



## Welcome to your first edition of Extension Connection!

We're grateful to Ohio Farm Bureau for this opportunity to connect with you via *Buckeye Farm News* four times each year, with information you can apply to your farms, families, and lives.

In this issue, learn more about farm policy options under consideration in our nation's capital, potential regulations regarding children and farm labor, and peer into 2012 with our agricultural Extension economists as they discuss what to expect in the new year.

You don't have to wait until the next *Extension Connection* to tap into Ohio State University Extension resources. Check out our agronomic crops team's newsletter at <http://corn.osu.edu/>, our farm management newsletter at <http://ohioagmanager.osu.edu/>, and our website <http://extension.osu.edu>.

Have suggestions for *Extension Connection*? E-mail us at [steel.7@osu.edu](mailto:steel.7@osu.edu).

Sincerely,

Keith Smith  
Associate Vice President,  
Agricultural Administration  
and Director, Ohio State  
University Extension



## Farm Bill Proposals Differ on Best Approach to Safety Net

With the reauthorization of the Farm Bill approaching in 2012, legislators and agricultural policy organizations had advanced no fewer than 10 distinct, different proposals as of October 6, 2011, for the next version of federal farm policy.

As a group, the proposals are a significant and important evolutionary change in the discussion of a risk management farm safety net, a step that began with the introduction of the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program in the 2007 Farm Bill.

I evaluated 10 Farm Bill proposals for similarities and differences using information from the Congressional Research Service and documents publicly released by the proposal's author. Inside this issue, the proposals are compared side by side, though specifics are likely to change as the debate continues.

All but one of the proposals had a shallow loss component, addressed multiple-year risk, were oriented to revenue, discussed the need for coordination of the program with crop insurance, had an individual crop orientation, and required a loss for a farm to receive payments. Eight of the proposals had no fixed price or revenue benchmark; in other



words, the benchmark changed with market conditions.

Where the 10 proposals differ most significantly is the "siting" of the revenue program, namely should it be based at the farm level,

at the county, at the crop reporting district, or at the state level.

Another disagreement, though not as large as with the geographical site of the program, is the delivery of the revenue program. Three propose to deliver the program through crop insurance, while six would use another approach.

The details of these proposals will likely change; you can read more inside this issue of *Extension Connection*, online at [extension.osu.edu](http://extension.osu.edu), and by subscribing to the Ag Answers newsletter.

■ CARL ZULAUF, Agricultural Economist

## The Shale Gas Shakedown

Shale gas development in Ohio could mean thousands of Ohio jobs, windfalls for landowners leasing away their mineral rights, and economic development for struggling communities.

But landowners also need to fully understand the potential financial, legal, and environmental ramifications of the highly complex leases, which could last for generations. With signing bonuses varying wildly from \$5 to \$5,000 per acre across Ohio, that means it's essential to consult a lawyer familiar with shale oil and gas leases before signing anything, said Peggy Kirk Hall, director of OSU Extension's Agricultural and Resource Law Program.

"My advice is that the first contract you see is probably the worst contract you can sign," Hall said. "The contract that's first presented to you isn't going to reflect your best interests. You want to extend the conditions of the lease to include what's important to you."

Mike Hogan, Extension educator in Harrison and Jefferson counties, said he tells landowners that a lease should cover both economic and environmental considerations.

"You want to make sure groundwater and future land use is protected, for you and your heirs. Even if you're a young person, the lease you sign will affect your kids for a long time to come," Hogan said. "And bad leases are worse than bad marriages — it's a lot harder to get out of a lease than a marriage. Keep that in mind."

Some of the issues landowners should consider building into leases include:

- Protecting groundwater resources. "I saw one contract in which the landowner put in a clause that if anything happened to their water supply, the company would replace the water for 20 years," Hogan said.

"Twenty years? I think it should be 'in perpetuity.'"

Landowners considering a lease should get their water supply tested by a third party and pay for the testing themselves to act as a baseline.

- Air quality, noise, additional background radioactivity could also be considerations, as well as "viewshed" issues — preserving the view from the home or the road.
- The right for a company to construct a pipeline, to use surface or groundwater in the drilling process, to store water, gas, or oil on the property or to construct injection (disposal) wells should all be covered under separate agreements.
- Landowners might want to consider including a non-development clause in their lease, which would prevent companies from constructing a drill pad on their land. With horizontal drilling technologies now being used, companies can mine the gas and oil resources beneath the surface up to a mile from the drilling site.
- Specify that only oil and gas and their constituents are included in the contract. "Who knows what else might be valuable 50 years from now?" Hogan said.
- Include specifics about the location of any roads or structures the company can build on your land.
- Make sure the lease term is clear and what type of activity could extend the lease.
- Include a negotiations or arbitration clause in case questions come up in the future. Also, it's helpful to have a "commencement of operations" clause that requires a company to begin drilling within a certain time period after receiving a drilling permit.
- Consider joining — or forming — a landowners' group to band together to be in a better negotiat-

ing position with companies. That's just what Licking County landowner Fred Schwarz is doing. "I think that's the way to go," he said. "We can pool our resources and our influence to get the best deal."

These are just a handful of issues landowners need to consider before leasing their land's mineral rights, Hall said, and none even touch the terms for bonus and royalty payments — which is what most landowners think of first.

"I can't emphasize enough — before signing anything, get advice from an attorney experienced in mineral rights," she said.

More information on the legal issues around Ohio's shale oil and gas production is available at <http://aede.osu.edu/programs-and-research/agricultural-and-resource-law-program/law-library/oil-and-gas-law>. In addition, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management has extensive information on shale development at <http://www.ohiodnr.com/mineral/shale/tabid/23415/Default.aspx>.

■ MARTHA FILIPIC

Licking County landowner Fred Schwarz





Jeff Rasaweher, Mercer County, farms nearly 3,000 acres less than 10 miles from Grand Lake St. Marys.

## ECO Farming: A new approach for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

David Brandt has reduced his fertilizer inputs by 50 to 70 percent, herbicide costs by 50 percent, and dropped fuel consumption. “All while adding soil organic matter which improved my soil health and increased my crops’ yields over the past 15 years,” said the president of the Ohio No-Till Council.

But his farming approach goes well beyond traditional no-till to a system called ECO Farming.

“ECO Farming stands for Eternal no-till, Continuous living cover, and Other best management practices,” said Jim Hoorman, assistant professor with OSU Extension.

“This system closely mimics natural cycles in virgin soils by feeding the microbes,” said Hoorman. “You have 1,000 to 2,000 times more microbes associated with live roots.”

Plants supply 25 to 40 percent of their carbohydrate reserves to feeding the microbes, which in turn recycle nitrogen, phosphorus, and water back to the plant roots. This natural process improves soil structure and increases water infiltration and water storage.

“Continuous living cover means that farmers try to keep a living crop on the soil 100 percent of the time,” said Ray Archuleta, with the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s East National Technology Service Center. Examples include grain crops followed by cover crops, pasture or hay systems, or perennial plants. “The goal is to protect the soil from soil erosion, increase water infiltration, and decrease nutrient runoff.”

Other best management practices (BMPs) include the concept of controlled traffic, water table management where applicable, manure management, and integrated pest management (IPM).

“For 100 to 200 years, farmers have been tilling the soil and basically mining it of nutrients, destroying soil structure and losing 60 to 80 percent of soil organic matter,” said Archuleta. “Now we can use advanced knowledge of soils, soil health, and soil ecology to work with Mother Nature rather than against her.”

■ ANDY VANCE



## Farm Bill Proposals: Observations and Concerns

■ CARL ZULAUF, Agricultural Economist

Assessing the 10 major Farm Bill proposals, some major themes will shape the next version of the farm safety net. The tables below compare each of the 10 proposals side by side.

Key similarities and differences among the proposals:

- 90% require farms to have a loss to receive assistance, meaning farms won’t receive payments without a financial loss.
- 90% address multiple-year revenue declines, a concern not addressed by crop insurance because its guarantee is reset each year based on expected harvest price.
- 90% address shallow revenue losses, which is a loss that generally is less than a crop insurance deductible.
- 80% have no fixed price or revenue benchmark.

Key concerns based on the analysis of each proposal:

- Economic justification for a farm safety net is systemic risk across many farms, not losses to individual farms.
- Pressure will be intense for a farm-specific program to deliver the most risk assistance to individual farms, which could lead to inefficient use of resources by:
  - encouraging production in high-risk areas,
  - encouraging production in environmentally sensitive areas,
  - encouraging more risky production practices, thus increasing cost of the program to the public.

**Table 1a. Comparison of Selected Farm Safety Net Program Proposals, as of October 6, 2011**

KEY: AGI = aggregate gross income payment limit; APH = crop insurance average production history yield; CAT = catastrophic crop insurance product; CRD = crop reporting district; OMA = Olympic moving average (removes high and low value); NAP = noninsured crop disaster assistance program.

Characteristic	ADAP (Corn Growers)	ARRM (Brown/Thune/Durbin/Lugar)	RMAF <sup>A</sup> (American Soybean)	STAX (for cotton only) (National Cotton Council)	CRGP (Conrad)
Programs Eliminated	direct payments, counter-cyclical, ACRE, SURE	direct payments, counter-cyclical, ACRE, SURE for ARRM eligible crops	direct payments, counter-cyclical, ACRE, SURE	direct payments, counter-cyclical, ACRE	counter-cyclical, ACRE, SURE for CRGP eligible crops, cuts direct payments 50%
Program Level	CRD	CRD	farm	county	whole crop farm
Revenue Program	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Yield Type for Benchmark	CRD yield; farm yield for farm loss condition	CRD yield; farm yield for farm loss condition	MAX [APH or 5-year OMA APH or 80% county yield]	expected county yield	MAX [APH or 5-year OMA APH]
Price Type for Benchmark	crop insurance harvest price	insurance harvest price (if not available, average of first 5 months of crop year)	5-year OMA of U.S. crop year cash price	MAX [insurance plant price or fixed reference price]	MAX [2010 target price or 5-year OMA crop year price]
Price Type for Realized Revenue	crop insurance harvest price	same price type used for benchmark	First 4 months of U.S. crop year cash price	insurance harvest price	MAX [first 4 months of U.S. crop year cash price or loan rate]
Range of Loss Covered	5% to 15%	10% to 25%	dryland: 10% to 25%; irrigated: 5% to 20%	producer elects; non-specified MAX loss exist	Greater than 10% but MAX per acre payment exists
Payment Factor	100%	85%	85%	100%	60%
Note on Program	benchmark = 5-year OMA of revenue computed for year (no cup & cap)	benchmark = 5-year OMA of revenue computed for year (10% cup & cap); elected annually	Payment factor could be reduced to make budget; payment calculation includes net insurance payouts	insurance not required for STAX; farmer co-pay possible	requires CAT/NAP; payment capped at base acres; payment adjusted for net insurance payouts and quality loss; disaster programs for other farm sectors
Program Payment Limit	does not discuss	\$65,000; 2008 Farm Bill AGI	maybe; 2008 Farm Bill AGI	not discussed	not discussed
Marketing Loan	continue	continue	continue	loan rate tied to 2-year average price but within \$0.47–\$0.52	not discussed

Note: <sup>A</sup>RMAF proposes that (1) the percent budget cut be the same for conservation and farm programs; (2) no cut be made in crop insurance; and (3) the acre cap for the Conservation Reserve Program be reduced.

**Table 1b. Comparison of Selected Farm Safety Net Program Proposals, as of October 6, 2011**

Subsequent to October 6, American Farm Bureau Federation proposed a “Systemic Risk Reduction Program” (SRRP). SRRP provides coverage at 70% to 80% of county benchmark revenue. Benchmark revenue is a 3 to 5 year moving average of county revenue calculated using U.S. average cash price for a crop’s harvest month and average county yield.

FFSN (crop insurance company)	CROP (Neugebauer)	AFBF (American Farm Bureau)	Administration (Obama)	FOR (National Farmers Union)
<b>Programs Eliminated:</b> direct payments, marketing loan benefits, counter-cyclical, SURE; maybe ACRE	<b>Programs Eliminated:</b> None	<b>Programs Eliminated:</b> SURE	<b>Programs Eliminated:</b> direct payments	<b>Programs Eliminated:</b> direct payments, marketing loan benefits, counter-cyclical, SURE, ACRE
<b>Program Description</b> ➤ Program level is the farm ➤ Makes crop insurance the farm safety net ➤ To protect against multiple-year losses, minimum price is added to insurance equal to 80% of 5-year average of insurance plant price ➤ In computing APH, excludes some low-yield years if certain conditions are met ➤ To address shallow loss, adds 5 percentage points to coverage (e.g., 75% becomes 80%) ➤ Limits farm-paid premiums to 15% of total dollars of enterprise <sup>A</sup> coverage	<b>Program Description</b> ➤ Allows producers to supplement individual insurance coverage with additional coverage via a county insurance product to cover shallow losses ➤ Changes APH calculation from a 10-year average to a 7-year OMA	<b>Program Description</b> ➤ Proposes that any budget cuts be distributed: 30% each from farm, conservation, and nutrition programs; 10% from crop insurance ➤ Farm program cut distributed: 94% from direct payments, 5% from ACRE, 1% from dairy ➤ Reducing 85% payment factor is only specific method mentioned to cut direct payments and ACRE ➤ Conservation cut distributed: 67% from land retirement programs, 33% from working land programs ➤ Conservation Reserve Program cap reduced ➤ Fewer number of conservation programs	<b>Program Description</b> ➤ Reduces spending over 10 years on farm safety net programs by \$30 billion, on conservation programs by \$2 billion, and on crop insurance by \$8 billion	<b>Program Description</b> ➤ Allows producers to put their crop into the crop’s farmer-owned reserve (FOR) when market price is below the crop’s loan rate ➤ Producers paid a \$0.40/unit/year FOR storage fee ➤ Loan rates are pegged to the corn loan rate and are adjusted for changes in the chemical input price index ➤ When FOR reaches its cap, a voluntary paid land set-aside is triggered; producers can bid acres into the set-aside program based on their whole-farm acres (not crop-by-crop acres)

Notes: <sup>A</sup>All acres of a crop in a county.

# Crop Input Outlook 2012

■ BARRY WARD

Leader, Production Business Management  
OSU Extension, Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics

Crop profitability prospects for 2012 are positive for the three major row crops in Ohio. Input costs have increased from last year, but high futures prices for 2012 crops allow producers to plan for positive margins for next year. OSU Extension Enterprise Budget projections show positive returns for corn, soybeans, and wheat in 2012. These budgets are available online at: <http://aede.osu.edu/programs/farmanagement>.

OSU Extension Budgets show projected variable (cash) costs for corn, soybean, and wheat production to all be 10% higher in 2012 versus 2011.

Higher commodity prices and higher costs lead us to a riskier production year as the cash investment in an acre of corn will top \$400 (excluding land, machinery, and labor costs) and in some production scenarios be closer to \$450 per acre. The cash investment in an acre of soybeans or wheat will be in the \$200–\$250 range.

## Fuel

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates the average price for West Texas Intermediate Crude Oil at \$88.00 per barrel for 2012, which is a 4.7% decrease from 2011. This is due to slightly lower oil consumption growth projections for 2012. The EIA projects natural gas prices to increase 4.3% in 2012. Expected tightness in the market is the reasoning, but this projection is harder to reconcile with the increased production capabilities in the United States.

## Fertilizer

Fertilizer continues to be the most volatile of the crop input costs and cost management of this important input may be the difference in being a low-cost or high-cost producer in 2012. The different fertilizer products have seen significant price increases over last year and likely will continue to increase due to higher crop commodity prices and positive profitability prospects for 2012. Healthier farm balance sheets and continued positive crop profit prospects have signaled the global marketplace to increase acreage (if possible) and maintain or increase fertilizer rates, and have led to strong global demand driven markets. On the flipside, the EU and U.S. sovereign debt issues and potential economic slowdowns are factors, if unresolved, that may lead to a slowdown in fertilizer demand and flat to lower prices.

## Nitrogen (N)

The retail price of N in October in Ohio was \$900–950/ton for anhydrous ammonia (24% increase over a year ago), \$400–425/ton for UAN (28%) (32% increase over a year ago), and \$595–665/ton for urea (40% increase over a year ago). Spring prepay NH<sub>3</sub> is running \$20–\$25/ton more than spot-delivered tons in many markets.

Nitrogen fertilizer manufacturers are presently operating at profitable levels due to higher N prices and relatively low natural gas prices, but this fact hasn't led to supply outstripping demand as the entire supply chain has been more cautious in getting caught in a repeat of the 2008 upside-down fertilizer market.

With the high correlation of nitrogen price to corn price, future movements in nitrogen prices will more than likely take their cues from movements in price of corn.

## Phosphorous (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>)

Di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) in October in Ohio was \$715–755/ton (18% increase over a year ago) while mono-ammonium phosphate (MAP) was \$715–775/ton (18% increase over a year ago).

Phosphate rock, sulfur, and anhydrous ammonia, all primary ingredients used in the manufacture of P fertilizers, are presently high priced and have contributed to higher P fertilizer prices.

These higher ingredient prices along with strong world demand continue to pressure phosphorous fertilizer prices. These pressures signal continued higher prices for the 2012 crop production year.

## Potassium (K<sub>2</sub>O)

The retail price of potash in December in Ohio was \$625–690/ton (38% increase from a year ago).

The potash industry essentially operates as a duopoly (two firms, in this case, two consortiums, with dominant control of the market) with Canpotex (Canadian Potash Exporters) and Bellarussian Potash Co. controlling much of the global potash supply.

Potash prices will likely trend higher into 2012 as high crop prices will translate into continued strong demand, while the two major potash consortiums will meter out supply to keep prices stable.

## Seed and Crop Protection Chemicals

Company price data and industry sources indicate seed prices for 2012 to be 5–10% higher. Crop protection chemical prices will see similar increases except glyphosate, which should continue to see relatively flat prices due to excess global production capacity.

Outlook information presented here was developed with data from Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics research, the Energy Information Administration, USDA, other land grant research, futures markets, and retail sector surveys. While gauged to the best of this author's capabilities, forward-looking statements contained in this document may prove to be incorrect due to changes in supply and demand and other political and economic related events.

# Non-GMO Soybeans Add \$32 Million Extra to Ohio's Economy

The soybean breeding program at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) fills a small but growing and valuable niche that industry tends to ignore — developing new non-GMO soybean varieties. Soybeans grown from non-GMO varieties are in demand, sell at a premium price, and can boost a farm's profitability.

Thanks in big part to OARDC's program, which continually improves soybean varieties and makes the seed available to farmers, Ohio grows more non-GMO soybeans than any other state. About 15 percent of Ohio's 4.5 million acres of soybeans are non-GMO types — ones that weren't genetically engineered, but came from traditional breeding.

Based on an average yield of 48 bushels an acre, a price of about \$12 a bushel, and a non-GMO premium of \$1 per bushel (which in fact can go up to some \$2-plus), non-GMO soybeans bring an extra \$32 million every year to Ohio farmers' wallets and the state's economy.

- ▶ On a farm of 1,000 acres, non-GMO soybeans can mean \$48,000 more every year in the farmer's pocket.
- ▶ OARDC's latest new variety, a non-GMO type called Summit, which is specially suited to northern Ohio, yields 2.4 bushels more per acre than a similar predecessor. To a farmer, for example, in Lucas County raising soybeans on 1,000 acres, that's worth \$31,200 more every year.
- ▶ Why the price premiums? Because of strong demand for non-GMO soybeans in organic foods and in Europe and Asia.

*"A soybean breeding program such as the one led by Leah McHale at OARDC can provide short- and long-term benefits to Ohio soybean farmers. Through the development of new varieties and incorporating pest and disease resistance in soybeans, Dr. McHale is directly impacting the future profitability of Ohio soybean farmers."*

—Tom Fontana, Director, New Use Development, Ohio Soybean Council

More information: <http://hcs.osu.edu/mchalelab/home>

■ KURT KNEBUSCH



Leah McHale, Assistant Professor, Horticulture and Crop Science

Extension Connection is produced by Ohio State University Extension.

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Extension Connection is produced four times a year by Ohio State University Extension. You're the audience — people interested in agriculture and its issues. This publication is distributed through the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation's *Buckeye Farm News*. If you have questions or comments, write to Suzanne Steel at 216 Kottman Hall, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210 or [steel.7@osu.edu](mailto:steel.7@osu.edu).

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## The euro zone crisis: any impact on China's demand?

■ IAN SHELDON, Andersons Professor of International Trade, Extension Specialist, International Trade

As politicians struggle to develop solutions to the sovereign debt crisis bedeviling the European Union (EU), on this side of the Atlantic we wonder about economic repercussions if the euro zone is not stabilized. Widespread default in the EU, and the accompanying banking crisis, could push the United States back into recession. If China's growth slows down as well, will there be an appreciable decline in their imports of U.S. crops?

The revelation in October 2009 that Greece's budget deficit was twice as large as previously reported triggered the euro zone crisis. The spread between German bond yields and Portuguese, Irish, Greek, and Spanish bond yields widened significantly as markets began to worry about the creditworthiness of the "PIGS." Although there is little doubt Greece is insolvent, debt-laden countries such as Italy and Spain are solvent, instead facing a liquidity problem.

The euro zone has a fundamental weakness: countries issue debt in a currency over which they have no control. If investors are concerned about Spain defaulting, they sell Spanish bonds, reinvesting the proceeds elsewhere in the EU, driving up Spain's cost of rolling over its debt. With the European Central Bank issuing currency, the Spanish central bank is no longer "lender of last resort" to its financial system. Consequently, a liquidity crisis in Spain can soon turn into a solvency crisis. Also, given the integrated nature of financial markets in the euro zone, the risk of contagion between member countries is great. By contrast, the UK can avoid such contagion by issuing sovereign debt its own currency, which the Bank of England can buy up if necessary.

Europe's leaders recently agreed on a three-part package to save the euro: restructuring Greek debt; recapitalizing EU banks; and boosting firepower of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) by €1 trillion (\$1.4 trillion), in order to protect solvent but illiquid countries. Will this be enough? Refinancing Spain and Italy's bonds alone will cost €1 trillion over three years, on top of existing commitments of €440 billion to Portugal, Ireland, and Greece, and any funds needed to recapitalize banks. Only the European Central Bank has unlimited liquidity to guarantee the debt of a country such as Italy.

Commodity markets initially appeared optimistic about the plan. Continuation of this sentiment, however, depends on expectations about sustained U.S. export demand, which could be undermined if the euro zone plan fails. China's economy has shown clear signs of slowing down, with exports to the EU declining 7.5 percent in September. While uncertainty about Chinese economic growth will likely resurface if the euro cannot be saved, this will not necessarily put a significant dent in Chinese demand for animal feed. China is the second largest economy in the world, but citizens' average annual incomes are very low (\$4,300), and they spend a significant portion of income on food. Consequently, even if China's forecast rate of GDP growth declines further as the euro zone collapses, demand for commodities such as soybeans is unlikely to diminish dramatically as Chinese consumers continue adding meat to their diets.

## Proposed regulations could mean big changes for farm youth labor

An update of federal labor regulations governing youth employment could mean significant changes in the types of work young people can do on the farm, according to the leader of Ohio State University Extension's **Agricultural Safety and Health program**.

"The Hazardous Occupations Orders for Agricultural Employment hasn't been touched or changed for the past 40 years," said **Dee Jepsen**, program leader and assistant professor in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering. "This regulation prohibits youth under the age of 16 from working in and around certain types of environments, outside two basic exemptions."

One exemption allows children to work on farms owned and operated by their parents, and this is not expected to change with the updated regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The second exemption, which is slated to undergo significant change, allows children under the age of 16 who completed a prescribed farm safety education and training program to work on farms.

"The second exemption is more commonly known as the tractor-safety certification program," Jepsen said. "Under the current law, students aged 14 and 15 take a safety course through Extension or their high school agriculture class. There is a written exam and skills test, where they learn about safety procedures. The certification isn't necessarily a competency test in operating machinery." It involves 24 hours of coursework prior to the exam and skills test.

The proposed regulation would expand the program requirement to 90 hours of study prior to an examination. In addition, the certification program would only be offered by secondary schools, essentially meaning high school agriculture programs, Jepsen noted.

"This would eliminate the safety courses provided by other groups like Farm Bureaus or Extension. Students would have to find a local ag education program to

participate," she said. "The course, basically an entire semester of study, would also deal with more than tractor safety, and would include confined space dangers and other farm-related safety issues."

The proposal changes some key definitions. For example, current regulation only applies to youth operating tractors rated at 20 horsepower. The new proposal would include tractors of any horsepower, including lawn and garden tractors.

"If teens wanted to go out and till a neighbor's garden or mow with a small horse-powered tractor to earn money, they would have to have the safety course if they are under 16," she explained.

In addition, the definition of power equipment used in the proposed regulation includes any powered equipment, including hay elevators.

When it comes to working with livestock, the current regulation prohibits youth under 16 from working in a pen or stall with an intact male animal, or a sow or cow still nursing. "They've expanded that to say that students can't work with any animal husbandry practice like breeding, branding, dehorning, or treating sick animals," she said. "They aren't allowed to catch chickens in preparation for market, and they can't herd animals in confined spaces or on horseback or using ATVs or other motorized vehicles."

She noted that this provision has generated numerous questions about the implications to programs like 4-H and FFA, as well as organized youth livestock exhibitions.

The premise behind the proposed changes is to protect youth from working in dangerous environments. The Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor encourages comments on the current proposal. The deadline for comment is Dec. 1, and more information can be found online at [www.facebook.com/OSUAgSafetyandHealth](http://www.facebook.com/OSUAgSafetyandHealth).

■ ANDY VANCE

## Giving Back: Supporting Our Troops, Their Families

The Durant family spent a weekend at Kelleys Island last summer — a whole weekend together, which doesn't happen often for this military family. They did so thanks to a Family Camp sponsored by "Operation: Military Kids" (OMK), a partnership of Ohio State University Extension 4-H Youth Development and the Ohio National Guard's family readiness program.

John Durant, a sergeant and safety officer in the Ohio National Guard, is thankful his day job is close to home at the Beightler Armory in Columbus. But mandatory weekend and summer training continually takes him away.

"It's common in the military to miss birthdays, anniversaries — important dates with your family," he said. "One year I even missed my brother's wedding. And I've never been deployed — that's far worse."

That's why OMK offered three Family Camps in 2011, all filled to capacity. Said Theresa Ferrari, Ohio's 4-H military liaison: "It's the gift of time."

"John's gone a lot during the year, and we call him a hero for our nation," said John's wife, Deborah. "But Family Camp gives us a time when he can be a hero for our kids."

### The Essentials

In 2011, Ohio's OMK and Military Teen Adventure Camp program received \$307,500 in grants and \$78,500 in donations to help organize:

- ▶ Overnight camps, including three weekend Family Camps; a weeklong Military Kids camp at Kelleys Island; and two Military Teen Adventure Camps. In all, overnight camps hosted 575 military family members.
- ▶ One-day HERO Camps hosted by the Great Lakes Science Museum in March and Ohio State University's Athletics Department in July.
- ▶ Youth programming during 51 Yellow Ribbon programs, both for mobilization (before military members are deployed), and reintegration (when they return).
- ▶ Seven military family appreciation events at local zoos, sporting events, and fairs.

■ MARTHA FILIPIC



The Durant Family