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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 David Dugan
 OSU Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources
 Adams/Brown/Highland Counties
 Ohio Valley Extension Education Research Area

Changes on the Horizon

I know news sometimes travels fast. Sometimes I wonder if news travels at all. This past week was the Brown County Fair and it was a bittersweet week. It was a great week for the fair, all be it a little hotter than normal the first couple of days.

I believe it was Wednesday, I was talking to a guy that I see at the fair every year. We talk every year, but we had not seen each other on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday. He said, “where have you been?” I explained to him that I had been there each day, for part of the day, but I had been in Adams County part of Monday and Highland County part of Tuesday. He asked, what were you doing there? I told him specifically what I had done with radio, collecting soybeans to send to the lab, and so on. He then said, why were you in those counties? So, I guess news does not travel fast. He did not realize that I have worked in Adams or Highland Counties for nearly seven years now. Yes, this began in January of 2011.

A couple of months ago I was made aware of a plan to move forward with the possibility to of hiring 2 new people to actually have an Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator in each of the 3 counties in the near future. The new positions would have a joint role in each county. In addition to the ANR responsibilities the new position would include Community Development.

In the past few weeks this idea has grown legs. In fact, in the past few weeks OSU personnel and the County Commissioners from each county met to discuss the possibilities of this coming into play.

To explain this situation, this all happened in 2011 because of funding issues that were limiting future programming in the 3 counties. The agreement was to share a Family Consumer Science Educator and an Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator between Adams, Brown and Highland Counties. This permitted the 3 counties to continue to have services from OSU Extension in each of these lines of programming and education, though limited, it did keep resources available at a reduced cost to each of the 3 county’s budgets.

The Family Consumer Sciences position had a change in personnel, I believe, in the second year of the agreement. The newly hired educator changed positions in the third year, and due to continued budget issues among the county budgets, the position was not filled from that point on.

The ANR position has stayed the same from 2011 until now. In the coming months (no specific timeline to my knowledge) there will be two new people working in the 3 counties with the added Community Development responsibility. With that said I will eventually be working in one county.

The past 7 years have been a whirlwind with lots of highs and lots of crazy schedules. I have had the opportunity to work with so many more people, make many more friends and continue to learn



more and more about agriculture in an even bigger area. There are so many people involved in Agriculture in these 3 counties. So many doing things that are common, but so many that are doing things that are innovative, some that are doing a niche, some that are on the cutting edge and I have learned from so many of these people. Of course there are also 3 county fairs. All 3 have so much in common, but are so much different. All 3 could probably learn something from each other, lol.

I grew up in Adams and Brown Counties. The family farm is a good 9 iron from the county line. Back in my younger days I may have been able to throw a baseball across the county line. Speaking of my younger days, in the 1970s and 1980s you could apparently belong to 4-H clubs in more than one county, or at least I did. I was in the Adams Co. Beef Club and the Huntington Hotshots in Brown Co. I showed beef cattle in Adams and Dairy and Pigs in Brown. I taught Agriculture in West Union for 10 years before joining OSU Extension in 1998 as the Brown County Ag Agent. Yes, we were still agents, back then. So, I had a pretty good knowledge of at least a good portion of the people and farmers in both Adams and Brown. Highland was different. Highland was not completely foreign as I had worked with programming in Highland over the years as John Grimes and I did joint programming in some areas.

As far as Highland, so many people welcomed me with open arms and made me feel a part of Highland County. The distance has made it quite a strain from time to time when it comes to making it to meetings around a crazy schedule. The distance (Southern Ohio measurement of distance in time) is over an hour and how much over an hour depends on how many school buses I get to see. The distance just doesn't make sense for me to continue to drive to Hillsboro if I am working just one county in the future, but I will be there from time to time.

The more difficult decision falls between Adams and Brown. So many ties to both. Between teaching and Extension, I have a comparable amount of time in both. There is no right or wrong decision, but there is no easy decision here either. I don't think I can go wrong as I win either way and if I mess up and make the wrong choice, I am eligible to retire soon and may just end up looking out of the kitchen window.

I have made the decision to stay as close as possible. For those of you who know me you know I am rarely early, so the closer the better. So I will be working in Adams County once this plan is all complete.

As far as Brown County, Brown County is a second home. I can't thank the people I have worked with in Brown County enough. From the farmers, to OSU Extension staff, to fair board members, to Master Gardeners, to other offices and agencies and the list goes on and on and on. I will not be far away and I will be a regular visitor to the Little State Fair among other things.

Dates to Remember

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| Oct. 14 | Tire Amnesty Day in Adams Co. |
| Oct. 16 | Pesticide Testing at Old Y at noon. Third Monday this month due to Columbus Day falling on the second Monday. |