

Ohio State University Extension Small Farm Program announces the 2017 Ohio New and Small Farm College

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 lay out 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 Southern Ohio New and Small Farm Colleges have helped over 700 individuals representing over 500 farms from 60 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 New and Small Farm College will be conducted in Clermont County at the OSU Extension Office, 1000 Locust Street, Owensville, Ohio on Thursdays, beginning January 12, 2017 through Thursday, March 2, 2017. Classes run from 6:30 –9:00 p.m. each week with dinner beginning at 6p.m.

Limited to the first 50 registrations per location.

The cost of the course is \$150 per person, \$100 for an additional family member. Along with the vast resources and knowledge gained, participants will receive a notebook (per each \$150 registration) of all resource materials, a soil test, dinner, refreshments, and a tour. Registrations are now being accepted. Individuals interested in the program may contact the Clermont County Extension office at (513) 732-7070. Registration brochures for the program can also be found online at the following website clermont.osu.edu and are available in area Ohio State University Extension offices.

For further information contact Tony Nye, OSU Small Farm Program Coordinator at (937) 382-0901 or email at nye.1@osu.edu or Gigi Neal, Clermont County ANR Educator at (513) 732-7070 or email at neal.331@osu.edu.