‘Cattle’ starts ag series

By Christopher Selmek

WEST LIBERTY
Dr. Annie Specht, from the Ohio State University’s Department of Agricultural Communication, Education and Leadership, and Dr. Steve Boyles, from OSU’s Department of Animal Science, gave presentations before about 40 local cattle producers at a symposium in the West Liberty-Salem High School cafeteria on Dec. 15. Specht’s presentation was titled “Consumer Perceptions of Cultured Meat” and focused on the marketing aspects of scientific efforts to create edible protein in a lab, while Boyles spoke about “Feeding Quality Cattle” and gave advice about how to raise the best quality of beef.

Specht was scheduled to assist Dr. Joy Rumble, who authored one of the studies cited in her presentation, but agreed to speak in her stead so that Rumble could attend a family holiday event. Her presentation was about public reactions to the idea of eating meat grown in a lab, although the science behind it is not yet commercially viable.

“Public sentiment is everything,” Specht said. “I teach communications, I teach marketing, and students sometimes forget that what the public thinks of you is what is reality. Regardless of how you perceive your reality, and so if public sentiment is with you then that’s really good, if public sentiment is against you...”
Glen Helen offers winter activities

By Dorothy J. Countryman
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YELLOW SPRINGS — Glen Helen Nature Preserve at Antioch College offers a number of programs throughout the year. During December and January the Trailside Museum at 405 Cory Street in Yellow Springs has been participating in Project Feederwatch, a citizen-science initiative of the Cornell Ornithology Lab. The objective of this program is to track birds visiting the feeders at the center, but also to educate visitors about the different species that are common to Ohio feeders during the winter. The next of these programs will take place Jan. 18 and 19, Feb. 5 and 19, and Feb. 15 and 16, at 10:30 a.m. each day. No reservations are required, but there is a $5 parking fee in the lot that adjoins both Trailside and the Nature Shop.

Hikers are invited to join the New Year, New Habits Hike group for a weekly hike at the center. The distance will be adjusted to accommodate the group each week. This program will take place Jan. 17 and 24 at 4:30 p.m. and will leave from the Trailside Museum. It’s free but donations are appreciated. Tea Time at Trailside will welcome visitors to sample teas made with locally and “ethically harvested” edibles, Jan. 18 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Reservations are not required. Suggested donation, $1.

For something a bit different, plan to attend the Reptile Romp, Jan. 23 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. During this hour and a half, the reptile Animal Ambassadors that live at the Trailside Museum will be roaming outside their enclosures. A special program for youngsters, aged 3-10, is planned Saturday, Feb. 16, when the park’s staff will lead the children on a journey through the Glen to learn about the creatures that inhabit the park. This session will begin with story time at the museum at 1 p.m. and will end about 2:30 p.m. Finally, February will close with a Raptor Photography program on Sunday, Feb. 24, at 9 a.m. This two-hour session will offer visitors the chance to photograph the park’s owls and hawks, and also the owls that live at the park’s Raptor Center. Appropriate for beginner to advanced photographers, this is a ticketed event and the cost is $30.

For information about these and other programs, contact Glen Helen by phone at 937-769-1902 or visit the website at www.glenhelen.org to make a reservation.

OSU’s Dr. Amie Specht discusses consumer perceptions of cultured meats on Dec. 11.

OSU’s Dr. Steve Boogie discusses feeding quality cattle on Dec. 13.

"In general, you want the cattle to eat more as they go on, so we can use a step program or things like that to increase the cattle intake," he said. "One of the key things we need to know in nutrition is how much they’re going to eat, then we’ll figure out the requirements we need to run. In good feed bunk management you want to deliver something consistent... Occasionally we like to go out and try Chinese, Mexican or Indian food to change things up... you don’t want to do that with cattle. They are quite fine with just consistent product and consistent quality feed."

He noted that the feed to gain ratio was a very economically important number for cattle raisers because it means that you are paying for less food to obtain better quality meat. He also reviewed different types of fat and said that the best kind of fat, acetate, was essentially made of vinegar.

Booyes spent most of his presentation discussing cattle behavior, which had a high level of heritability and can be changed through breeding selection. In his study, Booyes discovered that more aggressive cattle produced less meat than well-behaved cattle, and that the meat of aggressive cattle was generally tougher and darker.

Education

This event was part of the Champaign County Agricultural Association’s winter speaker series, which has several other events planned in early 2019. On Jan. 3, agriculturists are invited to the Champaign County Community Center at 11 a.m. for a discussion about Ohio’s changing climate and implications for agriculture. On Feb. 7 at the same time and location, there will be a wind energy project update. A third event is planned for March, with details to be determined. For more information about the speaker series or other agricultural events, please contact OSU’s agriculture and natural resource extension office at 937-342-3000, or Douridas, at Douridas.8@osu.edu or call 007-464-1206.

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