

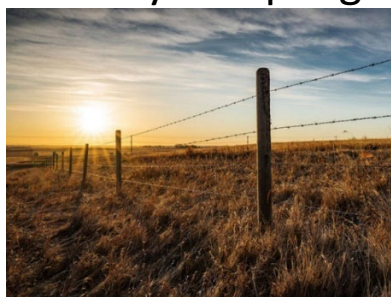
# Ohio Forage Grasslands Council Newsletter



JUL 2025

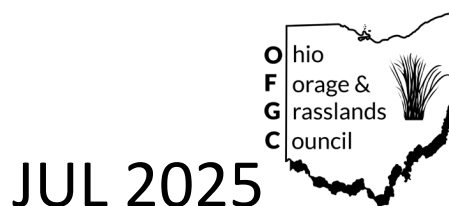
## In this Issue:

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9. <https://ohioforage.com/>

# Ohio Forage Grasslands Council Newsletter



Dear OFGC Members,

The drought seems to be in our rear-view mirror, but nothing is a guarantee, and planning is a critical part of good forage management. In Eastern Ohio, the greatest growth in cool season forages occurs during early spring. During early spring most livestock producers will typically see an excess in grass growth during this period and it can be difficult to graze forages in optimal conditions. Unfortunately, we typically see this abundance of growth preceding the lowest period of growth (the summer slump) and then another increase during the fall.

The seasonal transition in cool season grasses is that roller coaster that goes from highest spring production to lowest summer production and finishes with a less consistent increase that is important for successful winter vitality. It is sometimes at the fall stage when there is grass to graze, that we can overgraze and prevent the flow of nutrients from the leaves to the roots. What this leads to is a shallow root system that will be weak and an exposed crown that can be killed off during winter. One way to increase grass production in the fall is to fertilize late in July and into August when we have passed the hotter, drier part of summer. This will lead to an increased vegetative production of grass allowing for some controlled grazing and give you more options so that overgrazing can be better managed. Any grass that is not utilized can be grazed later during the dormant winter. As far as nitrogen (N) utilization by the cool season grass, fall growth is one of the more efficient ways to maximize N. Most of the nutrient is put into leaves that will benefit both the animal and the plant. It is typical to double your forage production with the addition of 50 units of N per acre during this time. A crude calculation of 50

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units of N is ~100 lbs./acre of urea. This approximation also allows for easier estimates in investment.

During this year many pastures were damaged from overgrazing due to last year's drought. Understand that pastures could be less productive this year so plan accordingly. Having a grazing plan is a great way to make sure your animals remain healthy, and your pastures remain profitable. Balance your animals and available land so that you do not overgraze and deteriorate your pasture year after year. Have a plan and strive for improvements.

Sincerely,

Dan Lima – OFGC Board Member

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## Welcome Emma!

Welcoming New Extension State Specialist in Forage Agronomy—Emma Matcham



*Figure 1: Emma Matcham is the new Extension State Specialist in Forage Agronomy, and also an Assistant Professor in the Horticulture and Crop Science Department at Ohio State. She started in January, 2025.*

We are excited to introduce the newest extension state specialist for integrated forage management, Dr. Emma Matcham. Prior to joining the faculty at OSU, Emma was an assistant professor of nutrient cycling and agronomy at the University of Florida and became a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) in 2020. She earned her BS and MS from OSU, and her PhD from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. As a CCA faculty, she is involved in continuing education and other opportunities for other CCAs and Certified Livestock Managers.

Emma is currently an assistant professor and extension state specialist, her lab focuses on applied forage systems research that helps address the needs of Ohio farmers. She has initiated one field trial at two OSU research stations, and this trial investigates how nitrogen management impacts yield, protein, and other qualities for winter annual forages. This trial is being managed by an MS student, Lauren Geiss, and field data collection has gone well so far. She's also starting

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trials on summer annual planting dates and stand evaluation methods this year, since that information is helpful when managing farms during droughts and other environmental stressors.



*Figure 2: Lauren Geiss walking rye plots at the Western Agricultural Research Station in April, 2025. Rye is jointed, and the first harvest date will happen in a few days.*

As Emma settles in Ohio, she has made an effort to get out and meet folks throughout the state. One of her first presentations was at our OFGC annual meeting in February, where she gave an extended introduction to her research approach and shared some data about assessing heavy metal risk in pastures. Other highlights of her winter talk season include sharing some information about nitrogen and potassium management in dry weather at the Conservation Tillage and Technology Conference in Ada, OH last month, and meeting with farmers at the Eastern Ohio Grazing Council January meeting.

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*Figure 3: Emma presented at the OFGC Annual Meeting in February, 2025.*

The best way to reach Emma is email ([matcham.3@osu.edu](mailto:matcham.3@osu.edu)), but she can also take calls at 614-247-0032. Keep up to date with research from her lab and other OSU forage team members at [forages.osu.edu](http://forages.osu.edu).

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## President's Column

Dear Members of the Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council,

It is an honor to be serving as your current President of the Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council. If we haven't met before, my name is Christine Gelley and I have been a member of OFGC since 2016 after beginning my role as the OSU Extension Educator for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Noble County, Ohio.

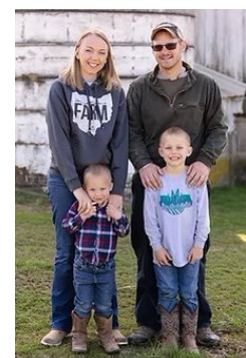


I have been a member of the American Forage and Grassland Council since graduate school, when I entered and won a prize at the annual student essay contest. Forages are my favorite topic to learn about, teach, advocate for, and explore with boots on the ground. I am an alumna of The Ohio State University (A.S. Horticultural Science & B.S. Sustainable Plant Systems & Natural Resources) and the University of Tennessee (M.S. Plant Science- Forage Quality & Management).

My work for OSU and service to OFGC have granted me the amazing opportunity to attend every AFGC Annual Meeting & Conference since 2018 and the International Grasslands Congress in 2023. These conferences have been the top motivator that keeps me inspired by forages, the people who grow them, and the animals that consume them. The incredible people who are a part of this industry have a passion for leaving the world better than they came into it by supporting the health and vibrancy of their grasslands, their livestock, their families, and their communities.



OFGC was well represented at the 2025 AFGC Meeting & Conference in Kissimmee, Florida with five Ohioans in attendance. Our contributions ranged from research presentations to national board service to spokesperson contestants. Levi Morrow of Morgan County, Ohio made us proud as our forage spokesperson and was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the national contest. Levi shared how he and his wife Krysti operate Rocky Knob Farms along the Muskingum River in Southeast Ohio where they run a diversified system that focuses on commercial sheep production in a



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low maintenance, low input pasture-based environment, that produces quality cuts of meat for their farm to table customers.

On February 7, 2025, we held our annual OFGC meeting and conference in Reynoldsburg with a diverse slate of speakers that covered topics from drought recovery to grazing impacts on meat quality to grazing native warm-season grasses to livestock production on pasture and commercial hay production. We extend our thanks to key-note speaker Chris Teutsch of the University of Kentucky who, along with providing valuable information, recorded the whole event. To review the happenings of the annual meeting, you can view the recordings online at: <https://go.osu.edu/ofgc2025meetingvideos>

The annual meeting is also an opportunity to recognize significant contributions to the Ohio Forage Industry.

This year Gary Wilson was selected for the Outstanding Producer Award. Gary and his wife Mary's farm near Jenera, Ohio where their son's family is now the eighth generation to live and work on the family farmstead. Both Gary and Mary retired from OSU Extension but continue to actively serve in various roles that benefit their communities. Gary is one of the founding members of OFGC and has served as the Executive Secretary of OFGC for many years. Thank you Gary for the decades of work you have contributed to be an admirable example for forage production in Ohio.

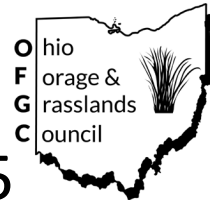


Greenacres Foundation was recognized for the Jack Tucker Distinguished Service Award. Michael Cox, the Greenacres Director of Agriculture, accepted the award at the meeting. Greenacres has partnered with a wide variety of agricultural groups to facilitate and host educational programs on sustainable agricultural production with an emphasis on grazing systems, including a tour stop during the International Grasslands Congress and hosting the Heart of America Grazing Conference. Greenacres also conducts their own on-farm research and partners with universities to conduct empirical research. Thank you for sharing our mission and your hospitality to forage groups from near and far.



Since the annual meeting there have been numerous pasture walks offered across the state that highlight best management practices in grazing systems, including a Pastures for Profit

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Course in Logan County, Ohio, with many more to come. We also celebrated National Forage Week- many folks doing so from the hayfield on some of the few rain-free days of June.

2025 has continued to throw weather challenges our way, but we are a resilient bunch and I am confident that we will persist through what's yet to come. One of the best ways to get through the tough times is to stay in contact with our peers. That is one of the best things about being a member of OFGC. Thank you for continuing to be an OFGC Member. We hope to see you out and about at some of these upcoming events!

Sincerely,

*Christine Gelley*

Ohio Forage and Grasslands Council President

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## Using Baleage to Manage Your Hay Quality

Jason Hartschuh, OSU Extension Field Specialist, Dairy Management and Precision Livestock

Baleage can be an excellent tool to manage challenging harvest weather windows or as a storage tool when barn space is not available. The ideal condition for baleage is to bale the hay between 40 to 65% moisture and wrap it within 2 hours of baling. This process uses anaerobic conditions, and the acids produced in fermentation to preserve hay. Baleage fermentation is slower than in haylage, often taking 6 weeks. When forage is baled between 25 to 40% moisture, it will not ferment properly, and Baleage at these moisture levels should be considered as temporary storage. During such situations, preservation is primarily a function of maintaining anaerobic, oxygen-limiting conditions. Mold is more likely at this moisture; higher bale densities and more wraps of plastic is required to better seal out oxygen. If using a tube wrapper, bale uniformity is critical so that there is not an oxygen pocket trapped between bales. Baleage at this moisture will not maintain quality for long term storage, and thus, it needs to be fed as soon as possible. Baleage can be utilized as a plan or as a backup, but the best baleage is a plan and not a rescue.

A recent study conducted at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center investigated the benefits of wrapping 25% moisture hay. This moisture has often been considered “no man’s land” as it is too wet to safely bale with preservatives as dry hay and too dry to bale as baleage. This hay is sometimes known as sweet hay. The study investigated heating of the wrapped hay versus unwrapped with preservatives. Wrapping hay significantly reduced heating with no protein degradation compared to unwrapped hay. When propionic acid was added at baling to the wrapped bales not only was heating reduced but after 84 days in wrapped storage the bales exhibited improved aerobic stability for the following 33 days it was monitored. This means that the hay would have improved bunk life.

While KEEPING OXYGEN OUT is the most important part of making high-quality baleage, it starts with mowing. When baleage is the planned storage method, your harvest capacity-limiting factor will be how many bales you can wrap an hour, with the ideal goal of wrapping the bales within 4 hours. Based on research done at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, we recommend laying swaths as wide as your mower will allow, helping preserve forage quality and speeding up drying to 65% moisture by 10.8 hours. When baling, your goal needs to be for the highest density bales that you can make. Increasing density from 6 lb./ft.<sup>3</sup> to 8 lb./ft.<sup>3</sup>, you

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gain an extra 12 hours of bunk life in the haylage due mostly to better bale fermentation. It is important to wrap bales as soon as possible after baling to avoid spoilage.

Most bale wrap is one millimeter (ml.) low-density polyethylene, and bales need a minimum of 5 mls. of plastic to seal out oxygen, requiring a minimum of 6 wraps. Types of plastic vary greatly in their stretchiness, which can reduce thickness by up to 25%. Some stretch is necessary so that the plastic stays sticky and seals well between the layers of plastic. Be cautious when wrapping in the rain as this will reduce the stickiness and allow more oxygen to penetrate, causing spoilage. Also, be cautious when wrapping forages that poke through the plastic, which will require more layers. When oxygen enters the bale, they start to heat and quality declines when temperatures are over 120°F. The amount of time until bales are wrapped and the number of mls. of wrap significantly affect internal bale temperature.

After bales are wrapped, handle them carefully using a squeeze so that plastic is not torn. If plastic is torn in storage, the tears should be taped as soon as you notice them with a vinyl tape designed to stop oxygen penetration. For this reason, bales should be inspected weekly in storage. Never use bale spears to move wrapped haylage until the day you are going to feed it. It is recommended that bales be fed within a year of wrapping. Baleage that is too wet, over 60% moisture, should be fed within 3 months, and baleage that is below 40% will not ferment well and should be fed within 6 months. Most of the time, when we make baleage as a rescue, it falls in the range of needing to be fed within 6 months.

When done right, baleage can last a year and make excellent feed. When done wrong, Baleage can spoil, mold, and grow organisms that will make your animals sick; use your eyes and nose to be sure that the forage you're going to feed is of high quality. Don't force animals to eat forage they don't want.



OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION  
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER



# Southeastern Ohio Hay Day 2025

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025 • 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Southeastern Ohio Hay Day is returning for 2025! This field day will offer demonstrations of hay harvesting equipment, tradeshow exhibits, educational presentations, lunch, and door prizes. Admission is free and open to the public. We look forward to welcoming you to the Eastern Agricultural Research Station on Friday, July 18, 2025. Registration will open at 9 a.m. with featured content beginning at 10 a.m. The event will conclude by 4 p.m.

**Eastern Agricultural Research Station**  
**16870 Bond Ridge Road**  
**Caldwell, OH 43724**

Follow ST RT 821 to ST RT 215 in Belle Valley. Map on page 2.

[oardc.osu.edu/facility/eastern-agricultural-research-station](https://oardc.osu.edu/facility/eastern-agricultural-research-station)

**Event Schedule & Exhibitor List:**  
<https://go.osu.edu/seohhayday>  
(Will be updated weekly until the event.)

To RSVP, scan the QR code to the right or fill out the form below. Return to Christine Gelley at the Noble County OSU Extension Office: 46049 Marietta Rd. Suite 2, Caldwell, OH 43724 or call 740-732-5681 or email [gelley.2@osu.edu](mailto:gelley.2@osu.edu). RSVPs are appreciated by July 15, especially if dietary or accessibility accommodations are needed, but walk-in attendance will also be welcomed.



*Handwritten signature*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Dietary/Accessibility Accommodations: \_\_\_\_\_

 **THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
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**NOBLE COUNTY EXTENSION**  
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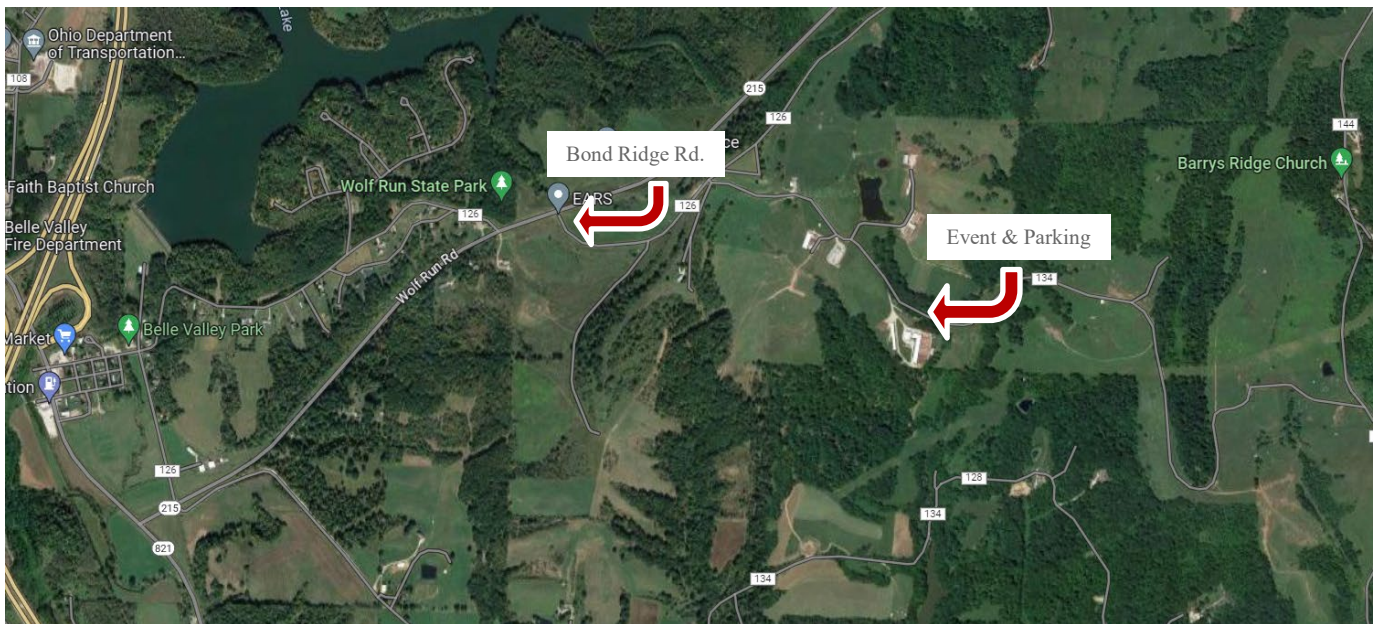
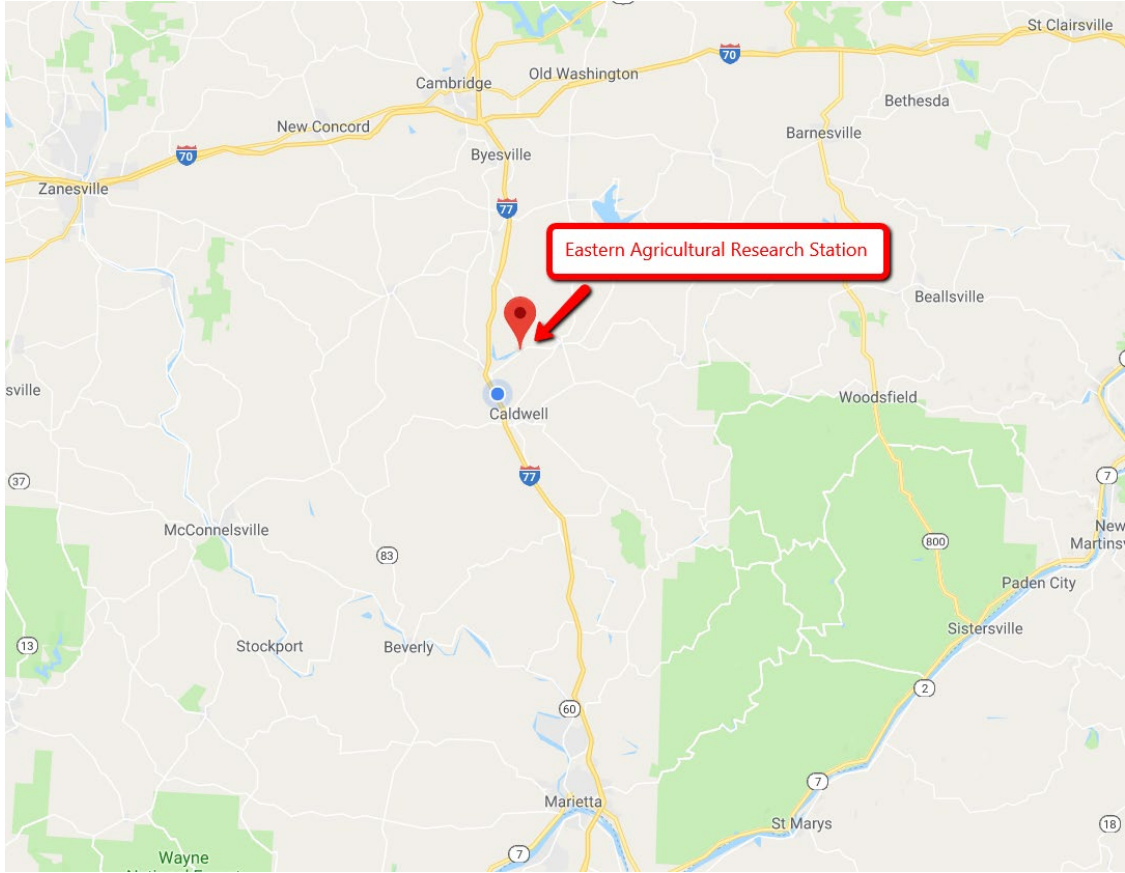
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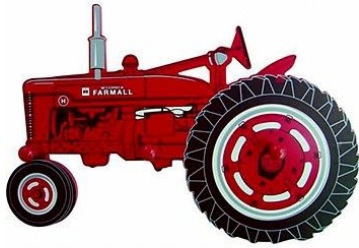
# Eastern Agricultural Research Station

16870 Bond Ridge Road

Caldwell, OH 43724 (Follow ST RT 215 from Belle Valley)

[www.oardc.osu.edu/facility/eastern-agricultural-research-station](http://www.oardc.osu.edu/facility/eastern-agricultural-research-station)





# East Central Grazing Alliance

The East Central Grazing Alliance is a joint effort between Belmont County, Guernsey County, Monroe County and Noble County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, along with the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio State University Extension and the Natural Resource Conservation Services, to further our mission of promoting best management practices of natural resources in grazing systems.

Each county will host a workshop and dinner each month starting in July and ending in October. The following dates and topics have been selected, the location will be announced by postcard the month of the workshop.

## July 24th – Monroe County @ Brad Miller's Farm

Pond livestock water system, Pasture Efficient Cattle Genetic Selection,  
Integrating clover

## August 14th – Belmont County @ Dave Grum's Farm

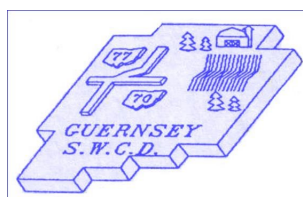
Managing mud, Stocking Density, Soil testing & Amendments

## September 18th— Noble County @ The Ray Family Farm

Grass management, pressurized spring development, sheep & goat  
meat production

## October 2nd—Guernsey County @ Mid-East Buffalo Campus

Forage testing & interpreting results, Winter feeding & Bale grazing,  
Soil health



If you are interested in more information or would like to attend please RSVP to the hosting SWCD  
Follow us on Facebook at East Central Grazing Alliance for the most up-to-date information.

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Ashtabula, Clermont, and Wayne County Extension Offices

# Equine Pasture Walks

Join us for a unique, statewide hands-on learning experience focused on equine pasture management. This interactive tour takes place on a working horse pasture—perfect for seeing best practices in action. Bring your questions and curiosity as we explore how to create healthier, more productive grazing environments for your horses!

- Plant/root physiology
- Mud management/ dry lots
- Grazing sticks and forage calculations
- Weed ID and poisonous plants

Light refreshments served at 5:30 PM at each location. No RSVP required.  
Free for all to attend.

## DATES:

July 23<sup>rd</sup> Wayne County, OSU ATI

August 20<sup>th</sup> Clermont County

September 3<sup>rd</sup> Ashtabula County

**TIME:** 6:00–8:00 p.m.



**Pick one to join us that is closest to you, or feel free to visit different farms  
throughout Ohio!**



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

**CFAES**

## Wayne County

Jul 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025

Ohio State ATI Equine Center  
3339 S Apple Creek Rd.  
Apple Creek, OH 44606  
**Contact:** Janessa Hill at  
[hill.1357@osu.edu](mailto:hill.1357@osu.edu) or  
330-674-3015

## Clermont County

Aug 20<sup>th</sup> 2025

Grassy Acres Horse Retreat,  
3991 Afton-Elklick Rd.  
Batavia, OH 45103  
**Contact:** Gigi Neal at  
[neal.331@osu.edu](mailto:neal.331@osu.edu) or  
513-732-7070

## Ashtabula County

Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025

Grand Haven Horse Farm  
2000 E Union Rd.  
Jefferson, OH 44047  
**Contact:** Amanda Barnum at  
[barnum.28@osu.edu](mailto:barnum.28@osu.edu) or  
440-576-9008

## EVENT SPONSORS:

OSU ATI Equine Center  
Ashtabula SWCD  
Clermont SWCD  
Holmes SWCD  
Wayne SWCD  
Ashtabula Extension Office  
Clermont Extension Office  
Holmes Extension Office  
Wayne Extension Office  
OSU Extension Equine Team  
OSU Forage Team



With the wet weather thus far in 2025, OSU Extension is offering reduced cost hay analysis. Mature, late made hay is lower in energy, protein, and digestibility often requiring additional supplementation. This reduced cost testing is provided by the OSU Extension eBarns program and Small Ruminant Research lab.

**Cost:** \$15 for first sample. \$20 for each additional sample

**What is provided?** Near Infra Red NIR analysis. Dry Matter Content, Crude Protein, ADF, NDF, Ash, Fat, C, P, K.

**Contact information: Your Local OSU Extension Office**

Garth Ruff, OSU Extension Beef Cattle Field Specialist. 740-305-3201

**Sample Submission :**

Place dry hay in paper bag, wet wrapped hay/balage in plastic bag and place in freezer.  
Samples must be delivered to local county Extension office by July 31, 2025  
Sample should include your name and completed sample form available at your local OSU Extension office.

Most Extension offices have a hay sampler that they loan out for collecting samples.

-----  
**Number of samples** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cost** 1 x \$15 + \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample numbers**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to: OSU Extension**

# Hay Sample Submission Form

## Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Information

Sample Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Forage Species (with % for each):

\_\_\_\_\_

Was the hay rained on after mowing?

Yes  No If yes, amount of rain: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of the Forage Stand: \_\_\_\_\_

Hay Type:

Dry hay  Wet-wrapped (baleage)

Date Sample Collected: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Date Hay Mowed: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Date Hay Baled: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

How is the hay stored after baling? \_\_\_\_\_

Cutting Number:

1st  2nd  3rd  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If not 1st cutting, how many days between cuttings?

\_\_\_\_\_



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