Hardin County Extension News Release
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For Immediate Release – February 5, 2015

Conservation Tillage & Technology Conference

Hardin County - Farmers in the area will soon have the opportunity to participate in the Conservation Tillage & Technology Conference (CTC), one of the largest agricultural programs in northwestern Ohio. Over 500 farmers, consultants, industry representatives, government officials and the curious will meet each day of the two day conference to listen to university specialists, industry representatives, and producers discuss new products and ideas for agriculture.

The conference will be March 3 and 4 at the McIntosh Center on the campus of Ohio Northern University in Ada. Over sixty speakers will be at the conference and about forty vendors will have product displays and representatives available. The program will include many presentations on tillage and conservation practices, such as a whole day session on Cover Crops and Soil Health. However, there are other concurrent sessions on topics related to crop production besides conservation practices.

Corn production topics will be presented on Tuesday during the Corn University program and soybean production topics will be covered on Wednesday during the Soybean School session. In addition, there will be concurrent presentations on Precision Seeding and Placement, Advanced Scouting, Big Data, and Nutrient Management (Solving the Phosphorus and Nitrogen Problem). Also, a biofuels and bioproducts train-the-trainer session will be held the day before the conference and a Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training will be held the day after the conference.
Big and little are both important in today’s agriculture. The Conservation Tillage & Technology Conference will have concurrent sessions that emphasize management of big data (from farm fields and equipment), and tiny amounts (of fertilizer that can cause huge problems when it leaves the farm). The Big Data session features a dozen speakers from OSU, Farm Bureau, John Deere, Pioneer, Crop IMS, including Ohio farmers and crop consultants. OSU Extension is leading the national discussion on how to maximize the benefits of gathering gazillions (is that a word?) of data points while protecting the security of data for individual farm fields.

The “Tiny” session refers to the amounts of phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) that can cause problems in bodies of water including Lake Erie, Grand Lake St. Marys, and the Gulf of Mexico. Losing as little as a half of one percent of applied phosphorus per acre in the tributaries to Lake Erie is enough to raise havoc with algae. The concurrent session devoted to Solving the P and N Problem will feature a national expert (Andrew Sharpley) and other prominent speakers from OSU, Battelle, USDA, industry, and state government. Solutions that may be prioritized include injecting dry fertilizer, continuous no-till, applying gypsum, managing cover crops, managing tile flow, and adjusting fertilizer rates and timing.

The concurrent session on Precise Seeding and Placement focuses on the role of the planter for maximizing yields. John Fulton, OSU Extension agricultural engineer, has organized a session that includes variable rate seeding and nitrogen application, planting up to 10 mph, and multi-hybrid planting.

"The potential for precision ag is more important as profit margins tighten," according to Fulton. "Precision ag technology permits on-farm research. Having the ability to evaluate hybrid performance, seeding populations, fertility, and much more is valuable." Specifically, automatic guidance and section control on planters (and sprayers) can bring immediate benefits. “A quality display that provides row-by-row feedback on parameters such as population and singulation can pay for themselves in one season by identifying an issue. They ensure peak performance from day one through the end of planting, plus it logs as-planted data that can be used for post-harvest analyses."

The program schedule and other details about the Conservation Tillage & Technology Conference at Ohio Northern University, March 3-4, are available on the website ctc.osu.edu. With four concurrent sessions each day, consider taking along partners or family members to get more value. Registration for the conference is $105 for both days (and $80 for one day) and may be paid at the door. If you register by the early bird deadline of February 21, registration for the conference is $85 for both days (and $65 for one day). Registration costs include lunch and the afternoon ice cream break.
Continuing education hours will be available to Certified Crop Advisers also for Certified Livestock Managers. The Conservation Tillage & Technology Conference is a great program to learn about the latest management practices in crop production and to network with the farmers and individuals in the agricultural industry. We hope to see you at this big event!

For more information about this year’s CTC, contact OSU Extension, Hardin County, visit the Hardin County OSU Extension web site at hardin.osu.edu, the Hardin County OSU Extension Facebook page, or call Mark Badertscher, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator at 419-674-2297.