yields, operating costs, and mortgage rates.

Individual soils type have a different value established on use as crop or pasture, woodland, or conservation. Woodland values are based on cropland values- with consideration of additional operation costs which results in a lesser value rate per acre than the same soil used as crop or pasture. Land that is not in agricultural production due to a federal contract for conservation or that is maintained in a conservation practice to prevent soil erosion is valued at the minimum value of all soil rates.

"In the Wayne County Auditor's Office, we maintain a robust Geographic Information System (G.I.S.) along with an integrated website which contains the mapping of land use, providing land delineation to our area farmers. This information can be found under the layer list." Underwood added.

There are more than 3,500 soils in Ohio and of those, 130 different types are valued in Wayne County. The most common soil type in Wayne County is Canfield silt loam with 2 to 6% slope, commonly noted as CdB, with over 38,000 acres in the county. Previously, CdB was valued at \$960 per acre, and is now valued at \$2,190 per acre with the increase. The average acre of land in Wayne County not enrolled in CAUV is \$9,800 an acre.

Houses and agricultural buildings on farm parcels will not be impacted in value by this update. Non-farmed land such as floodplain or other non-CAUV areas will also not see an increase in value.

Farm Bureau's - - Ag Toy Drive - - Tues. 11/28 5:30-8pm Lincoln Way Vineyards



Ag toy or monetary donations appreciated but not required!

Monetary donations will be used to purchase ag-themed toys within Wayne County and will benefit Wayne's Toys for Tots. Reindeer will be on site thanks to Spring Mist Farms and Santa will be in attendance as well!

Food available as long as supplies last. Sponsorship opportunities abound - contact Lindsay at Ltournoux@ofbf.org

AUDITOR'S NOTES (CON'T)

6

Since values are calculated by the Ohio Department of Taxation based on a formula set by the Ohio Constitution and state laws, the Auditor does not have the ability to change values of soil types.

Postcards will be sent to property owners by mail in the coming weeks as notice of the upcoming changes.

Taxpayers can view the new soil values on the auditor's homepage by visiting waynecountyauditor.org and viewing the CAUV Triennial Information link. If you believe that your land delineation is incorrect, please contact the auditor's office at (330) 287-5430.

UPDATE: There may be changes to the CAUV calculation later this year due to pending legislation. The Auditor will inform the public if the legislation passes and what the effect will be.



HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

Call 330-287-5420 or send to AgPlan@WayneOhio.org to be included in future updates. Newsletters will be published "seasonally" in Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter. All information is reviewed prior to publication by the Wayne County Commissioners for relevance & content.

Scan code to sign up and have our newsletter delivered to your email >>>



ABOUT THE AG SUCCESS TEAM

The mission of the Wayne County Ag Success Team is to secure Wayne County farms and farmland for future generations by serving as a convening resource that supports the many initiatives that sustain and add value to our agricultural community. Our goals are to:

- Promote and strengthen the viability of farms by fostering a vibrant and diverse food and farm economy.
- Educate the public about the important role agriculture plays in our community.
- Support agricultural systems and production practices that leverage our natural resources while protecting the environment and health of the people who live here.
- Identify holistic approaches that help farmers and make farming an appealing and attainable way of life.

The Ag Success Team is a network of farmers, food and farm supply chain businesses, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, capital providers, economic development organizations, and local government with diverse perspectives, deep knowledge and experiences, strong community connections, and a passion for protecting and preserving Wayne County's food and agricultural systems.

THE OASIS IN THE DESERT

Thoughts on protecting Wayne County's Farmland (an excerpt)



Imagine an Oasis in the desert. One that could supply plentiful food and shelter to its inhabitants. It produced enough that even those that inhabit the surrounding desert could partake of its bounty.

At first, everyone enjoyed, recognized, and appreciated the natural gifts of the Oasis. However, some began to take it for granted and destroyed unique attributes that made the Oasis what it was. Over time, the Oasis was not as fruitful as it had been before. Not only did the Oasis suffer, but the surrounding communities felt the effects as well. There was no way to restore the Oasis, and future generations would never experience the fruitfulness that those in the past had enjoyed.

Now, think of Wayne County as that Oasis. The land's ability to provide the essentials of life - food, water, and shelter - was why it was settled in the first place. Due to the naturally occurring features of the area, a rich diversity of agriculture and related businesses have thrived - enough to provide for the local community as well as those around us.

OUR IRREPLACEABLE SOILS

The soils of Wayne County are the result of glacial movement when, during the last ice age, the Killbuck lobe of the glacier stopped near current-day Millersburg. As it melted and recessed north, it deposited mixtures of boulders, gravel, sand, silt, and clay picked up from as far away as Canada. These soils combined with our location and unique microclimate make Wayne County a "land of plenty".

The loss of our soil is permanent. When an acre of ground is developed, the soil's structure and maximum productivity potential are lost forever.

OUR PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

What is grown on the land to give food, clothing, and shelter are essentials and always will be. If a community cannot grow these resources themselves, they are at the mercy of others. The longer we can provide for ourselves as well as others, the longer we can prosper.

In 2020, the U.S. was losing 3000 acres of prime farmland each day. To put this into perspective, Wooster would be consumed in 3 days and Wayne County in a little over 3 months.

DESERT OR OASIS?

No matter how much of an oasis a desert takes in, it only becomes more desert. And the fewer and more distance between each oasis, the harder it is to survive.

What we do now will have a far-reaching impact, not only for us and those around us, but also for the future generations, our country, and our world.

"Oasis" written by

RON BECKER

Lifelong Wayne County resident and retired Ohio State University, IPM Program Coordinator

Read the full article:
WayneOhio.org/planning-department under
"Farmland Preservation"