

From the President's Desk

Dolores Krick, York County Farm Bureau President

Happy New Year from all of us on your York County Farm Bureau Board.

We had a great annual meeting in Hershey in November, we had 11 people represent you on the delegate floor. Some new and some that have attended previously. We hope to have more of you join us next year.

Have you ever talked to your legislators? We would like to help you get familiar with them and be comfortable discussing farm concerns. Would you like someone to join you for a visit? Call or email me and we will set it up!

As your new President and past president, I welcome your suggestions and comments to help us improve the York County Farm Bureau. Do you have any concerns about our policies? Do you have a suggestion for new policies: something for us to work with the legislature to help our local farmers? Please feel free to call 717-487-4556 or email me at sjkrick@gmail.com I am always happy to talk.

Until next time,

Happy Farming!

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Pandemic Assistance to Hog Producers

The USDA announced additional pandemic assistance to hog producers who sold hogs through a negotiated sale during the COVID-19 pandemic. The new program, the Spot Market Hog Pandemic Program (SMHPP) is part of the USDA's larger initiative to address gaps in previous assistance for hog farmers.

USDA is offering SMHPP because packer production was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through employee illness and supply chain issues, which led to fewer negotiated hog sales and lower market prices. Producers who sold hogs between April 16, 2020 and Sept. 1, 2020 may be eligible to apply.

"Previous pandemic assistance used flat rates across the hog industry, and this didn't take into account the various levels of harm felt by different producers," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "We worked closely with industry partners and USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to target assistance to hog producers who were hit the hardest during the pandemic. This is one more example of our efforts to provide new, broader, and more equitable opportunities for farmers, ranchers and producers."

The Department has set aside up to \$50 million in pandemic assistance funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for SMHPP. The FSA will begin taking applications on Dec. 15.

SMHPP payments will be calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible hogs, not to exceed 10,000 head, by the payment rate of \$54 per head. FSA will issue payments to eligible hog producers as applications are received and approved. For more information on who is eligible and how to apply, visit farmers.gov/smhpp



Broadband Bill Passed

The Pennsylvania General Assembly passed House Bill 2071 in December, which will help bridge the digital divide when it comes to rural broadband in the state. The bill will establish the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority, that will address the lack of reliable broadband service in rural areas. The bill now heads to the governor for his expected approval.

The bill addresses the need for broadband expansion by creating an authoritative body that can implement a statewide broadband plan, and serve as a point of contact for entities that look to expand or start new services. The Broadband Development Authority will also oversee the allocation of federal dollars to these projects.

"We are very pleased to see this crucial bipartisan effort to address our lack of broadband access," said PFB President Rick Ebert. "Rural families and farm businesses have been under served, and the need to have access to high-speed internet is essential to compete and participate in the digital age."

The bill also puts in place safeguards to ensure that areas that have the slowest internet speeds or lack of access are prioritized, and that money and resources are being distributed to those areas first.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau advocated for the passage of the bill.

Source: PFB.com

DEP Energy Efficient Rebate Program

The PA DEP has a new rebate program for farmers to help with cost of energy efficiency projects. The Ag Energy Efficiency Rebate Program is offering rebates to defray the costs of installing LED lighting or variable frequency drives on the farm, which can save energy while saving money on utility bills.

Applications will be accepted through March 31, 2021 on a first come, first serve basis as long as funding is available. The available rebates will pay for 50% of the equipment costs, up to \$2,000.

For complete program guidelines and application instructions, visit the DEP agriculture and farming energy webpage: dep.pa.gov/agricultureenergy

PA Farm Bureau Convention Recap

I was fortunate enough to attend the Annual PA Farm Bureau Convention in November at Hershey Lodge this year, and wow! I have been on the board for almost a year, and sometimes have scratched my head wondering what all we are doing. I grew up on a farm, and have returned to that farm. I know I need to watch what the world is doing as it all affects pricing from seed, to fertilizer to profit. But I'm just in little York County, what are we really doing in the big scheme of things? Well, I know now. It is amazing to sit in a room with 204 other delegates all representing their respective County in PA and make decisions on issues that need addressed for our members. There is Value in Action!

So if you are on the fence about renewing your membership, Just Do It! Your local County Board as well as the Pennsylvania State Board are working hard for you every day. We need your input on the issues that matter to you. We are your voice to make change.

AFB President Zippy Duvall was present one evening and spoke inspiring words to every member in attendance. Did you know only 2% of Americans are Farmers? Did you know there is an 87% trust rate with the American public for Farmers per an AFB survey? In closure, he spoke these words: "We are planting seeds everyday. What kind of seeds are you planting?"

Newsletter Editor: Julie Yahnke-Schrum

Agritourism Signs & Wristbands

PFB has signs and wristbands available for purchase to help agritourism operators ensure they are protected under the new law limiting civil liability.

Signs are compliant with Act 27 and cost \$62 each plus shipping. They are 24"x36", made from .040 aluminum and have 3/4" rounded corners. They are waterproof and UV safe and guaranteed to last a minimum of 5 years and not rust.

Wristbands are also available which are compliant with Act 27 and cost 5.5 cents each plus shipping. They are 1"x10" made from Tyvek and include necessary legal disclaimer, in the correct font size and bold type, on the back.

To order, contact Ginny Keever at ykkeeever@pfb.com or (717) 731-3540. More information is available at www.pfb.com/agritourism

Source: PFB Country Focus

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Annual Dues

Reminder that your annual dues renewal for 2022 are now due. The annual membership did increase to \$100 per the by-law changes that were voted on at June's meeting. Remember to get your dues paid in order to keep your discounts and benefits!

Farm Vitality Planning Grant

The Farm Vitality Planning Grant Program will help fund professional services for those planning for the future of a farm. The program will enhance the long-term vitality of Pennsylvania's farms through sound business planning, efficient transitions of farm ownership, strategic farm expansion, diversification of agricultural production, and building a team of financial and technical expertise as a resource for Pennsylvania's farmers.

Grants may be used for expenses related to the following projects:

- Creating or obtaining business plans or management strategies to enhance the long-term economic viability of a farm.
- Creating or obtaining plans for the transition of ownership and operation of a farm to new owners and operators.
- Creating or obtaining plans for transfer of ownership and operation of a farm within the farmer's family.
- Creating or obtaining business plans to diversify an existing agricultural operation to new or different forms of agricultural production.
- Creating or obtaining business plans for a farm expansion or to seek financing for farm growth.
- Creating or obtaining plans to maintain the long-term economic viability and protect the investment of public funds in preserving farms that are subject to perpetual agricultural conservation easements acquired under the Agricultural Area Security Law, for agricultural production.

Who is eligible:

- Farmers, Prospective farmers, and others in support of the grant's objectives.

This is a reimbursement grant. The maximum grant amount is \$7,500 and is limited to 75% of project costs. The amount of reimbursement is based on actual eligible costs submitted by an approved applicant for an approved project during the fiscal year in which the grant is offered. Grants will be awarded on a funds-available basis. Grant money may not be used to reimburse any portion of the project costs which are being paid or reimbursed under another federal or state grant program.

Applications are for one, single project. Separate projects require separate applications.

Applications are online only, through Pennsylvania's Single Application for Assistance online application system, at: www.esa.dced.state.pa.us
Applications must be submitted through the Single Application for Assistance online system starting April 19, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. and will be received until available funding is exhausted.

Source: PA Dept. of Ag

Anything Is Possible For Rural Entrepreneurs

Even before the Internet connected us instantly phone to phone, Hugh McPherson was reaching out. Penn State Extension's Larry Yeager brought the first farmer interested in doing a corn maze to McPherson's fledgling Maize Quest corn maze attraction in 1998. It was a simple network, just two farmers talking.

In its 25th season at the home farm, Hugh & Maize Quest reaches thousands of agritourism operators worldwide through social media, email blogs, and online classes. "We evolved with technology," says McPherson, 5th generation farmer, and Maize Quest's founder. "Each step along the way we discovered new ways to reach guests for our home farm and farmers to help with their farms."

And help they have. Maize Quest designs corn mazes for over 80 locations each season, then cuts those mazes with sophisticated GPS systems for pinpoint accuracy. Hundreds of thousands of guests visit these 80 farms, collectively bringing tourism dollars into rural economies.

This benefit to the rural landscape in 24 states, Canada, and even the UK starts in tiny Gatchellville, PA, a town too small for a zipcode.

"The message to rural kids is that there are no limitations," says McPherson. "Your phone can open the world to your farm. The Internet can take your idea, your business, to the world."

This online presence brought Major League Baseball (MLB) to Maize Quest for what would become a crazy, national-stage project. Once contacted based on previous work with logo-centric corn mazes, the production company signed Maize Quest into secrecy.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Keystone Farm Show, York Fairgrounds

January 4-6, 2022

AFBF Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA

January 6-12, 2022

PA Farm Show, Harrisburg

January 8-15, 2022

YAP Leadership Conference, Boalsburg, PA

February 12-13, 2022

Ag Literacy Week

March 14-18, 2022

Region 2 PA Farm Bureau Day

March 14, 2022



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The big secret debuted on national television with Kevin Costner and major league baseball players emerging from the MLB logo corn maze onto the NEW Field of Dreams stadium. The scene was a nostalgic callback to Costner's classic movie "Field of Dreams." Maize Quest worked to make the labyrinth an attraction for guests and this special made-for-TV moment.

The rural ethic of hard work comes from the unpredictable nature of farming. You work hard every year because, if things go well and the weather is good, you'll reap a reward. If things go poorly or there's a drought, that hard work might be the difference between making it or not. Either way, the work must be done.

While the work ethic shouldn't change, the rural mindset should evolve. There simply are more opportunities available in a connected world, as the MLB/Maize Quest collaboration demonstrates.

From a town with no zip code, the middle child of fruit farmers reached out once to swing for the fences in the major leagues, then went back to work for his clients, his friends.

No matter how wild, big or crazy, ideas take flight from any place a person is willing to take a chance, willing to reach. There are no limitations for rural entrepreneurs. For more, Hugh's agritourism business blog is at www.HughMcPherson.com

Source: Hugh McPherson



Member Services

Did you know with your membership, you get discounts for Ford, John Deere, Grainger, hotels, dining, hearing aids, insurance and much more! Check out the complete list at <https://pfb.com/benefits/>

In York County alone, you can also get the following discounts:

Brown's Orchards & Farm Market \$3 off in-store purchase of \$30 or more; some exclusions apply. Expires 12/31/20

Harsco AgroSil (Butler) 10% off per ton of ag lime

True Value Plus \$5 off any \$30 sale; one discount per day (Shrewsbury and Loganville locations)

If you have a business and would like to participate in these discounts for our members, please contact Director Kate Menges at kml5484@gmail.com or call her at (717) 339-9959. We are always looking for new offers to pass onto our members and promote your local business!

Text Alerts

Be the first to know about major developments in Pennsylvania agriculture, state and federal policy, and Pennsylvania Farm Bureau advocacy and engagement by signing up for PFB text message alerts.

PFB keeps members informed through our print and digital communications. But sometimes, there's news you need to know right away. That's why we've developed PFB text message alerts to send important updates right to your phone.

No one likes spam and that's why we'll make sure to limit the number of texts you receive from us. You can expect to receive up to approximately five texts per month about major developments such as limited time opportunities and/or grants, major news that affects agriculture, changes in laws or regulations that affect your operation, significant updates on our advocacy efforts and opportunities to engage with Farm Bureau.

As the program develops, you may have opportunities to sign up for additional text alerts about topics you're interested in. PFB may text you to let you know about opportunities to sign up for additional texts about certain subjects but will never sign you up without your permission.

Sign up by texting PFBALERTS to 833-554-0849 or signup online at <https://pfb.com/text-alerts/>



Farmland Preservation Applications

Landowners interested in Farmland Preservation, the York County Ag Land Preservation Office reminds you applications can now be submitted for the 2022 Application Round. Deadline is February 15, 2022, but we encourage fall appointments to ensure you submit a qualified application well before the deadline. Please call (717)840-7400 for an Application-Literature Packet, or to make an Appointment. Visit our website and read about farm eligibility, qualification, the ranking and selection procedures, and the deed of easement restrictions. Go to www.yorkcountypa.gov, Property and Taxes, find Ag Land Preservation, in the drop down menu. The 2022 application is available to download. Please remember we moved to 2401 Pleasant Valley Road Suite 101, York Pa 17402. Across from Heritage Valley Credit Union and behind Diehl Toyota.

Only 10 applications have been submitted to date. Get yours in now!

Are You Turning 65 This Year and Going on Medicare?



Choosing your Medicare plan can be overwhelming. It can be hard to figure out what you want, or more important, what you need.

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Dairy Margin Coverage

Dairy producers are now able to sign up for the USDA's Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program. This program enables producers to get coverage through the safety-net program for another year. The USDA also expanded the program to allow dairy producers to get additional assistance through a new Supplemental DMC.

"Dairy Margin Coverage is a critical safety-net for producers, and catastrophic coverage is free. These DMC updates build on other efforts of the Biden-Harris Administration to improve DMC and other key USDA dairy programs," Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie said. "We encourage dairy producers to make use of the support provided by enrolling in supplemental coverage and enroll in DMC for the 2022 program year."

From USDA: "Eligible dairy operations with less than 5 million pounds of established production history may enroll supplemental pounds based upon a formula using 2019 actual milk marketings, which will result in additional payments. Producers will be required to provide FSA with their 2019 Milk Marketing Statement.

"Supplemental DMC coverage is applicable to calendar years 2021, 2022 and 2023. Participating dairy operations with supplemental production may receive retroactive supplemental payments for 2021 in addition to payments based on their established production history.

"Supplemental DMC will require a revision to a producer's 2021 DMC contract and must occur before enrollment in DMC for the 2022 program year. Producers will be able to revise 2021 DMC contracts and then apply for 2022 DMC by contacting their local USDA Service Center."

According to the USDA, "After making revisions to 2021 DMC contracts for Supplemental DMC, producers can sign up for 2022 coverage. DMC provides eligible dairy producers with risk management coverage that pays producers when the difference between the price of milk and the cost of feed falls below a certain level."

To be eligible, producers must certify that the operation is commercially marketing milk. The signup period for DMC 2022 enrollment runs from Dec. 13, 2021, to Feb. 18, 2022.

Source: PFB

Livestock Mandatory Reporting Extension

The House on Dec. 8 passed a pair of livestock bills supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation. One of the measures would extend Livestock Mandatory Reporting, while the other would create a contract library for the beef cattle industry, similar to the pork industry catalog.

Livestock Mandatory Reporting was extended through mid-February in the most recently passed continuing resolution, but the measure passed this week in the House would extend LMR through the end of the 2022 fiscal year, which ends on Sept. 30, 2022.

The other livestock measure, the Cattle Contract Library Act of 2021 (H.R. 5609), would create a library for cattle contracts within USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. The bill would require packers to report terms of alternative marketing agreements between packers and producers, equipping ranchers with additional market data needed to make informed marketing and business decisions. The USDA library would provide producers with key details on cattle contracts, including the type and duration.

Both bills "provide crucial information, which is needed now more than ever as prices skyrocket at the grocery store while payments to farmers lag behind," AFBF President Zippy Duvall said in a statement.

He continued, "We appreciate the leadership demonstrated by Agriculture Committee Chairman David Scott and the work of Representatives Dusty Johnson and David Cuellar. Their work on behalf of America's ranchers helped create overwhelmingly bipartisan support for both pieces of legislation. We urge the Senate to work together in a similar fashion to ensure market fairness for farmers and ranchers working to put food on dinner tables across the country."

Source: PFB

Farm Focused Podcast

Have you downloaded the PFB Podcast yet? There are currently 17 episodes that covers the issues affecting PA farmers and tells the stories of our members. There have been 1,148 downloads to date!



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Publications

PFB adds value to membership and keeps members informed through a variety of print and digital publications. Members receive 5% off advertising rates in our print publications. Contact advertising coordinator for details.

A \$3 portion of annual dues covers a one-year subscription to a PFB publication. Members can receive either 8 issues of the Country Focus newspaper or 4 issues of the quarterly Positively Pennsylvania magazine. Publication frequency and details are subject to change.

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