

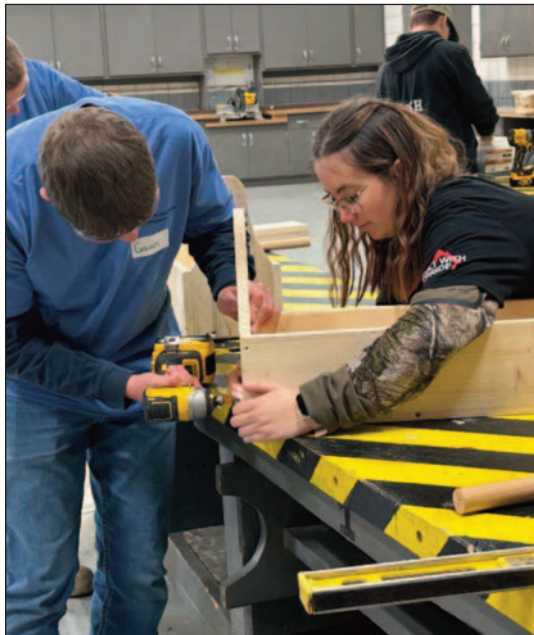
News from Morrow County

SCARLET AND GRAY NEWS

We sustain life.



Career Exploration Workshop: Construction Trade Careers



Students construct tool boxes in 2025

Take the guess work out of whether you want to work in a construction trade career! Spend the day trying it out by doing basic construction, heavy equipment demonstrations, small tool safety and concrete work.

The Construction Trade Career Exploration Workshop is for youth in grades 5-12. It will be held April 25, 2026 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Tri-Rivers Career Center in Marion. The cost is \$20 for Morrow County Residents and \$40 for non-Morrow County Residents. Registration is due April 17.

Questions? Contact Amanda Staley at staley.35@osu.edu or 419-947-1070.

For more information or to register, go to: www.go.osu/careerexploration.



Thank you to Morrow County Community Foundation

A big thank you to The Morrow County Community Foundation for providing our Family and Consumer Sciences program area with one of the initial donations of \$5,000 to support Health and Wellness programming.

We look forward to utilizing these funds in Morrow County to offer education on nutrition and cooking skills for youth.

Scholarships Available

The **Morrow County Pork Producers** will be sponsoring scholarships to qualified candidates. Students may be majoring in any field of study, which leads to a post-high school degree, certification. Deadline to apply is April 15, 2026.

The **Morrow County Cattlemen Association** will be sponsoring two or more scholarships to qualified candidates. Students may major in any field of study which leads to a post-high school degree and/or approved certificate. Applications are due March 23, 2026.

The **Morrow County Cattlemen's Association** annual Beef Ambassador Contest provides an opportunity for youth to share their story of agriculture, and effectively communicate and educate consumers on beef consumption and the industry. Deadline to apply is March 31, 2026.

For more information on any of these opportunities, please visit morrow.osu.edu/program-areas/4-h-youth-development/awards-and-achievements.

Current Resident or

Mt. Gilead, OH 43338
Suite 101
5362 US Highway 42
Ohio State University Extension

U.S. Postage PAID
Mt. Gilead, OH
Permit #19
Non-Profit Org.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Table of Contents

Agricultural News	Pages 2-6
4-H News.....	Pages 6-9
Family & Consumer Sciences	Pages 10-11
Calendar of Events	Page 12

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION MORROW COUNTY

5362 US Hwy. 42 • Suite 101 • Mt. Gilead, OH 43338
Phone: (419) 947-1070

OSU Extension-Morrow County: morrow.osu.edu

Like us on Facebook: Ohio State University Extension Morrow County
YouTube Channel: OSU Extension – Morrow County

Office Staff:

Amanda Staley - 4-H Youth Development Educator (staley.35@osu.edu)
 Ashley Huffine - 4-H Youth Development Educator (huffine.6@osu.edu)
 Carri Jagger - Ag & Natural Resources Educator (jagger.6@osu.edu)
 Candace Heer - Family & Consumer Sciences Educator (heer.7@osu.edu)
 Liz Ufferman - Office Associate (ufferman.1@osu.edu)
 Barb Hildebrand - Office Associate (hildebrand.2@osu.edu)



AGRICULTURE



Carri Jagger
Ag & Natural Resources Educator
(jagger.6@osu.edu)

Ohio Cropland Values & Rents Survey 2025-26

The Western Ohio Cropland Values and Cash Rents study is an opinion-based study surveying professionals with a knowledge of Ohio's cropland values and rental rates. Professionals surveyed are rural appraisers, agricultural lenders, professional farm managers, ag business professionals, OSU Extension educators, farmers, landowners, government personnel and Farm Service Agency personnel and committees.

To contribute to this study, complete the survey by using this QR code. Or go to:



osu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4UdEYgvF3MXnBEa



The Winter Kill Myth: The Cold Hard Truth about Tick Resilience

By Catelyn Turner,
OSU Extension Educator ANR,
Monroe County

Have you heard the myth that ticks are only active during the warm summer months? I have heard multiple people say that this harsh winter cold we've experienced must have killed a lot of them off, but that is simply not true. Most ticks go through four life stages: egg, six-legged larva, eight-legged nymph and finally, adult. Ticks can take 1-3 years to complete their lifecycle, needing a blood meal at every stage to survive.

Ticks are resilient little creatures who will seek out microclimates to buffer the freezing temperatures. Leaf litter, soil and brush piles can help them stay warm by providing insulation against the surface air. Once it warms up, even if just temporarily, adults can once again become active and quest for their next blood meal.

Ticks aren't just a nuisance; they can directly harm animals and spread diseases. There are many health impacts on livestock, including anemia, irritation, reduced weight gain, loss of condition, and in severe cases death.

Protecting livestock successfully comes from combining management practices that include environmental management, routine checks and treatment.

Ticks thrive in vegetative, shaded and humid areas, usually near woods or the edges of fields. To reduce these habitats, you can mow and clear brush along pasture margins and fence lines, as well as move any logs or leaf piles that may have provided ticks shelter while they overwintered.

Routinely mowing and keeping grass shorter will also help reduce

humidity at ground level, forcing ticks to move on to a better-suited environment. Pasture management can dramatically reduce tick encounters over time if done consistently.

Frequently observing livestock for ticks can be the first line of defense when it comes to protecting livestock. Ticks primarily attach to [livestock] in areas with thinner skin, soft tissues, and high blood flow. The most common areas on [livestock] that ticks will be found are around the tailhead, on the udder, inside the legs, on the brisket, in the ears and occasionally on the face and neck. If you notice a large number of ticks in any of these areas, it may be time for treat-

ment.

Having a good working relationship with your veterinarian will allow you to select the appropriate treatment. Always consult with a veterinarian before applying any product to ensure safety, effectiveness and to remain in compliance with withdrawal times. Even with chemical control, physical checks remain critical in detecting large tick populations.

Another good reason to have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship is that if any of your livestock animals are exhibiting any symptoms of a tick-borne illness, your veterinarian will be able to provide diagnostic testing in a timely manner.



Morrow County:

Ohio Farm Custom Rate Survey – 2026

We need your assistance in securing up-to-date information about farm custom work rates, machinery and building rental rates and hired labor costs in Ohio. Please respond even if you know only a few rates. We want information on actual rates, either what you paid to hire work or what you charged if you perform custom work. Custom Rates should include all ownership costs of implement & tractor (if

needed), operator labor, fuel and lube.

Please Indicate Whether Your Survey Responses (Custom Rate Quotes):

- Include Fuel
- Do Not Include Fuel

To complete the survey online, please use this QR code. Or go.osu.edu/customratesurvey2026





Early green doesn't mean ready to graze

By Victor Shelton, Retired NRCS Agronomist/Grazing Specialist

Spring is around the corner, I hope. In some areas, early February arrived with heavy snow. In others, it was mostly cold, dry and windy. Regardless of how it showed up, many were simply glad to see grass again once the white melted away — if it was green or brown didn't matter much.

An older relative of mine used to say that if there was snow still hanging around, it was just waiting for more to come. Whether that proves true or not, March reminds us that winter rarely leaves quietly. Each season is different, and so far this one appears to be leaning drier in several areas.

As days lengthen and soil temperatures begin inching upward, cool-season forages slowly wake from dormancy. Soil temperatures in the upper 30s and 40s can initiate growth, and once we consistently approach 50 degrees, growth accelerates. But seeing green does not mean it is time to graze.

March is not normally a part of the grazing season, even if the livestock think otherwise. The only reasonable exception is true stockpiled forage left intentionally from last fall, and only if soil conditions are firm enough to prevent damage. That stockpile was built with purpose, adequate nitrogen and sufficient residual to protect crowns and soil.

New spring growth is different. Those first leaves are powered primarily by stored root reserves. Grazing at this stage removes the very solar panels the plant needs to rebuild energy and extend its root system. If moisture becomes limiting later, shallow roots will show stress quickly. Protecting early leaf area is not just about maximizing

yield — it is about building resilience.

March is also prime time for frost-seeding clover if it has not already been done. Freeze-thaw cycles provide natural seed-to-soil contact for small, smooth seeds like clover. Maintaining legumes in the stand improves forage quality and reduces reliance on commercial nitrogen. A healthy legume component — often 30-to-40 percent of the standby dry weight — contributes biological nitrogen fixation and strengthens overall system resilience.

Even where clover is already present, frost-seeding can help maintain adequate levels, particularly with species such as red clover that tend to thin after a few years. If that same species has been growing and nodulating in the field, the proper rhizobium bacteria are likely present. Still, inoculating seed is inexpensive insurance. Without effective nodulation, legumes cannot fully fix atmospheric nitrogen, and the small added cost can protect a much larger return.

As spring approaches, it is also time to think ahead nutritionally — not just for the forage, but for the livestock. High-magnesium mineral supplementation should begin before cattle are turned onto rapidly growing cool-season pasture. Grass tetany (hypomagnesemia) is most likely to happen during early spring when forages are lush, rapidly growing, high in potassium and nitrogen, and relatively low in available magnesium. Cool, cloudy weather and stress can increase risk. Lactating cows, especially older cows nursing young calves, are particularly susceptible.

Lush, immature forage moves rapidly through the rumen and can

reduce effective magnesium availability and absorption. Providing a free-choice, high-magnesium mineral two to four weeks prior to turnout helps build magnesium status before risk increases. Waiting until symptoms appear is often too late. Prevention is far easier than treatment.

Grass tetany usually isn't just about low magnesium. More often, it is about an imbalance — too much potassium in relation to magnesium. When soils are high in potassium — especially following heavy potash applications — plants can take up excess potassium, which can interfere with magnesium availability and absorption in the animal. One practical way to assess potential risk is to look at the ratio of soil test potassium to magnesium. For example, a soil test showing 210 pounds of potassium per acre and 160 pounds of magnesium per acre gives a ratio of 1.3 ($210 \div 160 = 1.3$). When that ratio climbs much above about "1," particularly on lower Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) soils, tetany risk is elevated — especially during lush spring growth and in lactating cows.

That is also why potash applications on pasture must be managed carefully. Even if soil tests show you have fallen behind and more potassium is needed, it is usually best not to apply more than about 120 pounds of Potassium Oxide (K_2O) (200# of 0-0-60) in a single application on grazing ground. Large single applications can temporarily elevate forage potassium levels, increase tetany risk in cattle, and encourage "luxury consumption," where plants take up more potassium than they actually require. On lower CEC soils especially, splitting larger needs into



two applications is often safer and more efficient.

Regardless of soil fertility levels, feeding a high-magnesium mineral to cattle ahead of and during early spring grazing remains cheap insurance. During higher-risk periods, moving from a standard 1–2% magnesium mineral to one containing about 12–15% magnesium provides a little extra cushion when cows are grazing lush, high-potassium grass. Once we're past that early flush of growth, we can usually ease back to a normal maintenance mineral.

If the season trends wetter than normal, patience will prevent mud damage. If it trends drier than normal, patience will protect root depth, cover and moisture reserves. Either way, disciplined management now sets the stage for what follows. Delay grazing until the forage is truly ready and soils are firm. Prepare livestock nutritionally before turnout.

When grazing season does arrive, fields that carried adequate cover through winter will respond faster and more uniformly than those grazed tight last fall. Root reserves, soil protection and moisture retention are all influenced by how much leaf area and residue were left behind. That investment in cover will show up later in the season — especially if conditions turn dry. It is not about maximizing a single grazing event but about optimizing the entire grazing season. Keep on grazing!



New Commodity Program Base Acres explained

By Carl Zulauf, David Marrison, and Seungki Lee, Ohio State University

This article summarizes information in the US Federal Register of January 12, 2026 that addresses the addition of up to 30 million new commodity base acres effective for the 2026 crop year, making them eligible for ARC (Agriculture Risk Coverage) and PLC (Price Loss Coverage) benefits. One purpose of this article is help you formulate questions. Please direct them to FSA (Farm Service Agency) as specifics matter and this article summarizes what are often detailed procedures and rules.

Owners Make Base Allocation Decisions, Producers Elect and Enroll

FSA does not have discretion to alter this.

New base acres are automatically added to eligible farms unless an owner requests to not add them. FSA is under no obligation to notify other owners if a base allocation rejection is filed

Farmers who have not reported plantings to FSA in the past will be allowed to do so and thus have new base acres. Acres already reported to FSA cannot be modified.

Eligibility for New Base Acres

1. At least one current covered commodity (see list at the end of the article) must have been planted or have been prevented from being planted because of drought, flood, or other natural disaster or condition beyond the farmer's control in at least one year during 2019-2023.

Planted plus prevent planted acres are "planted and considered planted" (P&CP) acres. P&CP is limited to the initial planted or prevent planted crop, except for crops planted in an FSA approved dou-

ble-crop sequence. Otherwise, a subsequent planting is not P&CP acres.

AND

2. For an individual FSA farm, total P&CP acres must exceed total 9/30/2024 base acres for all covered commodities, excluding unassigned generic cotton base. Total P&CP acres are:

2019-2023 average (all 5 years) of P&CP acres for covered commodities **plus lesser of**

a. 15% of total FSA farm acres

Total acres equal total cropland acres minus acres enrolled in a federally funded conservation program that restricts production of agricultural commodities except CRP (Conservation Reserve Program).

or b. 2019-2023 average (all 5 years) of eligible noncovered commodities P&CP FSA farm acres.

Eligible noncovered commodities are all other crops except

- current covered commodities
- tobacco (consistent with other Commodity Credit Corporation programs),

- cannabis that does not meet the definition of hemp,

- commodities reported as tree, bush, vine, grass, idle, or fallow,

- cover crops reported as cover crops, and

- CRP and other conservation program acres ineligible for dual payments.

Notes:

Eligibility of hay acres varies. Alfalfa and other mixed forage acres reported as hay on an FSA acreage report are eligible non-covered commodities. Grass hay acres are not eligible. It is suggested you check with FSA if you had hay acres during 2019-2023.

Forage and silage acres of a current covered commodity are eligi-

ble as the covered commodity.

Sugar cane and sugar beets are eligible non-covered commodities.

New Base Acres = [(Total P&CP acres calculated as above) plus (unassigned generic base acres) minus (total base acres as of 9/30/2024)]

Unassigned base acres (see note at the end of the article) are converted first to covered commodity base acres, on an acre-for-acre basis. If unassigned base exceeds allowable new base, the difference remains unassigned base.

A current FSA farm with base acres but does not qualify for new base retains its current base acres.

Assignment of Base Acres and Base Yields

No new covered commodities are created. New base acres are added to base acres of current covered commodities planted on an FSA farm over crop years 2019-2023 using this ratio:

$$\frac{[(2019-2023 \text{ average (all 5 years) of a given covered commodity P\&CP acres}) \text{ to } (2019-2023 \text{ average (all 5 years) of all covered commodities P\&CP acres})]}{}$$

Other than under an established practice with FSA of double cropping covered commodities, an owner must elect what covered commodity on the same acre is used.

An FSA farm's current PLC yield is used for any new base acre. If the farm has no PLC yield for the covered commodity, average PLC yield for the county in which the farm is situated or a yield for a similarly situated farm is used.

Limits

An FSA farm's total base acres cannot exceed the FSA farm's total acres.

New US base acres are capped at

30 million. If the US cap is effective, an across-the-board, pro-rated reduction is applied to all eligible new base acres.

FSA New Base Acre Examples (from US Federal Register, Volume 91, Number 7, 1/12/2026, pages 1045-1046)

2019–2023 Planting History: 25 acres planted to a covered commodity (CC) each year, 25 acres planted to an eligible non-covered commodity (ENCC) each year.

Case I: Current Base Acres = 0
5-year Average Planting History (25 acres (5-year sum of CC P&CP Acres divided by 5) + (lesser of 7.5 acres (15% of total acres) or 25 acres (5-year sum of total ENCC P&CP acres divided by 5))) = 32.5 acres

Maximum potential new base acres = 32.5 [32.5 (5-year average planting history) minus 0 (current base)]

Case II: Current Base Acres = 10
5-year Average Planting History (25 acres (5-year sum of CC P&CP Acres divided by 5) + (lesser of 7.5 acres (15% of total acres) or 25 acres (5-year sum of total ENCC P&CP acres divided by 5))) = 32.5 acres

Maximum potential new base acres = 22.5 [32.5 (5-year average planting history) minus 10 (current base)]

Notes:

Current Covered Commodities: barley, canola, corn, crambe, dry peas, flaxseed, grain sorghum, large chickpeas, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium/short grain rice, temperate japonica rice, safflower, seed cotton, sesame seed, small chickpeas, soybeans, sunflower seed, and wheat.

Unassigned Base Acres: The

Continued on page 5



AGRICULTURE



2026 Agriculture and Horticulture Classes

Adult and Youth BQA

March 31 at 6:30

Ag Credit Building

This will re-certify adults for BQA

and certify youth for the Morrow County Fair.

Perennial Workshop

April 18th from 9:00 a.m. -

Noon

Ag Credit Building

9 - 10 Using Natives in the Landscape

10 - 11 Iris selection, care and varieties

11 - 12 Hydrangea placement, care and varieties

Buckeye Lady Beetle Blitz

May 18 from Noon - 1:00 p.m.

Ag Credit Building

Native lady beetle research study information session. Volunteer to collect data in the summer of 2026.

Entering Ag and Horticulture Products in the Morrow County Fair

June 25 at 6:30 pm

Ag Credit Building

Learn how to enter agriculture and horticulture products into the Morrow County Fair for competition.

Plant Swap

October 20 at 5:00 pm

Ag Credit Building

Bring any kind of non-invasive plant, gardening tools, books or magazines to swap with each other.

Commodity Base Acres

Continued from page 4

2014 Farm Bill made base acres of upland cotton as of 9/30/2013 “generic base acres.” They were not eligible for ARC and PLC benefits. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 authorized seed cotton as a covered commodity. Under this authorization, if a covered commod-

2026 Gift Tax Exclusions for farm families

**By Robert Moore,
Attorney and Research
Specialist, OSU Agricultural &
Resource Law Program**

Gift-giving can be an important tool for farm families who are working through a transition plan. Whether the goal is to gradually move assets to the next generation, reduce the size of a taxable estate, or help a child get established in the operation, understanding current federal gift tax rules is essential.

The 2026 Annual Gift Tax Exclusion

For 2026, the federal annual gift tax exclusion is \$19,000 per recipient. This means an individual may give up to \$19,000 to any number of people during the year without:

- Owing federal gift tax, or
- Reducing their federal estate tax exemption.

For married couples, “gift splitting” allows a couple to combine their exclusions and gift up to \$38,000 per recipient in 2026 without using any of their lifetime exemption.

The annual exclusion applies per recipient. For example, grandparents with three grandchildren could each gift \$19,000 to each grandchild in 2026, for a total of \$114,000 without affecting their estate tax exemption.

Gifts Above the Annual Exclusion

Gifts exceeding \$19,000 per re-



ipient are still permitted. However, the excess amount reduces the donor’s federal lifetime estate and gift tax exemption.

For example, assume Farmer gifts farmland valued at \$1,019,000 to Daughter in 2026:

- The first \$19,000 qualifies for the annual exclusion.
- The remaining \$1,000,000 reduces the farmer’s lifetime estate and gift tax exemption from \$15,000,000 to \$14,000,000.
- No immediate gift tax is owed unless Farmer has already used their entire lifetime exemption.

When a gift exceeds the annual exclusion, the donor must file a federal gift tax return (IRS Form 709), even if no tax is due.

Unlimited Gifts for Education and Medical Expenses

In addition to the annual exclusion, federal law allows unlimited payments for certain educational and medical expenses. These payments:

- Must be made directly to the educational institution or medical provider, and
- Do not count against the annual exclusion or lifetime exemption.

For farm families looking to make larger transfers, paying tuition for a child or grandchild, or covering medical expenses for a family member, can be an efficient way to provide assistance without affecting estate tax limits.

Important Considerations Before Making Gifts

While gifting can be a valuable

planning strategy, it is not without risk or tradeoffs.

One key issue for farm families is income tax basis. Assets transferred at death generally receive a “step-up” in basis to fair market value. Lifetime gifts, however, carry over the donor’s basis. This can create significant capital gains tax exposure if the asset is later sold.

Gift-giving can also affect:

- Cash flow and retirement security for the donor
- Fairness among heirs
- Medicaid eligibility and long-term care planning
- Control of the farming operation

Finally, gifts above the annual exclusion must be properly documented, and gift tax returns filed when required.

Work with Your Advisors

Because gifting interacts with estate tax, income tax, transition planning, and family dynamics, it should be coordinated with your overall farm transition plan. Before making significant gifts, consult with your attorney, tax advisor, and other members of your advisory team to ensure the strategy supports both your long-term goals and financial security.

For more information on gifting strategies and implications, see bulletins Gifting Assets Prior to Death and Gifting to Reduce Federal Estate Taxes available at farmoffice.osu.edu.





AGRICULTURE

It's Time to Start Seeds

As I sit here looking out the window at the cold dreary day, I'm dreaming of warm days in the garden. March 20th was the first day of spring. So it's time to start thinking about planning gardens. If starting a new garden, soil testing the site where the garden will go is a good idea. If it is an existing garden and the soil has never been tested, now would be a good time to think about testing it. Your local OSU Extension office can help you with soil testing.

Another gardening task to be thinking about is seed starting. Growing plants from seed is very rewarding and a lot of fun. Now is the time to start seeds indoors under a grow light or in a bright window. Grow lights however do produce a better seedling and many new windows don't allow UV rays to penetrate through them.

Seeds to consider starting indoors are: tomato, pepper, eggplant, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, onions, basil, rosemary, parsley, cilantro, lettuce, spinach, zinnia, marigolds, cosmos just to name a few.

When should these be started?

- Find out when the frost-free date is in your area
- Look at the seed packet to see how many weeks from seed to harvest or how many weeks until it should be transplanted outdoors
- Then count backwards to determine when to start seeds indoors.

For example: the frost free date in Morrow County is May 9th and tomato seeds should be started eight weeks before being transferred outside so they would be sown after March 14th.

A few supplies will be needed when starting seeds.

- Seed starting soilless mix

- Seed starting containers
- Labels
- Spray bottle
- Plastic wrap
- Seeds

When starting seeds special seed starting kits can be purchased, however creativity is more fun. A simple egg carton with popsicle stick labels will work, just make sure to poke holes in the egg carton for drainage. Place the seed starting mix in egg cartons or seed starting trays then pre-moisten the soil. Pick out seeds and poke them in the soil one seed per cell. Make sure to label the seeds so that it isn't a mystery when it's time to transplant them. Lastly cover the seeds with plastic wrap or a plastic dome as this will create a mini greenhouse to help hold moisture and heat in the soil until the seeds germinate. To help the seed germinate they can also be placed on heat mats with a thermostat set to the temperature the seeds need to germinate at.

Once the seeds germinate take the plastic wrap off and keep the container in a bright window or under grow lights. Trays may need to be turned if the plants start to stretch towards the light. Plants should also be given a little brush with your hand every day to help strengthen them up, this mimics the wind.

Once plants have gotten one set of true leaves, transplant them to a larger container with one plant per container.

When the temperatures start to warm up, gradually introduce the plants to the outdoors in shady protected areas.

For more information about seed starting visit: extension.unh.edu/resource/starting-plants-seed-fact-sheet

4-H NEWS



Amanda Staley
4-H Youth Development Educator
(staley.35@osu.edu)



Ashley Huffine
4-H Youth Development Educator
(huffine.6@osu.edu)

Mandatory Horse Project EquiSTEP Changes

EquiSTEP is an annual statewide training required for all youth exhibiting and participating in the Ohio 4-H Horse Program. Training should be completed and updated to 4-H Online by **June 1st!** This training replaces the statewide requirement of reading the Horse, Safety, and You resources and viewing a training video for youth and their families that are new to the program. They cover four topics that align with the 4-H pledge, focusing on Head (helmet safety), Hands (equine safety & handling), Health (Equine Health & Nutrition), and Heart (sportsmanship).

In 2026 the program underwent changes that may affect some mem-

bers. The program that was previously housed on the ScarletCanvas platform will now be housed on Qualtrics.

This will allow youth to no longer need to have their own unique email address to participate in the training. Instead of a long video followed by one final test, the training now features short, topic-based videos, each followed by a brief quiz. Participants must pass each quiz before moving on! Any 4-H or FFA member planning to take a horse project at both the county and state level must complete Equistep. If members plan to compete in any horse contest (including the Junior Horse Show) they must have this completed and uploaded to 4-HOnline by the contest/event's registration due date. Lastly, training will now be offered exclusively online. We understand this may be challenging for families without reliable internet access. If this affects you, please contact our office so we can help you find an alternative solution.

EquiSTEP Online Link:
go.osu.edu/equistep2026

Cloverbud Fun Day

July 18 • 9am-1 pm
Grades K-2

For more information, go to:
www.go.osu.edu/cloverbudfunday



Swine Project Member Needed (4-H and/or FFA)

The Morrow County Fair Board, Morrow County Livestock Sale Committee, and the Morrow County Pork Producers each year provide a Morrow County 4-H or FFA member with the opportunity to raise, display, and sell a market hog for the purpose of giving back all Jr. Fair Livestock Auction proceeds to the Morrow County Jr. Fair Building Fund.

A great community service project for any member! Guidelines:

1. Youth must be an active project member in 4-H or FFA of current year.

2. Youth must take Market Hog Project 139 as a 4-H member or Market Hog project through FFA.

3. Youth must be primary care givers providing day-to-day care and feeding of the Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig from possession to final sale at the Jr. Fair Livestock Sale.

4. Ideally Morrow County Jr. Fair Market hogs should weigh between 220 pounds and 280

pounds by fair weigh-in.

5. Youth are responsible for transportation and care to June Market Swine Tag-In and to the Morrow County Fair.

6. Youth are responsible for entering the Market Hog on their Jr. Fair Entry Form. Youth selected to raise the Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig may take a maximum of three market swine to the Morrow County Jr.

Fair, with one being the Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig and the other two their Market Hog projects.

7. The Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig will not be shown for placing nor any other awards related to muscling, confirmation, or carcass quality.

8. Youth must be willing and available for any media events etc.

9. The Morrow County Pork Producers will award the youth selected a donated market feeder pig to be raised as the Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig. This pig will be born in February of current year.

10. The Morrow County Pork Producers will donate towards purchasing feed for Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig. Receipts must be provided for reimbursement.

11. Youth must immediately contact the OSU Extension, 4-H Educator and Morrow County Pork Producer President if any problems, challenges, or questions arise.

12. The Morrow County Pork Producers, Morrow County Sr. Fair Board and OSU Extension Morrow County will help the youth succeed in making sure a Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig is sold in the livestock sale for the purposes of the Morrow County Jr. Fair Building Fund.

To enter the youth must submit an essay on the topic "Why I want to raise the Morrow County Jr. Fair Building Fund Pig". The essay must describe the facility that youth will use to raise the pig, their ability to raise a market hog, why they would like to be selected, and relevant experience. Please include pictures of the facilities where you plan to house the hog.

Applications are Due April 23rd to the OSU Extension Office, 5362 US Highway 42 Ste. 101, Mt. Gilead, Ohio 43338.



2026 Quality Assurance Session

Quality Assurance is a mandatory event for all exhibitors in the state of Ohio who plan to show a livestock project. This is an educational event to teach youth how to responsibly produce a safe and wholesome food animal product that meets the Ohio Department of Agriculture requirements.

Morrow County Rules: All youth project members taking livestock (market and breeding) are required to attend a quality assurance session annually or test out when eligible.

Morrow County Quality Assurance Test Out: Test out opportunities are only for youth in their 3rd year or beyond and 12 years old and older as of January 1st. Test out age groups 12 to 14 and 15 and older. Youth who pass the test at age 15 or older will not need to test nor attend quality assurance again.

Don't Forget: Quality Assurance must be completed by July 17th to show at the Morrow County Fair. State Fair project members should complete QA by June 14th.

Parents/Guardians are required to attend the first 2 years of a project member's required QA sessions.

County Quality Assurance Opportunities:

• **March 19, Quality Assurance Test Out**, 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Ag Credit Conference Room

• **March 31, Beef QA**, Ag Credit Building, 6:30 p.m., **RSVP-419-947-1070**

• **April 28, First- and Second-**

Year Member (8-13 year olds) **ONLY and Parent QA**, 6:30 p.m., Youth Building Fairgrounds

• **May 6, Livestock QA General**, 6:15 p.m., Fairgrounds

• **May 12, Livestock QA General**, 6:15 p.m., Fairgrounds

• **May 21st, Livestock QA General**, 6:15 p.m., Fairgrounds **State Quality Assurance Opportunities:**

Ohio Cattlemen's Best Program (face to face), Dairy Palooza, Pork Quality Assurance (face to face, 14 and older only), BQA (face to face and approved program) Watch announcements or check ohio4h.org website.

National Online Program Option: Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA)

Youth can go to the following website to take the age-appropriate on-line module for \$12: yqcaprogram.org/

Youth who intend to show their project animal(s) at exhibition (e.g., county or state fair) have the option to complete an online YQCA session. For the training to meet the Ohio Youth Food Animal QA requirement for the project year:

• The online module completed **MUST** be for the correct 4-H age for the youth.

• 1st and 2nd year members are **NOT** eligible for online module. Parents must attend with child at an in person session.

• The online session must be completed at least 45 days prior to the start of exhibition.

Mount Gilead Farmers Market

The Mount Gilead Farmers Market is offering a fundraising opportunity for local 4-H clubs.

Interested clubs can contact mountgileadfarmersmarket@gmail.com

com or pick up a registration form at the Morrow County Extension Office. See the flyer on page 8 for details!



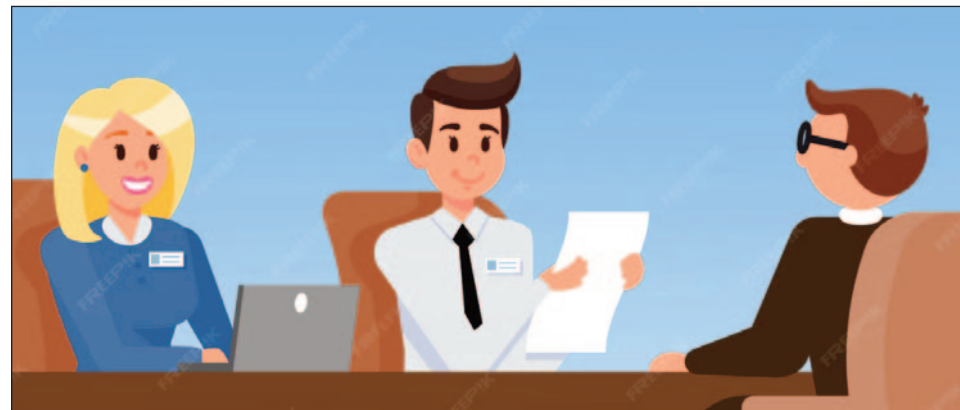
4-H NEWS



Morrow County 4-H Camp Dates!

Pack your bags and get ready for the sweetest adventure of the summer! This year's 4-H Camp theme is CANDY LAND, and we can't wait to sprinkle the week with fun,

friends, and flavorful activities. Mark your calendars for July 9-13 and join us, it's going to be a treat!



4-H Marketing, Job Interview and Communications Contests

Don't know how to get started? No problem, contact Amanda Staley, staley.35@osu.edu, to coach you through how to build your speech or project. It was her favorite competition as a teen and

she'd be happy to help. Register by June 18 at www.go.osu.edu/speakingcontest. The competition is June 23 at 6:00 p.m. in the AgCredit Building Conference Room.

Winning 4-H Plans: Creating Inclusive Paths to Success

The Winning 4-H Plan (W4HP) assists Extension professionals and volunteers by providing resources to aid them in developing accommodation plans to meet the needs of Ohio 4-H youth with disabilities. As a part of The Ohio State University, Ohio 4-H must make all aspects of 4-H, including programming, projects, facilities, and activities, accessible to people with disabilities. Access and inclusion are created with a combination of accessible programming, events, interactions, and spaces, with the goal of allowing the individual maximum independence and minimal intervention from others (such as advisors and educators). The learning and experiences that a member gains through 4-H are just as important, if not more important, as a "perfect" final project or a blue ribbon at the fair.

Creating access is more than ensuring the member can attend 4-H events and fairs, it includes choosing an appropriate project, holding

meetings and activities in accessible spaces, and including all members in all activities.

Ohio 4-H and OSU Extension, as part of The Ohio State University, are required to provide reasonable accommodation and access through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This civil rights law prevents discrimination based on having a disability. Any organization receiving federal funding must comply with Section 504. Unlike Secondary School individual education plans, the family is responsible for seeking services. A member's school IEP does not transfer to our 4-H program. The parents will need to fill out all the necessary paperwork and submit that to the Extension office.

These forms can be found on our website under youth development than the Winning 4-H Plan tab. We try to have these forms submitted prior to our enrollment deadline of April 30th but are willing to work with members throughout the year!

**Morrow County 4-H Clubs
We want you!**

**June 13 from 9-12 the Mount Gilead Market
is hosting their first ever specialty:
4-H Young Growers
Farmers Market**

**This will allow 4-H clubs to come to the market and set
up a booth along side market vendors to raise money
for your club. All items will be by donation. Examples
could be: Baked good, Crafts, Flowers, Veggies, ect.**

**If this is something you would be interested in signing up for- please
send an email to mountgileadfarmersmarket@gmail.com NO LATER
than May 30th. Please also direct all questions to this email as well.**



4-H NEWS



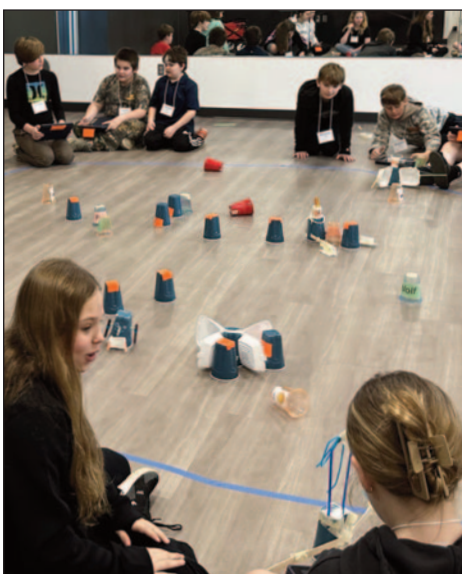
While learning about the power of the prairie, students made seeds balls to take home to plant.



Despite the windy day, students explored the prairie at Ohio State Marion.



This Northmor student is learning how to blood type.



Students were Rolling with Robotics as they engineered devices to go on top of their Sphero Bolts to get cups outside of a circle. A game similar to Hungry, Hungry, Hippo.

Northmor Sixth Graders Explore STEAM Careers

Eighty-seven sixth-grade students from Northmor Middle School visited The Ohio State University at Marion on March 10 for a hands-on STEAM Career Day, exploring potential futures in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics through interactive campus experiences.

The visit, a collaboration between Ohio State Marion and OSU Extension–Morrow County, introduced students to a range of careers through activity-based learning sessions led by campus faculty, staff, and an OSU Extension 4-H Educator. Students rotated through workshops that included Prairie Power: Explore & Create!, Rolling into Robotics: Coding with Sphero Bolts, The Chemistry of Coca-Cola Caviar, Naming Nature, Your Body Is Built to Move!, and Human Blood Typing.

Each session emphasized discovery, experimentation, and real-world career connections. From coding robots and testing blood

types to exploring prairie ecosystems and creating chemistry-based food spheres, students experienced how STEAM concepts apply to everyday life and future careers.

Survey responses from participating students showed strong interaction with the program. The majority reported learning more about STEAM careers after the visit, with 73 students saying the workshop increased their knowledge of these career fields.

Students also enjoyed the hands-on nature of the activities. One participant wrote, “My favorite part was Rolling into Robotics. It was my favorite because I liked building the robots.” Another shared, “This field trip taught us a lot of stuff while still having fun.”

“These kinds of hands-on experiences help students see that science and engineering aren’t just subjects in school—they are pathways to exciting careers,” said Tiffany Rye-McCurdy, Director of Youth and Community Learning at The Ohio

State University at Marion. “By bringing students to campus and letting them experiment, build, and explore, we hope they begin to see themselves as future innovators.”

A key partner in organizing the event was Amanda Staley, 4-H Youth Development Educator with OSU Extension–Morrow County, who served as the liaison between Northmor Schools and Ohio State Marion. Staley worked closely with campus organizers to coordinate the visit and connect classroom learning with real-world STEAM opportunities.

By providing immersive experiences early in students’ academic journeys, Ohio State Marion and OSU Extension hope to inspire curiosity and encourage young learners to see themselves in future STEAM careers.

In the coming weeks both Cardington Lincoln and Highland sixth-grade students will be attending this same event!



FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES



Candace Heer

Family & Consumer Sciences Educator
(heer.7@osu.edu)

2026 Food, Nutrition and Home Food Preservation Programs!

MAY FOOD PRESERVATION OPEN HOUSE

Drop by the Annual Food Preservation Open House and...

- get your food preservation questions answered.
- have your pressure canner inspected and your dial gauge tested.
- review canning basics.
- receive tips for choosing and using canning jars and lids.
- learn more about different methods of food preservation.
- discuss best practices for storing your preserved food.
- pick up tested recipes.
- sign-up to win a So Easy to Preserve book and canning supplies!

❖ So Easy to Preserve books for sale.

DATE: Thursday, May 28, 2026

TIME: 1:00 – 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Ag Credit Building, 5362 US Highway 42, Mount Gilead, OH (Conference Room – Second Floor)

COST: Free, covered by your levy dollars

QUESTIONS: Contact Candace Heer, Family and Consumer Sciences Educator at 419-947-1070

JUNE FOOD PRESERVATION OPEN HOUSE

Stop in Selover Public Library ~ Home Food Preservation & Food Safety Information & Canner Inspections

DATE: Tuesday, June 16, 2026

TIME: 3:30-6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Selover Public Library, 31 State Route 95 Chesterville OH 43317

COST: Free, covered by your levy dollars

THE SCIENCE BEHIND FOOD PRESERVATION METHODS

Join us for “The Science Behind Food Preservation Methods”

Question: Why attend a program about food preservation methods if you or your family have been preserving food for decades?

Answer: Following updated food preservation methods is critical for ensuring a food safe product for your family and household. The latest science has resulted in some changes to the current methods over the years.

DATE: Monday, June 22, 2026

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Ag Credit Building, 5362 US Highway 42, Mount Gilead, OH (Conference Room – Second Floor)

COST & REGISTRATION: Free (covered by your levy dollars) but must register at 419-947-1070

NEW DIETARY GUIDELINES

Morrow County Seniors ~ Join us for the Nutrition Program “What’s New in The New Dietary Guidelines for Americans”

DATE: Monday, June 22, 2026

TIME: 12:30-1:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Seniors On Center, 41 W Center St, Mount Gilead, OH 43338

COST: Free, covered by your levy dollars

MUST REGISTER: Contact Brian Johnson, Nutrition Manager at the Seniors On Center number 419-946-4191

Getting Ready for the Summer Garden and Canning Season

Written by: Kate Shumaker, Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, Ohio State University Extension, Holmes County

Now is the perfect time to dream of warmer days and begin planning your summer garden. What will you grow? And once the harvest comes in, how will you preserve all that beautiful summer produce? The peace of mind that comes from knowing you have food on hand to carry you through the year is something you simply can’t buy.

Before the garden is producing and it’s time to fire up the canner, take a moment to inventory what you already have and what may need to be replenished. Have your pressure canner inspected and tested for accuracy at your local Extension office. Check your supply of jars, lids, and rings, and stock up if needed. Take a close look at your equipment as well—if anything has seen better days, now is the time to replace it, not when you’re in the middle of a busy canning season.

Next, think about what you plan to preserve this year. For best quality, it’s recommended to preserve only what you can realistically consume within a 12–18 month period. Did you run out of anything last year? Do you still have plenty of something sitting on the shelf? Is there something new you would like to try canning preserving this year?

Grab a notepad and start tracking how many jars per month your family typically uses of the foods you preserve. This simple exercise will help you set realistic, practical goals for the upcoming season. Once you have estimated how much of each item you want to preserve, you can work backwards to determine how much of each veg-

etable or fruit you need to grow or purchase.

For instance, if your family uses one quart of green beans each week (52 per year), you would need approximately 100 pounds of fresh beans based on yield estimates from the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

Taking the time to evaluate your past product use and plan for the coming season now can save many frustrations in the future. Reach out to your Extension office for resources on growing, using, and preserving Ohio produce. We’ve got you covered!

u.osu.edu/livehealthyosu/2026/02/10/getting-ready-for-the-summer-garden-and-canning-season/





FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES



What's "New" about the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines?

By Jennifer Little, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, OSU Extension, Hancock County, OH.

The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) were released in January 2026, marking a significant shift in federal nutrition policy. Initially created in 1980 and updated every five years by the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services, these guidelines influence everything from school lunches to military rations and food packaging.

Over the years, the Guidelines have been updated to promote more variety in the diet, the avoidance of excess sodium, fats and sugars. More recent adaptations have focused on lifestyle, including maintenance of a healthy weight and participation in regular physical activity. In the last 15 years, the recommendations began to offer additional guidance based on age and life stage, recognizing age-specific nutritional needs and challenges.

What are key changes and additions that we should make note of for the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

• **Prioritize Protein Foods at Every Meal.** This guideline acknowledges that for maintaining body tissue and improving metabolism and blood sugar, meals should include lean animal (fish, poultry or red meat) or plant-based (nuts, seeds, beans/lentils) protein. Serv-

ing sizes of 2-3 ounces per meal are still considered appropriate.

• **Consider Gut Health.** With increased understanding of the role of gut bacteria (our microbiome) in overall health, the new Guidelines emphasize eating more "real food" (closer to its natural state) as well as consumption of some fermented foods which may help replace lost "good bacteria" in the intestinal tract.

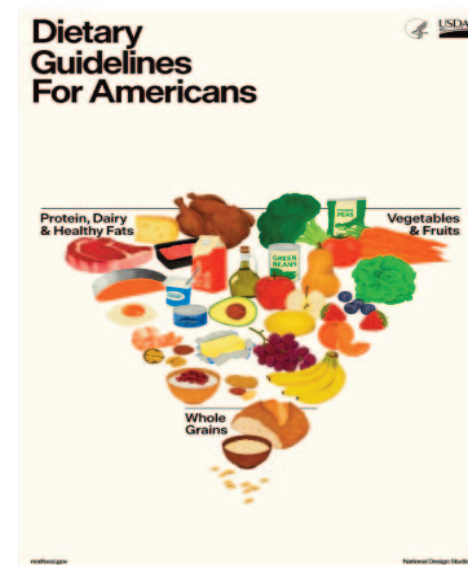
• **Incorporate Healthy Fats.** In previous versions of the DGA, the emphasis has been on limiting fat, but healthy fats (including those found in eggs, seafood, nuts, olives and avocado) are necessary for absorption of certain vitamins, contribute to good cholesterol, and enhance the flavor and sense of fullness foods provide.

• **Limit Highly Processed Foods, Added Sugars & Refined Carbohydrates.** The new Guidelines target highly processed foods as an issue. While definitions of "highly processed foods" may vary, the emphasis is to consume more "real" fresh or home prepared foods (instead of ready-prepared foods, with added preservatives and flavor enhancements typically high in sodium, sweeteners and some trans fats). Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are still preferred as nutritious energy & fiber sources over refined carbohydrates, such as packaged snack foods and desserts.

We all can take steps to have healthier diets. The key is to start

small and make simple, sustainable changes, such as eating at home more often or selecting nuts or fresh fruit as a snack instead of packaged cookies or chips. Eating for health is not just about avoiding certain items, but also about focusing on the good real food that is all around us, grown on farms or in backyard gardens and cooked in kitchens.

u.osu.edu/livehealthyosu/2026/02/19/whats-new-about-the-new-u-s-dietary-guidelines/



DINING WITH DIABETES

FOUR WEEK SERIES

PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND ALL 4 CLASSES

Wednesday, April 15th, 12:30-2:30pm

Wednesday, April 22nd, 12:30-2:30pm

Wednesday, April 29th, 12:30-2:30pm

Wednesday, May 6th, 12:30-2:30pm

The Marion Family YMCA, OhioHealth and OSU Extension present a 4-week series that includes cooking demonstrations, topics on menu planning, carb counting, label reading, portion control, recipes and more! Food samples will be served from our live cooking demonstrations. Door prizes and give aways included.

REGISTER AT NO COST BY CALLING THE MARION Family YMCA AT 740-725-9622.

Reunion from the previous class will be April 15th from 9:00-10:00am and the topic is Medications.

Location: Marion Family YMCA
645 Barks Road East

Cost: No Cost. Donations Accepted

Do not have to be a Y Member

Open to all adults 18 & up. You do not have to be a YMCA Member.

Registration: Stop in the Y at 645 Barks Road East, or call 740-725-9622

If you have taken the class once, you can not register again. You can be asked to be put on the wait list and if there is room, you will be added.

Serving Marion and Morrow Counties

Freeze-Drying Fundamentals

Are you interested in scheduling a Freeze-Drying Fundamentals class with friends and family?

- Minimum of 10 participants required
- No cost, covered by your levy

dollars

- Program location is the OSU Extension-Morrow County office
- Contact Candace Heer, Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences at 419-947-1070



OSU EXTENSION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 2026

- 6 Jr. Fairboard, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
- 8 Dining With Diabetes (series), 12:30 p.m Marion Family YMCA, Marion, OH
- 9 Morrow County Pork Producers – 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
- 15 4-H ENROLLMENT DUE (past volunteers & members)
- 15 Dining With Diabetes (series), 12:30 p.m Marion Family YMCA, Marion, OH
- 16 Horse & Pony Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
- 17 Registration Due: Career Exploration Workshop
- 18 Perennial Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon, Ag Credit Building
- 22 Dining With Diabetes (series), 12:30 p.m Marion Family YMCA, Marion, OH
- 23 Sr. Fairboard, Fairgrounds, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
- 23 Applications due to raise and show the Building Fund Hog
- 25 Career Exploration Workshop, 9 a.m.- 2 p.m., Tri-Rivers Career Center, Marion
- 28 1st & 2nd Year (ages 8-13) Member & Parent Quality Assurance, Fairgrounds, 6:30 p.m., RSVP to office
- 29 Dining With Diabetes (series), 12:30 p.m Marion Family YMCA, Marion, OH
- 30 4-H ENROLLMENT DUE (new members or changes for projects)

MAY 2026

- 4 Jr. Fairboard, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
- 6 Quality Assurance, 6:15 p.m. Fairgrounds, Mandatory with a parent for ALL 1st & 2nd year members
- 12 Quality Assurance, 6:15 p.m. Fairgrounds, Mandatory with a parent for ALL 1st & 2nd year members
- 14 Horse & Pony, Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 14 Morrow County Pork Producers – 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
- 18 Buckeye Lady Beetle Blitz, 12 noon-1 p.m., Ag Credit Building
- 21 Quality Assurance, 6:15 p.m. Fairgrounds, Mandatory with a parent for ALL 1st & 2nd year members
- 26 4-H CARTEENS, Ag Credit Building Conference Room, 5:30 p.m.
- 28 Sr. Fairboard, Fairgrounds, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
- 28 Annual Food Preservation Open House, 1-6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room

JUNE 2026

- 1 Possession Of All Livestock Projects!!
- 1 Jr. Fairboard, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
- 1 Horse & Pony Training & Entries Due
- 1 Horse & Pony Awards Due
- 5 Broiler Pool Order Forms Due
- 6 Jr Fair Feeder Calf Weigh In, 7-11 a.m., Fairgrounds Large Arena
- 11 Morrow County Pork Producers – 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
- 15 **JR FAIR ENTRIES DUE AT MIDNIGHT!**

- 15 Dog, Goat, Poultry & Rabbit Ambassador Forms Due
- 16 Food Safety & Home Food Preservation Q&A and canner inspections, 3:30-6:30 p.m., Selover Public Library, Chesterville, OH
- 18 Horse & Pony Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 18 **Registration Due: Illustrated Talks or Demonstration**
- 18 **Registration Due: Marketing Contest**
- 18 **Registration Due: Public Speaking LEGO Edition**
- 18 **Registration Due: Job Interview Contest**
- 22 Early Project Judging
- 22 What's New in "The New Dietary Guidelines for Americans," 12:30 p.m., Seniors on Center, Mt Gilead, OH
- 22 The Science Behind Food Preservation Methods, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
- 23 Illustrated Talks or Demonstration, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building
- 23 Public Speaking - LEGO Edition, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building
- 23 Marketing Contest projects due
- 23 Job Interview Contest, 6 p.m., Ag Credit Building Conference Room
- 25 Sr. Fairboard, Fairgrounds, 7 p.m., Fairgrounds
- 25 Entering Ag & Horticulture Products in the Morrow County Fair, 6:30 p.m., Ag Credit Building
- JULY 2026**
- 22 Officially Speaking: OSU Extension-Morrow County, 6 p.m., Selover Public Library, Chesterville, OH