OSU offering advice for farmers facing uncertain times

Most of the agriculture industry in our area is based on grain production — corn, soybean, and wheat. Grain production during the winter months involves buying decisions for inputs and participation in educational and informational programs.

The agricultural industry is once again facing uncertain times as we move into 2018. Grain prices have been weak for the past several years, and the trend is expected to continue in 2018, unless a major event affects the world supply, such as a major drought.

There is little a farmer can do to change the grain price. Thus, they have to evaluate the value of purchased inputs. Inputs would include seed, fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.

Farmers are bombarded by marketing and sales personnel to purchase products that will “make them more money and save them time” to influence their decisions. Companies often give significant price discounts if a farmer will purchase seed, fertilizer, and other input products this time of year.

Farmers have to sort through the marketing hype to determine if the promoted product will work and be a good economic investment. Information is often limited, and research presented may be from the selling company’s perspective.

One of the important roles of the Ohio State University Extension is to provide research-based information to farmers on these products and technology. This information is based on university studies that have no financial gain from the results or conclusions.

The Hancock County Extension office will be offering four programs in Findlay during January and February to assist farmers in their input buying process. The latest university research will be given on the benefits of various input products.

All of the programs will be free to the public, but the Extension office requests individuals to register several days before each program for room and handout preparation.

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