

Agriculture Newsletter: April Edition

“Every day is Earth Day to a farmer.” - Skinner Family Farm
in Delaware County

As we welcome the new season, I wanted to take a moment to share important updates and resources. Your hard work and dedication to feeding and fueling Ohio play a crucial role in the growth and prosperity of our community, so a key goal of mine is to communicate with you regularly and provide information I hope is helpful.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns — together, we can continue to improve the future of farming.

Thank you for your continued commitment to feeding and sustaining our communities. Let's work together for a prosperous season ahead!

Sincerely,
State Representative Beth Lear



Skinner family farm in Delaware County

Stay updated!

Contact my office at:
Rep61@ohiohouse.gov
or by calling:
[614-466-1431](tel:614-466-1431)



Ohio Farm Bureau

The Ohio Farm Bureau advocates for farmers all over the state. They are currently working on their Farm Bureau Health Plans Legislation (HB99/SB100). HB 99, introduced by Rep. Bob Peterson, would result in access to affordable, personalized health care plans for Ohio farm families who do not have access to health insurance as an employee benefit or who are uninsured or underinsured due to high costs and limited options in the marketplace. A companion bill (SB 100) for Farm Bureau Health Plans was also introduced in the Senate by Sen. Susan Manchester. As the bills progress through the General Assembly, please consider providing testimony, and do not hesitate to reach out with questions.



Knox County's Bicentennial Barn

The Budget:

The House version of the budget, HB 96, includes a prohibition against using eminent domain for trails.

Bird Flu

USDA Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins, has gotten rid of bird flu vaccines. Of the amount of birds that are vaccinated, 80-83% still contract avian flu. This news comes out shortly after the USDA planned to vaccinate millions of chickens. The USDA Secretary announced,

“Not only are we not mandating vaccines now, we won’t, frankly, ever.”

The Ohio Department of Agriculture, “... HPAI cannot be transmitted through properly cooked meats or eggs. Products from any HPAI-affected flocks are prohibited from entering the food system.” They also provide real time cases on their website: www.agri.ohio.gov/divisions/animal-health/hpai/01-poultry

Delaware Study

The Ohio House passed the Transportation Budget AFTER getting a necessary amendment in the Senate to try and protect Delaware County from yet another freeway study through our precious northern county farmland and watersheds. They plan to study several possible routes, including one that considers southern Marion and Morrow for the potential freeway. Senator Brenner and I worked with our leaders to ensure this alternative was included in the study. I remain committed to some of the Route 23 changes and do not support a freeway through northern Delaware County.

House Bill 65: Agriculture Appreciation Act

The Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 65, the Agriculture Appreciation Act, with a vote of 95-0.

This legislation will codify the following important agriculture days in state law:

- FFA Week, the last full week of February
- 4-H Week, the week ending in the second Saturday of March
- Ohio Soil Health Week, the second full week of November
- Stormwater Awareness Week, the first full week of October
- Agriculture Day, March 21st
- Farmer's Day, October 12th

Laws Regarding Suspicious Drone Activity

“Drones, or more accurately named Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), have helped provide new methods of pesticide applications and agronomic data collection to assist farmers with productivity and efficiency. Yet the possibility of unknown drones flying over a farm property can cause concerns. Recent conversations and sightings of drones in rural areas have producers raising questions such as “what can I do about suspicious drone activity” and “can I shoot down a drone over my property?” Federal and state laws provide answers to these questions.

It can be unnerving and threatening to see an unknown drone flying over one's property, but shooting at the drone is not a viable solution to the concern. An injured UAV can harm people and property. A shooter could not only be liable for that harm but could also face criminal felony and misdemeanor charges for endangering or harming aircraft, along with hefty fines and imprisonment penalties. The preferred solution for dealing with drone activity is to report it to local law enforcement or the FAA. Taking action quickly could result in identification of the owner and an explanation of the drone's activities. If that activity is suspicious or endangering, federal and state laws can penalize the offender and eliminate the drone activity.”

- Copied from OSU Extension Knox County Ag News
 - u.osu.edu/knoxcountyag/agricultural-news/
- OSU Extension Delaware County Ag News
 - delaware.osu.edu/program-areas/agriculture-and-natural-resources
- Ohio Farm Bureau
 - ofbf.org/