

NORTHEAST OHIO AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER

Your Weekly Agriculture Update for
Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties

May 21, 2024



How many slugs do you see? Slug trapping continues in Trumbull County.

In This Issue:

- Summer-Like Weather Sets In
- Evaluating Stockmanship
- New Rule and Legislation on Electronic Ear Tags for Cattle: A Continuing Battle
- New Online Database a “FRST” in Fertilizer Knowledge Sharing
- Study Reveals Consumers Value Animal Welfare More than Environmental Sustainability When Buying Meat and Dairy Products
- Are Cover Crops a Good Alternative Feed Source for Dairy Cattle?

Hello Northeast Ohio Counties!

Hot and dry weather aided a fast progression of field work over the past several days. I saw a few hay fields mowed too.

Continue to scout your small grains. Cereal leaf beetle is widespread, and several leaf diseases have been found. Give me a call at 330-638-6783 if you need assistance.

Have a safe Memorial Day weekend. The newsletter will arrive on Wednesday next week to accommodate the holiday.

Lee Beers
Trumbull County
Extension Educator

SUMMER-LIKE WEATHER SETS IN

By Aaron Wilson

Source: <https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2024-15/summer-weather-sets>

Summary

High temperatures reached 90°F in Toledo and Findlay on Monday for the first time in 2024. Temperatures in the upper 80s to low 90s are well above the average highs in the low to mid 70s for middle May standards. Overall, temperatures through May 19th ran 2-6°F above the long-term mean (Fig. 1). Following a very wet April including a record monthly total of 7.94" in Toledo, precipitation in May has ranged from 1-3" across northwest counties, to 4-6" across parts of Highland, Adams, Scioto, Pike, and Jackson Counties. Overall, western and northern Ohio are running below average (50-100% of normal) for the month, despite rainfall occurring on 11 out of the first 19 days in many locations. For the latest up-to-date conditions, seasonal outlooks, and monthly climate summaries, please visit the [State Climate Office of Ohio](#).

Weather Forecast

The hot conditions that started on Sunday, will continue across Ohio through Tuesday with highs in the mid 80s to low 90s across the state. A few widely scattered storms are possible as well across Ohio on Tuesday. A cold front will bring more widespread showers and storms on Wednesday with highs in the upper 70s to mid 80s. Scattered showers and storms along with cooler highs in the 70s will stick around Thursday and Friday.

Northeast Ohio Agriculture



Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals
May 01, 2024 to May 19, 2024

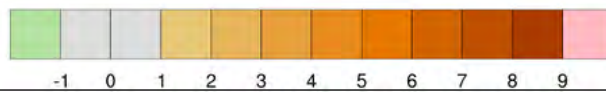
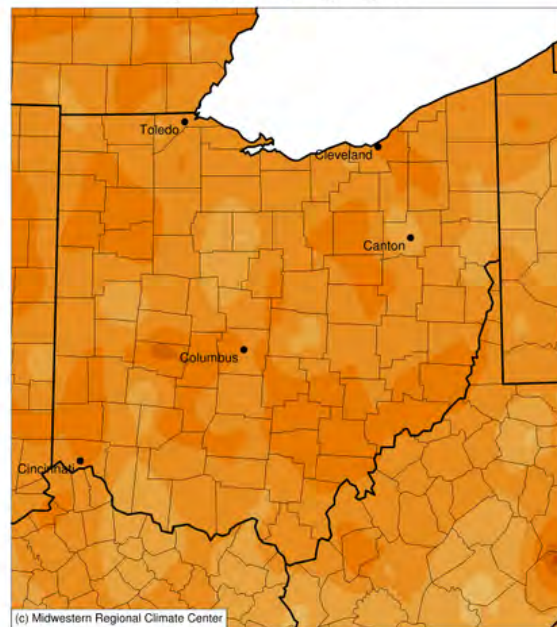


Figure 1. Differences from average temperature for May 1-19, 2024. Figure courtesy of the Midwestern Regional Climate Center (<https://mrcc.purdue.edu/>).

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
Ashtabula and Trumbull Counties

The weekend will feature highs back into the upper 70s to mid 80s with a continued chance for scattered showers and storms. The Weather Prediction Center is currently forecasting 0.75-2.00" northeast to southwest over the next 7 days, with localized heavier amounts (Fig. 2).

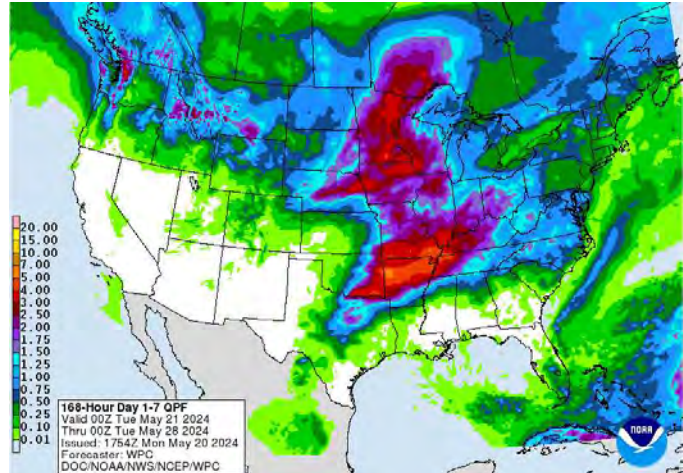


Figure 2. Precipitation forecast from the Weather Prediction Center for 8pm Monday May 20, – 8pm Monday May 27, 2024

The 6-10 day outlook from the Climate Prediction Center and the 16-Day Rainfall Outlook from NOAA/NWS/Ohio River Forecast Center show greater probability of above average temperatures and precipitation (Fig. 3). Climate averages include a high-temperature range of 73-77°F, a low-temperature range of 50-55°F, and weekly total precipitation of 0.90-1.20".

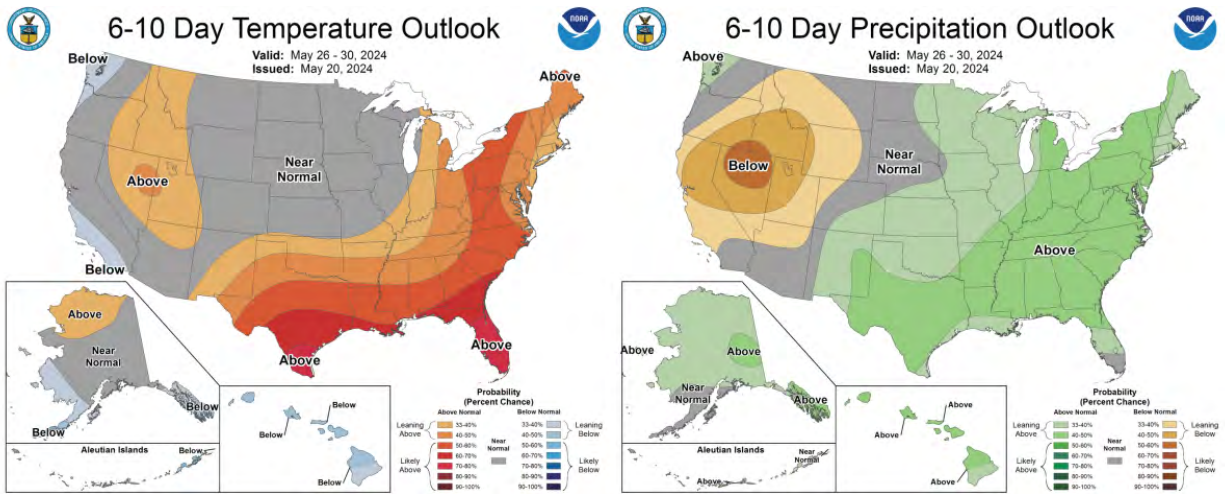


Figure 3. Climate Prediction Center 6-10 Day Outlook valid for May 26 – 30, 2024, for left) temperatures and right) precipitation. Colors represent the probability of below, normal, or above normal conditions.

Evaluating Stockmanship

By John Yost

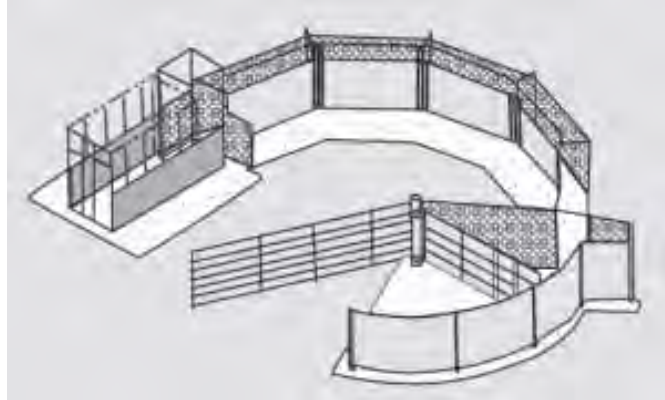
Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2024/05/15/evaluating-stockmanship/>

Efficiently handling cattle requires more than just good facilities.

Over my career I have had the pleasure to work cattle with a lot of different people. To me, there is no job more enjoyable than working a pen of cattle with a team of stockmen that I call

friends. After all, there are many places across the country where processing day is as much a

community event as it is a cattle management task that just needs to be completed. Familiar family, friends, and neighbors come together to help each other out. When the time comes, each member of the group knows what their job is. After all, they may have been filling a role for decades. Each year, the same people show up to help, taking their position on the dance floor, and get to work with the only discussions being friendly razzing about the calf that keeps avoiding the loop. It becomes a thing of beauty and is only interrupted when the enthusiastic, younger generation is given an opportunity to find their place in the well-orchestrated event.

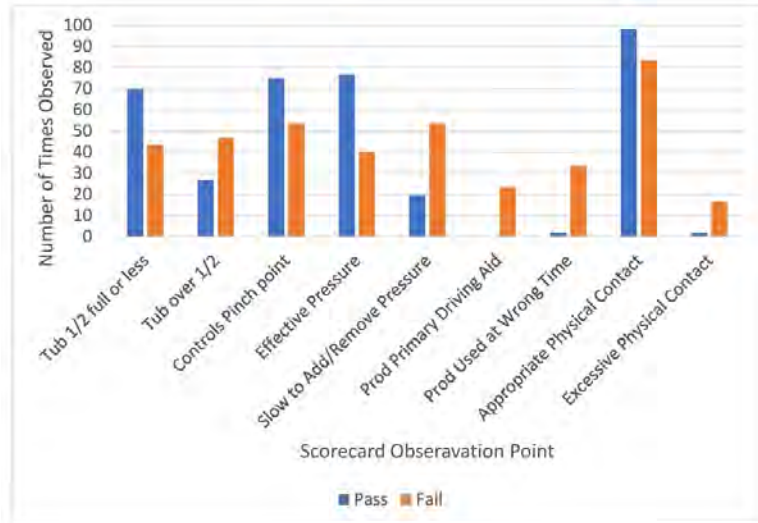


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I have also been on the other side of the coin. There are times when you might think that you are herding cats rather than cattle. At some point, you begin to get frustrated and just stop, wondering “what’s the plan here”. You may be at an unfamiliar facility, trying to learn a new setup, or there are different team members with whom you don’t have a working relationship and haven’t learned how to communicate with. This may be a more frequent situation as more and more operations deal with high employee turnover and a lack of experienced candidates. It is a rarity to have a staff that has worked together for 20 plus years and have that family-style cattle working atmosphere that we grew up with. As a manager, it is up to you to bring the team together and find the way to get the most out of each member.

At the operational level we have a series of great tools to understand the quality of our group stockmanship. The NCBA Beef Quality Assurance Self Assessments have been designed to provide reliable information on how you are performing as a team. As general themes, the assessments seek to discover if appropriate management protocols are in place to ensure the implementation of scientifically based, industry recognized, Best Management Practices. Within these evaluations, highly reliable, animal-based measurements are utilized to determine the quality of

stockmanship. Specifically, the BQA Assessments ask that 100 head of cattle be observed to determine the number of cattle that: are touched with an electric prod, fall upon release from the chute, stumble/trip when released from the chute, vocalize in chute before procedures, jump or run when released from the chute, or miscaught with the headgate and not readjusted while in the chute. Thresholds for each criteria have been established to create a pass/fail evaluation of the operations cattle handling quality and identify if potential deficiencies exist.



If deficiencies are determined, it can be a challenge to know what the cause is. There could be a facility issue. Is the pressure too high on the hydraulic chute, is there a design flaw in the flow of the handling system, is it a single employee causing an issue, or is it how they are functioning as a team?. Facility issues are usually the easiest to figure out. Although we may not want that to be the case, given what you may have paid to get the equipment. Employee issues can be much more complicated, as it may not be obvious what has gone wrong.

As a part of my graduate work, I was interested what employee actions may contribute to handling deficiencies within the operation. To help evaluate the process, I developed the Stockman's Scorecard. The Scorecard assigned a point system to stockman actions that would be detrimental to the cattle handling activity. The criteria evaluated includes subjective measurements around the themes of situational awareness, handling skill, and the use of noise and handling aids. Specifically, the subject begins with 100 points, and deductions are made for: over filling the crowd tub, not working as part of the team, allowing animals to run, not controlling flow through a pinch point, being unaware of the point of balance concept, using excessive vocal/artificial noise, creating metallic noise, excessive physical force, and over using electric prods. Similar to the BQA Assessments, the Scorecard is the evaluator to observe the employee work 100 head of cattle.

Between March of 2018 and April of 2019, we assessed the overall operation at 39 Texas feedyards and 87 separate employees. The BQA Feedyard Self Assessment was used to evaluate each operation and two employees were observed separately to be scored using the Scorecard. When we compared the activities of the stockmen at

facilities that passed the handling portion of the Assessment against those at facilities that failed, there were some identifiable teaching points (Figure 1 above). Employees at feedyards that passed the Assessment were more likely to:

- Fill the crowd tub less than half full
- Control the movement of cattle through pinch points, such as gate openings
- Apply the proper amount of pressure to encourage positive animal movement
- Limit the use of electric prods
- Use the appropriate amount of physical contact with livestock to encourage movement

Whereas employees at those facilities that failed the Assessment were more likely to be seen:

- Overfilling the crowd tub
- Not controlling animal flow through pinch points
- Being slow to add/remove pressure while moving cattle
- Over using electric prods or using them at the wrong time
- Use excessive physical contact to force animal movement

I have a good friend that likes to conclude his stockmanship presentations by telling the participants that “Just like life, cattle stockmanship is a journey”. He impresses on them that as with any journey, the most important step is the first step. As stockmen, we are all on the same journey, we may be at different points on that journey but there is always another step to take in improving our cattle handling skills. There are some great programs offered around the country to make us better livestock handlers. None of them may be perfect, as we are imperfect, but there is something that we can learn from each. For me, there isn't a better journey to be on.

NEW RULE AND LEGISLATION ON ELECTRONIC EAR TAGS FOR CATTLE: A CONTINUING BATTLE

By Peggy Kirk Hall

Source: <https://farmoffice.osu.edu/blog/thu-05162024-1134am/new-rule-and-legislation-electronic-ear-tags-cattle-continuing-battle>

Producers shipping certain types of cattle and bison across state lines might have to use electronic identification (EID or RFID) tags if a final rule developed by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) becomes effective.

Federal funding is available to help producers obtain the EID tags. But efforts are underway to stop the EID rule from taking effect. As we've seen in the past, disagreements continue over animal traceability and EID mandates. Here's an update on the current events surrounding the EID issue.



The APHIS final rule. The final rule announced by APHIS on April 26, 2024 will amend the animal traceability rule enacted in 2013. That rule requires “official identification” on certain cattle and bison moved in interstate shipment for the purpose of animal disease traceability. Under the rule, “visual” ear tags are a form of official identification, in addition to certain pre-approved brands and tattoos and group lots.

The new final rule, originally proposed in 2022, will expand the requirements for ear tags used as official identification. For animals tagged after the rule’s effective date, the ear tags “must be readable both visually and electronically (EID).” The EID rule will continue to apply only to these types of cattle and bison when shipped across state lines:

- Sexually intact cattle and bison 18 months of age or older;
- Dairy cattle;
- Cattle and bison of any age used for rodeo or recreation events, shows, or exhibitions.

Effective date of the rule. The EID requirement is not yet effective. The final rule will take effect 180-days after the rule was published in the Federal Register. USDA published the final rule on May 9, 2024, making the effective date November 5, 2024.

Funding for EID tags. Before APHIS finalized the rule, Congress approved funding to help producers voluntarily obtain EID tags, which cost around \$3 each. The Consolidated Appropriations Act passed in March of 2024 allocated \$15 million for EID. Ohio producers should contact the State Veterinarian’s office at the Ohio Department of Agriculture for information about the availability of free EID tags that comply with the official identification requirements.

EID bill in Congress. A bill introduced on May 8 by Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD) would counteract the APHIS final rule. The one-paragraph bill simply states: “The Secretary of Agriculture shall not implement any rule or regulation requiring the mandatory use of electronic identification eartags on cattle or bison.”

Why the debate over EID? Animal traceability has long been a controversial issue for the livestock industry. APHIS and Sen. Rounds capture the two sides of the controversy well with their recent statements summarizing their efforts. APHIS explains that “the most significant benefits will be enhanced ability to limit disease outbreak impact in the U.S., as well as maintaining foreign markets.” On the other hand, Sen. Rounds states that “USDA’s proposed RFID mandate is federal government overreach, plain and simple. .. If farmers and ranchers want to use electronic tags, they can do so voluntarily.”

What’s next? Given the slow pace of legislative activity in Congress, it’s unlikely that Sen. Rounds’ proposal will affect the November 5 effective date of the EID final rule. Several associations have threatened to bring legal action against the rule, however, so it’s likely we’ll see litigation and other legal challenges. As seems always to be the case with animal traceability, we still don’t yet know what the future holds.

NEW ONLINE DATABASE A "FRST" IN FERTILIZER KNOWLEDGE SHARING

By Sherrie R. Whaley

When growing crops, fertilizer is a critical component. Too often, however, knowing what type of fertilizer to use, how much to apply, where, and when for peak crop production can be a major challenge for growers.

Soil scientists and agronomists at The Ohio State University are part of a national team of over 100 agricultural professionals that has launched a new tool to pave the way for future advancements in crop nutrient management. The team represents nearly 50 universities, USDA, not-for-profit organizations, and one private sector partner.



Photo of long-term corn fertility trials at the CFAES Western Ag Research Station in South Charleston. (Photo courtesy of Greg LaBarge)

Manbir Rakkar, assistant professor of soil fertility and nutrient management in Ohio State’s College of Food, Agricultural, Environmental, and Environmental Sciences, is part of the team and is excited about the new online national soil fertility

database and decision support tool, called the Fertilizer Recommendation Support Tool (FRST).

“FRST provides unbiased, science-based interpretation of soil test phosphorus and potassium values for crop fertilization from across the U.S. It indicates where there is no expected yield increase from fertilizer application,” said Rakkar. “Quickly changing climate conditions only makes efficient fertilizer management more complicated. This new tool can potentially save farmers and land managers millions of dollars annually while reducing excess nutrient losses to the environment.”

Leonardo Deiss, a visiting assistant professor in Ohio State’s School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR) and a member of the project team who developed the tool, said “We are extremely excited about the launch of this digital decision support tool. FRST was developed in response to the pressing need to harmonize soil testing across state boundaries. It represents an improvement in our ability to evaluate soil test correlation.”

In addition to Rakkar and Deiss, other team members from Ohio State include Gregory LaBarge, OSU Extension field specialist, agronomic systems, and Jim Ippolito, the Rattan Lal Endowed Professor of Soil Health and Soil Fertility. Former Ohio State soil fertility specialist, Steve Culman, made significant contributions to the FRST with Ohio-based soil data.

The new web-based tool includes historical and current research data, including 2,500 phosphorus and potassium trials for 21 major agricultural crops, with the majority being corn and soybean. It includes published and unpublished trial data from 40 states and Puerto Rico. In the next phase, the FRST will provide research-based phosphorus or potassium rate response information to assist farmers in selecting the minimum fertilizer rate expected to produce maximal crop yield.

Key features of FRST include:

- **Data-Driven:** FRST utilizes a dynamic database of soil test correlation data that is constantly updated to improve testing confidence.
- **Crop Specific:** The database currently covers 21 major commodity crops.
- **Geographically Diverse:** Includes published and unpublished trial data from 40 states and Puerto Rico.
- **Unbiased:** Blended data removes political and institutional bias in soil test interpretation.
- **Scientifically Sound:** Data represents a minimum dataset that provides reliable outcomes.

For more information about FRST and how it can transform nutrient management on your farm or in your organization, visit soiltestfrst.org and click on “Tool.”

Funding for the FRST project has been provided by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, including the Conservation Innovation Grants; the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service; the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture; and corporate partner OCP North America.

Study reveals consumers value animal welfare more than environmental sustainability when buying meat and dairy products

Source: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/05/240516122613.htm>

The treatment of animals rates higher than green issues when consumers choose meat and dairy products.

That's according to a new study, which suggests that while consumers consider sustainability important, other factors such as taste, quality, and animal welfare take precedence in their purchasing decisions.

On product labels, consumers valued information regarding animal welfare, food safety, and health and nutrition. The results can help producers to market particularly sustainably produced food products in a more targeted way and make them more attractive to consumers.

The study was conducted across five European countries -- Czechia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK to identify the attributes that are most important to consumers buying meat or dairy products.

Taking part in an online survey, 3,192 participants were asked to rate the importance of 18 different factors when shopping for meat and dairy products on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important):

- Attributes -- freshness, quality/taste, healthy eating, nutrition, price, processing, special offers, convenience of use/preparation, and familiarity of brand.
- Animal welfare attributes -- animal welfare, outdoor-reared/free range, and pasture-fed.
- Attributes related to environmental sustainability -- locally produced, sustainable packaging, food miles, carbon footprint, and organic.
- Social sustainability -- Fair trade or producer/farmer fairly paid.

Across all surveyed countries, consumers consistently prioritised freshness, quality/taste, and animal welfare as the most important attributes. In contrast, environmental factors such as food miles, carbon footprint, and organic production were deemed less important in influencing purchasing decisions. However, sustainability labels were perceived as helpful among consumers.

Study co-author Dr Andy Jin, Senior Lecturer in Risk Management in the Faculty of Business and Law at the University of Portsmouth, said: "Our study highlights the complex interplay of factors that influence consumer behaviour when buying meat and dairy products. Consumers indicated that information related to animal welfare, food safety, and health and nutrition was considered more important than environmental sustainability when making food choices.

"The findings demonstrate the importance of labelling strategies that encompass multiple aspects of product attributes, beyond environmental considerations alone."

The implications of the research extend further than consumers to policymakers, producers, and retailers in the food industry who are striving to meet evolving consumer demands for more sustainable products.

Dr Jin added: "Labels on their own are not enough to change behaviour, especially for consumers who have low or no behavioural intention to buy sustainable meat or dairy products.

"These results should be translated into additional policy measures, such as nudges or behavioural interventions, helping individuals translate their attitudes into behaviour and facilitating the choice of sustainably produced products."

The research, published in the journal *Food Quality and Preference*, was conducted by the universities of Portsmouth and Newcastle in the UK, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, University of Córdoba in Spain, Mendel University in Czech Republic and Agroscope from Switzerland.

Are Cover Crops a Good Alternative Feed Source for Dairy Cattle?

Source: <https://access-onlinelibrary-wiley-com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/doi/epdf/10.1002/crso.20366>

The short answer: Yes, cover crops can be a great alternative feed source for dairy cows. Thinking of cover crops as another annual forage can help growers better manage them on their operation.

Break it down: Cover crops can be used for various purposes on farms, including forage. Choosing the correct cover crop is vital when you are using it as a feed supplement. Research on using cover crops for forages for livestock such as cattle and sheep is abundant.

Kim Cassida, Michigan State University (MSU) extension Forage and cover crop Specialist, recommends that growers who want to use cover crops as feed recondition their minds to consider the plants as annual forage and not as cover crops.

Some tips: Select appropriate varieties, fertilize, and manage as a forage. Consider nutrition: Knowledge of livestock nutritional needs at all life stages should be considered before adding cover crops as a feed source.

It is important to note that plant maturity and varieties within a species have different nutrient content.

When choosing a cover crop for its feed value, make sure that it is a high quality forage and will supply the nutrients that your livestock, especially dairy cattle, will need.

Utilizing cover crops for dairy cattle feed and forage is becoming more appealing. Cover crops like rye, triticale, wheat, and winter pea increasingly appear in research as alternative cattle feed.

Table 1. Common cover crops that can be used as forage sources.

Grass	Legume	Brassica/forbs
Annual ryegrass	Crimson clover	Radish
Oats	Red clover	Rape
Rye (cereal)	White clover	Turnip
Triticale	Winter pea	
Forage sorghum		
Sorghum-sudan (sudex)		
Sudangrass		

Take finances into account: Martin Carrasquillo Mangual, MSU Extension Dairy Educator, suggests that dairy farms including cover crops as an alternate forage may reduce the cost of purchased feed.

Growing cover crops can be profitable: The North Central Region SARE produced an excellent guide to profitably growing cover crops.

Using cover crops on-farm not only provides a valuable feed source, but well-managed cover crops also pose a positive environmental impact and preserve soil. A whole-farm approach should be considered when exploring the use of cover crops.

When farmers harvest cover crops as feed, they tend to manage the cover crops more like double crops. For example, cover crop seeds are often planted at higher density using a drill (not broadcast), and farmers will often apply manure or fertilizer to the crop to ensure a substantial yield.

Challenges: Successfully growing cover crops can seem daunting. Here are a few tips for improving your experience with cover crops.

Start small: Incorporate the use of cover crops into your operation over time. Gain experience by starting with a single project, and expand the use of cover crops gradually.

Research multi-species mixes: One of the challenges of adding cover crops into a livestock farm is that there is much more research and data on individual cover crop species compared with multi-species mixes.

Multi-species mixes are recommended when planting cover crops as a forage.

Understand nutrition: Multi-species mixes can change the nutritional components of the forage. When consulting with your farms' nutritionists, it is vital they understand the needs of the livestock for any operation.

Pesticide use: Consider the pesticides used in the cropping rotation, and follow the label for any rotational restrictions.

Dig deeper: There are many resources available for those interested in adding cover crops into their rotation or for those who want to change what cover crops they grow. Cover crop councils have been established in every region in the United States. State- and crop-specific information and decision tools have been developed. For example, The Midwest Cover Crop Council (MCCC) has developed a cover crop decision tool that gives users state-specific information on growing specific cover crops.

In short, growing cover crops as an alternative food source is a viable option for dairy farmers. Before getting started, we recommend carefully considering which species you can grow in your location, thinking of cover crops as another type of annual forage, and taking the nutrition of cover crop forage into account.

CFAES

Thursday

JUNE

13

at 6:00 PM

Bloomfield Livestock Auction
2211 Kinsman RD NW
North Bloomfield, OH 44450

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE (BQA)

This program offer the opportunity to earn your certification or renew you expiring one. The certification cycle is 3 years.

Haley Shoemaker and Noelle Barnes will cover a multitude of topics, including carcass quality, injection protocol, and animal handling, that will provide your BQA certification and ultimately impact your success at marketing.



**BLOOMFIELD
LIVESTOCK
AUCTION LLC.**

Call 330-638-6783 to RSVP

**Please arrive at least 10 minutes
prior to 6:00 PM**

This free program is made possible by a generous donation from the Hertzner Family Trust.



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EXTENSION