

# Blair County Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter of Blair County Farm Bureau



Volume 5, Issue 4

December 2020

Fellow Farm Bureau Members,

Wow, what a year! Who would have ever thought there would be global pandemic, ag products being dumped, low commodity prices, and to top it off a toilet paper shortage. Even with all these things happening your Farm Bureau is still out working for you. Your county board continues to meet, discuss and work on issues that affect our industry. Farm Bureau leaders and staff are still working with legislators and regulators on your behalf. Some of the issues that have been addressed are: Covid-19 Relief, Broadband, Support for Great Flexibility for Ag Haulers, Agritourism and Watershed Implementation Plan for PA for the "Phase 3" period.

You are a vital part of the largest, most effective and respected Farm Organization in the nation. Without you, the member, our organization would not have the influence and clout and, yes, the financial resources to able to advocate for the rural people at every level of government and regulatory agency in this nation. That is what Farm Bureau is all about and has been for over 100 years. Simply put, our organization's mission is to get things done for our members that we cannot do on our own. The Mission Statement of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is "Growing Communities. Many Voices. United Vision." If you have not renewed your membership, please do it now.

It is my honor and privilege to recently have been reelected by our County Board of Directors to serve as your County President. Also, thanks to Ed Kreider for his time as secretary. I would also like to welcome Earlyn Sollenberger to our board. Also, a great big thank you to Kelly Ritchey for all of your years of service Farm Bureau and the members that you served. Enjoy your retirement.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Sincerely yours,  
Gary Long  
President, Blair County Farm Bureau

## MEMBER BENEFITS AND PESTICIDE APPLICATORS AND SAFETY TRAINING SESSION HOSTED BY: FARM BUREAU AND NATIONWIDE®

### 2021 VIRTUAL SESSIONS:

**TUESDAY, MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>**  
**9:45 AM – 12:00 PM**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup>**  
**1:00 PM - 3:15 PM**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>**  
**7:00 PM – 9:15 PM**

These 2-hour sessions conducted by Nationwide's Risk Management Services Team, offers ways to keep your business and employees safe. Those in attendance will receive 2 Core and 2 Category Points toward your Pa Pesticide Applicators License.

Topics include:

- *Pesticide Labels and Safety-Sensitive Applications*
- *Application equipment use, maintenance and calibration*
- *Safe application techniques, including drift reduction*
- *Weeds and Weed Management*
- *Insects, Diseases and Management*

Watch for information in February on how to register.

## **Blair County Farm Bureau Board of Directors**

### **President**

-Gary Long 814-931-2692

### **Vice President**

- Mark Heeter 814-934-3053

- Laverne Nolt 814-793-4028

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-Ken Diebold 814-201-2820

-Brad England 814-932-6709

-Tom Gearhart 814-215-9530

-Wade Harclerode 814-505-4473

- Earlyn Sollenberger 814-505-6307

### **Governmental Relations Director**

-Louie Brenneman 814-931-3287

### **Membership Chairman**

-Dorothy Ross 814-793-2492

### **Newsletter Editor**

- Volunteer needed

### **District 11 Board Member**

-Larry Cogan 814-483-0627

### **MSC Account Supervisors**

-Shane Barkman 717-908-0778

- Joe Davis 814-327-0529

### **Regional Organization Director**

-Joseph Diamond 814-934-0330

If you are interested in getting involved with any of our county or state Farm Bureau programs or if you have a project, program or issue that farm bureau should be involved in please give any of the board members a call. We look forward to hearing from you. Thanks for being a farm bureau member.

*Blair County Farm Bureau Newsletter* is published by Blair County Farm Bureau four times per year.

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Volume 5, Issue 4

Blair County Farm Bureau

5161 Clover Creek Road

Williamsburg, PA 16693

## **Advertisement Opportunity**

Interest in reach over 775 Blair County Farm Bureau Members. The Blair County Farm Bureau Board is making this opportunity available to members.

The Blair County Farm Bureau Board of Directors updated it rates on August 28, 2018, Meeting the following Advertising rates:

- Business Card - \$50/per issue
- ¼ Page - \$100/per issue
- ½ Page - \$175/per issue
- Full Page - \$325/per issue

The goal of the Blair County Farm Bureau is to produce and print 4 newsletters in fiscal year. If you buy an advertisement in 3 consecutive newsletters you will get an advertisement in the next newsletter for free.

Newsletter are normally printed in September, November, February, and June.

To have an advertisement placed in the newsletter the advertiser must be a member of the Blair County Farm Bureau.

The Blair County Farm Bureau Board of Directors has the right to accept or reject advertisements or advertisers.

If interested in advertising please contact

Joseph Diamond at 814-934-0330 or  
jmdiamond@pfb.com

## **AFBF To Hold Convention Virtually**

The American Farm Bureau Federation's 102nd Convention will be held virtually.

The January event had been planned for San Diego; however, all events at the convention center have been canceled through the end of January, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event will now be held Jan. 10 through 13 in a virtual format.

"Our top priority at every Farm Bureau gathering is the safety of our attendees and staff," AFBF President Zippy Duvall said. "While we are saddened to not meet in person for this convention, we are eager to bring this event safely to farm and ranch homes across the country and excited to offer the same top-level content our members have come to expect from our in-person events."

The virtual convention will bring together farmers, ranchers and industry experts to discuss the top issues facing agriculture, including the impact of COVID-19, sustainability and the future of the supply chain, and will feature keynote speakers who inspire and motivate grassroots action.

Registration for the 2021 American Farm Bureau Virtual Convention will open later this year and will be free to all attendees. Further details on the event can be found at <https://annualconvention.fb.org>.

## Blair County Conservation District

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### Golden Owl Award

Nominate an outstanding ag educator for the Golden Owl Award, presented by Nationwide, PFB and Pennsylvania FFA. Go to the PFB website for more information. Presented by Nationwide®, the [Pennsylvania FFA](http://www.pennsylvaniaffa.org) and the [Pennsylvania Farm Bureau](http://www.pfb.org)®, the Golden Owl Award recognizes agricultural educators across Pennsylvania for their tremendous contributions to helping the next generation of agricultural leaders. Students, fellow teachers and other supporters can nominate their favorite agricultural teacher and summarize what makes him or her the best in the state.

Thanks for being a  
Blair County  
Farm Bureau Member

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Blair County Farm Bureau Awarded Fred Imler Sr and the great folks at Imler's Poultry with "Friend of Blair County Farm Bureau Award" at the 2020 County Annual Meeting. Congratulation and thanks Fred and all your staff for your support of Agriculture

# There's More to Membership

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Nationwide® offers a variety of insurance and financial services to Farm Bureau members including farm\*, auto\*, home\*, pet\*, travel\*, powersports, commercial and life insurance.

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To learn more, contact your local Nationwide agent or visit [theusa.com/pfb](http://theusa.com/pfb).

**AD&D Insurance:** Group Accidental Death & Dismemberment policy for each qualified member in family. Immediate value \$1000. Annual increase \$300 for consecutive renewals before January 1 each year to maximum \$3100 value. \*Subject to policy terms and conditions.

5% off advertising rates in PFB publications.  
Contact advertising coordinator for details.



Story content on ag issues and Farm Bureau news



Stories about farming, food and agriculture

A 1/3 portion of annual dues entitles a member subscription to a PFB publication. Member receives either 11 issues of the County Farm newspaper and "Journal of Farm Bureau" or 11 issues of the quarterly *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Applications indicating "farmer", "pasture farmer" or "ag/business" on the membership application are classified as "farmer" members. Should not be too old and a farm must not be listed. Member will be classified as "Journal of Farm Bureau". Please contact your county Farm Bureau with questions regarding membership classification.



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**Pennsylvania Farm Bureau**

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Camp Hill, PA 17001-8736

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## Simple Form Available for Farmers Who Received Dean Foods Letters to Avoid Payment



Pennsylvania Farm Bureau has been working closely with the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) and American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) to advocate for dairy producers who received letters last month demanding payments as part of the Dean Foods bankruptcy case.

Independent producers who previously shipped milk to Dean received the letters the last week of November from ASK LLP, a bankruptcy law firm representing Dean's estate, demanding a partial refund of past milk checks.

American Farm Bureau last week [sent a letter](#) to ASK LLP, asserting that there is no legal basis for the firm to be demanding payments from farmers and [calling the maneuver a "predatory shakedown."](#) Farm Bureau's letter demanded that the firm retract its demands by notifying each affected farmer within 10 business days, returning any funds already received, and ceasing any litigation against farmers who did business with the company. At the same time, PMMB engaged the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office and contacted ASK LLP questioning the legal basis for the demand.

As a result of these efforts, ASK LLP worked with PMMB on a simple, one-page form that farmers can fill out to demonstrate that the payments they received for milk sold to Dean were part of routine business and, therefore, do not need to be paid back.

## Adopted State Budget is Good News for Agriculture

In the final days of their legislative session, the Pennsylvania General Assembly adopted a budget that will fund the state through June 30, 2021. The spending plan does not call for any broad-based tax increases and instead relies on federal stimulus dollars and transfers from special accounts to fund operations.

Nearly all of agriculture's priority line items will receive flat funding through the rest of the fiscal year. The Department of Agriculture will receive roughly \$600,000 less in spending than the previous fiscal year, and the department's disaster preparedness line will receive a \$1 million cut.

In addition, the state is setting aside grant money to aid county and community fairs that had to cancel due to COVID-19. Those fairs will be able to apply for reimbursements for money they typically would have received for hosting agriculture-specific events and contests.

Work on the state's 2021-2022 budget will start in February when Gov. Tom Wolf unveils his next spending plan.



Laverne Nolt, Gary Long, Mark Heeter and Antony Rice represented the county at the PFB Annual Meeting Sessions at Hoss's, Ebensburg, November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. They evaluated, discussed and voted on over 140 proposed resolutions.

## **Nationwide is on Your Side**

Nationwide Insurance began in 1925 as the Farm Bureau Mutual Automobile Insurance Company with the goal of providing quality auto insurance at low rates for Farm Bureau members in Ohio. Nine state Farm Bureaus promote Nationwide and provide discounts to members. Other than Ohio, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau has had the longest relationship with Nationwide than the other eight state Farm Bureaus.

The **Nationwide appointed agencies** in Blair County are:

**Chad Boyer**

735 S Logan Blvd  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-3031  
814.946.9486 chad@theboyeragency.com

**Todd Good & Associates**

343 Bedford St  
Claysburg, PA 16625-8231  
814.239.2205 monet@goodinsuranceagencies.com

**Jonathan T May**

Kyle Miller & Associates  
41 South Market St, Ste 201  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022  
(703)855-0397 jmay@kmainurancegroup.com

**Darin Meck**

908 Spruce St  
Roaring Spring, PA 16673-1535  
814.224.2166 meckd1@nationwide.com

**Gary Shetter**

305 Union Ave  
Altoona, PA 16602  
814.944.4651 shetterinsuranceagency@gmail.com

**John Carr**

APA Insurance  
1654 E. Pleasant Valley Blvd.  
Altoona, PA 16602  
814-569-2473



## **For your always growing side.**

We help protect your farm, family, finances and future. As a Farm Bureau member, you may be eligible for a discount on your farm insurance from the #1 farm insurer.<sup>1</sup>

Learn more at [nationwide.com/pfb](http://nationwide.com/pfb).

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## **Agritourism, COVID-19 Immunity, Vetoed**

Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed sweeping COVID-19 immunity legislation that contained language that would have provided civil immunity exemptions to agritourism businesses.

House Bill 1348, drafted to provide limited immunity relief to farmers that host public events and activities on their farms, was amended into a larger civil immunity bill in the final days of the General Assembly's two-year session.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is disappointed with Gov. Wolf's decision and will seek to address agritourism liability reform again this legislative session. The governor's veto memo expressed objections to the COVID-19-related provisions but did not mention any qualms with the legal protections for agritourism. House Bill 1348 was approved by the full House 120-81 before it was amended into HB 1737 while in the Senate. HB 1348 had bipartisan support as it moved through the legislative process. However, the bill became more controversial when it was amended into a larger bill aimed at COVID-19 immunity.

House Bill 1348 would have provided farmers limited civil immunity from accidents that occurred beyond their ability to control, such as trip and fall accidents in corn mazes. In order to receive those protections, farmers would be required to post multiple warning signs and also have visitors sign waivers, or place waivers on the back of admission tickets.

House Bill 1348 was approved by the full House 120-81 before it was amended into HB 1737 while in the Senate. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau wants to thank the following Democrats who crossed party lines to vote in favor of this legislation: Danilo Burgos, Frank Burns, Pam DeLissio, Bill Kortz, Bridget Kosierowski, Danielle Otten, Eddie Day Pashinski, Adam Ravenstahl, Harry Readshaw, Christina Sappey, Pam Snyder, Wendy Ullman, Joe Webster, Dan Williams and Rosita Youngblood.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau wants to especially thank Representative Barb Gleim, who introduced HB 1348, and lead the charge to get this legislation passed. In addition, Representatives Mark Keller, Marty Causer and Kerry Benninghoff worked to make sure the bill was voted on in the House before the legislative session ended. Farm Bureau also thanks Senate Majority Leader Jake Corman for working to get agritourism legislation added into the larger immunity legislation that was eventually sent to the Governor. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau will work with lawmakers to reintroduce agritourism legislation in the coming months.



Blair County Farm Bureau  
5161 Clover Creek Road  
Williamsburg, PA 16693

*Address Service Requested*

### Upcoming Events:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| ❖ December 31   | Deadline for Golden Owl Award Applications  |
| ❖ January 5-7   | Keystone Farm Show                          |
| ❖ January 9-16  | Virtual PA Farm Show                        |
| ❖ January 26    | Blair County Farm Bureau Board Meeting      |
| ❖ January 10-13 | American Farm Bureau Virtual Annual Meeting |
| ❖ February 23   | Blair County Farm Bureau Board Meeting      |
| ❖ March 2-4     | Virtual Pesticide Updates                   |
| ❖ March 15-19   | Ag Literacy Week                            |