

Bucks County Farm Bureau

Volume 8, Issue 3

www.pfb.com

Summer 2023

President's Message

Hello to all my fellow Bucks County Farm Members:

I hope you all had a prosperous summer as we come close to entering fall. We look at our roads filled with school buses as the children go back to school. I hope that they will fill their minds with knowledge of agriculture and the science of animal husbandry. Farm Bureau has been trying to get agriculture education into more schools so children can learn where their food comes from and how it is produced. We brought in the immersion lab to the Middletown Grange Fair, which is an interactive educational experience for children, to educate them to different aspects of agriculture. I am always proud to see how many young 4-H members of Bucks County participate in our county fair and 4-H round-up from everything from dairy cattle, beef cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, lambs, and chickens. Unfortunately the chickens could not be there this year due to the Avian Flu quarantine, but the children still put on an excellent example of what 4-H poultry is like. I certainly hope many of you took the opportunity to observe these future agriculturalists in action.

In action is what Farm Bureaus are all about. We are always in action whether it's contacting our congressman or county commissioners or township supervisors to make sure agriculture is viable in Bucks County.

If you haven't already renewed your membership, please do so. We have rewards for people that renew before their second mailing. Please get your family and friends to join farm bureau because from here is "one voice, one community, one action". Thank you and please renew your farm bureau membership soon.

Sincerely,

BUCKS COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**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—2023 Book: “From Seed to Plant” \$10.00

Past books are also available. Contact Glenda Wismer 215-766-0675 or pamperedchefglenda@gmail.com

Jerry Harris/Paul 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 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.

NATIONWIDE PET INSURANCE

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Members-Get a quote with your member discount at benefits.petinsurance.com/pfb-npr or call 877-738-7874 and mention group code N788.

Joseph Poppiti-New ROD

Joseph's background in agriculture started with growing up on his maternal family's mushroom farm in Kennett Square, Chester County. Joseph pursued a degree in Horticulture from The Pennsylvania State University with an emphasis in mushroom production. Joseph lives in Kennett Township with his wife, Beth. They have one daughter, Kathryn (Katie).

During his thirty years in the mushroom growing business Joseph had the opportunity to work at several mushroom farms throughout the United States. Various staff positions allowed him to visit not just mushroom farms, but many different agricultural commodity farms and operations throughout the United States, Canada, South America, and Europe.

Joseph was on the Board of Directors for the American Mushroom Institute, a national mushroom trades association representing cultivated mushroom growers, processors, and marketers. Joseph held various leadership positions during his time on the Board from 1997 through 2014, including Chairman of the Board from 2010 to 2014.

He previously held a leadership position in Farm Bureau as the Executive Director of Delaware Farm Bureau from 2018 through 2021. During his tenure, Joseph, with the Board of Directors, strengthened the financial position of the organization, transitioned the organization through various insurance changes, and re-established the Delaware Farm Bureau's presence in state, county, and local governments, communities, agricultural associations and with the land grant universities. In working with Nationwide Insurance, volunteer fire companies, and agricultural businesses, the Delaware Farm Bureau helped secure four grain bin rescue tubes in strategic fire stations throughout the state. The Delaware Farm Bureau Foundation was also strengthened with new Board members, a re-focus on the mission of the Foundation and its fundraising efforts, and increased presence at schools and agricultural events throughout the State.

Joseph continues to serve his community as a Township Representative on the Kennett Township Environmental Advisory Council beginning in 2008. This Council's primary focus is to advise the Township Commissioners and residents on issues that concern preserving and guiding the use of our Township's natural and cultural resources.

by: Joseph Poppiti

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR 2024 MEMBERSHIP EARLY
(BY OCTOBER 1, 2023) TO BE ENTERED INTO A WAWA GIFT
CARD DRAWING! YOU CAN ALSO BRING YOUR RENEWAL TO
THE BUCKS COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING ON
SEPTEMBER 29, 2023.**



BUSY AS CAN BE

Bucks County beekeeper shows us what it takes to care for honey bees.

By: Michele Haddon, Bucks County Courier Times/USA Today Network.

The sun hung low in the sky as Kate Steck grabbed a white jacket out of her trunk on her way to greet her little friends. It was the perfect way to spend a warm June evening at the end of her long work week.

Steck was checking in with her colony of honey bees, buzzing in and out of two hives set along the perimeter of a grassy field stretched out behind Forest Grove Presbyterian Church in Buckingham.

As a hobbyist beekeeper, she takes her duties seriously. To be a good steward, she performs regular inspections and addresses their needs, which includes detecting harmful parasites such as varroa mites, checking on the queen bee, looking for eggs and determining if more space should be added to the hive.

"I do a check up every two weeks. I absolutely love beekeeping, but if you're not actively keeping our hive healthy, you will fail being a beekeeper," said Steck who volunteers with the Bucks County Beekeepers Association educating others to find joy in beekeeping.

Across the U.S. more than 10,000 people keep bees, a vast majority who are hobbyists maintaining less than 25 hives. Locally interest is growing. The Bucks County Beekeepers Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting beekeeping in the local community through education and resource sharing-currently has 300 active members, up 27% from just three years ago.

"My favorite thing is teaching beginners, helping them get started and watching them get to enjoy it," Steck said.

What is there to love about beekeeping?

Beekeeping is a great solo hobby for people who are naturally curious and love to try new things, Steck said. "The funny thing about bees is there's so much to learn," she said. "For instance, in its lifetime, one bee will produce only 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey. It makes you appreciate all that goes into making it." And while she admits the honey is a good health benefit, she mostly loves the opportunity to observe her bees up close. "It's pretty fascinating to watch the bees and see this collective organism blossom in front of you," said Steck, who described how the bees work together for the overall wellbeing of the hive.

From the queen bee, whose only job is to lay eggs and produce pheromones, and the drones, who exist to mate once and die, to the worker bees, who labor tirelessly to clean and protect the hive, nurse the brood, build the combs collect nectar and process it into honey, they all exist to ensure the future of their colony.

"They all work for the good of the hive, not the good of the individual bee. The bees collecting the nectar and making the honey right now are not going to live to enjoy the honey, but their younger sisters will," Steck said.

What it takes to become a beekeeper?

Do plenty of research to decide if beekeeping is for you, said Steck, who recommends checking out the Bucks County Beekeepers Association for its monthly meetings, classes, and workshops. "There is so much to learn, especially in year one and year two, and doing it on your own is so much harder than when you have resources around you locally," Steck said. Also, be sure to look into your local laws and neighborhood rules around beekeeping. If you're unable to keep bees in your own backyard, don't give up. Your local beekeeping club can often connect you with people who are willing to have hives on their property. And of course, you will need to invest in the equipment, which includes hive boxes and frames, protective clothing, hive tools, a smoker and finally, the honey bees.

If beekeeping isn't for you, there are other ways to help

In honor of National Pollinator Week, June 19-26, the USDA is recognizing the critical role of pollinator species—such as bees, other insects, bats, and birds—in producing more than 100 crops grown in the U.S. Honeybee pollination alone adds more than \$18 billion in value to agricultural crops annually. "Our world's ecosystem and food supply greatly rely on pollinators—without them, many of our nation's crops wouldn't be able to produce as many fruits, nuts, or vegetables resulting in lower supplies and higher prices," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in a press release.

This week and every week, it is critically important that we continue to encourage the protection of pollinators and their habitats."

Here are a few simple ways you can help bees and other pollinators thrive:

- Plant a variety of native plants, flowers, and herbs.
- Limit or eliminate use of pesticides, which are extremely toxic to honey bees.
- Spread awareness and educate others about the importance of pollinators.

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State Legislative Update From State and Local Government Affairs Specialist Lily Guthrie

Secretary Negrin Confirmed as Department of Environmental Protection Secretary

Rich Negrin was confirmed by the Senate to serve as the Secretary of DEP on June 27th. An attorney by trade, Negrin previously served as a Deputy Mayor of Philadelphia. President Hoffman and PFB staff met with Sec. Negrin on June 20th and was pleased to hear he wants to work closely with the agricultural community. It's our hope that this is the beginning of a fruitful relationship.

Celebrating Dairy Month

On Monday, June 19th Senator Elder Vogel (R-Beaver, Butler, Lawrence) hosted a press conference celebrating National Dairy Month. Also taking part in the press conference was Senator Judy Schwank, Representative Eddie Day Pashinski, Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding and Director of the Center for Dairy Excellence, Jayne Sebright. PFB President Chris Hoffman was at the event along with PFB staff. To further celebrate, farm show milkshakes and calves were brought to the Capitol. It was a great day for Pennsylvania dairy farmers!

Visit from 4-H State Council

On Tuesday, June 27th PA 4-H state council officers visited PFB headquarters in Camp Hill. The four officers shared their ag stories and had the opportunity to meet staff and tour the ag lab. It was a pleasure to host them, and we look forward to seeing them again at annual meeting in November.

Federal Legislative Update From Federal Affairs Specialist Bailey Thumm

AGRICULTURAL LABOR

Senate Discussions Started on Ag Labor

On May 31st, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing entitled "[From Farm to Table: Immigrant Workers Get the Job Done](#)." The hearing examined the financial issues with the adverse effect wage rate, complications in the H-2A application process, OSHA regulations, and concerns about mandatory e-verify. We are hopeful these hearings will initiate productive negotiations that lead to a long-term legislative solution for our agricultural workforce.

BROADBAND / RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Second Version of the National Broadband Map Released

On May 30th, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released its second version of the National Broadband Map, which reflected the challenges submitted to the November 2022 version. FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel said, "Over 75% of those challenges have already been resolved and the majority have led to updates in the data on the map showing where broadband is available. At the same time, the new map also reflects a net increase of more than one million new serviceable locations, as compared to the November 2022 pre-production draft."

Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act

On June 7th, Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Roger Marshall (R-KS), and Tina Smith (D-MN) and Representatives Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA-3) Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-OR-5), Tracey Mann (R-KS-1), and Yadira Caraveo (D-CO-8) introduced [S.1867/H.R.3922](#), the Expanding Childcare in Rural America (ECRA) Act. The ECRA Act would direct USDA to authorize and prioritize projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of childcare in agricultural and rural communities through certain programs.

AFBF is in support of the ECRA Act.

DAIRY

Whole Milk Bill Reported Out of Committee

On June 6th, House Education and Workforce marked up [H.R.1147](#), the *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act* by Representatives "GT" Thompson (R-PA) and Kim Schrier (D-WA). The vote was 26-13 to report it out of committee, where it now awaits action to be voted on by the House. The bill would allow whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free flavored and unflavored milk in school cafeterias. Current PA co-sponsors are Representatives Meuser, Smucker, Cartwright, Reschenthaler, Perry, Kelly, Joyce, Fitzpatrick, and Wild. **Ask your U.S. House Member to support the bi-partisan Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023 by completing [PFB's Action Alert](#).**

Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) Reform Update

On March 28th, [International Dairy Foods Association](#) (IDFA) and [Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association's](#) (WCMA) submitted FMMO petitions to USDA. AFBF President Duvall sent a letter to USDA expressing [Farm Bureau's opposition](#) to IDFA and WCMA's petitions. On April 28th, USDA responded to [IDFA](#) and [WCMA's](#) FMMO petitions by requesting more information. USDA cited lack of proposed make allowances values as reason to request additional information from IDFA and WCMA before deciding whether to proceed with an FMMO hearing. On May 1st, [National Milk Producers Federation](#) (NMPF) filed a petition to USDA requesting a FMMO hearing. AFBF President Duvall sent a letter to USDA [partially supporting](#) NMPF's petition. AFBF's letter urged USDA to accept NMPF's petition for a comprehensive FMMO hearing, based on a recognition that USDA currently has the authority to perform cost surveys on dairy manufacturers to update make allowances fairly. On June 1st, USDA responded to NMPF's petition by opening a request for additional proposals to be considered. Click [here](#) for USDA's response to NMPF and a draft time for a FMMO hearing. AFBF submitted [their proposal](#) to USDA on Tuesday, June 13. Dr. Roger Cryan, AFBF's Chief Economist, represented Farm Bureau at the virtual pre-hearing information session.

FARM BILL

CBO Releases Updated Farm Bill Projection

On May 12th, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released an updated baseline for farm bill programs. Click [here](#) for AFBF's latest Market Intel that analyzes CBO's new projection.

TRADE

Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act Introduced

In 2018, CA's voters passed a law called Proposition 12 that requires veal, pork, and egg raised in confined areas to have a certain space minimum. Egg-laying hens must be cage-free; sows must have at least 24 square feet of usable floor space; and cows used for veal must have at least 43 square feet of usable floor space. This means that an operation which is not Prop 12 certified, cannot sell their products in CA.

On June 16th, Senator Marshall (R-KS) along with Senators Ernst (R-IA), Grassley (R-IA), Cornyn (R-TX), Fischer (R-NE), Schmitt (R-MO), and Cotton (R-AR) introduced [S.2019](#), the Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act. S.2019 would be the legislative solution to Prop 12 by prohibiting other states and local units of government from regulating the preharvest production of agricultural products in other jurisdictions. A House companion bill will be introduced shortly by Representative Ashley Hinson (R-IA). **This is a priority for PFB, and we would urge Senators Casey and Fetterman to support S.2019 to prevent increased food costs and food insecurity.**

Action on Mexico Corn Trade Dispute

On June 2nd, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced formal dispute settlement consultations with Mexico, under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), concerning measures restricting agricultural biotechnology that will impact U.S. corn exports. USTR states that Mexico is violating the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Chapter of the USMCA with its import ban on certain U.S. white corn produced with biotechnology. This is significant since Mexico is the largest foreign market for U.S. corn with 13.8 million tons of yellow corn and 1.6 million tons of white corn exported in 2022. USTR's announcement means the formal dispute settlement consultations will now begin. If there is no resolution, the U.S. can call for a dispute panel to decide the issues.

WOTUS

2023 Waters of the United States Update

On May 25th, the United States Supreme Court issued its long-anticipated decision in *Sackett v. EPA*, ruling that the EPA and the Army Corps wrongfully claimed oversight on wetlands owned by Chantell and Michael Sackett. The Court ruled unanimously, 9-0, that the Clean Water Act (CWA) did not apply to the wetlands on the Sacketts' property, striking down the "significant nexus" test in determining what is considered a WOTUS. Additionally, by a 5-4 vote, the Court adopted a more stringent test for what qualifies as an "adjacent wetland" subject to the CWA jurisdiction. Writing for the majority, Justice Alito concluded that the CWA applies to wetlands that are "as a practical matter indistinguishable from waters of the United States" because they have a "continuous surface connection" with a larger body of water. The decision will have positive, far-reaching consequences for the agricultural industry. While the *Sackett* case addressed the pre-2015 WOTUS definition, the Court took the opportunity to thoroughly dissect the 2023 WOTUS rule in Section IV. As a result, the 2023 rule technically is in effect, but functionally EPA and the Army Corps cannot enforce it. Moreover, the Court did note that the current rule would not withstand judicial scrutiny. AFBF is currently suing the EPA and the Army Corps over the current WOTUS rule, and the *Sackett* decision will aid Farm Bureau's case significantly in arguments.

Regulatory Affairs Update From Regulatory Affairs Specialist Grant Gulibon

Farm Bureau Meets with DEP Secretary Negrin & Senior Staff

Farm Bureau leadership and staff met with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Rich Negrin and his senior executive team on June 20 to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern, such as the need for dedicated conservation funding, increasing technical support for farmers installing pollution control practices, and the Department's permitting reform initiatives. Sec. Negrin shared his vision for improving the Department's operations and previewed some of the changes that stakeholders can expect to see from DEP in the coming months.

Farm Bureau thanks the Secretary and his staff for the conversation and looks forward to collaborating with the Department in areas that benefit Pennsylvania agriculture.

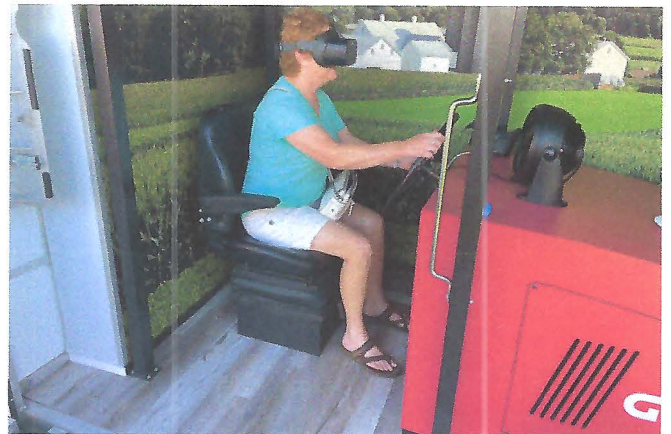
"Dog Law Modernization Act" Passes PA Senate, Awaits Final House Action

Senator Elder Vogel's (R-Beaver) "Dog Law Modernization Act" (SB 746) was approved by a vote of 43 to 7 on June 20. It currently sits in the House Appropriations Committee awaiting further action. Farm Bureau supported Sen. Vogel's bill in the preceding legislative session and is again in support in the current session. The bill is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- Make sure all Pennsylvanians have the same opportunities to easily purchase a dog license online, as well as receive education and resources for dog licensing at point of purchase or adoption and have all the resources they need to make informed decisions about selecting the dog that is right for them.
- Help the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement increase dog licensing compliance, and easily locate an illegal kennel operation on advertising sites.
- Create better protections from dangerous dogs, with the intent that state dog wardens and police would not have to spend countless hours and days trying to find a shelter willing to hold a dangerous dog for an extended period.
- Take proactive steps to prevent infectious and contagious diseases before an outbreak occurs.
- Generate an additional \$3 million in revenue that would cover the costs of the Bureau's increased expenses by increasing individual dog licensing and kennel license fees.

MIDDLETOWN GRANGE FAIR—AUGUST 16-20, 2023

The Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture's Farm to Families Immersion Lab powered by GIANT made a stop at the Middletown Grange Fair from August 16th through the 20th. Fair visitors were able to learn about food nutrition from the MyPlate activity, play agricultural games, and put on a headset for a 4D virtual tractor ride. The Immersion Lab was sponsored by the Bucks County Farm Bureau for this year's fair.



Bucks County Farm Bureau President, Mark Scheetz, who farms in West Rockhill Township, said that Bucks County Farm Bureau members are proud to sponsor the Immersion Lab at the Middletown Grange Fair. Fairgoers were able to see what it was like to sit in a tractor cab going through the fields. Most fairgoers are not farmers, so this was a truly unique experience for them. Bucks County Farm Bureau is always proud to bring people from the city closer to the farm and educate them about our livelihoods.

by: Joseph Poppiti, ROD, Region 1



BUCKS COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING/BANQUET 2023

Friday, September 29, 2023

Pennridge Community Center

146 E Main St Perkasie PA 18944

(Rt. 113, Silverdale PA)

Buffet Meal Provided by C & C Catering

\$22.00/person

6:30 Hors d'oeuvres 7:00 Dinner

Door Prizes

RSVP By Tuesday, September 19th

Glenda Wismer at 215-766-0675 pamperedchefglenda@gmail.com

or

Sandy Herstine at 215-795-2385 ksherstine@verizon.net

Please make check payable to Bucks County Farm Bureau

Mail to:

Glenda Wismer, 87 Log Cabin Rd, Perkasie PA 18944

RSVP and Payment REQUIRED

****Raffle for all attending members who bring membership renewal/payment or
have renewed prior to the meeting****

(Separate payment required)

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Bucks County Farm Bureau is collecting soda & soup can tabs for charities (Farmer 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.

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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

Mark Scheetz, BCFB President

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