There’s no shortage of challenges for farmers these days: delays in planting, low commodity prices, and dwindling amounts of hay to feed farm animals.

At a time when some farmers are seeking advice on dealing with those and other obstacles, Farm Science Review 2019 will offer that, plus the latest in farm technology and products.

From Sept. 17–19, the agricultural trade show will offer educational talks and opportunities to speak one-on-one with experts from CFAES, which sponsors the annual event at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center near London, Ohio.

“With last fall and this spring being two of the most challenging seasons for farmers in recent history, you can visit many exhibitors and experts on-site to discuss situations you haven’t had to experience before,” said Nick Zachrich, manager of Farm Science Review.

Now in its 57th year, the event offers the most relevant and up-to-date information to farmers on topics ranging from crop diseases to soil health. Farmers can learn how to reduce input costs and increase their operations’ efficiency at a time when both are particularly crucial.

The wettest yearlong period on record in Ohio has left regions across the state consistently saturated, delaying or preventing some growers from being able to plant. Some Ohio farmers who typically plant corn, soybeans, or both have, instead, planted cover crops and filed insurance claims to gain some earnings rather than risk planting in mud. The delay or prevention in planting has added an extra layer of strain on farmers already facing low prices for corn and soybeans, low animal feed supplies, and uncertainty about trade relief aid.

“All farmers will have to come up with ways to be more efficient both in animal agriculture and grain production to be
Taxes, on average, are going down for some Ohio farmland owners and are expected to decline at an even faster rate next year, a study by CFAES researchers shows.

The average taxable value of Ohio agricultural land has dropped by a third since a recent change in how the state calculates taxes for land used exclusively for commercial agriculture, according to a study by Robert Dinterman and Ani Katchova, two CFAES agricultural economists.

Starting in 2020, the taxable value of Ohio farmland likely will drop by another third, said Dinterman, who is also a postdoctoral researcher with CFAES. With values going down, owners of Ohio agricultural land should see similar declines in their taxes.

2017 was the first year some owners of Ohio agricultural land saw a break in taxes. Taxes on agricultural land are based on the state’s assessment of the value of the land, which is done every three years. Ohio farmland used exclusively for commercial agriculture is valued on the income it is expected to generate from crops, not on what it would sell for on the open market.

The Ohio legislature in 2017 approved changing the law on how agricultural land would be valued for tax purposes. But in 2016 before that change was in place, the average value of agricultural land in the state was $1,310 per acre, according to the results of the study by Dinterman and Katchova. This year, the value decreased to $875 per acre.

Agricultural land values and the corresponding taxes paid on that land will continue to decline at an even faster rate, said Dinterman. Steeper decreases in taxes will be seen, on average, because the changes to the way the farmland is assessed have occurred in yearly, gradual phases from 2017–2019. Small changes were made each year to avoid a sudden, dramatic drop in tax revenue, said Dinterman.

But in 2020, the phase-in will end. That’s why, during that year, Ohio farmland owners should see another one-third drop in the assessed value of their land, compared to the previous year, and similar declines in their taxes, said Dinterman.
I see a lot of opportunities here due to the majority of producers’ proximity to large population densities and outreach efforts. However, there is also a direct relationship between these opportunities and the challenges of urban sprawl and competition for land. This complexity can add pressure to the countless decisions agriculturalists must make every year. As an economist, trade-offs excite me because they’re exactly what economists do.

The current agricultural economy is one of hope for the future and celebration of the past, but it is not ideal at the present. Many decisions need to be made, but please know that CFAES, your land-grant institution, is here.

I am going to ask you to consider the acronym “GROW.” It seems straightforward and agriculture-related, but to me, it provides a framework for decision making. Coined in the book Great Leaders Grow by Ken Blanchard and Mark Miller, “GROW” is formed from the first letters of four steps to consider when running your operation:

1. **Gain knowledge.** There are, no doubt, hundreds of meetings you could attend every year to help run your business, but I encourage you to attend the ones that, while possibly uncomfortable, teach you something you didn’t already know.

2. **Reach out to others.** Understand what your neighbors are doing better than anyone else. Everyone has things that they do really well, somewhat well, or a little less than well. Understand your strengths and the strengths of those around you.

3. **Open your world.** The agricultural industry is global, but I am not only talking about international experiences. You can get a worldwide perspective by visiting operations that look different from yours.

4. **Walk toward wisdom.** Find a group of individuals who can serve in an advisory role for your operation. In agriculture, we tend to make all of the decisions ourselves, and we tend to bear the weight of the responsibility solely on our own backs. Well-designed advisory boards can help you alleviate some of that pressure and can help you recognize opportunities you did not see previously.

Agriculture is a beautiful industry, and I am happy to work alongside each one of you. There will be many decisions in the years ahead, and no one should bear that weight alone. I encourage you to keep GROWing in agriculture, and I hope to see you around the state sometime soon.

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**Ag Econ Insights**

**BY BEN BROWN**

Ben Brown is an assistant professor in the CFAES Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, and the program manager of the CFAES Farm Management Program. Brown’s column focuses on agricultural economics and will appear here periodically.

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**Ben Brown as a young boy on his family’s farm in Missouri. Photo courtesy of Ben Brown.**
A message from above

For the past five years, Farm Science Review has offered a special feature that can be seen only from above.

Each of these years, team members of CFAES’ Precision Agriculture Program have used a “smart planter” to plant multiple hybrids of corn or soybeans that, once fully grown, have created a different symbol in the field. The team brought Buckeye spirit to the field with a simple block “O” in 2015, a Brutus Buckeye in 2016, an official Ohio State Athletics Block O in 2017, and Ohio State Marching Band’s famous Script Ohio last year.

As for this year’s symbol? Stay tuned!

CFAES help for growers and producers

CFAES experts know that this year has been particularly challenging for Ohio growers and producers due to the historic rainfall in Ohio this growing season. As such, CFAES has convened a task force to address concerns and offer the best science-based recommendations for and solutions to the issues growers are facing regarding weather impacts, tariffs, and low commodity prices.

Here are just a few of the resources that CFAES experts are working hard to offer farmers statewide.

- FAQs about the 2019 agricultural challenges can be found at go.osu.edu/AgCrisis.
- Recommendations and information for farmers of grain and feed can be found in the C.O.R.N. Newsletter at agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter.
- Recommendations and information for livestock producers can be found in the Ohio Beef Cattle Letter at u.osu.edu/beef and in Ohio Ag Manager at u.osu.edu/ohioagmanager.
- Recommendations and information for dairy producers can be found in Buckeye Dairy News at dairy.osu.edu/newsletter/buckeye-dairy-news.
- Recommendations for grape, fruit, and vegetable growers is being developed. Visit go.osu.edu/AgCrisis for up-to-date information.

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity. For an accessible format of this publication, visit cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility.

A day to make the most of manure

You’ll find lots of fertile topics for discussion at this year’s Manure Science Review. Set for Aug. 7 at JIMITA Holsteins in Strasburg, Ohio, the event will keep you up to date on putting manure to good use. Featured will be talks by CFAES and other experts, field demonstrations, and a tour of Bull Country Compost in nearby Dundee. Registration is $30 and includes coffee, doughnuts, lunch, and the tour. Participants can earn credits for continuing education. Get details at go.osu.edu/2019MSR.

New Extension fact sheets

OSU Extension has several new fact sheets of interest to farmers. Grain Bin Hazards discusses how to recognize, avoid, and control potential grain bin hazards. Hand Signals for Agricultural Safety discusses how to learn and use the correct hand signals when working under noisy conditions. And Introduction To Agricultural Safety discusses ag safety training as a means to reduce injuries. These fact sheets and more are free and available to read at and download from ohioline.osu.edu.

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