

»»» THE WAYNE COUNTY «««

# AG SUCCESS TEAM

Securing farms and farmland for future generations

## MAKING A PERMANENT COMMITMENT

### SEVERAL LOCAL FARMS PRESERVE LAND THROUGH EASEMENTS IN 2024

In 2024, several families took the bold step of ensuring their farms will remain in agriculture indefinitely by placing an agricultural easement on the property. An easement is a permanent and legally-binding restriction which forever limits the use of the land to predominantly agricultural activity. The land remains in private ownership, and can be sold or passed along as a gift at any time, but the restriction prohibiting development stays with the land...forever. There are two local organizations that work with landowners through what can be a long and confusing process.

The Board of Wayne County Commissioners is a local Sponsor for the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, or LAEPP. The LAEPP is a program where landowners can receive up to \$2000 per acre (not to exceed each year’s annual allocation) from the ODA in exchange for placing a permanent agricultural easement on their land. The Wayne County Planning Department assists the ODA in finding eligible farms and helps the landowners through the application process.

Steve Hahn from Baughman Township contacted the Planning Department about applying when he heard about the program back in 2023. He wanted to preserve the 82-acre property that had been in his family for generations and saw the LAEPP funds as a good way to make upgrades to the farm. Steve and his wife Carol worked with the Planning Department’s Farmland Preservation Specialist and the ODA and finally closed on the easement in December.

The other local organization, Killbuck Watershed Land Trust (KWLT) has helped to preserve more than 75 farms in Wayne, Holmes, Coshocton, Ashland, Richland and Tuscarawas Counties since its founding in 2000.

A land trust is a nonprofit organization, the main mission of which is to assist in the conservation of land for its natural, recreational, historical or agricultural purposes. KWLT helps the landowner to write the easement language which permanently limit the type and scope of development of the land. They also document the condition of the property at the time of the easement for use as a baseline from which to monitor future



**Steve Hahn in Baughman Township preserved his 82 acre farm with the LAEPP**

# COMMITMENT (CONT.)

activity. Just like with the LAEPP program, the landowner is free to sell or pass along the land to heirs at any time, but the easement, and future monitoring, ensures that the land will never be sub-divided or developed.

Two Wayne County families donated conservation easements to KWLT in 2024. Jim & Ann Obrecht are lifelong farmers and farmland preservation advocates. As commissioner, Ann chaired the Agricultural Success Team when it was first founded in 2003. Now, she and Jim have placed their first agricultural easement on 100 acres in Plain Township. With the land forever dedicated to 100% agriculture, the Obrecht's stewardship ensure their family will always have land to farm. Thank you, Ann & Jim.

Jeanne & Dan Jantzi put a lot of consideration into the details of their newly preserved 76-acre Zimmerly Family Farm in Green Township. Their conservation easement protects the land from future development, and in turn preserves the generational community built around the farm since it was first settled around 1820. Furthermore, their easement aims to reconnect indigenous people with the land by allowing them access to the land for historically cultural purposes. Thank you, Jeanne & Dan for your stewardship.

KWLT accepts donations or bequests of land. As KWLT is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, the landowner donating may be eligible to receive a tax benefit. KWLT also accepts non-land contributions that help support operations.



The Jantzis and Tate Emerson of KWLT

An easement can be placed on the land now, or specified in the owner's will. Either way, it is a major commitment that will affect how the property can be used FOREVER. A landowner considering this option has many legal, financial, and family matters to take into account. An organization like KWLT or the Wayne County Planning Department can help to navigate the process, but each person should also consult their own legal and tax/financial professionals.

The fact that an easement is such a big step makes it all the more special! Many thanks to those who made the commitment to preserving their land in this, and every, way!

## BY THE NUMBERS: EASEMENTS

### EASEMENTS IN WAYNE COUNTY:

- KILLBUCK WATERSHED LAND TRUST = 4089.6 ACRES
- USDA/ODA = 1143.5 ACRES
- WESTERN RESERVE LAND CONSERVANCY = 719 ACRES

### TOWNSHIPS WITH MOST EASEMENTS:

1. SUGAR CREEK (1176 ACRES)
2. FRANKLIN (972 ACRES)
3. GREEN (855 ACRES)
4. PLAIN (748 ACRES)
5. CHESTER (614 ACRES)

# LAEPP: 2025 APPLICATION PERIOD

## APPLY FOR ODA EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM BY MARCH 1ST

The Ohio Department of Agriculture's Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP) provides funding to farmland owners for placing an agricultural easement on their property. Read more at: <https://agri.ohio.gov/programs/farmland-preservation-office/resources/resource-clean-ohio-local-agricultural-easement-purchase-program-laepp>

As a Local Sponsor to the LAEPP, the Wayne County Planning Department assists in finding interested and eligible farms and helps the landowner complete the application process.

If selected for funding, the landowner can receive up to \$2000 per acre - not to exceed our 2025 allocation of \$122,125 - from the ODA in exchange for placing a permanent agricultural easement on their land.

If you are interested, visit [wayneohio.org/planning-department](http://wayneohio.org/planning-department) and download the "2025 LAEPP Pre-screening Questionnaire". Landowners must submit the Questionnaire, or contact the Planning Department at [AgPlan@WayneOhio.org](mailto:AgPlan@WayneOhio.org) or 330-287-5422, no later than March 1, 2025.

# TAKING ORDERS FOR ASA SIGNS

## LET THE WORLD KNOW YOU ARE PROTECTING FARMLAND!

**ONLY AVAILABLE TO FARMS PARTICIPATING IN THE AG SECURITY AREA (ASA) PROGRAM.**

**THESE METAL SIGNS ARE 24" X 24" - PERFECT FOR MOUNTING ON BARNES OR EXISTING FENCEPOSTS!**

**COST: \$50 EACH**

**CONTACT JESSICA AT 330-287-8422 OR EMAIL [AGPLAN@WAYNEOHIO.ORG](mailto:AGPLAN@WAYNEOHIO.ORG) BY APRIL 1ST TO ORDER.**



*Please note: Pay in advance, checks can be made out to 'Wayne County Planning Department'. You will be notified when ready. Landowner responsible for pick up and installation in accordance with standards established in Section 1115.02(d). Any freestanding signs must be set back from the right-of-way so as to comply with the clear vision requirements and so as to pose no threat to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.*

# WINTER EDUCATION EVENTS

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WHEN THE GROWING OUTSIDE SLOWS DOWN IT IS THE PERFECT TIME TO EXPAND YOUR MIND! CHECK OUT THE GREAT CLASSES AND INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS HAPPENING AROUND THE REGION:

A flyer for a 'Farm Office Live' event. The background is a winter scene with cows in a field. The flyer includes the CFAES logo, the text 'Join us for FARM OFFICE LIVE', the date 'January 17, 2025, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.', a list of January topics, the OSU Farm Office logo, a list of featured speakers, and registration information.

**CFAES**

Join us for  
**FARM OFFICE LIVE**

January 17, 2025, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

**January Topics**

- Legislative Round-Up
- Farm Business Analysis Program Update
- Long Term Care Update
- Quarterly Fertilizer Update
- Crop Input Outlook
- Livestock Outlook
- 1099 Reminders
- Farm Policy & Farm Bill
- Winter Program Update

**Featuring the OSU Farm Office Team**

- Peggy Hall
- David Marrison
- Robert Moore
- Garth Ruff
- Clint Schroeder
- Barry Ward

**OSU Farm Office**  
Your farm's ag law and farm management resource partner

Register and watch replays at  
[go.osu.edu/farmofficelive](https://go.osu.edu/farmofficelive)

Register once and receive links to join future programs

[farmoffice.osu.edu](https://farmoffice.osu.edu)

## *Who Will Fill My Shoes:*

### **Succession Planning for Land Owners, Farmers, Forest Owners, and Family Businesses**

Registration is now open for this five-part webinar hosted by the Southern Regional Development Center.

**Wednesdays, January 22nd - February 19th • 2:00 PM ET/1:00 PM CT, via Zoom**

Registration: [msudafvm.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2aRrKSK3aF7ady6](https://msudafvm.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2aRrKSK3aF7ady6)

Participants will learn about the following components of succession planning:

- **Communication and Conflict in Succession**
- **Key Players in Succession: Who Should Be Involved?**
- **Legal and Business Structures**
- **Roadmapping and Goals in Succession: Who, When and How to Transfer?**
- **Meeting Planning and Coordination for Succession**

Succession planning encompasses many emotional and financial aspects of a family and a business, making decisions and moving forward more difficult. This research-based curriculum with comprehensive handouts integrated will give participants the confidence they need to learn strategies for moving succession forward with their property or business. Both soft and hard skills are covered in the materials and will empower owners to develop and implement their succession plan. *This webinar series is open to everyone.*

**Thursday & Friday January 23rd & 24th: NE Ohio Grazing Conference in Mt Hope**

For more information and to register: [smallfarminstitute.wordpress.com/upcoming-events/](https://smallfarminstitute.wordpress.com/upcoming-events/)

# MORE WINTER EDUCATION EVENTS...

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## **Friday, January 24th from 12:30 - 4:30pm: Backyard Maple Production at Canter's Cave 4-H Camp near Jackson**

Have you ever enjoyed some some good old fashioned maple syrup and been interested in learning how to make your own? If so, this is your opportunity to learn the all about making maple syrup from your backyard or your woodland. This program is offered on January 24th at the Canter's Cave 4-H Camp near Jackson and will include the opportunity to see and practice tapping. You will also learn everything you need to know to begin tapping your own trees and making your own maple syrup!

<https://u.osu.edu/apsley.1/2024/12/19/backyard-maple-production-learn-to-make-maple-syrup-at-home-offered-by-a-day-in-the-woods-and-ohio-woodland-stewards-to-woodland-owners-and-enthusiasts-in-se-ohio-at-canters-cave-4-h-camp-on-friday/>

## **Wednesday, January 29th from 9am-3pm: Commodity Marketing School**

**At Secrest Welcome & Education Center, 2122 Williams Rd., Wooster, OH 44691**

The Commodity Marketing Strategies program is an advanced commodity marketing school meant to sharpen participant's skills for pricing their grain, beef cattle, and milk.

The program will cover completing your balance sheet & determining cost of production; beef cattle marketing strategies; pricing grain post-harvest; understanding contracts; and the strategic use of insurance products.

The program features the best University and private industry speakers from across the country.

[wayne.osu.edu/events/commodity-marketing-school](http://wayne.osu.edu/events/commodity-marketing-school)

## **Tuesday, January 30th: AgPro's Expo at Harvest Ridge Expo Center in Millersburg**

Watch [agrocompanies.com/ohio/expo](http://agrocompanies.com/ohio/expo) for details

## **Feb 4th from 9:00am - 3:00pm: Agronomy School**

**At Secrest Welcome & Education Center, 2122 Williams Rd, Wooster, OH 44691**

This year's program will feature presentations which focus on targeting input costs for the 2025 growing season. We will feature a variety of OSU specialists covering the topics of soil fertility; seed treatments; foliar fungicides and fertilizers; soybean diseases; and on-farm research. \$20, includes lunch and program materials. Registration can be made by calling 330-264-8722 or visit:

[wayne.osu.edu/events/agronomy-school](http://wayne.osu.edu/events/agronomy-school)

## **Dairy Quality Conference/ODPA Meeting: February 11th & 12th**

### **NE Ohio Dairy Conference: February 26th**

Both at Fisher Auditorium, Wooster

Watch for updates: [wayne.osu.edu/events](http://wayne.osu.edu/events)



# MORE WINTER EDUCATION EVENTS...

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## Pesticide Applicator Recertification

1/21 @ Mt. Hope Livestock Auction

1/30 @ Harvest Ridge, Millersburg

2/7 @ West Salem

2/18 @ Kidron

3/4 @ Secrest Arboretum  
Welcome Center, Wooster

[wayne.osu.edu/events](http://wayne.osu.edu/events)

## Northeast Ohio Pollinator Society 2025 Winter Webinar Series

Free online classes Wednesdays at 7pm. For more info [go.osu.edu/neops](http://go.osu.edu/neops)

- January 8th – Dave Tomaszewski – Making the most of your tree with a soft landing garden.
- January 22nd – Denise Ellsworth - Wild Bees in Your Ohio Backyard
- February 5th – John Blakeman - Creating and Managing a Prairie Meadow
- February 19th – Michael Keeler - Matrix Design for Biodiverse Gardens
- March 5th – Brian Hackett – Attracting wildlife to your property



## Mar 8th: OSU Small Farm Conference at Fisher Auditorium, Wooster

<https://wayne.osu.edu/events/osu-small-farm-conference>



Wayne SWCD Pond Clinic featuring Steve Fender  
Tuesday March 11, 5:30 - 7pm, Buckeye Ag Museum  
FREE, but space is limited call 330-263-5376 to RSVP

[www.wayneswcd.org/home/news-events](http://www.wayneswcd.org/home/news-events)

## Planning For The Future Of Your Farm Workshop

March 11th & March 13th from 6 - 9pm

at Fisher Auditorium, 1680 Madison Ave., Wooster, OH 44691

*The base registration of \$85 includes course materials, refreshments, and dinner for two.*

*Additional family members can attend for \$40 per person.*

For more information [wayne.osu.edu/events/planning-future-your-farm-workshop](http://wayne.osu.edu/events/planning-future-your-farm-workshop)

or contact John Yost at the OSU Extension office at 330-264-8722.

## March 21st: 10th annual East Ohio Women in Agriculture Conference in Wooster

[u.osu.edu/eastohiowomeninag](http://u.osu.edu/eastohiowomeninag)

# ALL FROM “JUST FARMLAND”

*This is the second of a series of articles about protecting farmland by Ron Becker, a lifelong Wayne County resident and retired Ohio State University, IPM Program Coordinator.*

When developer permanently takes farmland out of production by building on it, they will often try to justify it with the phrase “It was just farmland.” So, what is “just farmland” and how does it play a part in each of our lives?

The most common crops people see are soybeans and corn. You may think to yourself “well, I don’t eat those!” but consider that they are used to give balanced nutrition to the livestock that put dairy products, eggs, and meat onto the grocery store shelves.

That is not the only place you will find evidence of these crops in the store! Read any list of ingredients on packaged foods and you will find things like dairy solids, corn syrup, cornstarch, cornmeal, soy lecithin, and soy protein. Vegetable oil is often a blend of corn, soy, and other seed oils.

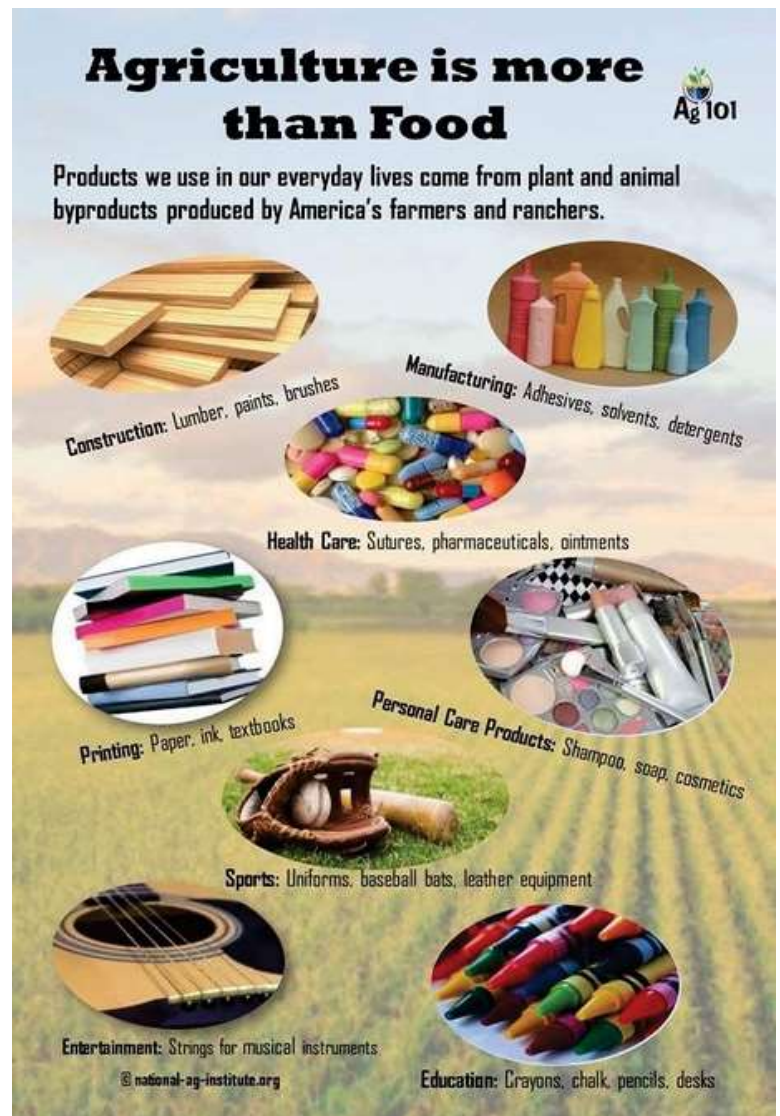
Corn and soy beans are found in many non-food products as well. Both are used to make fuels for your vehicle as well as medicines. Corn is also used for bio-degradable plastics, deicer, diapers, balloons, clothing, and batteries. Soybeans are used in ink, cleaners, motor oil, roofing, and even concrete! These products of “just farmland” we use and export to countries around the world.

In fact, if you look at just about any product, you will find that “just farmland” is somewhere in the family tree. Even items not derived from crops were made by workers fed by “just farmland”.

Wayne County has also benefitted greatly from agribusinesses that have built up due to our farmland and its quality. Without them, and the products they produce, the cities would not be in existence now.

Food, clothing, and shelter all are ultimately supplied by “just farmland”. As much as cities like to brag about their development, they need to realize they wouldn’t, and won’t, exist without farmland.

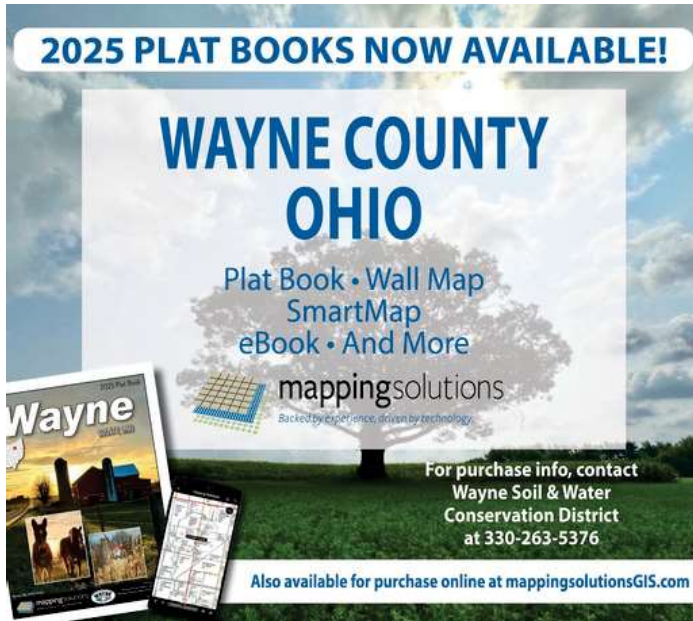
After all, what good is all the money in the world if there is nothing to buy?



You can learn more about what makes up Wayne County’s Farmland in Ron’s article “Oasis in the Desert” available at [wayneohio.org/planning-department](http://wayneohio.org/planning-department)

# FROM THE USDA: LOANS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

Building a successful farm is a significant financial investment and can be especially challenging for beginning farmers who are not financially ready to access credit from commercial lenders. The USDA's Farm Service Agency makes and guarantees loans to beginning farmers. While FSA is fully committed to all farmers and ranchers, there is a special focus on the credit needs of farmers and ranchers who are in their first 10 years of operation.



A beginning farmer is an individual or entity who:

- Has not operated a farm for more than 10 years;
- Substantially participates in the operation;
- For farm ownership loans, the applicant cannot own a farm greater than 30 percent of the average size farm in the county, at time of application.
- If the applicant is an entity, all members must be related by blood or marriage, and all entity members must be eligible beginning farmers.

In addition, beginning farmers must meet the loan eligibility requirements for the program.

Learn more at [fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans](https://fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans)

## 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.

## HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

Call 330-287-5422 or send to [AgPlan@WayneOhio.org](mailto:AgPlan@WayneOhio.org) to be included in future updates. Newsletters will be published "seasonally". 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 >>>

