“They have to start cutting back right now,” said Bill Weiss, a CFAES dairy nutritionist.

Cutting back doesn’t mean the animals will have to eat less. It means they might need to eat more alternatives to the higher amounts of fiber they typically get.

For example, if hay, which is high in fiber, normally makes up about half the diet for a dairy cow or other animal, some of that hay could be substituted with cottonseed. That’s what’s left of a cotton plant once the cotton fibers are removed, Weiss said.

Farmers might also feed their livestock additional grain and less of the fibrous portions of various plants, he offered. “It’s what we have to do,” Weiss said.

Before making any changes in what their animals are fed, livestock owners should consult with a nutritionist, he said.

While humans can live reasonably well without much fiber, which passes right through their bodies, cattle cannot. They need it. About one-third of their diet should be fiber, which provides them with energy and keeps their digestive systems healthy.

Many farmers across Ohio are considering different diet options for their livestock because the state’s hay supply is the lowest since the 2012 drought, and the fourth lowest in 70 years. Plus, the persistent spring rain during Ohio’s wettest yearlong period on record did not allow much hay to be cut in time for it to be of the highest quality.

Some of the options being considered for animal feed are grasses such as sorghum and sorghum-sudangrass, and other warm-season summer annuals. They can be harvested through early October and then fed to animals.

“These feed options are not as nutritious as conventional ones,” Weiss said. “But we can make them work.”

For more information on forage options, visit go.osu.edu/forages.

For support and resources on the farming crisis, visit go.osu.edu/agcrisis. #LeanOnYourLandGrant
Hemp holds potential for Ohio farmers

Ohio’s recent legalization of growing and processing hemp comes at a time when the state’s farmers might be especially interested in finding more sources of income.

Though costly to grow, hemp can be profitable, particularly as a source for cannabidiol (CBD) oil, an extract produced from hemp seeds and used to treat various illnesses, said Peggy Hall, CFAES agricultural and resource law field specialist.

Markets for Ohio-grown hemp products are just starting to be developed. Still, hemp holds potential for farmers in the state, Hall said.

An unprecedented number of Ohio farmers this year had to either plant late in the season or could not plant at all because of unrelenting spring rain and an extremely wet year.

“There’s a lot of interest in it,” Hall said. “Many see hemp as a possible high-dollar crop that can sustain a small farm and allow a larger farm to diversify.”

Before producers can grow hemp, they have to have a license from the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The licenses aren’t yet available because the U.S. Department of Agriculture has to finalize its internal regulations before approving state programs.

“So, Ohio farmers still can’t grow hemp yet,” Hall said.

State licenses are expected to become available before next spring when seed will go into the ground, she said.

Besides legalizing the growing and selling of hemp, the federal farm bill passed in December 2018 added hemp to the list of crops for which farmers can get crop insurance. The previous federal farm bill, which was passed in 2014, gave universities and other institutions the authority to grow it for research purposes.

Both hemp and marijuana come from cannabis plants. Hemp looks and smells like marijuana. But unlike marijuana, hemp is low in tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical that can trigger a high. Hemp has 0.3% THC while marijuana plants have much more than that, some as much as 30%.

In Ohio, growing hemp might be particularly appealing to tobacco farmers in the southern part of the state because the crop typically grows in fields that are not necessarily suited for row crops, said Lee Beers, an OSU Extension educator in Trumbull County. Plus hemp, if it’s used for CBD oil, needs to be dried out, and tobacco farmers usually have special barns for drying.

Though hemp could bring in extra income for farmers, it is unlikely to become a major cash crop in Ohio, replacing corn and soybeans, Beers said.

“Do a lot of research and then possibly wait before investing in growing hemp,” he said. “It might not be as large a cash crop as people think.”

Many see hemp as a possible high-dollar crop that can sustain a small farm and allow a larger farm to diversify.

Peggy Hall
CFAES agricultural and resource law field specialist
Job offers plentiful: Agricultural economics leads the way

In an industry that has been struggling with the impact of increased tariffs, low commodity prices, and weather extremes that delayed planting for some and prevented others from planting at all, the bright outlook for students majoring in agricultural fields of study was reinforced in a 2019 report issued by 24/7Wall St. and published in USA Today.

Looking at employment rates among the top 25 undergraduate majors, agricultural economics, at 0.74%, had the second lowest rate of unemployment.

Other agricultural majors that made the list included animal sciences, ranking 14th, with an unemployment rate of 1.52%. Soil science ranked 12th, with unemployment of 1.40%. Miscellaneous agriculture majors ranked ninth, with an unemployment rate of 1.35%.

THE INTERNSHIP-TO-JOB PIPELINE

Majoring in agribusiness and applied economics, Connor Frame was in the thick of finals in December 2018 when he learned he’d joined the ranks of CFAES students who get a job offer before graduating. As an agribusiness assistant at Heartland Bank in Columbus, Ohio, Frame worked part-time while finishing his undergraduate degree and then graduating in May. He credits a summer internship at Heartland two years prior with preparing him to hit the ground running.

Akron, Ohio, native Haylee Zwick completed two, four-month commodity merchandising internships with Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) before graduating last December. One month later, she was working full time as an ADM commodity merchandiser based in Columbus, Ohio.

Fayette County, Ohio, native Natalie Miller graduated in August and is already working as an applications engineer with Trimble Inc., near Denver, Colorado. She completed three different internships with ADM in Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri.

Megan Ritter of Lima, Ohio, graduated in May and began working full time that same month as an associate territory manager for Corteva Agriscience, the agricultural division of DowDuPont, in Findlay, Ohio. She completed internships with DuPont Pioneer in Ohio and Michigan.

Alumna Cassie Jo Arend has also benefited from the internship-to-job pipeline. As an undergraduate majoring in agricultural communication, she interned at Cooper Farms, a family-owned farm based in Northwest and West Central Ohio. Now, 12 years later, Arend leads a team of seven as the farm’s corporate communications manager.

A BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Career development is a lifelong process that begins the first year of college, said Adam Cahill, CFAES career development manager whose office offers career expos, workshops, and individualized career advising for students from enrollment to beyond graduation.

The most current CFAES career outcome data shows that 92.1% of graduates were employed or were continuing their education within six months of graduating, working for 349 different companies, of which, 78.1% were in Ohio. Students landed the most jobs at Ohio State, Cargill, Turner Construction, and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.
Ohio AgrAbility

Please consider a gift to the Ohio AgrAbility Program (#313467), which promotes independence for people in agriculture who want to continue to farm after experiencing a disabling condition by providing education, resources, and technical assistance.

Contact the CFAES Office of Advancement at 614-292-0473 or faesdevcom@osu.edu to learn more.

Water Quality Initiative has its leader

Ohio scientist Heather Raymond, a national leader on policies and responses regarding harmful algal blooms (HABs), joined CFAES in September as director of the college’s new Water Quality Initiative (waterquality.osu.edu). The initiative is aiming to expand the impact of CFAES research and outreach efforts on Ohio’s pressing water quality issues, HABs being one of them.

“I’m so excited to join such an amazing team,” said Raymond, who came to CFAES from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, where she was the agency’s state HAB coordinator and lead hydrogeologist. She was also recently elected to the National HAB Committee.

Read more at go.osu.edu/wqidirector.

Farming crisis

From historic rains that kept many growers out of their fields this year, to tariffs and higher commodity and feed prices, many Ohio farmers are struggling. To help with these challenges, CFAES created the Rural and Farm Stress Task Force, composed of experts who can connect farmers and their families with OSU Extension specialists or specialists within the community.

Working with Ohio State’s College of Social Work, the task force can offer resources for emotional support, including finding mental health providers, assisting farmers with management questions, and helping people find jobs off the farm.

For more information and available resources, visit go.osu.edu/agcrisis.

Dean’s Charity Steer Show a huge success

The inaugural Dean’s Charity Steer Show raised $152,000 to benefit the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Central Ohio.

Hosted by Cathann A. Kress, vice president for agricultural administration and dean of CFAES, the event was held on July 30, 2019, at the Ohio State Fair.

“I am so appreciative of the unbelievable support we received in our first year of doing this,” said Kress. “Our community came together to celebrate agriculture and children, both our 4-H youth as well as youth who benefit from the wonderful Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Ohio.”

The steer show included 13 teams of celebrity exhibitors paired with a 4-H member and his or her steer. The next show is set for August 4, 2020.