



## **Invited Remarks on The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences**

Joint Hearing of Ohio Senate and House Agriculture Committees 2023 Ohio State Fair  
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Good morning, I would like to thank Chairman Schaffer, Chairman Creech, Vice Chair Landis, Vice Chair Klopfenstein, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee and the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee for giving me the opportunity to address you today. I am Dr. Cathann Kress, and I serve as Vice President of Agricultural Administration and Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University.

The College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) is one college with multiple components, united in our purpose but with different strategies and missions. As a land grant, we are part of a cooperative structure which includes key partners all dedicated to integrating research, education, and Extension to improve the food and agricultural sectors, the environment, and the quality of people's lives. We educate not only college students but over a million individuals across the lifespan. We work to ensure that groundbreaking scientific discoveries are brought out of the laboratory and into the hands of those who can put them to work. In recent years, CFAES has experienced a historic period of growth and change in terms of physical spaces, outreach, and research, which has allowed us to do even more to serve the people of Ohio. We are wholly focused on continuing this momentum forward, and we strive toward becoming the model land-grant university for the future.

The quality of our physical spaces on our campuses and throughout the state is a key component in our ability to serve the people of Ohio. Therefore, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the General Assembly and the Governor for making an investment in CFAES by including a one-time appropriation of \$10 million in the Operating Budget for the Multispecies Animal Learning Center (MALC) we plan to build at our Waterman Agricultural and Natural Resources Laboratory on our Columbus Campus. The MALC is truly a public/private partnership, with additional funding from Nationwide, and great support from the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and agricultural commodity groups. With the General Assembly's \$10 million capital investment, CFAES will be able to build a modern learning center for animal sciences education at Ohio State. With this infrastructure in place, we will attract and retain animal science students in Ohio and top talent. The MALC will be a world-class facility to bring people and animals together, supporting education for Ohio State students, K-12 students, and others across the lifespan. Your generous support has cleared the last hurdle in making the MALC a reality. Thank you!



In 2022, we opened another state-of-the-art building at Waterman the Controlled Environment Agriculture Research Center (CEARC). CEARC provides a platform for interdisciplinary research at the nexus of horticulture and crop science, engineering, entomology, plant pathology, food science, computer science, and human nutrition and health. Since it opened in September 2022, CEARC has secured over \$10 million in grant funding, with research projects currently underway.

The new physical spaces on our campus help us teach Ohio's current and future food, agricultural, and environmental science workforces to be prepared for the challenges and technological advances in the years to come. In May, Trimble, an industrial technology company, announced that it would establish its first agricultural technology labs at CFAES, on both our Columbus and Wooster campuses. The Trimble Technology Labs will open during the upcoming Autumn semester and will support student instruction, as well as training programs to re-equip Ohio farmers and agricultural professionals with technologies which can improve productivity, increase efficiencies, and drive sustainable farming practices. Additionally, the labs will also be used to train students in agricultural engineering and construction management.

Because we are charged with teaching the next generation of the food, agricultural, and environmental sciences workforces, our philosophy is always to put students first. This philosophy has us leading all other OSU colleges in student success metrics. We award more than \$3.1 million in scholarships annually, more than any other college at OSU. 94% of our graduates are enrolled in graduate education or are employed within six months of graduation, and our 4-year and 6-year graduation rates have exceeded the university's average. Importantly, almost 80% of our graduates stayed in Ohio in 2022, up from about 75% in 2021.

CFAES is also committed to ensuring that more young people across Ohio can attend our college. We have found success with a new pilot program, the Buckeye Agricultural Leadership Pathways (BALP) program. BALP aims to increase undergraduate enrollment at the college by prioritizing early admission notification for early action applicants and including additional consideration in the application review for FFA and 4-H participation, leadership experience, and recognition of skills learned in farming experiences. Overall, expected enrollment for programs in the pilot is up almost 37% over last year, with increased admissions at Ohio State ATI and in graduate programs, as well.

OSU Extension extends the CFAES campus to all 88 counties in Ohio. Over the last year, OSU expanded its network of learners, educating over 2.5 million Ohioans across the lifespan, from 4-H youth, to families, to senior citizens. Current Extension efforts in local communities include a focus on food accessibility and security, precision agriculture, broadband connectivity and access, rural vitality, health and wellness, and most recently the train derailment in East Palestine. In 2022, we founded the 4-H Pathways to the Future program to expand the Young Scholars model statewide and engaged with partners across Ohio to create workforce development opportunities and attract more students to OSU.



4-H is the first course many Ohio youth take at Ohio State. While you are at the fair, I invite you to visit the Lausche building or any of the barns to see our 4-H youth in action.

4-H Youth Development was born in Clark County, Ohio, in 1902 and has been a part of OSU Extension since its inception in 1914. The organization was originally called the “Boys and Girl’s Agricultural Club,” and its focus was on teaching youth about the environment, agriculture, and domestic sciences. Although the original subjects are still a major focus, 4-H’s breadth has grown leaps and bounds since 1902 to include learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), leadership and personal development, and the exploration of pathways toward future careers. In 2022, over 130,000 youth across Ohio participated in 4-H community clubs, but also in camps, special interest (or SPIN) clubs, and through in-school and afterschool programming. At independent and county fairs throughout the state, as well as at the Ohio State Fair, 4-Hers showcase their hard work and celebrate what they have learned, whether their 4-H project was focused on livestock production, STEM, cooking, gardening, or leadership skills.

In many ways, the Ohio State Fair is a perfect encapsulation of what we do at CFAES. Here at the fair, we have 4-Hers presenting the culmination of all their hard work, and we educate Ohioans on the food and agricultural industries, natural resources, and how to live healthy lives, like our exhibits here in the Land and Living, with all of our partners. We also highlight some of this work with state and industry partners, like our partnership with the Ohio Treasurer’s office to implement the “Real Money. Real World.,” an Extension program that is a youth-focused financial literacy program. Everything we do is about sharing research-based, unbiased information to help Ohioans reach their full potential.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of CFAES and The Ohio State University. As a Land-Grant institution, The Ohio State University has a significant legacy of impact and leadership in Ohio’s agricultural industry, but we must continually seek ways to broaden that impact. The continued support of the General Assembly has made it possible for us to fulfill our purpose—we sustain life. We are excited to see what the next few years of growth and change will bring. The 2023 Dean’s Charity Steer Show is at 2:00 p.m. today – we hope you’ll stop by and have some fun with us. Thank you for your support.

At this time, I would welcome any questions you may have.