

SOLUTION ACTIONS



OHIO SMART AGRICULTURE

SOLUTIONS FROM THE LAND

PROGRESS IN THE PROCESS

This past winter, The Ohio State University Extension Service hosted five regional forums across the state on behalf of OSA’s steering committee. OSA project leaders shared their preliminary findings and recommendations and sought input from agricultural, conservation, business, nutrition and health leaders on steps that could be taken to help Ohio agriculture strengthen and expand the multiple solutions they deliver from the land.

Across the different segments and regions, it was apparent that more details and data are needed around several key issues: access to nutritious foods and their health value; ecosystem service pathways; unique niche markets like the maple syrup industry; adapting to increasingly erratic weather and changing climatic conditions; and identifying if the committee is working with existing initiatives and using all available resources.

During the first week of April, the steering committee met to digest the feedback from these forums. They identified three important issues that needed more attention:

- **Increase youth engagement and educational opportunities in Ohio’s agriculture.**
- **Reach out to limited resource and rural communities.**
- **Highlight forestry industry, well-managed woodlands, and ecosystem services and their economic benefits.**

Thanks to the input provided through the forums, there are now over 30 possible initiatives being considered for more work. We’ve divided these into several broad “solution pathways” to start changing “what’s” into “how’s.” These include *food and health, keeping working lands working, enhanced sustainability and resiliency, and building resources and capital* in Ohio’s agriculture.

OHIO AG UPDATE



With wet, cold conditions, planting progress is inconsistent around the state. As shared by [Ohio’s Country Journal and Ohio Ag Net](#), adjusting corn management practices in these times will aid in a prolific 2018.

It will be important for farm operators, agriculturalists and environmentalists to analyze and balance land health into planting season. Additional variables to consider adjusting include but are not limited to:

- Tillage practices
- Nitrogen applications
- Field selection
- Seeding rates
- Planting depth
- Hybrid selection

MAJOR ISSUES: OHIO AND NATIONWIDE

Water Issues across Ohio

No matter where in Ohio you reside, water quality is a major priority. This fact was reinforced at the regional forums.

Water quality conditions in northwest Ohio and other areas have led to calls for further preventative measures for keeping Ohio waters clean. Ohio's Environmental Protection Agency is asking input on its plan to have the open waters of western Lake Erie declared impaired under the federal [Clean Water Act](#). This challenge has evolved over many years and many parties are now offering suggestions to respond to the impairment.

Although this topic is most current for northwest Ohio, stakeholders around the state know similar issues can soon evolve in their waters. These conversations will continue until consensus is reached on a solution pathway.



Water quality in Ohio will not be improved solely through government mandates, but rather, through a movement lead by local Ohioans to clean up our waters. You can read more about the impairment in the Ohio EPA's [2018 Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan](#). What suggestions do you have for ways water quality in Ohio can be improved?

Big Challenges Cloud Ohio's Future

- **Ohio ranks 38th nationally in food security**
- **1 in 7 individuals suffer from food insecurity. 1 in 5 children are unsure where their next meal will come from.**
- **Ohio ranks 46th out of 50 states in health value.**
- **Nutrient pollution from agriculture is a leading cause of water quality impairment across the state.**
- **Ohio is losing more than 50 acres of farmland per day--since 1950, more than 7 million acres of farmland, representing nearly 1/3 of the state's land, has been lost.**
- **Ohio ranks 2nd in the United States in wetland losses.**

In response to these conditions, OSA leaders are creating a strategy to help Ohio agriculture restore environmental resilience, build strong communities, engage consumers and ensure public health and access to nutritious food. Ohio's food system must transform and help improve the quality of life for all Ohioans. It cannot be done by one individual or group. To find out more and join the conversation, visit the ['Resources'](#) and ['Contact Us'](#) pages on the OSA website.

In the coming months, the steering committee will need more feedback, input and outreach from people like you. We must work together to efficiently and effectively provide for our local communities. Please continue to stay engaged via this newsletter, our new website and our Facebook page!

Stay involved now!
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