

Climate bill benefits Ohio farmers, state’s agricultural communities

MIKE ESTADT
OSU Extension

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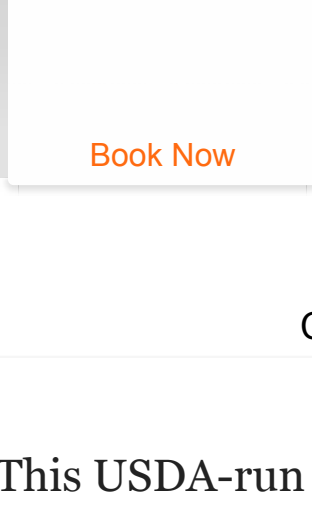
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Ohio farmers and agricultural communities stand to benefit if Congress passes legislation called the Growing Climate Solutions Act.

This bipartisan bill would help provide a new, steady stream of revenue for farmers and foresters while empowering the agricultural community at large to play a more active role in reducing carbon emissions. This is a commonsense solution that will boost rural economies and protect our environment for generations to come.

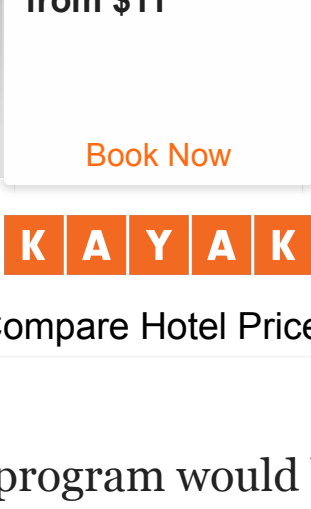
Having worked with farmers throughout my career on agricultural conservation practices and most recently in the area of voluntary carbon markets, the bill directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a voluntary program to certify technical assistance providers and third-party verifiers that assist farmers, ranchers, or private forest landowners in preventing or mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, sequestering carbon, or verifying processes described in protocols for greenhouse-gas credit markets.

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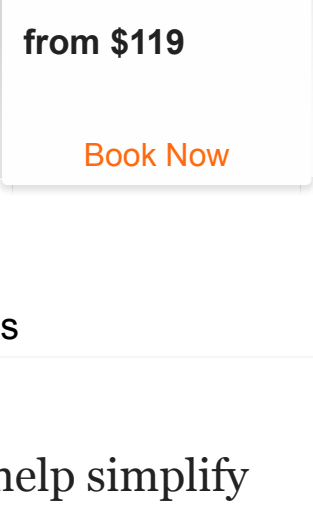
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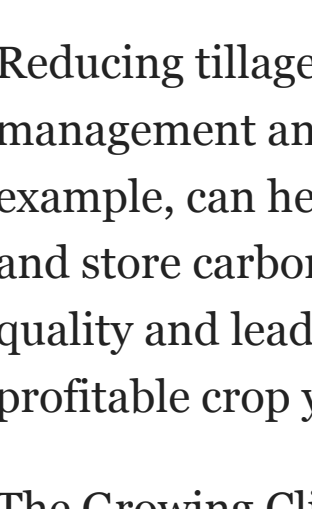
This USDA-run program would help simplify the process for farmers to participate in existing carbon-credit markets, where they could essentially sell the credits they accumulate from putting these climate-friendly agriculture practices to use in their operations.

These markets exist today, but are difficult to navigate, particularly for farmers unfamiliar with the process or techniques involved.

The GCSA would ensure there are adequate resources and information for farmers and help connect them to credible, certified third-party organizations seeking to purchase credits to offset their own carbon footprint.

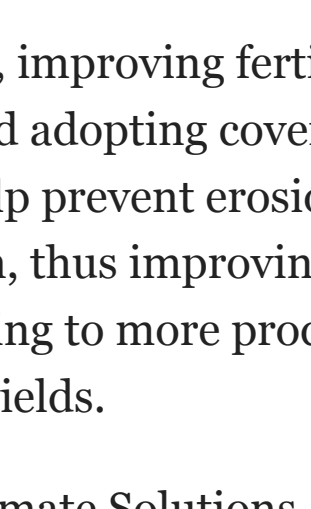
In doing so, it leverages free-market forces to advance climate-friendly farming rather than relying on burdensome government regulations or mandates.

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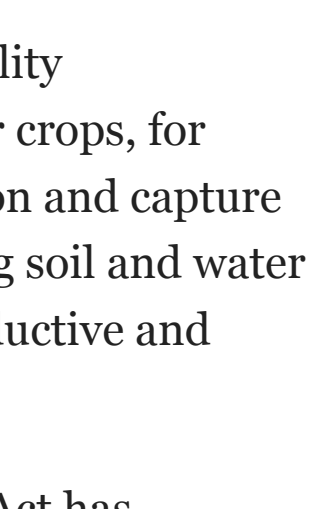
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This voluntary, market-based approach is exactly the kind of solution that empowers farmers to be part of the climate solution.

It only makes sense that farmers be included in the conversations and debates happening around climate policy and carbon reduction.

As stewards of the land, farmers have a vested interest in ensuring they help preserve and enhance our soil resources. Implementing these climate-friendly agricultural techniques also has tangible benefits.

Reducing tillage, improving fertility management and adopting cover crops, for example, can help prevent erosion and capture and store carbon, thus improving soil and water quality and leading to more productive and profitable crop yields.

The Growing Climate Solutions Act has attracted broad bipartisan support as well as the backing of major agricultural, business, and environmental groups nationwide.

That in and of itself says a lot. In these often divided political times, it is rare that a piece of legislation can bring so many different groups together.

Today, farmers in Ohio and across the nation have to contend with volatile markets, supply chain issues, increasing costs of inputs such as fertilizer and increasingly unpredictable weather.

The GCSA would help provide a much-needed economic buffer for farmers willing to adopt regenerative farming practices while advancing our nation’s climate goals.

Having already cleared the Senate with broad bipartisan support, Congress should pass this bill without any further delay. The sooner they do, the better off Ohio farmers, our environment, and our entire economy will be.

I sincerely hope that the Ohio’s Congressional delegation will support the local farming communities of Ohio and help advance this bill by signing on as a cosponsor.

Mike Estadt is an educator at the Ohio State University Extension.

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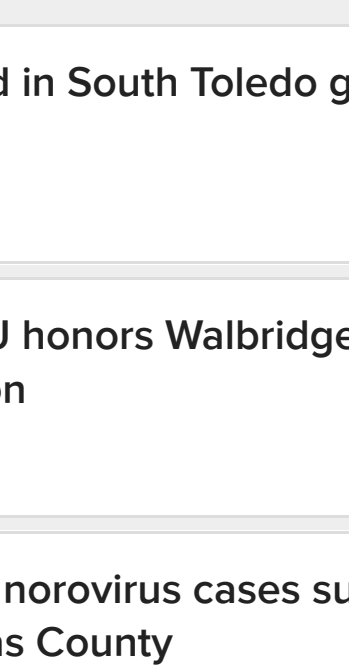
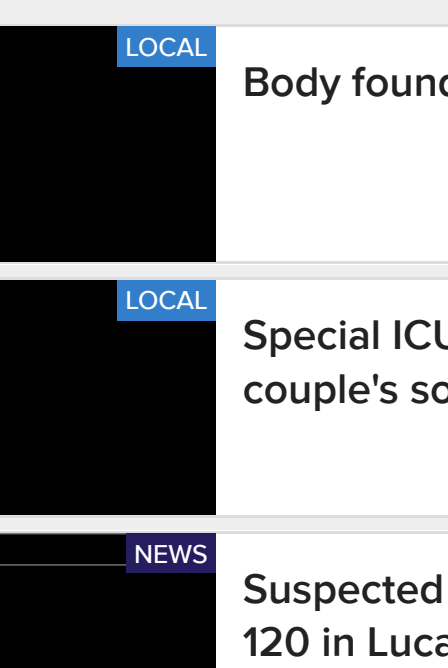
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