Hardin County Extension News Release

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Hardin County Agriculture Big in Ohio

by Mark Badertscher

Hardin County – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service 2017 Census of Agriculture ranked Hardin County 5th in total market value of agricultural products sold in the state of Ohio. Conducted once every five years, the census aims to get a complete and accurate picture of American agriculture. The resulting data are used by farmers, ranchers, trade associations, researchers, policymakers, and many others to help make decisions in community planning, farm assistance programs, technology development, farm advocacy, agribusiness setup, rural development, and more.

The results of this most recent ag census determined that Hardin County has 726 farms averaging 361 acres in size with total land in farms at 261,744 acres. The market value of agricultural products sold in the county was reported at $222,865,000 with $7,663,000 in government payments, and $8,911,000 in farm-related income. Total farm production expenses were $197,004,000 leaving $42,435,000 net farm income in the county in 2017.

Cropland makes up 93% of the land in farms by use, followed by woodland at 3%, pastureland at 1%, and 2% classified as other. No-till farming was practiced on 40%, reduced tillage on 24%, intensive tillage on 24%, and cover crops were used on 14% of the farms in 2017.

Crops made up 48% of Hardin County farm income with a value of $107,220,000, ranking the county 16th in Ohio for overall crop production with the county having a below average year for corn and soybeans as a result of local weather. Soybeans were the top crop with 120,186 acres planted while corn was second with 88,792 acres planted for grain and 5,292 acres planted for silage or greenchop. 8,994 acres were planted to wheat and 5054 acres were planted to forages for either hay or haylage.

Livestock, poultry, and products made up 52% of Hardin County farm income with a value of $115,646,000 ranking the county 6th in Ohio for overall livestock, poultry, and products production. The livestock inventory in Hardin County as of December 31, 2017 included 68,974 hogs and pigs, 18,156 cattle and calves, 702 broilers and other meat-type chickens, 170 pullets, and the number of layers were undisclosed. There were 643 sheep and lambs, 542 horses and ponies, 249 goats, and 64 turkeys in the county reported to the USDA.

There are 1165 total producers in Hardin County, with 826 being male and 339 being female. 683 producers are between the age of 35-64, 394 are 65 and older, while 88 are under the age of 35. The percentage of family farms are 95%, with 18% of county farms hiring farm labor. Seventy-eight percent of the county farms reported having internet access, 4% sell directly to consumers, and 2% farm organically. For a more detailed description of Hardin County agriculture, go to www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus.