

## Ohio State's 2013–2014 Agricultural Policy and Outlook Series Is Coming to a County Near You

■ BY NICOLE PIERRON RASUL

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—Crop producers will find 2014 to be tougher than the past few years as the combination of no growth in ethanol demand and expanded global crop acreage means that markets are moving back toward matching supply and demand, an expert from Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences said.

"We are already seeing lower prices come into the market, and unless U.S. or South American acreage declines, those prices are likely to move lower," said Matt Roberts, an Ohio State University Extension economist.

Roberts will discuss his findings during a series of county meetings in late 2013 and early 2014 as part of the college's 2014 Agricultural Policy and Outlook Conference Series.

The meetings will feature presentations by experts from the college's Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics on issues the agricultural community should expect in 2014, including policy changes, key issues and market behavior with respect to farm, food and energy resources, and the environment.

Dates for the county meetings can be found at [go.osu.edu/2014outlook](http://go.osu.edu/2014outlook). The meetings are open to the public.

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## Ohioans Urged to Join Ohio Saves Program

■ BY MARTHA FILIPIC

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—More than half of Americans don't have an emergency fund. Only 37 percent have tried to figure out their retirement savings needs. More than 40 percent believe they have too much debt.

While these findings from the 2012 National Financial Capability Study aren't surprising to Betsy DeMatteo, they are trends she would like to see reversed.

That's why DeMatteo, an Ohio State University Extension educator in family and consumer sciences, is coordinating the effort behind Ohio Saves, a statewide campaign to encourage people to save money, pay down debt and build wealth. OSU Extension is the outreach arm of Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

The Ohio Saves program is free. Anyone can sign up by going to [ohiosaves.org](http://ohiosaves.org) and clicking on "enroll in Ohio Saves today."

"All you need is your savings goal and an email address," DeMatteo said.

Ohio Saves is part of America Saves, a national non-profit organization headed by the Consumer Federation of America. To date, 347,600 people have signed up with America Saves, pledging to save a specific amount of money for a certain period of time to reach a specific savings goal.

"Research shows that if you make your savings goal specific, if you give it a deadline, and if you write it down, then you're much more likely to achieve it," she said. "So, just the fact that you're signing up to be an Ohio Saver will help you achieve your goal."

DeMatteo wants every Ohioan to know that they can start saving, no matter how low their income nor how high their debt.

"Start wherever you are," she said. "If you're really hard-pressed, you can start saving by putting your change in a jar."

"You'd be amazed at how fast that adds up. If you save just a handful of change each day, you'll have a good start toward an emergency fund by the end of the year."

Beyond that, it always helps to make a savings deposit first, before paying bills, DeMatteo said.

"Whatever you think you can save, put that aside first," she said. "If you wait until the end of your pay period, it will definitely be spent."

"Even if you have to tap into your savings in between paychecks, if you deposit it first, you're more likely to save more money no matter how much it is."

Participants in the program have access to free resources that will encourage them to save money and reduce debt.

"Savers receive a monthly email newsletter with savings strategies from national experts," DeMatteo said. "They also have access to online tracker tools, encouragement and motivation. It's all about an individual saver making their own savings goal and being encouraged and motivated toward that goal."

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## OSU Extension and Ohio Sea Grant Help Toledo-area Business Association Create Business Retention and Expansion Plan

■ BY CHRISTINA DIERKES

OHIO SEA GRANT

TOLEDO, Ohio—Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Sea Grant's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program has helped a Toledo-based business association create a business retention and expansion initiative that organizers there say can help the region keep more businesses in the area and help them expand.

The Point Place Business Association, which is a group of more than 140 Toledo-area businesses that work to promote the business interests of the Toledo Point Place and Shoreland communities, recently completed the initiative that will focus on developing an economic development plan and vision for the future of the Point Place neighborhood, said Joe Lucente, an OSU Extension and Ohio Sea Grant educator.

Lucente, who works as a program consultant for OSU Extension's Business Retention and Expansion program, along with Ohio Sea Grant, worked with the business group to help craft the initiative.

The initiative will focus on developing an economic development plan and vision for the future of Point Place, Lucente said.

"Attraction of new businesses is a highly visible aspect of most economic development programs, but businesses that already exist in a community can account for up to 80 percent of all new jobs in local employment," Lucente said. "Through this initiative, the business association will be able to improve services, grow existing businesses, and retain and improve quality of life in Point Place."



From left to right: Paul Syring, Toledo deputy mayor; Mike Bell, Toledo mayor; Bob Pulhug, BRE Task Force member; Joe Lucente, OSU Sea Grant/OSU Extension; Len Syrek, BRE coordinator; and Bob Kneisley, BRE Task Force member.

The business association recently completed a survey of 112 existing area businesses about their perceptions, plans and concerns regarding their operation in the community, to better understand how to keep businesses in the area and help them expand, he said.

The survey found that:

- Retaining these businesses helps to keep 240.5 full-time-equivalent positions in the community.

- Respondents expect to create 35–44 new jobs, meaning the potential addition of up to \$29,997 in income tax revenue for the city and up to \$1,333,200 in personal income to the Toledo economy.

"What we want to do is keep working with the community to nurture those lines of communication, to help form an economic development plan based on what they found out from the business surveys," Lucente said.

Launched in 1986, the Business Retention and Expansion program has worked with community leaders in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties, helping them prioritize, plan and implement community development initiatives. In the past five years alone, the program is credited with creating 897 new jobs and retaining 1,365. That accounts for \$86 million in personal income generated.

The program provides the resources, training and tools to develop the capacity of the community to better understand its economy. In addition to enhanced community capacity to address critical community issues, other outcomes of such community engagement include a streamlined business retention and expansion process that enables local leaders to focus on planning, action and results; a database of local information; and a more robust local economy.

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