Farmer training programs coming

Farmers often fulfill their continuing education requirements for various regulatory licenses during the winter months. Most of these licenses or certificates have to be renewed every three years.

One of the more common renewal programs is the private pesticide applicator license, which must be renewed every three years. Before the license expiration date, farmers have to complete three hours of recertification training.

The recertification hours must include at least one hour in core, which is an umbrella term for general pesticide safety, use, and regulations. The remaining two hours include categories of specialization, such as grain and cereal crops, forage crops and livestock, fruit and vegetables, and/or greenhouse crops.

In addition to private applicator license renewal, 2018 will be the first year that some farmers will have to renew their fertilizer applicator certification. Farmers will have to attend a class and complete one hour of training for renewal.

Many farmers have both a private applicator license and a fertilizer applicator certification. For these farmers, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has synchronized the expiration year for their pesticide license and fertilizer certificate.

Ohio State University Extension is responsible for providing the continuing education programs in each county. Agriculture Extension educators are given research updates each year to develop tailored training programs for their given counties. As a result, training may vary from county to county.

However, all Extension programs will emphasize effective management strategies that enhance crop productivity, encourage responsible use of pesticide products, and promote safe practices for applicators, the general public, and the environment.

OSU Extension-Hancock County will offer a morning and evening program for farmers to renew their private applicator license and fertilizer applicator certification. The morning program will be from 8 a.m. to noon on Jan. 30 and the evening program, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 20. Both will be at the Hancock County Agriculture Service Center, 7868 County Road 140, Findlay.

The fertilizer training will be the first hour of each program for farmers who only need fertilizer recertification. Pesticide training will be the last three hours for farmers who only need pesticide recertification.

For only the pesticide training, the registration fee is $35 and for only the fertilizer training, the registration fee is $10. A $5 discount will be given to individuals taking both training programs. Pre-registration is requested by calling the Hancock County Extension Office at 419-422-3851 or emailing lentz.38@osu.edu.

Individuals who pre-register a week before the pesticide program will be given a copy of the 2018 Ohio Weed Guide. Payment for the training can be made at the door by check or cash.

Farmers who have conflicts with the Hancock County dates can attend training sessions in other counties. Dates and locations of these meetings may be found at https://pested.osu.edu/privaterecertification.

Late last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency added restrictions to dicamba formulations used to control weeds in genetically modified soybeans to minimize the potential for drift. Trade names for these herbicide products include Engenia, FeXapan, and XtendiMax.

These products have been newly designated as “restricted use” products and require special annual training for use on soybean fields. This is a new regulatory requirement for farmers. Private pesticide applicator recertification programs are not approved to give the training. Nor will the dicamba training count as recertification hours for private applicator licenses.

In Ohio, a representative of BASF, Dupont or Monsanto will be responsible for the dicamba training and certification. Currently there are three opportunities to get the training in Findlay.

BASF will have two sessions on Jan. 25 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and one on March 8 at the Sterling Center from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Legacy Farmers Cooperative is hosting the March 8 program and will provide a lunch prior to the training. Registration begins at 12:30 p.m. RSVP to Legacy Farmers Cooperative by March 2 for that program. There is no charge for the training.

Dates and locations of other training programs may be found on the manufacturer’s website for each product or go to pested.osu.edu, the Ohio State University pesticide safety education website. The OSU website also has a complete list of restrictions for the new dicamba formulations.

Individuals who need to obtain fertilizer applicator certification for the first time may attend a three-hour training program on March 8 in the morning at the Sterling Center. Registration begins at 8:30 and actual training will be 9 a.m. to noon.

OSU Extension will provide the training. There is no registration fee. Legacy Farmers Cooperative is hosting the program and will have a lunch after the training. Please RSVP Legacy Farmers to participate in the fertilizer program by March 2.

Farmers participate in the pesticide education and fertilizer certification programs to do their part in being good land stewards, to follow sustainable practices, and to improve the water quality of the Lake Erie watershed.

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Lentz can be heard with Vaun Wickerham on weekdays at 6:35 a.m. on WFIN, at 5:43 a.m. on WKXA-FM, and at 5:28 a.m. at 106.3 The Fox.