OSU Extension, Mercer County will be holding **Three-Hour Fertilizer Applicator Certification Training** sessions on Thursday, December 8th and on Friday, December 9th. These three-hour trainings are for those farmers who apply fertilizers to their cropland but do not hold a Pesticide Applicator’s License.

Applying commercial fertilizer – or manure with a guaranteed analysis – to 50 or more acres of cropland is the “tipping point” for needing a Fertilizer Applicator Certification. Yes, even if all you apply is 28% as side-dress to corn, this counts!! Yes, even if you only have about 25 acres of corn on that 60-acre farm, it counts!! (After all, you do have the potential for putting all 60 acres into corn that needs to be side-dressed . . .)

Okay, the details: The December 8th meeting will be held at Shane’s Park, 705 Front Street in Rockford. There will be a light meal at 4:45p with the training from 5:30p-8:30p. The December 9th meeting will be held at the Coldwater American Legion, 601 N. 2nd Street in Coldwater. This begins with a light lunch at 11:15a with the training to follow, 12n-3p.

There is no charge to attend either of these meetings, but pre-registration is required by Tuesday, December 6th. Contact Mercer County Extension to register: 419.568.2179 or ellis.301@osu.edu.

As an aside, but *not* cause for procrastination: Jeff Stachler and I are planning for another Auglaize/Shelby County three-hour Fertilizer Applicator Certification meeting in March. We don’t have the details finalized, yet, so keep an eye out!!

And, while we’re on the topic of spreading fertilizers: You have until September 30th of next year (2017; 10 months away!) to get your Fertilizer Applicator Certification!!! As noted earlier, if you do not have a Pesticide Applicator’s License, it requires sitting through a three-hour class. There are no guarantees that there will be three-hour classes offered late next summer!! Get it done, SOON!!

Another issue to be thinking about is the **Veterinarian Feed Directive (VFD)** that becomes effective January 1st of 2017. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began to outline upcoming changes for the use of antibiotic products in production animals in December of 2013 with overarching goals that sought to address three key elements: the *“*judicious use of antibiotics,” the *“*protection of public health,” and the mitigation of antimicrobial resistance.

The final ruling, published in June of 2015, outlined plans to phase out the use of *“*medically important antimicrobials” (those drugs used to treat both humans and animals) in food animal production for purposes such as *“*enhanced growth or improved feed efficiency.” Veterinarians have been assigned the primary responsibility for identifying which situations require the therapeutic uses of these medically important drugs and drug combinations.

The bottom line: Effective January 1st, you will need an order from your veterinarian to purchase medicated feeds for your livestock. For producers grinding your own feed, you will need that VFD to feed any medicated feed produced. And, yes, there are records to keep!!

Securing a VFD will necessitate a Vet-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) to ensure that your veterinarian knows you, your operation, and your animals and is knowledgeable about your needs. This is something we talk about at our Junior Fair Quality Assurance trainings; I’d like to think most commercial producers already have a VCPR in place. But note: Bees are considered a “food-producing animal,” so beekeepers will also need a VCPR and a VFD for treatment of their hives for the prevention and control of colony diseases that require the use of a medically important VFD drug or drug combination. For more information (and there is \*a lot\* here), visit <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/ucm071807.htm>.