

GROWING ATHENS COUNTY

Growing Plants and Animals in Athens County Ohio

December 2018

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Time to Learn

Winter seems to be the time of year when I'm the busiest. There are a ton of educational opportunities both as an extension educator and for our producers. I am in the middle of planning for our upcoming Master Gardener class, Pesticide Recertification, and Fertilizer classes. There are also a few other opportunities that I am going to try and arrange. So, be on the lookout in future editions of the newsletter.

Even with all of this planning, I do take time out to spend time with the family. With that I would like to wish everyone Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and be ready to spend time learning in the new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Brown".

Forestry News

ODA offers tips for purchasing firewood

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — As winter quickly approaches and more people look to firewood to help heat their homes, the Ohio Department of Agriculture is offering some basic tips to help when purchasing wood. The following firewood rules and regulations are helpful to review:

- Non-packaged firewood must be sold by the cord or by fractions of a cord. One cord, when properly stacked, should be 8 feet long by 4 feet high and 4 feet wide (128 cubic feet).
- If sold in bulk, firewood must be sold by in terms of price per ton. This must be weighed on a certified scale. In no case can a scale be used for net loads that weigh less than fifty minimum divisions.
- It is illegal to sell firewood by any other unit of measurement such as a rick, rack, face cord or truckload. If a consumer believes that a seller did not comply with these rules and regulations, the person should immediately contact the seller.
- If non-packaged firewood is purchased, the seller must present the consumer with a delivery ticket or sales invoice that includes contact information of seller and purchaser, date of delivery, quantity, quantity upon which the price is based, total price of the amount delivered and terms and conditions of the sale.
- If the firewood is advertised and sold a representation may include a declaration of identity that indicates the species group. (Example: 50 percent hickory, 40 percent oak, 10 percent ash). Such a representation shall indicate, within 10% accuracy, the percentages of each group.
- Be aware of different firewood movement regulations in place concerning invasive species such as gypsy moth and Asian longhorned beetle. For more information on specific regulations visit ODA's invasive pests webpage. It is always good practice to not move firewood long distances and to buy local and burn local.
- When burning firewood for heat, the State Fire Marshal advises to follow all necessary safety practices to avoid any serious problems.

If you have questions or concerns with a firewood sale, and the seller will not correct the problem, contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Weights and Measures at [614-728-6290](tel:614-728-6290) or contact your county auditor's office.

— Ohio Department of Agriculture



Master Gardener Training Class

A new Master Gardener class is forming. Orientation is **January 30** with classes meeting February 6 - April 24. Classes meet every **Wednesday night from 6 PM - 9 PM**. There will be two Saturdays where we will be going outside and learning. The deadline for applications is **January 14**. We need 10 students to form a class. So, the sooner we get your application, the sooner we can guarantee that there will be a class. **The cost is \$110**

What does it take to be a Master Gardener?

- Master Gardeners are volunteers
- You don't need to know everything about gardening. We will teach you.
- You will receive 50 hrs. of classroom and hands-on training
- You will be required to volunteer 50 hrs. in our garden projects over the coming year.
- Yearly requirements to remain a Master Gardener: learning (10 hrs) and volunteer service (20 hrs)

How to apply

- Come into the Extension office and pick up an application **or**
- Go online to <http://go.osu.edu/mg-app>
- Do not pay anything until January.
- We need a minimum of 10 students to have the class. (We now have 7)



2018 Master Gardner Class learning about planting herbs with Neal Cherry

Calendar of Events

Please contact Ed Brown for additional information on all of these events

brown.600@osu.edu or

740-593-8555

- **January 7**—Athens Library
\$25 Registration is required by Jan. 2. Space limited
- **January 9-10** - Ohio Hop Conference, Columbus.
Space limited
- **January 30 – Apr. 24** –
Master Gardener Volunteer Training
- **February 5**– Beef Cattle School. Free. Extension Office 7 PM. Registration Required.
- **March 5**—Private Pesticide Recertification. Extension Office. 1:00 PM \$25

SMALL FOOD PROCESSORS WORKSHOPS

Food Safety Document Development

LOCATIONS AND DATES:

- Columbus, Ohio on December 13, 2018
- Athens, Ohio on January 7, 2019
- Bowling Green, Ohio on January 10, 2019
- Dayton, Ohio on January 15, 2019
- Cleveland, Ohio on January 29, 2019

TIME: Each location has it's own timeframe. Please go to the link below for each workshops exact time.

COST: \$25.00 per person

REGISTRATION: For more information and to register go to go.osu.edu/valueaddedfoodsafety2018-2019

DETAILS:

If you are a small-scale food producer there is required documentation you will need to complete to be compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). This includes documentation of your size exemption as a "qualified facility" and various food safety programs. This workshop is intended for small (< \$1 million in sales/year) producers of fermented, canned, and other shelf-stable foods. This one-day course is a hands-on opportunity for processors to develop their food safety documentation in small groups with individual coaching from instructors. Participants are encouraged to bring their existing documentation, if they have it, for review by instructors. Attendees should leave with completed or nearly completed food safety documentation for size exemptions, Good Manufacturing Practices, and Preventive Control Food Safety Plans as relevant.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
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Specialty Crop Conference

Registration is now open for the 2019 Southern Ohio Specialty Crop Conference. It will be held on February 5, 2019 at the Oasis Conference Center in Loveland, Ohio. The deadline to register for this conference is February 1, 2019 at 12:00 Noon. No walk-ins are permitted. Registration is limited to 75 people, so register early to avoid being shut out.

This is the conference to attend for Southern Ohio specialty crop growers. Fifteen different class options on fruit and vegetable production are available at this conference. Your registration includes a continental breakfast and a buffet lunch. All attendees will receive a USB memory stick with copies of every available presentation

to take home, so even if you don't attend the session, you'll still get the information. Private pesticide and fertilizer recertification credits will be available for categories 3, 5, core and fertilizer. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from industry experts and share information with other growers.

The Oasis Conference Center is conveniently located about 5 miles off of I-275 on the northeast corner of Cincinnati.

For more information about the schedule and to register for the conference, go to the conference website at <http://go.osu.edu/swohfvsc>.

There are several opportunities for specialty crop producers to increase their knowledge this winter

2019 Ohio Hops Conference

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION is open for the **2019 Ohio Hops Conference and Trade Show...**

Come be a part of this year's **Ohio Hop Conference** at its new location in central Ohio!

On **January 9th and 10th 2019** we will hold the Ohio Hop Conference in Columbus, Ohio. This will be held in conjunction with the Ohio Craft Brewers Association (OCBA) at the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

Come learn about:

- Sensory Analysis
- Maximizing Yield
- Hop Growing Annual Calendar
- Insect Management
- Hop Harvest Timing
- Disease Management
- Hop Drying
- Hop Quality Group
- OHGG Hop Quality Standards
- Pesticide Round Table

- Brewers Panel
- Soil/Water/Fertilizer Management
- Selling Your Hops
- Hop Growers Panel

New this year is a joint happy hour with the OCBA. A perfect opportunity to discuss hops, beer, and mingle with brewers and growers!

Please see the flyer attached and below for full details.

We suggest that you register early, **space is very limited**.

To register go to the ATTENDEE section at <http://bit.ly/OHGGRegister>

We hope to see all of you there...

Brad



Beef Cattle School

The OSU Extension Beef Team is announcing that the 2019 Ohio Beef Cattle School will be held on **Tuesday, February 5, 2019 starting at 7:00 p.m.** It will be a single webinar hosted via Zoom and will be broadcast to the Athens County Extension Office

Listed below is the agenda for the webinar:

"Winter Management of the Cow Herd to Insure a Productive 2019"

* Introduction: Analyzing the Current Situation: What is the quality and quantity of your hay supply and what is the body condition of your herd?

* Nutritional requirements of the beef female for optimal performance from the last trimester through breeding season.

* Impacts of nutrition on heifer development and conception rates of heifers.

ers. Impacts of nutrition on days to return to estrus and conception rates of lactating females.

* Managing calf health born into stressful situations: Weak calves, importance of amount and timing of colostrum intake, colostrum replacers or supplements, suggested newborn treatments and vaccinations, etc.

Speakers will include OSU Animal Science Dept. Specialists and members of the OSU Extension Beef Team.



**Register to
attend the one
evening Beef
School in
Athens**

Cull Ewe Checklist *Brady Campbell, Program Coordinator, OSU Sheep Team*

A cull ewe is a female within the flock that is no longer benefiting your operation. This ewe may have failed to become pregnant (open) or has some other underlying issues that are not allowing her to perform to her greatest potential. With feed costs accounting for approximately 75% of a livestock enterprise, culling nonproductive and attention needing ewes may be in your best interest this year before you begin to put an abundance of resources into these ewes.

Now I have heard some producers say, “Well, I want to keep my cull ewes until market prices are up” and “I am going to hold onto my culls to put some more weight on them before I sell.” In moments like these, I can’t help to think to myself, what is the value of a cull ewe?

To answer that question, I have been following the current market and pulled some old market reports to determine when is the best time to sell cull ewes. After compiling market reports over the course of the past 12 months the average price for cull sheep at Mt. Hope is \$0.76/lb. Other livestock sale barns from across the eastern U.S. (Mt. Vernon, OH; New Holland, PA; and Nashville, TN) show ranges of cull ewes being valued at \$0.67 – \$0.91/lb. depending upon the time of year. Two trends that I have noticed are that there is a higher premium offered for rams (~\$0.95/lb.), which we won’t discuss in this piece, and that there is a slight increase in demand for cull ewes from January through April.

However, we would assume that these cull ewes receiving a premium (\$1.00 – 1.10/lb.) during the beginning of the year are in good condition. Thinking of time, space, and resources, could you as a producer justify keeping a ewe during lambing season just to have the potential to receive another \$0.25/lb.? Some may answer ‘yes’ to this question, but this situation may change depending based upon why the ewe is being culled from the flock. If the ewe is being culled for issues other than being open, you may think twice about keeping her around to chase a potentially small premium. Below are some of the most common culling criteria that would warrant removal from the flock.

Age:

According to the [USDA APHIS Sheep report \(2011\)](#), which reports data for 2001 and 2011, age is the #1 reason for culling sheep in the United States. Ewes are most productive between 3 -6 years of age. Data from the western sheep flocks show that the average culling age of a ewe is 5-6 years of age. Thinking about the production systems here in the east, ewes may be able to be productive for a longer period of time due to availability of resources (i.e. feed) and the conditions that they are exposed to (i.e. small pastures, dry lots). However, ewes can

also be productive beyond this age, but the proportion of these ewes decreases as age increases. One issue that may arise as ewes age is a loss of teeth. Ewes with few to no teeth have difficulty foraging and therefore lack proper dietary intake. When inspecting your flock and evaluating thin ewes, be sure to take a look in their mouth for any teeth issues.

Production history:

Production records are a useful tool that every producer should have on hand at all times. These tools are very objective, stating exactly how the ewe and her offspring performed each year. For example, an aged ewe with no records would represent an unproductive ewe. Simply stated, unproductive ewes should be culled. Other reasons include ewes that lambed but due to a difficult birth, the lambs are either born dead or lambs survive and are unthrifty and small. Even if these lambs live beyond the first few days of life, they will be slower growing than their thrifty counterparts.

Also, it is important to check for other criteria relating to lambing rates. For example, ewes that continuously give birth to triplets, but only weans a single or twins will be less efficient overall when compared to a ewe that gives birth to and weans twins. It is important to track lamb health and performance according to the ewe such as number of lambs born, raised, weaned, and marketed.

Structure:

Although not something that can be found in the pedigree, structure plays a huge role in ewe longevity and therefore productivity of an operation. Ewes that have mouth issues (over or under bite) should be culled in order to keep this defect out of your flock. Ewes that have issues lambing (dystocia) due to a smaller pelvis width should also be culled as these ewes require more time and effort and potentially less in return if the lambs are not able to be saved. Ewes with poor leg structure (i.e. feet, toes, pasterns, legs) should also be culled. Animals that are not able to walk properly tend to have issues keeping on weight as they do not keep up with the rest of the flock. Those ewes with a poor Body Condition Score (BCS) should also be considered for culling. All of these structural traits can effect ewe longevity in the long run.

Health and disease:

Animal health should rank high on your list of priorities, therefore it make perfect sense to cull ewes based upon their health status. Ewes that are ill thrift or have some other type of health issue should be culled from the flock, especially if the condition is contagious. ***Continued on back page***



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... Sheep Continued

To point out the obvious, if a particular ewe in the flock has had repeated instances of health issues, these ewes should be culled. Ewes that have issues regarding udder health and structure such as: mastitis, blue bag, teat size and placement can all result in poor milk yield which negatively effects lamb performance. Ewes showing signs of lameness due to foot scald or foot rot should also be culled.

Other issues such as disease status and internal parasite status should also be considered when culling in your flock. In addition, ewes that have a history of prolapsing (rectal, vaginal, or uterine) should be culled from the flock. Ewes with these condition can be managed, but will continue to be problems if they and their offspring remain in the flock. In order to reduce issues associated with this I recommend that all animals experiencing issues with prolapse be culled.

Behavior:

Many shepherds may not consider this, but behavior is certainly a culling criteria! Ewes that are hard to manage due to their behavior can create other problems down the road. Some ewes may be reluctant to care for their lambs (poor mothering), others may know where the weak spot in your

fence is at and because sheep follow, your entire flock could be on the loose. Regardless of the situation, don't think that behavior is not an acceptable reason, because it most certainly is!

Now that you have looked at all of your ewes and have ran them through your checklist, how many did you find that didn't make the cut? Some of you may say too many, but the reality of this is that the average culling rate in the United States according to the 2011 USDA APHIS Sheep report is 14%. Therefore, if you have a flock of 100 sheep, it will take approximately 7 years to turn over the entire flock. This matches well with the productive life cycle of a mature ewe.

The bottom line is don't keep ewes that don't lamb. Ewes that continually present themselves as problems or are in a poor state of health should also be culled. Seems pretty simple, right? Therefore, I challenge you that the next time that you call your ewes in to feed, which will more than likely be tonight, start thinking about this checklist to see if all of your ewes meet the criteria to remain on your farm.