



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

### **Hardin County Extension News Release**

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## **Ag Hall of Fame to Induct New Members**

*Hardin County* – The Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame has announced the 2017 honorees to be inducted at the fifteenth annual Agriculture Hall of Fame recognition banquet. The 2017 inductees include: Merritt Corbin, Joe Cornely, and Jim Lyle. The banquet will be held on Tuesday, December 5th, beginning at 6:30 pm at St. John's Evangelical Church on East Carrol Street in Kenton. The public is invited to come to honor these inductees and their families, and to recognize their many accomplishments. The purpose of the county Agriculture Hall of Fame is to recognize outstanding agricultural contributions by Hardin County people and to honor those who have brought distinction to themselves and the agricultural industry.

Dave Russell will present the keynote address. Russell is a local broadcast journalist who got his start as the farm director for both WRFD and WOWO Radio, worked for the Indiana Farm Bureau as Director of Information and Public Relations, was a farm broadcaster for Tribune Radio/Channel Earth, and a writer/producer for Baxter Communications. Russell served as the Agricultural Liaison for the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and Brownfield Ag News as an anchor/reporter covering Indiana and Ohio. He formed Dave Russell Media, LLC in 1980 where he works today.

Merritt Martin Corbin graduated from Forest High School in 1937. He went on to The Ohio State University where he earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture in 1941, with majors in Agricultural Education, Agricultural Economics, and Agricultural Engineering. He lived in Hardin County until 1941, when he left to serve in World War II. Merritt Corbin was a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the Army, serving with the 727<sup>th</sup> Amphibian Tractor Battalion from 1942-46, where he won several awards. After World War II, he moved to Fremont for his first job with the USDA Farm Security Administration. He became a county supervisor over two counties in 1946, making loans to farmers, particularly returning veterans and servicing loans already in place while working in Warren. He became assistant manager and then manager of the Wooster Production Credit Association (P.C.A.) in 1954.

Corbin was later promoted to Assistant Vice President, P.C.A. at the central office in Ashland. He was a credit supervisor for three field offices and responsible for the initial start of AGRIFAX, a computerized farm record keeping system before retiring with 30 years of service to P.C.A. He still owned the family farm in Hardin County until it was sold in 1987, before he passed away in 2010. Corbin was a member of the American Legion – Post No. 68, Farmer’s Home Administration Employees Association, and The Ohio State University Alumni Association where he received the Alumni Centennial Award. He sang in a men’s chorus and two quartets, placing 6<sup>th</sup> in an international competition. He was a member of the Blanchard River Church of Christ, Dunkirk; Champion Heights Presbyterian Church, Warren; Trinity United Church of Christ, Wooster; and United Methodist Church, Wooster and Winter Haven, Florida.

Joe Cornely graduated from Kenton High School in 1974. After high school, he moved on to Bowling Green State University, where he graduated in 1978 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech and Communications Education. He began working in agriculture shortly after graduation from college at WRFD, WLW, and then again at WRFD Radio Stations. While at WRFD, he developed the station’s 90 minute mid-day farm program which reached farmers in 70 Ohio counties. Cornely was chosen by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block to accompany the U.S. Delegation to the European Union Economic Summit. He was president of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters in 1995, and was voted the ‘National Farm Broadcaster of the Year’ by his peers in 1996.

Cornely joined the Ohio Farm Bureau in 1998 as Director of Media Relations and is now Senior Director of Corporate Communications. During his time at Ohio Farm Bureau, he conceived and launched the group’s member publication ‘Our Ohio,’ its revised newspaper ‘Buckeye Farm News,’ and initiated the weekly public affairs radio show ‘Town Hall Ohio.’ He led Farm Bureau into social media and has been honored by the American Farm Bureau more than a dozen times for his work. The Ohio State University recognized him with the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Service Award. His community involvement includes being active as a little league baseball coach, serving as president of his son’s high school baseball boosters club, has been a contributor to FFA and 4-H, the Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation, NAFB Foundation, Ohio Association of Food Banks, and other local charities. He regularly volunteers his work as master of ceremonies for the Ohio 4-H Foundation and Cultivating a Cure cancer fundraiser.

Jim Lyle is a graduate of Alger High School. He has been a resident of Hardin County for 76 years where he is the fourth generation of his family to farm the family farm in the Scioto Marsh south of McGuffey. He produces corn and soybeans and previously raised Poland China hogs. Although farming has always been his love, he has been in the carpentry business for 60 years, building houses and doing repairs for his customers in Hardin County. Jim and his wife Jean managed the Agrico Fertilizer plant in Alger from 1965-66. He has been willing to try conservation practices such as installing hybrid poplar tree windbreaks to prevent erosion on his farm, working with the Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District. He has also installed grass waterways on his farm and uses cover crops. The Hardin Soil and Water Conservation District named him ‘District Cooperator of the Year’ twice in the 1980s. He has participated in on-farm nitrogen rate trials through Ohio State University Extension.

Lyle has been a 4-H advisor and served 20 years on the Hardin County Fair Board. While a fair director, he has held roles as swine superintendent, grounds chairman, vice president, and president. In 2011, he received the 'Hardin County Fair Honoree Award' for his service. He has been a member of the McDonald Grange for 59 years, a 7<sup>th</sup> degree member and has held the office of Master in this organization. He has served his country as a member of the Army Reserves for six years. He is a past member of the Hardin County Farm Bureau Board. In addition, Lyle was on the first steering committee for the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame. He has been a member of the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church for 66 years, served as Roundhead Township Trustee for 26 years, and was named the Alger Alumni Association Alumnus of the Year.

Tickets for the Hardin County Agriculture Hall of Fame Banquet must be purchased in advance through November 27. Tickets are \$12, and available at the Hardin County Extension office (419-674-2297) or from the committee members: Dustin McCullough, Robert McBride, Ruth Oates, Kerry Oberlitner, Gary Harpster, Steve Poling, Luke Underwood, Robert Wood, and Mark Badertscher.