Farm Bureau plans ATV Ag Tour

Prior to harvest, the agriculture community has many activities for the public to enjoy and to learn about the industry. Something new this year is the Hancock County Farm Bureau ATV Ag Tour, where individuals bring their own ATV and form a caravan going from stop to stop.

The caravan will gather at the McComb Legacy Farmers Cooperative Agronomy Center at 3264 Ohio 613, McComb, on Saturday, Sept. 8. Registration begins at 8 a.m. A short safety demonstration and rules of the road will be given at 8:30.

The tour will begin with an overview of precision agriculture at the Legacy facilities. Farmers are using this technology to be more precise in fertilizer placement on fields, to reduce the loss of nutrients. Legacy Farmers Cooperative is one fertilizer retailer using this equipment as part of its 4R Nutrient Stewardship Program.

From the Legacy location, the caravan will travel to Stateler Family Farms, http://statelerfamilyfarms.com. This farm of nearly 600 acres raises corn, soybeans and wheat and also includes 7,200 pigs housed in two finishing barns and one nursery barn.

The nursery barn holds piglets that are recently weaned that need special care until they get larger. The finishing barns hold older pigs that will remain in the barn until they reach market weight.

For the health and safety of the pigs, individuals are not allowed in the barns. Unlike most hog operations, the Statelers have a great viewing window where individuals can see the pigs in one of the barns.

In addition to the hog operation, the Statelers have committed 243 acres of land to the Blanchard River Demonstration Farms Network.

The Blanchard River Demonstration Farms were established to show the public practices that farmers use to improve water quality by preventing nutrient loss from crop fields. The Stateler site is the only demonstration farm that includes applying manure to fields.

Participants will be able to see how these practices reduce nutrient loss, particularly phosphorus and nitrogen. Some of these systems are part of Ohio State University research to quantify how much benefit a farmer will receive from a specific practice.

Practices that can be seen on the farm include a wetland with pollinator habitat, variable rate manure management, phosphorus removal beds, edge of field nutrient monitoring, drainage water management, cover crops, animal mortality composting facility, and a home septic replacement system.

A third activity at the Stateler Farm involves a demonstration of manure application and fertilizer injection equipment.

Roger and Jason Bower will demonstrate manure handling equipment by Rockview Custom Pumping. Duane and Anthony Stateler will demonstrate their manure tanker and application equipment.

Mike Kryling of Sugar Ridge Farms will demonstrate deep soil cultivation equipment. Before this type of equipment, farmers had to surface-apply phosphorus to avoid plowing their fields. Plowing may increase soil erosion and surface applications may increase nutrient runoff. This new technology may improve both situations.

The last stop for the ATV tour is Rader Farms and M+R Metal Works, operated by Max and Roger Rader. The Raders operate one of the few beef feedlots in the county.

During the stop, individuals will see and learn about the cattle, feeding systems, and waste handling facilities.

The Raders will also show their metal fabrication business.

Individuals will see how they create signs and other metal products. This is an example of how an innovative farm family has created other income during the down times of the agriculture industry.

After the Rader Farms stop, the ATV caravan will return to the McComb Legacy Farmers Cooperative facility for lunch. The program including lunch will end at 1 p.m.

The cost of the tour is $20 per ATV, which includes lunch. Pre-registration is required before Sept. 4 by calling the Farm Bureau at 419-447-3091 or stopping by the Farm Bureau exhibit in the poultry building at the Hancock County Fair, just east of the beef barn.

All ATV owners should take advantage of seeing some of Hancock County’s agriculture industry at work and join the caravan on Sept. 8, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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