



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Hardin County Extension News Release

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Burkhart Named Ohio Master Shepherd

By Mark Badertscher

Hardin County – Local Hardin County sheep producer Dave Burkhart was named the 2018 Charles Boyles Ohio Master Shepherd of the Year at the Buckeye Shepherd's Symposium held December 1 in Wooster. He started his sheep production enterprise in 1987 when he purchased his farm near Alger. He built his flock up to 300 head of sheep, but has since decreased the size of his operation. Burkhart is a commercial sheep producer, raising crossbred Dorset white faced ewes, along with some Suffolk-Hampshire crossbred ewes. His ewes are bred each year with a couple of purebred Suffolk rams, a crossbred Hampshire and a white-faced ram that isn't always a Dorset.

His main production goal has been to raise superior lamb carcasses. Over the years, he has sold a few club lambs for 4-H and FFA projects, but his primary focus lately has been producing and feeding out fat lambs to take advantage of the high lamb price and current low corn price. Burkhart has been very active in the sheep industry, serving on both the Ohio Sheep Improvement Association Board of Trustees and the Ohio Sheep and Wool Program Board of Directors. He has also been a long time director of the Hardin County Sheep Improvement Association, serving as president most recently in that group.

Education about the industry has always been important to Burkhart. Not only does he participate in statewide educational field days, grazing tours, and conferences, the Alger farmer has traveled around the world and United States touring sheep operations to better hone his production and marketing skills. Internationally, Burkhart has participated in sheep and agriculture tours to Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Ireland. Nationally, he has toured sheep farms in Utah, Idaho, Oregon, and most recently California. Locally, he has traveled to all parts of Ohio and neighboring states as part of the Hardin County Sheep

Management Tour planned by OSU Extension and the Hardin County Sheep Improvement Association along with producers from nearby counties.

The Hardin County Fair is another place where Burkhart's influence has made a positive impact on the county. He has been a major part of the success of the local Sheep Improvement Association's Lamb Stand at this yearly event, growing it from a tent to a small building that exists today. He also has spent a large amount of time helping junior fair members get started in the industry, as well as generating support to bolster the market lamb sale at this event. Under Burkhart's leadership, a scholarship has been established that is presented each year at the Hardin County Lamb Banquet. Although he has been thoroughly involved in the sheep industry, his most enjoyable aspect of the business is seeing new lambs being born each year.

For more information about Dave Burkhart and the 2018 Charles Boyles Ohio Master Shepherd of the Year award, visit <http://ocj.com/2018/12/a-global-education-used-for-local-service-by-master-shepherd/> on the *Ohio County Journal* website.

Attached photo: The 2018 Charles Boyles Master Shepherd of the Year was Dave Burkhart of Hardin County. He was recognized at the 2018 Shepherd's Symposium. He is pictured with Ohio Sheep Improvement Association & Ohio Sheep and Wool Program Executive Director Roger High (far left), Nancy Wilcox, and 2018-2019 Ohio Lamb and Wool Queen Kaitlyn Stillion.