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# Ohio Country Messenger

Ohio Farmers Union - [www.ohfarmersunion.org](http://www.ohfarmersunion.org) - Volume 40, January 2012

## 2012 Should See a Revamped Ohio Grain Indemnity Law

By Ron Sylvester

A successful farmer-funded Ohio Department of Agriculture program will see its first changes in more than a decade during the first half of 2012 according to the ODA official who administers it.

The Ohio Grain Indemnity Fund, which protects producers from losing everything in grain elevator failures, is on track for a legislative overhaul sometime in the first quarter of 2012 according to the fund's administrator, David Simmons.

In December the fund's advisory commission met to consider a slate of proposed changes to the fund's section in the Ohio Revised Code. **You can**

**view a version of the law, marked up with proposed deletions and additions by checking out the OFU website.**

Major proposed changes include:

- An increase in the fund's cap from \$10 million to \$15 million
- An increase in the fund's "trigger" from \$8 million to \$10 million
- Removal of barley, oats, rye, grain sorghum, sunflower and speltz from the list of commodities covered by the fund

There are also several changes described as cleanup and clarification by ODA. Simmons said the Indemnity Fund has been a program beneficial to producers and that all changes are being made while "keeping

producers' interests at the forefront." He said some clarifications should also keep unnecessary litigation from occurring if an elevator goes bust.

The Indemnity Fund account is funded through farmers paying a one-half cent per bushel levy when they deliver grain to an elevator. The levy is collected until the fund's statutory cap is reached. Currently this cap is \$10 million. It's been years since farmers have had to pay the levy – once the cap is reached, the levy ends until the fund reaches the levy's trigger. The trigger is currently set at \$8 million.

Simmons said at the December meeting that the fund disbursed over \$4 million in 2011 after two

elevator failures in the state. The largest was the Archbold Elevator where farmers were paid \$3.4 million in claims. The Indemnity Fund currently holds \$8.3 million – just \$300,000 over the trigger.

With the fund so close to the trigger and corn and soybeans selling for double what they were the last time the cap and trigger were changed, ODA would like to see their proposed changes work their way through the Ohio General Assembly as soon as possible. The next time producers are paying the one-half cent per bushel levy, they could be building the fund up to a new cap of \$15 million.

Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee Chairman

*continued on page 6*

## Save the Date: OFU Legislative Day Set

Ohio Farmers Union Executive Director Linda Borton is asking members to mark March 21, 2012 on their calendars as OFU's Legislative Day at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus.

"As in the past, we will meet at 9 a.m. and set up teams for visits with representatives and senators," Borton said.

More information will be available for members at the 2012 OFU Convention in late January and in upcoming editions of the *Ohio Country Messenger*.

Borton said a reception for OFU members and legislators is planned for the evening of March 21 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. The planned site for the reception will be The Museum Gallery, formerly known as The Crypt, located in the lower level of the Capitol Building.

### *In this issue ...*

*From the President - p.2*

*Richard "Dick" Babb - p.3*

*From the Vice President - p.4*

*Election Year - p.6*

## From the President



*Roger Wise*

As another year begins there is always hope that the year ahead will be better than the one just past. That optimism is stronger no where than within the Ohio Farmers Union. It has manifested itself all across our state. At every winter county meeting I attended (and there were many), members talk about our future positively and are not dwelling on the past. They want our organization to be the voice in Columbus for sustainable family agriculture. They want to rejuvenate our youth programs. They want to be visible in their communities by conducting educational meetings on a variety of subjects (depending on which part of the state) that will benefit their neighbors and their neighborhoods. These efforts will hopefully generate new memberships as we demonstrate the enthusiasm and viability of our organization.

The passing of the years also means the passing of some of our members. While we mourn them all, 2011 marked the passing of three of our most distinguished lifetime members. Dick Babb, who held numerous local and state positions, most notably in my memory, as legislative director in the 1980's,

will be sorely missed. His commitment to our organization, an ability to analyze issues in a knowledgeable manner, a keen adeptness to work with people (on both side of the political aisle), and forge coalitions that, more often than not, resulted in positive accomplishments for all Ohioans.

Jim Schnipke also passed away in 2012. A county president, former executive committee member, who attended numerous fly-ins. His wit and generosity are qualities that endeared him to us and epitomized the character and essence of a farmer's union member.

Harold Bateson left us late in 2011. He was active in many capacities in the rural community, including for many years being president of the Wood County Farmers Union. Harold had an appointment to the state committee of the USDA Farm Service Agency. Harold will be missed by many.

The annual convention (January 27 & 28) is approaching rapidly. Please plan to attend. It promises to be an excellent annual meeting. Both of our US Senators (Brown and Portman) are invited, and a number of our congressional representatives. National President, Roger Johnson, will arrive Friday morning and be with us until Saturday morning, which should

give everyone an opportunity to meet and visit with him. We expect many state officeholders also (the Governor?), and ODNR Director Jim Zehringer, along with acting ODA Director, Dr. Forshey. Steve Maurer, David Drake and the FSA state committee will be represented as well.

David Simmons (ODA), director of the grain indemnity fund, will make a presentation about that fund and its status. There will also be a session on "Fracking" which continues to garner attention across more and more of the state. On Saturday, Senator Cliff Hite, Chairman of the Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Committee will bring remarks. The elementary posters will be displayed and the finalists in the high school and college scholarship contests will present their essays and winners will be announced after lunch. There will be policy and bylaw sessions, state officer elections, selection of delegates to national convention, and districts 2 & 4 will caucus to choose executive committee members.

Sandra and I wish you all a happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year and we look forward to seeing all of you at the annual meeting.

--Roger

## *Notice Of The Annual Meeting Of The Farmers Educational And Cooperative Union Of America, Ohio Division*

Pursuant to Article V. Section 2, of the Bylaws of this Association, you are hereby notified that the 78<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention of the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America, Ohio Division, will be held at the Columbus Airport Marriott, 1375 N. Cassady Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, January 27 – 28, 2012.

Registration will begin at 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 27, 2012. The Convention will begin at 12:00 noon, continuing until all business is complete.

To qualify for voting privileges, delegates must be registered by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 27, 2012, the time of the final Credentials Committee report.

*Roger Wise, President  
William Miller, Interim Secretary*

## *January 30 brings new medical and self certification requirements for commercial driver's licenses*

*By Ron Sylvester*

Beginning January 30, 2012, new federal regulations require ALL Commercial Driver License (CDL) holders to self-certify their type of commercial driving. This will be done at the time of issuance or renewal of the CDL. The Ohio BMV will not begin accepting the self-certification forms until January 30, 2012.

Failing to Self-Certify by completing the required BMV 2159 and/or submitting the required Medical Examiner's Certificate (MECERT) by January 30, 2014 will cause a cancellation of commercial driving privileges and prevent the issuance of a CDL until compliant.

All CDL holders MUST Self-Certify to one of four categories:

- Category 1: Non-Excepted INTERSTATE (across state lines) (Driver must submit completed MECERT)
- Category 2: Excepted INTERSTATE (across state lines)
- Category 3: Non-Excepted INTRASTATE (exclusively within Ohio)
- Category 4: Excepted INTRASTATE (exclusively within Ohio)

This change is in reference to new federal regulations.

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## *Richard "Dick" Babb*

*By Linda Jones Borton*

My husband Mel and I had the privilege of working with Dick while at Ohio Farmers Union, but we also considered him foremost as a friend. Dick's career with Farmers Union started in 1980 as a fieldman and extended over and included some work with the state legislature. It was during this time that Dick started working with the legislature on the grain indemnity fund that passed in 1983 that farmers in Ohio still benefit from. As Dick seen the positive results of working with the legislature and the great benefit it had for the farmers of the state that he asked to be assigned to the position as legislative director. He worked on way too many numerous pieces of legislation to name.

But standing out above the rest, is the legislation known as the Agricultural Linked Deposit program. The program still allows farmers to borrow money for farm operating expenses at local banks at a couple points below the normal interest rate. It was known then as the Emergency Agricultural Linked Deposit program, because agriculture funding was in an extremely tight position and an updated program is still available to farmers today. Dick worked with Ohio State Treasurer, Mary Ellen Withrow, to make this program happen for farmers across the state of Ohio. In his tenure as the legislative director for Ohio Farmers Union, Dick worked with many others. One of whom was Dwight Wise, as chairman of the Agricultural and Natural Resources

*continued on page 8*

## From OFU Vice President

Bill Miller

It has been a fascinating and challenging year as Vice President of the Ohio Farmers Union, as we have identified and explored serious emerging issues and vital concerns of Ohio's farm families. I have had the responsibility and opportunity to investigate issues related to energy, environment and the economy, for our membership and our rural communities. Moreover, I have had the privilege of working with the National Farmers Union on energy initiatives, the BlueGreen Alliance and other groups on clean energy and alternative energy job creation, the Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association on healthful food and innovative farming practices, and the Coalition for a Prosperous America on trade and tax issues.

With the National Farmers Union we worked to promote energy independence, National Renewable Electricity Standards, alternative energy development, increased ethanol and biodiesel development, and economic opportunities for family farmers. Our work with the non-partisan Coalition For A Prosperous America culminated in a very successful Economic Summit this fall held at the Dayton Convention Center. As the recently elected co-chair of their Task Force, I expect to be involved this year in extensive educational and advocacy efforts to impact trade and tax policies that position agriculture favorably in an increasingly global arena.

Our farmers are the most efficient and productive farmers in the world. And our Farmers Union, with its emphasis on family values, effective business practices, wholesome foods and stewardship of the land, continues to provide strong leadership on the significant agricultural issues confronting our State and Nation. I am privileged and proud to be the Ohio Farmers Union Vice President and look forward to continuing my service as Vice President, with God's help, to increase our impact on State and National policy and legislation for the betterment of our farm families. I look forward to working with our President, Roger Wise, and Interim Executive Director, Linda Borton, to advance OFU goals and extend our vital mission.

### ***Ohio Farmers Union 78<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention***

Convention Registration Form

January 27 – 28, 2012

Columbus Airport Marriott, Columbus, OH

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the names of additional registrants [spouse and/or child(ren)]

Name 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Name 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Name 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Name 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fees (includes Friday Banquet and Saturday Luncheon):

Attendees \_\_\_\_\_ x \$65.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to *Ohio Farmers Union*

Please complete this form with registration payment and return to:

Linda Borton, Ohio Farmers Union, P.O. Box 363, Ottawa, Ohio 45875

**If you are planning on attending, please call 1-800-321-3671**

## *Farmland Preservation Event Highlights Marketing Your Farm*

One of the best ways to preserve Ohio's farmlands is for family farmers to understand and exploit their market opportunities and keep the family farm in agricultural production.

A breakout session at the 12th Annual Ohio Farmland Preservation Summit put on by the Ohio State University Extension provided Ohio farmers, planners and activists with a few tools and ideas to help farmers in Ohio market what they produce.

The Ohio Farmers Union was a sponsor of and exhibitor at the Preservation Summit.

Mike Hogan, an Extension Educator and Associate Professor at OSU, presented the breakout session, *Local Food Business & Community Resources*. Hogan also serves as the statewide Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator and the Local Foods Network Leader for OSU Extension. Additionally, he serves as the Ohio Coordinator for the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. Hogan specializes in sustainable agriculture and small farm issues including direct marketing, local food systems and alternative crop and production systems.

Hogan's first message is that farmers shouldn't get hung up on the definition of "local."

"What's local is almost always in the eye of the beholder," Hogan said, explaining that different buyers define buying locally different. Some buyers begin in their home county when making decisions or sourcing food. If they can't find what they want there, they expand their search into neighboring counties and perhaps even statewide.

The moral of the story for small farms is that the produce they are growing or the grass-fed beef they are raising may be in demand from a wholesale or consumer buyer outside of what the farmer believes is local.

To that end, Hogan introduced three tools that can be used by farmers, farmers market managers or other local food activists: Ohio MarketMaker, Ohio MarketReady and Meet the Buyers.

One way to preserve farmland is to sell more of your product through Ohio MarketMaker.

### **Ohio MarketMaker**

MarketMaker was originally developed as an online marketing resource to give Illinois farmers greater access to regional markets by linking them with processors, retailers, consumers and other food supply chain participants. Since its inception, it has expanded tremendously and is currently one of the most extensive collections of searchable food industry related data in the country, containing nearly 500,000 profiles of farmers and other food related enterprises in sixteen states.

MarketMaker is a free and easy to use Web-based resource. Users of the system are either buyers or producers. As a producer, a farmer builds a profile in the system containing information about his or her farm, crops and livestock. They key is to let the buyers know what you have to sell. Farmers can show their affiliations and link to the farmers markets or other places they sell their products. There is also a 'Market Place' where sellers can post information about occasional products for sale.

Buyers can set up similar profiles, only their information is targeted at what they're looking to purchase. Whether a user is on the buyer or seller side, they may use the tools in the software to find opportunities to connect with people who are either selling what they need or buying or what they have to offer. Users can also find market data which comes from the community of users and from federal demographic and food

consumption data. Users are also able to map their data. For instance, a buyer may produce a map of the closest farms in their area selling organic leafy greens.

### **Ohio MarketReady**

Hogan used a quote from renowned management and business expert, the late Peter Drucker: "Marketing is not only broader than selling, it is the whole business seen from the customer's point of view."

And that's the point of Ohio MarketReady. This program, also managed by the OSU Extension was incubated in the state of Kentucky to great success and is catching on in Ohio. Made up of workshops and a set of tools for producers to use to implement best marketing practices, MarketReady begins with farmers analyzing their own business goals and how to line them up with a potential customer base. In one-day workshops, extension educators take family farmers through the basics of marketing dealing with subjects from product selection to signage, delivery, promotion, regulatory and insurance issues and how to get to know your know your (potential) customers.

The workshops' cost varies due to location expenses, but includes lunch and should be in the neighborhood of \$75 per person. The next workshops are tentatively planned for late January through February 2012 in Athens, Columbus, Youngstown, Cincinnati, Toledo and Cleveland. Hogan said the marketing team at OSU Extension is also open to scheduling workshops by working with Ag groups whose members could put together the numbers of participants to make an event work. Julie Fox may be contacted at fox.264@osu.edu for information.

### **Meet the Buyers**

Meet the Buyers is an extension program that has enjoyed some success in the past, but is somewhat

*continued next page*

## Marketing Your Farm

continued from page 5

currently limited due to state budget cuts. The aim of the program is to sponsor events where institutional or wholesale buyers set up shop in a trade show like atmosphere and producers can interact with them to find out what they would need to do to sell the likes of broadline food service distributors like Sysco or large-scale food service operations like OSU's cafeteria system.

Hogan said that budget cuts haven't killed the program, but the events are likely to be fewer and feature fewer buyers.

## OFU Delegates to Elect Officers at 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

Ohio Farmers Union convention delegates will elect a president and vice-president at the 78<sup>th</sup> annual Ohio Farmers Union convention held January 27–28, 2012 at the Columbus Marriott Airport, Columbus, Ohio.

Pursuant to the OFU bylaws, Article V, 6: "The state president and one vice president shall be elected by secret ballot on each even numbered year and each shall serve a term of office of two (2) years. The term of the officers shall commence at the conclusion of the convention."

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## Election Year:

To the Farmers Union Delegates at the annual convention of the Ohio Farmers Union:

This year at the convention state officers will be elected. I am a candidate to again be your state president. With Vice President, Bill Miller, it is an honor and privilege to serve OFU as your president. If you reelect me for a final term, I will continue to represent your organization to the best of my ability at the local, state and national levels.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Roger Wise

To the Farmers Union Delegates at the Annual Convention of the Ohio Farmers Union:

I am a candidate to serve again as your State Vice President. As I work along with President Roger Wise and the OFU Board, I have the opportunity to help promote our family farm values and the interests of our members. If I am reelected, I pledge to continue to hear the concerns and positions of our members and represent our Ohio Farmers Union with commitment and energy.

Sincerely,

William (Bill) Miller

## Ohio Grain Indemnity Law

continued from page 1

Sen. Cliff Hite attended the December meeting of the Indemnity Advisory Commission and pledged his support for ODA's efforts to strengthen the fund. Also at the meeting were OFU President Roger Wise, OFU Executive Director Linda Borton, OFU state legislative representative Ron Sylvester and longtime OFU member and activist Mel Borton.

"The Ohio Farmers Union is essentially very happy with what we've seen from both ODA and the Indemnity Advisory Commission. The proposed changes recognize that prices are higher today than ten years ago – meaning that family farmers have a lot more on the line, should their local elevator fail," said Wise.

"We believe that increased values for the cap and trigger are prudent given higher commodity prices and are respectful of not tying up more of farmers' capital than necessary."

Wise said he does have some concern about removing some commodities such as barley and oats from the protected list of commodities, but understands that the cost to elevators and ODA to administer the program for items with little or no market in Ohio is too much. He said that if market conditions change in Ohio, the law allows the ODA director to add commodities to the protected list without further legislation.

The Indemnity Advisory Commission will meet again on February 8 at 10 a.m. at the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture in Reynoldsburg. It's expected that more will be known regarding the timeline for legislation at that meeting.



*Pictured: Wyandot County Farmers Union member Robert Bear, Secretary-Treasurer Rosella Bear, Sue Culver, Vice President Fred Culver, President Joel Castanien, and OFU President Roger Wise enjoying dinner before their annual meeting.*



*Pictured: Henry County Farmers Union Secretary-Treasurer Linda Riefers, President Tony Giesige and Vice President Jonathan Giesige presented the original Henry County Farmers Union charter dated May 7, 1934 to the Ohio Farmers Union.*



*Pictured: Miami Valley Farmers Union President William (Bill) Miller, Sibyl Miller, OFU President Roger Wise, and Executive Committee Member Joe Logan at their annual meeting.*



*Pictured: Huron/Lorain County Farmers Union President Tony Dellisanti, OFU President Roger Wise and Vice-President Fred Leimeister at their annual meeting.*

### ***Youth Opportunities***

Do you know a college student looking for an internship? NFU's internships are unique. Our paid internships offer real working experience on Capitol Hill. Apply now for the summer of 2012. National Farmers Union is now accepting applications at [www.nfu.org/education/internships](http://www.nfu.org/education/internships). Extended internships are available during the fall, winter, and spring sessions.



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 www.ohfarmersunion.org  
 1011 N. Defiance St., P.O. Box 363  
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 AND GENE ZENZ

***Richard “Dick” Babb***

*continued from page 3*

Committee in the Ohio House of Representatives. Dwight asked me to relay to Dick’s family and friends that he had the opportunity and the pleasure to work with Dick Babb. “He was always “up-to-date” on legislation that benefited the family farmers and also issues that affected the entire state. He was well acquainted with the members of the Ohio General Assembly. That relationship was of immense value. It made possible the approval of a number of bills that needed the necessary votes. Dick was a person of integrity and honesty. He had many, many friends.”

When Dick retired, Farmers Union threw a kind of big going away party for him as OFU legislative director. There was a procession of representatives and senators from both political parties to wish him well. It was no surprise to anyone that there was only one or two of all state representatives and state senators that didn’t stop in to thank him for his assistance and wished him well as he went back to his normal and regular career as an auctioneer, realtor and community minded person here in southern Ohio. He will be remembered by many for his concern and passion for people. He was known throughout the state as a sharing and giving person. After his going away party, everyone thought his legislative days were over, but Farmers Union got into a crisis and again called for Dick’s services which he agreed to and came back for many months and did a superlative job.

As executive director of the Ohio Farmers Union, my members wish to convey the great love and appreciation for this very caring person. This did not end my relationship with Dick Babb and his wife Ann whom we care for equally as a team. She and Dick made a great team as they continued to place the welfare of other rural people as one of their top priorities in their lives. And we know that Ann will continue the work that she and Dick had been doing for many years. He continued to be involved in his local community and acted as the secretary/treasurer of the Clinton County Farmers Union. Some of us even cared for him more as we shared his compassion for family agriculture in the rural community and every year we continue to love and care for Mr. Dick Babb as one of the very finest.

Tribute to Dick Babb at his memorial service on January 7, 2012

Note: The Dick Babb Memorial Scholarship was established for students attending college in the field of agriculture – Clinton County Farmers Union Dick Babb Memorial Scholarship, P. O. Box 49, Wilmington, Ohio 45177.

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More and more people are using this helpful tool to communicate and stay in touch. If you are interested in receiving information from the Ohio Farmers Union by e-mail, just send your name, county and e-mail address to:  
 lborton@ohfarmersunion.org.