



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Report Rainfall Online

Hardin County – The county has received its share of precipitation in the past couple of weeks. Soon the 15 Hardin County Township Rainfall Reporters will be back at taking care of the important task of recording rainfall. This type of data has been collected for the past 24 years through the local OSU Extension office. Traditionally, rainfall has been collected during the growing season from April 15-October 15. Monthly reports are sent in to the Extension office and the data is summarized. A monthly article is then submitted to the area media to let people know how much rainfall has been collected around the county and how this information compares with the past month, past year, and sometimes a ten year average. This is useful information for crop producers, but the disadvantage is that immediate rainfall information is not available. The advantage is that there is a wealth of information from collecting data this way for several years, and this research will be continued.

So what about a person who is interested in knowing the rainfall amount the same day or maybe for the week? Many farmers now have cropland around the county and in some cases in multiple counties. Different farms receive different amounts of rainfall. There is a rainfall collection and reporting system that meets these needs as well. The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow network or CoCoRaHS for short is the nation's largest rainfall collection network started by Colorado State University in 1998. Once a CoCoRaHS volunteer collects rainfall in their special gauge, it is entered online that day. This rainfall information becomes immediately available to anyone with charts and maps on the internet. Historical records are compiled automatically and can be viewed at <http://www.cocorahs.org/>.

In 2014 the Extension office began a program to start this method of rainfall reporting in Hardin County in addition to the traditional rainfall collection method that will be starting its 25th year

on April 15. New CoCoRaHS gauges have been purchased to continue this rainfall collection process. The idea is to find more volunteers to around the county who are willing to participate in this effort so that all townships are represented. The Extension office will provide these individuals with gauges and training in return for the data that will be collected and will be available for anyone to view online. A person is expected to check their rain gauge each morning and enter the amount, if any, online or by use of a phone app. If they are going to be away and cannot check the gauge, a multi-day entry can be made. There are also methods available to check hail and snow to make this reporting system a year-around process if desired.

Currently the Extension office is asking for volunteer CoCoRaHS rainfall collectors in under-represented townships. Ideally, these rainfall collectors should be located in different areas around the county. Currently there are 18 active CoCoRaHS stations and 5 inactive stations in Hardin County. If you are interested in becoming a CoCoRaHS rainfall collector, please call the Extension office at 419-674-2297 with your address. After a site location map is developed, interested people will be called back regarding placement of rain gauges and training for collecting and reporting rainfall using this online system. This online precipitation information will be used to complement the existing rainfall collection stations that have been in place around the county for several years. In addition to making timely rainfall amounts available to local farmers and homeowners, this will benefit local, state, and national researchers by providing a source of historical data that will be accessible at any time from anywhere.