



# Bucks County Farm Bureau

Volume 9, Issue 3

[www.pfb.com](http://www.pfb.com)

Summer 2024

## President's Message

Hello to Bucks County Farm Bureau Members:

Happy summer! I hope that all of you are having a wonderful summer and a prosperous one. We have just completed the Fair. I hope many of you were able to come out and visit the Fair and see the youth of Bucks County displaying their 4-H projects. It is heartwarming to see the Bucks County 4-H members working so hard and to see the dedication to their projects. We at Farm Bureau are proud to support our youth, for these are the future leaders in agriculture.

We are approaching our County Annual Meeting on September 21st. I truly wish all of you attend for it is a wonderful time for meeting other Farm Bureau members from our county. So please join me at our Annual Meeting. I look forward to seeing all of you. I'm also going to ask all of you to renew your membership as soon as possible. We have many rewards for those who do such as being entered into a Wawa gift card drawing. So please, renew your membership either on line or bring to the Annual Meeting. Get your neighbors to join too. It is one of the most exciting organizations to be part of.

Thank you and have a safe Fall!

Sincerely,

Mark A. Scheetz

President Bucks County Farm Bureau

## **BUCKS COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Dolly Rutherford, Newsletter Editor	267-566-2123	orruth91@yahoo.com

**The Bucks County Farm Bureau meets the 4th Wednesday of the month @ 7:30 p.m.  
Plumsteadville Grange, #1738, Route 611, Plumsteadville**

### **FARM-tastic Book Program—2024 Book: “Polly and the Birth Day”** **\$11.00**

Books are still available. Contact Glenda Wismer 215-766-0675  
pamperedchefglenda@gmail.com

### **Harris/Hockman Young Ag Professionals Grant-2024**

Applicants must be between ages 20-30, a Bucks County resident, and be actively involved in production agriculture. Applicant and/or family must be members in good standing of the Bucks County Farm Bureau and be committed to a career in production agriculture. **Applicants will be eligible after 1st year membership renewal.** Applicants may receive up to two grants of \$2500.00, but not in succeeding years. Preference will be given to first time applicants. Applicants must be present to receive their grant at the Bucks County Annual Meeting in September. This grant is non-renewable. Please contact Mark Scheetz at 215-723-4904 or fivemfarm@verizon.net or Don Buckman at 267-718-0313 or donbuckman81@yahoo.com to request an application.

### **Young Ag Professionals Contests-2024**

Achievement Award, Excellence in Agriculture Award, Social Media Award,  
Discussion Meet Contest-Deadline 9/30/24

Upcoming Events: AFBF Fusion Conference, Denver Co, March 7-10, 2025

AFBF Annual Convention, San Antonio, TX, January 24-28, 2025

Go to: pfb.com for further information.

# Ice Cream Social & Farm Tour Traugers Market

June 2, 2024



We had nice weather and a great turnout. Approximately 100 people showed up for the event. Everyone who attended had a nice afternoon. 3 Farm Tours were given.

## Bucks County Annual Meeting-September 21st

Pennridge Community Center-6:00 p.m.

**\$25.00/person**

A promotional poster for a membership giveaway. It features a background image of a farm with green fields and trees. The text is in various colors and fonts, including red, black, and white. It lists the prize amounts and the deadline for membership renewal.

**Membership Giveaway**

**Have a chance to win up to \$2,000!**

- ▶ New members who join by October 31 will be entered to win **\$1,000**
- ▶ All members who sign-up for auto-renewal by October 31 will be entered to win **\$1,000**
- ▶ New members and all renewals submitted by September 30 will be entered to win **\$2,000, \$1,000, and \$500**

Sign up on our website  
[www.pfb.com/reasons-to-join](http://www.pfb.com/reasons-to-join)

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

**In addition, please renew your membership by October 1, 2024 to be entered into a \$25.00 Wawa Gift Card Drawing! You can renew online or bring to Annual Meeting.**

RSVP by September 11th to Glenda Wismer 215-766-0675  
[pamperedchefglenda@gmail.com](mailto:pamperedchefglenda@gmail.com) or  
Sandy Herstine 215-795-2385 [ksherstine@verizon.net](mailto:ksherstine@verizon.net)

All reservations must be accompanied by check or cash.

Check payable to: Bucks County Farm Bureau

Mail to: Glenda Wismer, 87 Log Cabin Rd, Perkasie PA 18944



# 73rd ANNUAL MIDDLETOWN GRANGE FAIR



PAFB Immersion Lab (Bobby Rutherford III)



Kristin Hollenbach grabs a packet of wipes as Cheyenne Robinson picks up, Hershey, the goat, after giving him a haircut. Photo by Daniella Heminghaus, BC Courier Times.





Shiloh Kriechbaum (left) pets her cow, Cocoa, in the pen with Brynn Guillaume (center) and Avery Wieczorek (right). Photo by Daniella Heminghaus/Bucks County Courier Times.



A pig awaits judging in its pen

## **MILFORD TWP AG DAZE** **MOLASSES CREEK PARK ON KRAMMES ROAD**

We're excited to invite you to our annual AG Daze on September 14th, from 11 AM to 4 PM! This family-friendly event is packed with fun activities for everyone. Enjoy crafts, hayrides, touch-a-truck experiences, pumpkin painting, and a model airplane display. Don't miss out on our local farmers' market and so much more. Bucks County Farm Bureau will have a table.

Best of all, parking and admission are free! Bring your family and friends for a day of community fun. We can't wait to see you there!

### **E Chester Heim Scholarship**

**Farm Bureau members with a son/daughter studying for an ag degree at DVU or Penn State can apply for this scholarship.**

**Check box on the application confirming your parents are in good standing with PA Farm Bureau. For information for all of our scholarships go to:**

<https://pfbfriends.com/education/scholarships/>

## *Pennsylvania Farm Bureau State Legislative Update From State and Local Affairs Specialist Mitchell Kurek*

### **Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Applauds Agriculture's Inclusion in 2024-25 State Budget**

On July 11, Governor Shapiro signed the 2024 budget, totaling \$47.6 billion. There were substantial investments in agriculture, with the Department of Agriculture's budget growing nearly 10 percent to \$228 million. Overall, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau was supportive of this year's budget and feels there were plenty of victories for the agricultural community.

For more information, read PFB's press release on the 2024-2025 budget: <https://pfb.com/pennsylvania-farm-bureau-applauds-agricultures-inclusion-in-2024-25-state-budget-several-pfb-priorities-signed-into-law/>

Link to legislative update zoom recording - <https://vimeo.com/990759769?share=copy>

### **Highlights**

- **\$10 million** for the Agricultural Innovation Grant program, aimed at supporting new technologies and attracting agricultural businesses to maintain Pennsylvania's leadership in the industry.
- **\$31 million** to assist poultry farmers affected by the avian influenza crisis, covering testing costs and compensating for flock losses.
- More than **\$33 million** in combined funding for Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine (Penn Vet) and Penn Medicine's Division of Infectious Disease in 2024-25.
- **\$58 million** for Penn State Ag Research and Extension.

Additionally, there was a significant **\$50 million** investment in the Clean Streams Fund to enhance water quality initiatives, including:

- **\$35.75 million** (71.5 percent) for the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP)
- **\$6 million** for the Clean Water Procurement Program
- **\$5 million** for the Nutrient Management Fund
- **\$2 million** for Stormwater grants and reimbursements
- **\$1 million** to the Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment Fund
- **\$250,000** to the Keystone Tree Restricted Account

### **Penn Vet and Penn State Funding**

Penn Vet and Penn State received funding in this year's budget, but there was no increase for Penn State to account for inflation, and Penn Vet did not receive funding last year. As a result, both institutions may face hard financial decisions in the future. Funding for Penn Vet is crucial for agriculture, as it is the only state-funded veterinary school in Pennsylvania. Similarly, Penn State's lack of increased funding to match inflation may impact their operations and support for agricultural programs.

These investments demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting Pennsylvania's agricultural industry and ensuring its continued growth and sustainability. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau looks forward to working with state leaders to build on these achievements and further support our farmers and rural communities.

## **PA House of Representatives**

Two notable bills received strong bipartisan support and were passed in the House, which we supported. They will now proceed to the Senate for the next phase of the legislative process.

### **HB 2357: Pennsylvania Food Bucks Program**

- Establishes the Pennsylvania Food Bucks Program to incentivize Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to purchase eligible fruits and vegetables.
- Creates a restricted account in the General Fund exclusively for this program.
- Outlines program administration, including the selection of a grantee to manage the program for a minimum of two years.
- Specifies that funding will come from appropriations, donations, and federal revenues.

### **HB 2420: Keystone Fresh Act**

- Establishes the Keystone Fresh Program within the Department of Education (PDE) in consultation with the Department of Agriculture (PDA).
- Creates the Fresh Schools Grant Program to reimburse school food authorities for purchasing local food for school meals.
- Introduces the Keystone Producer Grant Program and the Keystone Assistance Grant Program to support local producers and assist with various agricultural initiatives.
- Sets up the Keystone Fresh Fund as a restricted revenue account for program funding from various sources.

### **HB 2414**

**Focus:** This bill has been introduced in the House, and a companion bill may be introduced in the Senate. The amendment introduces a new tax credit system for beginning farmers, shifting the emphasis from rentals to sales and ownership of agricultural assets.

- Removal of “or rent”: The amendment now focuses on the sale and ownership of agricultural assets.
- Both asset owners and beginning farmers are eligible for a credit of 5% of the lesser of the sale price or fair market value, up to \$50,000 per asset or farm.
- Application: Requires specific forms from the Department of Agriculture (PDA) and proof of beginning farmer status and agricultural experience.
- Includes provisions for use, carryover, carryback, refund, and assignment of the tax credit.

### *House Returns September 23rd*

## **PA Senate**

**Over-Order Premium (SB 1297)** On July 17, Senator Vogel and Senator Schwank introduced SB 1297 to reform the over-order premium (OOP) process. The bill aims to shift decision-making power from the Milk Board to the House and Senate Ag Committees. This change would allow the Committees to hold hearings, receive stakeholder testimony, and vote on the OOP rate and expiration. If the Committees do not hold a hearing within 30 days of the Milk Board’s decision, the legislature will lose the opportunity to act on the matter.

### **PFB's official statement:**

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) sincerely appreciates Senator Vogel and Senator Schwank's leadership and introduction of legislation to reform the over-order premium. After years of advocating on the issue, we now have specific legislative text to work toward achieving a more effective and equitable over-order premium. While critical questions remain, such as the premium's specific distribution, the introduction of the bill is an important initial step, and we look forward to working with the General Assembly and the industry collectively on accomplishing meaningful over-order premium reform.

**Wildlife:** Wildlife damage presents significant challenges, including substantial crop losses and harm to livestock. Rising input costs and decreasing hunter numbers compound these issues. USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) reported Pennsylvania among the top states for wildlife-related crop losses, with over \$20 million in corn losses and \$15 million in soybean losses in 2017. APHIS estimates annual livestock losses of \$232 million due to predators and over \$150 million in crop losses from bird damage.

### **Legislation:**

- **HB 2106 – HB 2108** by Representative Steele:

- Increases penalties for hunting trespass.
- Streamlines crop damage mitigation programs.
- Requires at least one PA Game Commission member to be a farmer.
- Establishes a system for farmers to contact licensed hunters.
- Repeals the Sunday hunting prohibition.

Passed the House in June and now awaits Senate Game and Fisheries Committee action.

- **(SB 67 (Which now includes SB 1086 – SB 1089))** by Senators Rothman and Laughlin:

- Increases penalties for hunting trespass.
- Streamlines crop damage mitigation programs.
- Governor shall ensure that at least one member of the commission represents the interest of agricultural commodities.
- Establishes a system for farmers to contact licensed hunters.
- Repeals the Sunday hunting prohibition.

Passed the Senate on July 3 and now awaits action by the House Game and Fisheries Committee.

### **FARM BILL**

**Farm Bill Advocacy Needed During August Recess:** Congress is running out of time before farm bill expires on September 30, 2024. It is crucial that the House bring the farm bill to the floor for a vote, and the Senate release text and schedule a markup. PFB's asks of members is twofold. During County Farm Bureaus' legislative events this summer, please urge your U.S. House and Senate Members to take action on farm bill before the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress concludes.

Please complete [AFBF's Farm Bill Action Alert](#) as soon as possible. NOTE: This Action Alert has been updated so if you completed the old one, thank you, but please complete the updated one to urge your U.S. House and Senate Members to pass a farm bill this year.



**Proposition 12 Legislative Fix Needed in Farm Bill:** One of PFB's top priority in farm bill is successfully passing it with the inclusion of Section 12007, which is Chairman Thompson's proposed solution to Prop 12. AFBF, National Pork, American Veterinary Medical Association, American Association of Swine Veterinarians, [the U.S. Solicitor General](#), and [USDA Secretary Vilsack](#) have all agreed that Congress must find a bipartisan legislative fix and soon. Section 12007 of H.R.8467 clarifies that states and local governments cannot impose standards of production, as a condition for sale or consumption, on livestock produced outside of their borders. This protects a producer's right to participate in a national market without having to adhere to a patchwork of costly compliance requirements. It also protects the rights of states and local governments to impose production standards as they see fit, but *only* for livestock raised within their own borders. We have explicit policy supporting Section 12007 and appreciate the Chairman's efforts to find a commonsense solution that we hope everyone can get on board with when it comes time for a vote on the House floor.

## DAIRY

**USDA Issues Recommended Decision for FMMOs:** On July 15, USDA published in the Federal Register a [Recommended Decision proposing to amend the uniform pricing formulas applicable in all 11 FMMOs](#). The Recommended Decision puts forth a package of amendments to update formulas and factors based on the recent FMMO hearing in Indiana. Farm Bureau supports the following recommended amendments:

The switch from the current "average-of + \$0.74" adjuster to the "higher-of" Class III or IV skim milk prices for the month. The updating of milk composition factors as described. The removal of 500-pounds barrel cheddar cheese prices from the Dairy Product Mandatory Reporting Program survey. The increase in county-specific Class I differentials Class I differentials increase in all counties by an average of \$1.25 per hundredweight.

Farm Bureau opposes the following recommended amendments:

Relying solely on the 40-pound block cheddar cheese price to determine the monthly average cheese price used on the formula.

Updating Class III and IV formula factors (make allowances) without utilizing data from a mandatory and audited survey of costs and yields from all processors.

USDA failing to issue an amendment to increase the Class II differential.

USDA failing to issue an amendment to remove advanced pricing from the Class I and II pricing formulas.

Next steps: The comment period ends on September 13, 2024. PFB's Dairy and Farm Policy Committee met with AFBF on July 23 to provide feedback for comments. After a final rule is published USDA will plan and hold a referendum of dairy producers to vote on whether to accept or reject the proposed amendments.

## TAX REFORM

### Farm Bureau's Prioritizes Tax Reform for 2025:

In 2025, key provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will expire. Many of the pass-through business provisions are temporary and should be made permanent. The tax reform process on Capitol Hill has already started with the tax-writing committees beginning to hold hearings and develop working groups focused on key issue areas. More than 98 percent of farms and ranches operate as "pass-through businesses:" sole proprietorships, partnerships, and Sub S corporations. Failure to extend these important provisions will result in a tax increase for farmers and ranchers and leave them without ways to deal with the cyclical and unpredictable nature of their businesses. These provisions benefit most farm and ranch businesses and help build their operations and stimulate the agricultural economy. PFB is supporting/prioritizing the following bills:

S.1706/H.R.4721, the *Main Street Tax Certainty Act* – would make permanent the 20-percent deduction for small- and individually-owned businesses (Section 199A) by Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) and Representatives Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) and Henry Cuellar (D-TX).

S.1108/H.R.7035, the *Death Tax Repeal Act* – would repeal the estate and generation-skipping transfer taxes. It also makes conforming amendments related to the gift tax by Senator John Thune (R-SD) and Representatives Randy Feenstra (R-IA) and Sanford Bishop (D-GA).

H.R.4937, the *Preserving Family Farms Act* – would allow more farmland or ranchland to be valued at agricultural value rather than development value under Section 2032A Special Use Valuation by Representatives Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) and Mike Kelly (R-PA).

## AG LABOR

**Heat Index Standards Rule:** In June, OSHA published the proposed [Occupational Safety and Health Administration's \(OSHA\) Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings Rulemaking](#). Farm Bureau's major concern with this rulemaking is it implements a national heat index standard of 80 degrees and would mandate 15-minute rest breaks at 90 degrees. A universal federal heat standard fails to account for diverse regional and commodity-specific needs. Hand-harvested crops, such as many highly perishable specialty crops, have time-sensitive needs and limited windows of maintenance, planting and harvesting. AFBF will be providing comments. Please email Bailey Fisher ([bmfisher@pfb.com](mailto:bmfisher@pfb.com)) for talking points.

## TRANSPORTATION

**AFBF's Action Alert for Support of the *AM Radio in Every Vehicle Act*:** Please complete [AFBF's Action Alert](#) asking legislators to support H.R.3413/S.1669, the *AM Radio in Every Vehicle Act*. This bill would require the Department of Transportation to issue a rule that requires all new motor vehicles to have devices that can access AM broadcast stations installed as standard equipment. Current PA co-sponsors are Senator Casey and Representatives Kelly, Wild, Meuser, Scanlon, Fitzpatrick, Evans, Boyle, Houlihan, Smucker, Reschenthaler, Thompson, and Deluzio. The following have yet to co-sponsor but most likely will as it is a widely bipartisan piece of legislation: Senator Fetterman and Representatives Dean, Cartwright, Perry, Lee, and Joyce.

## AFBF'S JULY MARKET INTELS:

[Sustainable Aviation Fuel Tax Credit Will Have Almost No Farm Impact in 2024 \(And What You Can Do About It\)](#)  
[USDA Reports Bring Further June Gloom](#)

[Grasshoppers Eating into Western Farmers' and Ranchers' Bottom Lines](#)

[Five Things We'll Miss Without a New Farm Bill | Market Intel | American Farm Bureau Federation \(\[fb.org\]\(http://fb.org\)\)](#)

## ***Regulatory Affairs Update From Regulatory Affairs Specialist Grant Gulibon***

### **Farm Bureau Meets with DEP Interim Acting Secretary**

Farm Bureau met with DEP Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley on July 2 to discuss issues of common interest and explore opportunities for our organizations to work together to promote agricultural conservation while keeping farms economically viable. Shirley assumed her role last October upon the sudden resignation of former Secretary Rich Negrin.

The group discussed how DEP's permitting reform efforts could benefit agriculture and current examples that illustrate the need for changes in this area; the continued improvements in water quality for the Chesapeake Bay watershed and Pennsylvania farmers' growing contribution to that progress; and ongoing joint efforts to reinvestigate the Farm Bureau Environmental Coordinator Program.

Farm Bureau also invited the Secretary to participate in an upcoming EPA water quality event being held through the Animal Agriculture and Water Quality (AAWQ) Subcommittee of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities (FRRRC) Federal Advisory Committee, on which Farm Bureau is represented by President Chris Hoffman (AAWQ—see item below) and former state board member Dave Graybill (FRRRC).

Farm Bureau thanks the Secretary and her team for their time and will continue to collaborate with DEP on issues of importance to Pennsylvania agriculture.

### **Discussions Continue on Food Processing Residuals Legislation**

As referenced in last month's Regulatory Affairs update, Reps. Paul Friel (D-Chester), Barb Gleim (R-Cumberland), and Paul Schemel (R-Franklin) have introduced legislation on the topic of food processing residuals (FPRs). House Bill 2393 seeks to change how the use of food processing residuals (FPRs) on farming operations is governed in Pennsylvania by removing the existing permitting exception for the use of FPRs in normal farming operations and giving the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) greater authority to regulate them.

Both of these provisions contradict Farm Bureau policy, and staff has made our opposition to the legislation as drafted clear to House Bill 2393's authors. Discussions on possible amendments to HB 2393, as well as proposed separate legislation regarding registration, training and other requirements for haulers and brokers of FPRs, have continued, and a meeting with a larger group of stakeholders is expected in early August.

For additional background on the evolution of efforts to address complaints about FPR usage, as well as the reasoning behind Farm Bureau's position on the issue, please refer to the June 2024 Farm Bureau Regulatory Affairs Update.

### **Farm Bureau & Partners Applaud Inclusion of ACAP Funding in Newly Approved State Budget**

Farm Bureau, along with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and numerous agricultural, conservation and environmental organizations, applauds the Pennsylvania General Assembly for its inclusion of a \$50 million annual recurring appropriation to the state's Clean Streams Fund in the recently approved 2024-25 state budget. Dedicated funding for the Fund, particularly the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) created in the 2022-23 state budget, has been a priority for Farm Bureau and allied organizations in the two years since its creation.

The Clean Streams Fund addresses agricultural conservation, nutrient management, clean water procurement, stormwater management and acid mine drainage and has helped Pennsylvania gain momentum in meeting its goals for reducing pollution to the Chesapeake Bay. Spearheaded by Sen. Scott Martin (R-Lancaster) and Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming), along with Sen. Dan Laughlin (R-Erie), dedicated funding for ACAP will allow continued sharing of the costs to farmers for farm management practices that reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in Pennsylvania waterways, which benefits all Pennsylvanians by improving local water quality and also promotes the continued improvement of downstream waters like the Chesapeake Bay.

Best management practices implemented by Pennsylvania farmers and local governments are showing results. Earlier this month, the annual Chesapeake Bay [report card](#) released by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) showed notable progress, with the overall health of the Bay receiving its best grade in more than two decades. The Upper Bay, which is most influenced by the Susquehanna River, received a B- in the report card, a score second only to the lower Bay, which is primarily influenced by the Atlantic Ocean.

Approximately \$35 million of the \$50 million dedicated to the Clean Streams Fund will be allocated to ACAP. Over 967 miles of Pennsylvania streams have been restored back to health in the past 20 years, and new tools to find the most effective actions and locations, combined with added resources through the Clean Streams Fund, will accelerate that trend.

### **State Conservation Commission Holds Joint Summer Meeting with Conservation Districts**

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) held its annual joint meeting with the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) on July 18 in State College. Topics discussed included proposed allocation of funds from the Conservation District Fund and Unconventional Gas Well Fund; allocation of proposed Conservation Excellence Grant (CEG) program funds for FY 2024-25; the FY 2024-25 budget and scope of work for the Penn State Center for Conservation Assistance Training, including the new ACAP Training and Practice Approval System;



allocations to participating conservation districts for the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program for PY 2024-25; and the progress of the “Clean Water Progress Teams” working to address ongoing challenges with Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration implementation.

### **Farm Bureau Meets with Penn State Ag Leadership Team**

Farm Bureau leaders and staff met on July 29 with the leadership of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences to discuss near- and long-term collaborative efforts between the two organizations. The group was pleased to hear from Dr. Troy Ott, who was recently named as dean of the College of Ag Sciences (effective July 1). Dr. Ott has worked at Penn State since 2006 as a faculty member in the university’s Department of Animal Sciences. He is the inventor or co-inventor on five patents and has authored over 100 scientific papers and review articles. Ott has a bachelor’s degree from Penn State in animal production, a master’s degree in reproductive physiology from Auburn, and a doctoral degree in reproductive physiology from Florida.

The discussion centered on Dr. Ott’s strategic vision for the College of Ag Sciences and how it fits into the university’s overall plans for future growth, particularly ways to balance the “discovery research” that the college conducts with the actual usage of that research to promote economic development and entrepreneurship. Other topics of conversation included strategic priorities and initiatives for Penn State Extension, the college’s research and strategic priority of modernizing and revitalizing its plant science facilities, the future of the Penn State Animal Diagnostic Laboratory (ADL) in light of the forthcoming establishment of an animal diagnostic laboratory in western Pennsylvania, and ways to reverse declining undergraduate enrollment and broaden opportunities for student undergraduate research.

### **PDA Bureau of Animal Health Updates State Dairy HPAI Quarantine Order in Response to USDA Action; Agencies Offer Additional Resources, Options for Dairy Farmers**

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) Bureau of Animal Health, in conjunction with the Center for Dairy Excellence, has convened regular updates on the evolving situation with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in dairy cattle in thirteen U. S. states, with 173 confirmed cases, since the start of the outbreak. At this writing, Pennsylvania continues to be dairy HPAI-free, but state animal health officials caution that all producers should remain vigilant in updating their biosecurity plans to meet the potential threat.

New data now suggest that the HPAI virus was spread from wild birds to cattle beginning in late 2023 and has been spreading in cattle since then. PDA is advising dairy farms to protect their cattle as much as possible from wild birds to prevent further virus spread among dairy farms. There is still just one human case reported to date, but mutations in the virus suggest bovine adaptation. Milk and mammary tissue carry the highest viral load in cattle. There is some evidence of limited respiratory shedding.

As reported previously, PDA’s April quarantine order was revised May 9 to mirror the succeeding USDA order’s terms. All lactating dairy cattle being transported interstate must be tested (except for those moving directly to slaughter). All non-lactating cattle from affected states must be tested within 7 days of movement. PDA has developed a response protocol to quarantine positive premises if needed.

PDA also reminds farmers to use their premises ID number when reporting suspect cases to get testing reimbursement. Farmers should work with their vet to initiate testing if they suspect HPAI. PDA is currently drafting guidelines for fairs and exhibitors. Out-of-state animals must be tested prior to entry. USDA will be offering an aid package work up to \$28,000 for affected farms to use for PPE, heat treatment of waste milk, and reimbursement for production losses. The CDC is working with state health departments to proactively distribute PPE. PDA is working with the PA Dept. of Health to prepare. PDA also outlined sampling basics for farmers who need to submit them.

USDA has also launched an “HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program” intended as a cooperative effort between APHIS, regulatory state animal health agencies, the dairy industry and its stakeholders, and dairy producers. The program offers dairy producers more options to monitor the health of their herds and move cows interstate while further reducing H5N1 virus spread, increasing surveillance and expanding knowledge of the disease, and supporting an overall national program to reduce the risk of H5N1 in dairy herds.

The program augments the previously announced federal order; the financial support options already available to producers of affected and non-affected HPAI dairy herds to support biosecurity planning, implementation, and other treatment and prevention measures; and funding from USDA's forthcoming Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program. The HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program establishes a national strategy to provide support for ongoing testing for HPAI in participating dairy herds and additional support to detect and respond to HPAI in affected dairy herds to better understand this virus and reduce the risk of further spread.

PDA is also encouraging dairies to submit biosecurity plans for evaluation. Approved plans will be necessary for obtaining permits to move milk and dairy animals off a farm in the event that avian influenza has been detected on that farm. An approved plan is also required for enrollment in the PA Lactating Dairy Cow Health Monitoring Program. The state veterinary staff is ready to review plans and help address questions.

Biosecurity plans and questions about the plans can be submitted by email to: [RA-AGBioplans@pa.gov](mailto:RA-AGBioplans@pa.gov). Questions regarding enrollment in the PA Lactating Dairy Cow Health Monitoring Program, which is based on weekly testing of the bulk tank for avian influenza, may be addressed to [RA-ahds@pa.gov](mailto:RA-ahds@pa.gov) or 717-307-3259.

PDA recommends the National Dairy FARM Program Everyday Biosecurity Plan with the Pennsylvania Supplement. Other biosecurity plan templates, including the Secure Milk Supply plan, will be accepted provided that they meet the same minimum requirements. Farms are encouraged to work with their veterinarian, the Department, or Penn State Extension in developing and implementing a biosecurity plan. The Center for Dairy Excellence is also working with Penn State to offer printed copies of the "Everyday Biosecurity Planning" template, along with other resources, to dairies who want to develop and implement a plan.

## **ANOTHER PHOTO OF 73RD ANNUAL MIDDLETOWN GRANGE FAIR**



Kane Miller, 4, from Philadelphia, sits at the wheel of one of the farm vehicles on display. Daneilla Heminghaus/Bucks County Courier.

# ADVERTISING CORNER

## 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.

Farm Bureau's experienced and trained staff are ready to help. At no cost to you, we can:

- Answer your questions
- Explain and compare options
- Work within your budget
- Help with informed Medicare coverage decisions

*Knowledgeable. Helpful. Dedicated.*

To check availability in your county call **800.522.237**.

Bucks County Farm Bureau is collecting soda & soup can tabs for charities (Farmers Care Day). Please help us out. You can give them to a Board member, drop off at a Board Meeting, or bring them to any Farm Bureau event.

## NATIONWIDE PET INSURANCE

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There are many agricultural careers, so I encourage you to go to Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Ag Promotion Committee website to view all the different careers in agriculture. [www.agandfoodcareersinpa.com](http://www.agandfoodcareersinpa.com)

**Mark Scheetz, BCFB President**

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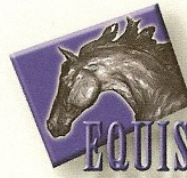
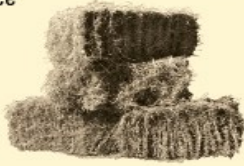
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