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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New and Small Farm College

Way back in 2005 a group of OSU Extension Agricultural Agents began a program that has become an annual event in Southern Ohio. The program has moved from one area to another, with the program normally being offered in more than one location each year. The first year the program was offered in Jackson and Fincastle, at the old Southern State Community College Campus. The program was offered again in Mt. Orab a few years later. It has also been offered in Rio Grande, Piketon, Chillicothe, Dayton, Xenia, Chillicothe, Owensville, Waynesville, Lebanon, Washington Court House, Wilmington, and more.

There have been several changes over the past decade as we are no longer called Ag Agents, but now Ag Educators. Many of the people involved in the development of the program have retired or made career moves, but the much of the core group is still involved.

Southern State Community College is no longer at the Fincastle location, but now Mt. Orab. This year we will offer the New and Small Farm College at the new campus located at 351 Brooks-Malott Road; Mt. Orab, OH 45154 on Wednesdays starting on January 20, 2016. The following will explain the program in more detail.

Are you a small farm landowner wondering what to do with your acreage? Are you interested in exploring options for land uses but not sure where to turn or how to begin? Have you considered adding an agricultural or horticultural enterprise but you just aren't sure what is required, from an equipment, labor, and/or management perspective? Are you looking for someplace to get basic farm information? If you or someone you know answered yes to any of these questions, then the OSU Extension Small Farm College program may be just what you are looking for.

OSU Extension is offering a program targeted at the new and small farmer. The Ohio New and Small Farm College is an 8 week program that introduces new and even seasoned farmers to a wide variety of topics. The program will teach participants how to set goals, plan, budget, and where to find resources available for them if they chose to start a small farming operation. The courses will layout how to manage financial and farm records. Extension Educators will illustrate many different enterprises that can be profitable on land as small as one acre. The educators will show the benefits and pitfalls of each enterprise so that the participant will be able to pick and choose what may work best for them and what suits their interest. To round out the experience, a bus tour will be held around area farms so that participants can see firsthand how small farm life works, and also make contacts of practicing farmers in the area.

The Small Farm College was originally conceived as a way to help southern Ohio's tobacco farmers make the transition away from that crop as government subsidies were phased out. OSU



Extension educators soon realized such programming also could benefit rural landowners who own small acreage in the countryside. Since 2005, past regional New and Small Farm Colleges have helped 693 individuals representing 522 farms from 52 Ohio counties improve the economic development of their small family-owned farms. This program can help small farm landowners and farmers diversify their opportunities into successful new enterprises and new markets. And, it can improve agricultural literacy among small farm landowners not actively involved in agricultural production.

Many program participants don't expect to make a living off the land, but do want to recoup something, said organizer Tony Nye of OSU Extension in Clinton County. First time farmers want their interaction with their land to be productive.

"They like living in the country, getting their hands dirty," Nye said. "That has been their motivation for buying land."

The registration material will be available in the OSU Extension Offices soon, or you can access it on the web. For Adams County go to <http://adams.osu.edu>, for Brown County go to <http://brown.osu.edu> and for Highland go to <http://highland.osu.edu>

As always, please call the office ahead if you plan to stop by. With programming needs out of the office and a shorter staff than in years past, unfortunately the office is occasionally not open during normal business hours. Phone numbers for Adams Co. is 544-2339; for Brown Co. 378-6716 and Highland Co. 393-1918.

EPA Proposes Changes for Pesticide Applicators

In case you missed it in an earlier column, here are the links explaining the proposed changes. If you would like to be able to read the proposals without typing in the links, go to <http://corn.osu.edu> and the links should be hot in the Oct.27 issue which is 2015-36. The public may comment on the EPA's proposal was to end on November 23, but it has been extended.