Frequently asked questions about new CAUV application

Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) is a real estate tax assessment program that allows farmland to be taxed on an agricultural production value, rather than the full real estate market value.

Ohio voters passed a referendum for the CAUV option in November 1973, and it became law after the Ohio General Assembly passed Senate Bill 423 in April 1974.

In most situations, CAUV results in a considerably lower property tax bill for owners of farmland compared with the market value rate. Landowners must meet certain criteria for land to qualify for CAUV.

However, in the past several years, the CAUV formula caused a significant increase in property taxes even though farm income had dropped significantly during the same period. Farmers in some parts of Ohio saw a 200 to 300 percent increase in CAUV property valuations.

To address this concern, former state Sen. Cliff Hite introduced Senate Bill 36, which created CAUV reforms that would more closely tie farmland taxes to actual farm income, and change the method of evaluating conservation land in the CAUV program. The bill became law last summer.

The state responded to the law by creating a new CAUV form incorporating the reform changes. Farmers may have trouble with the new form since it asks for more detailed information than the previous form. County auditor offices are assisting farmers in understanding and completing the new CAUV application.

Charity Rauschenberg, Hancock County auditor, has prepared the following “frequently asked questions” to assist Hancock County individuals in completing the new CAUV application. Property owners in adjacent counties need to check with their respective county auditor office since the protocols may be slightly different.

Does the owner have to fill out the form if nothing has changed?
Yes. Updates for Hancock County will be prepared in 2019, payable in 2020. This information will assist in the process of preparing the eligible properties for the changes made to the Ohio CAUV program.

If the requested information is not provided, the property owner will be contacted by the Hancock County Auditor’s Office via email, telephone, or mail to complete the form. The form may be found at the following web address: http://co.hancock.oh.us/docs/auditordataprov forms/dte/dte_form_109a.pdf?sfvrsn=989726c4_2

If an owner has more than 10 acres, does the information have to be filled out?
Yes. All lines that are applicable to the agricultural property need to be completed.

Do you have to match parcel number total acres in section 3 with total land use acres in section 6?
Yes. The acre total needs to be the same for section 3 and section 6.

What is a homesite?
A homesite only includes a house and does not include outbuildings.

If an owner sends in a conservation program contract copy and soil map, will they need to do this every year?
Only if the contract or another factor changes for the property.

What’s the difference between noncommercial and commercial woods and timber?
Commercial refers to forest land with the intent to sell as timber, and would most likely be under a forest stewardship management program rather than CAUV.

Noncommercial woods can qualify as CAUV as long as the woods is adjacent to CAUV agriculture production land and is less than 25 percent of the total parcel.

Where does one get the information to fill out the form?
In the REGIS section of the county auditor’s webpage. Once in this page, select the search function and enter the parcel number. Once the parcel number has been found, an agricultural tab will appear that has the detail information by acres.

For example, CR is for Crops, RD is for road, WO is for woods, HS is for homesite, etc. The web page with the search function may be found at http://regis.co.hancock.oh.us/Search.aspx. Select the parcel option.

What if the USDA Farm Service Agency and the Hancock County Auditor’s Office have different numbers for tillable acres, which number will be used?
Once the auditor has been provided documents by the owner for the conservation programs, such as the contract and maps, the number should match.

What if I cash rent land, how do I fill out the form?
The initial application should have the contact information on it and be on record at the auditor’s office. If this information has changed, please inform the auditor’s office with the new contact information.

The state, and not county auditor offices, is responsible for the new form and CAUV calculations. However, county auditor offices are responsible for county valuation.

The Hancock County Auditor’s Office will assist any property owner in completing the new form. The office can be reached by calling 419-424-7820 or 419-424-7015, or stop by the office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

To qualify for CAUV, the renewal application has to be completed before Monday, March 5, 2018.

Lentz is extension educator for agriculture and natural resources for The Ohio State University Extension Service in Hancock County. He can be reached at 419-422-3851 or via email at lentz.38@osu.edu.

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