



Blair County Newsletter

Quarterly Newsletter of Blair County Farm Bureau



Volume 5, Issue 3

September 2020

Fellow Farm Bureau Members,

A few days ago at the farm, my wife Jen asked me if I would "want to be a corn or a soybean". At the time, I did not give much thought to her question but a few days later while picking sweet corn I started to think about the question. I would have to say that as a farmer, we should be more like soybeans than corn. I told Jen that corn is beautiful and does extremely well when the conditions are rightit can reach a height of 10 feet tall, beautiful leaves and a great yield when there is plenty of fertility and waterbut when water is lacking and we have extreme heat, corn does not do as well. It ends up short with leaves that change color and curl and the yield has potential to be nothing. On the other hand, soybeans remain constant even with limited water their color and height are close to the same. The yield will not be as good as it would've been with perfect conditions but the plant will at least yield something. For this reason, I feel we should be like soybeans —our world is constantly changing in drastic ways especially in the last six months and most of our challenges are a very uphill battle. It is at these times I am proud to be a Farm Bureau member— knowing I will not face these challenges alone and I am not the only one that is going through this.

Along with everything in life, Farm Bureau is also experiencing a lot of changes now and we are working hard to inform our members in everything that we do for them. Last month our state president Rick Ebert, along with the state board and AFBF president Zippy Duvall had the privilege of talking with the President of the United States Donald Trump. The call lasted approximately 40 minutes and consisted mostly of Zippy and Rick discussing agriculture with the president. He also informed us of everything that he has done for agriculture and how well he has worked alongside us to make agriculture better in America. He was quick to point out that there has been no great civilization without great agriculture for this reason he expressed to us that his chief trade advisor Bob Lighthouser was continuing with trade negotiations with China and other countries. The president told us that his administration was working hard and would continue to work hard to put agriculture first.

When you think about it —that is the power of Farm Bureau when you have our national president and state president on a call with the most powerful legislature in America, for this and many reasons like this, I am a proud Farm Bureau member. There is no other agricultural organization that maintains the relationships that Farm Bureau has. As always, I thank you for being a Farm Bureau member and encourage others that you know to be Farm Bureau members.

I look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Gary Long

President, Blair County Farm Bureau

All Blair County Farm Bureau Members are invited to attend:

The New and Improved Blair County Farm Bureau Annual Business Meeting. We will be having a Cake and Ice Cream Social instead of a meal and it will be on **Thursday, October 8** at the Christian Missionary Alliance Church, Williamsburg at 7:00pm.

The cost is \$5 per person.

If your dues are paid on or before the annual meeting on October 8 your name will be entered into a drawing to have your dues paid for the year. You must be present to win. You may pay your dues at the meeting.

Please make your reservations by October 2
by
calling Dotty Stahl at 814-793-3182.

**Members are encouraged to social
distance and wear a mask.**

**Anyone experiencing
COVID-19 symptoms defined by the
CDC should stay home.**



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-Kelly Ritchey 814-696-6982

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.

**Remember
to
Vote**

Blair County Farm Bureau Newsletter is published by Blair County Farm Bureau four times per year.
September 2020
Volume 5, Issue 3
Blair County Farm Bureau
PO Box 366
Martinsburg, Pa 16662-0366

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

Nominate Outstanding Ag Educators for 2020-21 Golden Owl Award

Do you know an outstanding agriculture educator? Nominate them now for the Golden Owl Award.

The awards program is presented by Nationwide to recognize exceptional agricultural teachers and provide financial support for their education programs. Nationwide presents the award in five states, including Pennsylvania, where it is awarded in cooperation with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and Pennsylvania FFA.

The award was presented in Pennsylvania for the first time this year to Mark Anderson, agriculture teacher at Elizabethtown High School in Lancaster County.

Nominations for the 2020-21 award are open now through Dec. 31.

Four finalists will receive \$500 each for their programs and an overall winner will receive the Golden Owl Award trophy and \$3,000 to help bring new educational opportunities to their program.

For more information and to nominate an outstanding agriculture educator, visit

www.nationwide.com/golden-owl-award/pennsylvania.

Blair County Conservation District

Supporting Blair County's Farmland
Preservation Program
and Leading the Region!



55 Farms and
8,200 Acres
Preserved!

Interested in the Conservation Easement
Purchase Program—the deadline to apply
for 2021 funding is October 15, 2020.

Don't delay—talk to Donna or Rich
at 696-0877 ext. 5
www.blairconservationdistrict.org

Confused by healthcare options?

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

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VOTE!



Funding Available for Organic Certifications

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has funding available to help organic producers pay for the cost of their organic certifications.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program reimburses participants for up to 50 percent of the certified organic operation's eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$500 per scope. If additional funding is appropriated by Congress, the maximum may increase to \$750 for up to 75 percent of eligible costs.

Applications are due Oct. 31 for reimbursements of eligible costs incurred between Oct. 1, 2019, and Sept. 30, 2020.

Learn more at www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index or contact your Farm Service Agency county office.

Reminder: Apply Now for REAP Credits

Applications are now open for one of Pennsylvania's signature conservation programs, which offers tax credits to agricultural producers who implement on-farm conservation practices.

The Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (better known as REAP) is funded at \$10 million dollars this year. Farmers can apply for REAP tax credits to cover 50 to 75 percent of the costs of implementing conservation practices or purchasing related equipment. In high-priority areas, such as the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, credits covering up to 90 percent of costs are available for certain targeted practices, such as 50-foot, forested riparian buffers and measures to exclude livestock from streams.

Common REAP projects include no-till planting and precision ag equipment, waste storage facilities, conservation plans, Nutrient Management Plans, cover crops, riparian buffers and barnyards runoff controls. Credits can be used in conjunction with other funding sources and applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Learn more about the program and how to apply at <https://bit.ly/30hYrEc>.



Daren Brubaker updates those in attendance at the Annual Summer Legislative Farm Tour about changes in technology changes in Agriculture. Those in attendance were: Amy Webster, Blair County Commissioner, Pa Representative Jim Gregory, Pa Senator Judy Ward, Aides for Congressman John Joyce and US Senator Patrick Toomey and Walt Frank from the Altoona Mirror. Some of the other issues discussed were: Rural Broadband, Civil Liability Reform for Agritourism Businesses, Regulatory Relief for Use of Agriculture Buildings For Events, State Budget, New programs for agriculture conservation and Getting Whole Milk into Schools.

Thank You Daren

Thank You, Daren Brubaker for your service as a director. Daren has served 2 terms as a director on the board. He was first elected in 2014. He has reached tenure and cannot run for reelection. We thank you for your work in promoting Blair County Farm Bureau. We have appreciated the events you have hosted and the input you have provided to the board. Again, thank you and we look forward to working with you in the future.



Policy Resolutions for the 2020 Blair County Annual Meeting

Policy Development Process for the County Annual Meeting on October 8th. The way the process will work at the meeting: Mark Heeter, Policy Development Chair, will read the resolution and make a motion for adoption then Gary Long, President, will ask for a second and then open it up for discussion. After discussion, a vote will be taken on to support or oppose the proposed resolution. Once all the resolutions have been voted on we will take any additional from the floor. Any additional resolutions must be presented in writing to the Policy Development Chair prior to the start of the business meeting. Resolutions that are passed that are related to state and national issues will be sent on the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Annual Meeting for consideration.

State:

1. We recommend supporting the development of small dairy processing facilities in Pennsylvania
2. We recommend Pa restarting its inspection of meat and poultry facilities to allow for the custom slaughtering of animals for retail sales
3. We recommend the review of the requirements for a state of disaster declaration
4. We recommend that a State of Disaster can only be deemed by the Governor for a maximum of 14 days after that it must be approved by the State House and Senator
5. We recommend that local food be defined as products produced within 125 miles of sales location
6. We recommend that Townships and PennDot be required to trim trees back to the edge of the road right of way up to 16 feet in height
7. We recommend that all farmers have right and privilege to build a pond to hold water in the wet season to irrigate in dry seasons
8. We recommend that cleaning all streams in time of drought
9. We recommend harvesting any tree detrimental to flowing waters

National:

1. We oppose the mandatory immunization for COVID-19 when a vaccine is developed

If you have any questions about the policy development process, questions on any of the proposed resolutions or additional resolutions please give Mark Heeter a call at 814-934-3053. We look forward to your input on the proposed resolutions at our annual meeting on October 8.

Be Sure to Listen to PFB's New Podcast

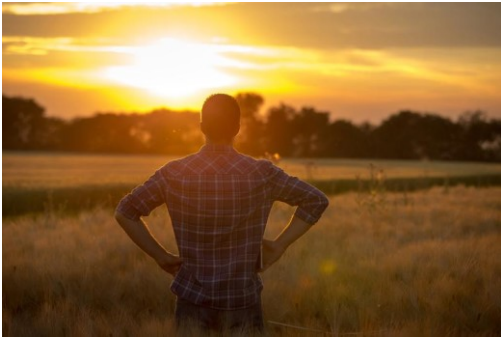


Pennsylvania Farm Bureau recently launched *Farm Focus*, a new podcast that will cover the issues facing Pennsylvania farmers and tell the stories of Farm Bureau members. Each episode will be produced by PFB staff and will feature interviews and discussion on a variety of topics.

You can download the first three episodes now. Episodes can be found at pfbcast.podbean.com, on the Podbean app, on Apple Podcasts,

Google Podcasts or follow the link on the pfb.com homepage. Just search for "Farm Focus" or "Pennsylvania Farm Bureau." New episodes will be released monthly.





Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Opens

Property owners in Pennsylvania have a new financial incentive to help beginning farmers access the tools they need to get their start in agriculture.

The Beginning Farmer Tax Credit provides an income tax credit for selling or leasing agricultural assets such as land, livestock, facilities, and equipment to a beginning farmer. The program, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, is open now.

“I would encourage Pennsylvania farmers and property owners to look into and help spread the word about this new opportunity to help new farmers get established,” said Pennsylvania Farm Bureau President Rick Ebert. “We often hear that access to land and equipment are among the greatest barriers faced by beginning farmers, especially those who did not grow up in agriculture. The Beginning Farmer Tax Credit will help beginning farmers who are passionate about their work grow their operations and secure the future of our industry.”

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau partnered with state Sen. Elder Vogel, Jr. of Beaver County, chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, to develop and introduce legislation creating the tax credit last year. The measure was signed into law in June 2019.

Beginning farmers who participate in the program must be certified by DCED by demonstrating that they have the experience or transferable skills needed to work in agriculture, have not received income from farming for longer than 10 years, and plan to farm in Pennsylvania, providing the majority of the labor and management for their operation.

Property owners can claim a credit equal to 5 percent of the sale price or fair market value (whichever is lower) of an asset sold to a beginning farmer, up to a maximum of \$32,000. For rental agreements, the credit is equal of 10 percent of gross rental income for the first, second and third years of the rental agreement, up to a maximum of \$7,000 per year. The program is capped at \$5 million for the 2020 tax year and \$6 million for 2021 tax year.

More information, including guidance from DCED and required forms are available at www.pfb.com/BeginningFarmerTaxCredit.

More Milk Giveaway

We would like to thank everyone who helped make our 4 milk giveaways successful. We gave away over 16000 gallons of milk.

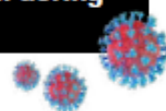
We provided milk to: The Altoona Food Bank, Altoona School District Backpack Program, Altoona Senior Services, American Rescue Workers Mission, Blair Senior Services, Christ Community Church, Clover Creek Church of the Brethren, The Crossroads, First Baptist Church, Diehls Crossroad Church, Gallitzin United Methodist Church, Grace Brethren Church, Homewood (Martinsburg),

Kensinger Food Outreach, Martinsburg Food Bank, Memorial Church of the Brethren, New Life Church, Maybrook Hills Rehabilitation and Health Center, Memorial Brethren Church, Nehemiah Project, Reality Church of God, Roaring Spring Food Bank, Round Knob Church, Salvation Army, St. Vincent DePaul Society, St. John’s UCC, St. Michaels Church, Trinity United Methodist Church, Tyrone Food Bank, Walaceton Church, Wehnwood United Methodist, Williamsburg Area Improvement Development Organization, Williamsburg Food Bank and Williamsburg Senior Center.

Special thank you to Imler’s Poultry for warehousing the milk and the use of the refrigerated trailers and **Jenn Heltzel and Tammy Stoltz** for their work in reaching new locations to donate milk to.



Your Farm Bureau membership ensures that Pennsylvania agriculture has the powerful voice that's needed to advocate for you and protect the future of your farm during times of crisis.



Farm Bureau: Working for You During Uncertain Times

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented, new challenges for agriculture, Farm Bureau worked quickly to ensure that Pennsylvania farmers, like you, could continue your critical mission of maintaining a safe and accessible food supply.

The following is a brief overview of Farm Bureau's advocacy during the COVID-19 pandemic. For even more details on how Farm Bureau is working for you, visit www.pfb.com/coronavirus.

In Harrisburg:

- Worked closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to expand the list of businesses considered essential to include more agricultural operations, such as forestry and sawmills, and to clarify guidance for equine boarding activities and farmers markets.
- Worked with the General Assembly to create a program to reimburse dairy farmers for losses suffered due to sudden closures of restaurants and schools.
- Advocated for temporary measures from the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board to help move milk and improve the price received by dairy farmers.
- Urged the administration and General Assembly to move quickly to help food processors protect frontline workers and ensure continued operations.

In Washington:

- Advocated for support for farmers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through \$16 billion in direct payments and inclusion in small business loan programs. Farm Bureau continues to advocate for additional support to farmers.
- Advocated for a critical infrastructure designation for meat processing plants to ensure a market for livestock producers and a stable meat supply for U.S. consumers.
- Called on the administration to investigate wide spreads between retail meat prices and prices farmers were being paid. USDA has issued a comprehensive report, and the Justice Department has launched an investigation.
- Persuaded the administration to change course on its decision to halt routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa processing services in Mexico and secured flexibility to the H-2A visa program.

At both levels:

- Secured needed regulatory flexibility in areas such as transportation, environmental compliance, USDA programs, taxes and more.
- Kept state and federal policy-makers and legislators informed about challenges facing agriculture and Farm Bureau's policy priorities through letters, briefings, hearings and more.
- Emphasized the importance of expanding broadband access in rural communities, especially in light of challenges related to the pandemic, and advanced related legislation in the General Assembly and Congress.
- Kept Farm Bureau members informed about important updates related to the pandemic, assistance and resources and Farm Bureau's advocacy efforts through publications, email updates, the PFB website, social media and several statewide conference calls.

Blair County has received monies from the federal CARES Act, of which at least \$1.2 million has been allocated to assist local businesses. I encourage every eligible Blair County business—particularly our farms—to apply for these funds. Small businesses with less than 100 employees and non-profits may submit an application starting August 31, with a deadline of September 11 @ 4pm.

Applications and full instructions are available at <http://www.blairco.org>. Under "popular links", click "CARES Grant Program", which takes you to "PA Act 24 of 2020: COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant Program". If you scroll down the page, you will see the links to the pdf's for the application, instructions, and frequently asked questions.

One of the approved expenditures or losses that is listed in the information is "spoilage". I recall that our dairy farmers had to dispose of extra milk. That is an example of a qualifying loss for the purposes of this grant. The purchase of masks and gloves aren't the only qualifying losses. Any losses related to difficulties created by the pandemic, and the directives put in place by the governments which resulted in losses to your business, are eligible for reimbursement.

If you were operating a business headquartered in Blair County prior to March 1, 2020, have less than 100 employees, and suffered losses related to COVID-19, **your business is eligible**. Remember--you, as a taxpayer, have paid into the federal and state coffers. This is just a small portion of what we taxpayers have paid, which the higher levels of government are returning to us. I implore you to apply for this grant.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me. I will be happy to assist if possible.

Amy Webster, Blair County Commissioner awebster@blairco.org (814) 656-1339

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Panel Issues Five-Year Plan for Bolstering Pennsylvania Dairy

Pennsylvania has a road map for promoting and strengthening its dairy sector.

The PA Dairy Future Commission recently issued its recommendations to General Assembly for action items that can be implemented over the next five years to support Pennsylvania dairy. The commission was created by legislation last year supported by Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

"We have been talking for years about what is really needed to help our industry thrive, and we want this report to be used as an action plan rather than just being yet another report that sits on a shelf without substantial implementation," said Commission Chair Brett Reinford, Juniata County dairy farmer and PFB member.

The report was developed with input from farmers as well as other representatives from the dairy industry. Numerous PFB members served on the commission, including Somerset County dairy farmer Glenn Stoltzfus, who represented Farm Bureau.

Several of the commission's recommendations are items PFB is already advocating for and the organization is reviewing the report to determine what other measures would be supported by Farm Bureau policy. Farm Bureau members may also wish to consider whether other recommendations in the report should be addressed through PFB's grassroots policy development process.

Read the full report at

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/pa-dairy-goodness-that-matters/pa-dairy-future-commission-recommendations.

AFBF to Host Virtual Women's Fly-In

Farm Bureau women are invited to participate in a virtual "fly-in" event hosted by the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee.

The event, which is free and open to all Farm Bureau women, will provide an opportunity to connect via Zoom to learn, grow and share ideas and programs. Sessions are scheduled for noon to 2 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21 and from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22. Register online at

https://farmbureau.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NmbVDsMaSq-OmJmkhB32EQ.

Reimbursements Available for Conservation Planning in Chesapeake Bay Watershed

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will again reimburse farmers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed for costs associated with developing conservation plans.

The Agricultural Plan Reimbursement Program has \$900,000 available to reimburse producers for the cost of hiring technical experts to develop Nutrient and Manure Management and Agricultural Erosion and Sediment Control plans. Plans developed after Jan. 1, 2019 are eligible.

More than one plan may be submitted for reimbursement, for up to a maximum of \$6,000. Plans must be submitted by May 31 to be eligible for reimbursement.

More information about the program is available at <http://bit.ly/2Nranxh>.

Farmers in Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cambria, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Somerset, and York Counties should contact Jedd Moncavage of TeamAg at jeddm@teamaginc.com or 717.721.6795.

Grants Available for Farm Conservation Projects

Funding is available through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Small Business Advantage Grant program to help farmers purchase energy efficient or pollution prevention equipment, or adopt waste reduction processes. The program provides 50 percent matching grants, up to a maximum of \$7,000.

In addition to projects that decrease energy usage, the grants can be used on best management practices that improve water quality. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to: riparian buffer plantings, streamside exclusionary fencing, barnyard runoff controls, energy efficient lighting, high efficiency heating and cooling equipment, geothermal heat pumps, energy efficient refrigeration, process equipment upgrades, waste recycling systems, solvent recovery systems, and agricultural solar pumps.

Learn more at <https://bit.ly/30K7Jcj>.

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

Jonathan T May

Kyle Miller & Associates
41 South Market St, Ste 201
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
703.855.0397 mayj18@nationwide.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
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Altoona, PA 16602
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Register Now for PFB's Virtual Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for **Nov. 16 through 19** to join Farm Bureau members from across the Keystone State for a virtual celebration of Pennsylvania agriculture!

Perhaps the most significant days on our yearly calendar, PFB's Annual Meeting brings farmers across the state together to set our organization's direction, recognize the achievements of the past year, learn and network.

While it's disappointing that we won't all be able to see one another face-to-face this year due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual format offers new and exciting opportunities that we expect will make our 70th anniversary one of the most exciting to date.

If you've always wanted to participate in PFB's signature event but have not been able to commit to the time and expense of traveling to Hershey, **this is your chance to join the celebration!** The virtual meeting is free to all PFB members and you can participate as much or as little as your schedule allows.

And remember to mark your calendar for **Nov. 10**, when the excitement begins with a kick-off event. You'll have an opportunity to compete for prizes and get familiar with the virtual convention before it begins.

How do I access PFB's 70th Annual Meeting virtually?

You'll be able to participate in the virtual meeting from most computers and mobile devices with an internet connection. If you are using an Apple or Android mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet, you'll be able to download our Annual Meeting app from the Apple or Google Play app stores. For desktop computers, laptops and other devices, you'll follow a link and participate via your web browser. Either way, you'll be able to access all aspects of the Annual Meeting in one, easy to find place.

Be sure to register ahead of time to receive more detailed instructions.

How do I register?

Registration is open now! Attendees, except for voting delegates, are asked to register online by filling out and submitting the form available at **www.pfb.com/register**. Your registration may take up to a few days to process so be sure to register as early as possible.

If you are serving as a voting delegate, do not register through the online registration form. You will receive special registration instructions after you are selected by your county Farm Bureau.

You will need an email address to register and access the meeting. If you do not have an email account, you can sign up for a free email account through services such as Gmail (visit **mail.google.com**), AOL (visit **login.aol.com**) or Outlook (visit **outlook.live.com/owa**).

How can I learn more?

Look for even more details in the October edition of *Country Focus*. We'll also post updates on our Annual Meeting webpage, **www.pfb.com/annualmeeting**.



Blair County Farm Bureau
PO Box 366
Martinsburg, Pa 16662-0366
Address Service Requested

**Blair County Farm
Bureau**

**Cake and Ice Cream
Social and
Annual Meeting
Thursday, October 8**

**Christian Missionary
Alliance Church,
Williamsburg**

Upcoming Events:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ▪ October 8 | Blair County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting |
| ▪ November 1 | Daylight Saving Time Ends |
| ▪ November 3 | Election Day |
| ▪ November 10 | PFB Annual Meeting Kickoff |
| ▪ November 16-19 | PFB Annual Meeting |
| ▪ November 26 | Thanksgiving |
| ▪ November 28-December 12 | Rifle Deer Season |