

Mercer County Farm Bureau

Newsletter of the Mercer County Farm Bureau

A quarterly publication

June 2023

DATES TO REMEMBER

MCFB Board Meeting

County Board meets
7:30 p.m., the first
Monday of the month,
at the Pig Barn,
Munnell Run Farm

July 29

Summer Picnic with
Beaver/Lawrence
Counties at SNPJ Rec
Center in Enon Valley

July 29

Western PA Growing
Stronger Leaders
Spartansburg

August 11

Legislative Tour
Irishtown Acres
Paxton Farm

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Governor Shapiro Visits Farm to Celebrate Dairy Month

Governor Josh Shapiro and Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding visited Reinford Farms in Mifflintown to officially celebrate June as dairy month, while sharing his administration's plans to refine the permitting process and improve farm conservation efforts in the state. Gov. Shapiro met with Farm Bureau members Brett and Meredith Reinford and toured their farm, which is well known for its innovative sustainability business practices, that includes recycling cow manure and food waste into an anaerobic methane digester to transform it into renewable electricity, heat and fertilizer. The digester creates enough energy to power the entire farm. Reinford Farms is a multigenerational farm in Juniata County that currently houses 750 milking cows and 800 young cattle.

During the tour, Shapiro and Secretary Redding were given a demonstration of the farm's de-packaging and food recycling operations, which uses the farm's digester to dispose of food waste in an environmentally friendly manner.

The event featured representatives from Pennsylvania Farm Bureau including President Chris Hoffman, and Manager of Government Affairs and Communications Justin Clapper, as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Center for Dairy Excellence, the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association and Land O' Lakes, who the Reinforde are in a co-op with.

"Pennsylvania's dairy farmers contribute a wide variety of products to consumers and their hard work does not go unnoticed. Dairy farmers contribute more than \$14 billion to our state's economy."

Shapiro Focused on Permitting

Shapiro detailed his plans to speed up the permitting processes, citing an executive order he signed when he took office that shrank the permit timeline from eight weeks to three days to get a corporate permit processed through the Department of State.

"When we talk about expansion, one of the things that holds our farmers back in addition to not having the access to the capital that they need – which I'm hopeful we will correct in this budget and the budgets that follow – is for too long, Harrisburg has taken too long to help our farmers get a permit and expand, Shapiro said. "That is changing. We will be announcing the timeline for each of our 2,400 permits and licenses and applications that the Commonwealth issues. We will also be going forward with a money back guarantee, where we will process a permit, license, and an application within a certain period of time, and if we miss that period of time, we will give you your money back for your application fee."

Shapiro Addresses Missed Opportunity With Fairlife

Shapiro addressed on his administration's efforts to land a deal with premium milk bottler Fairlife, vowing to secure "a big-time ag deal" in Pennsylvania during his administration.

Fairlife deciding to build its new processing plant in New York came as a big blow to Pennsylvania's dairy industry, as the plant was expected to use 5 million pounds of local milk per day, making it the largest milk processing plant in the Northeast. Fairlife is owned by Coca-Cola. Fairlife's milk is ultrafiltered and has less sugar and more protein and calcium than traditional milk.

"We worked our tails off to try and get Fairlife here. It was all hands on deck," Shapiro said. "In effect, what we learned from this process may be more important than landing that deal. We learned that we needed to be quicker on permitting. We were able to put together a team that would've guaranteed Fairlife that our permit would have been done in the timetable that they laid out. It was a good thing to learn on how to speed up the permitting process."

Shapiro said that while Pennsylvania offered a permit and the necessary incentives to land Fairlife, it couldn't ensure that Fairlife would have access to enough milk to get to market.

"In that, candidly, we came up a bit short. We learned from that and how we need to engage more with our dairies and that we need to increase our capacity," Shapiro said. "I'm not happy that we didn't land that, but I'm confident that we will land a big ag-deal in Pennsylvania and we will be ready to rock and roll soon in the future."

Dairy month is an annual celebration that began in 1937 as a grocery milk promotion

I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream



July is National Ice Cream Month! Chefs spend countless hours preparing decadent desserts but it doesn't get any better than sitting on the front porch watching fireflies while eating a bowl of melting ice cream covered in sweet, fresh strawberries! In 1984 President Ronald Reagan proclaimed July as National Ice Cream Month and established National Ice Cream Day as the third Sunday in July. You can get a jump by celebrating early at the Mercer-Northwest Guernsey Breeders Association Ice Cream Supper which will be held on Friday, July 14 from 5 pm – 9 pm at the 4-H Park north of Mercer on Rte. 19.

2023 Region 6 Conference Western PA Growing Stronger Leaders Event DRONES, THERAPY DOGS, VENDORS

The Women's Leadership Committee invites you – both men and women – to attend this special conference. The theme is Old N' New, Hand N' Hand. There will be drones, therapy dogs, a community service project, and vendors! The cost is \$25. It will be held on July 29, 9:30 a.m. at Rometown Community Church, 44364 Harrison Road, Spartansburg, PA 16434, which is at the corner of Rte 89 and Harrison Rd. The event is hosted by Region 6, Crawford County.

RSVP by July 15 to Jessica Bryan (814) 758-9970 jessijersey@aol.com

LEGISLATIVE TOUR TO BE HELD IN AUGUST

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau members will be meeting with local, state, and national politicians to share how considered legislation will impact agriculture by giving them insight from a farmer's point of view. Steve Paxton will be hosting the event on his farm on August 11. The event will begin with a tour of Irishtown Acres' facilities and after discussing current topics, a light lunch will be served. This event is open to all Mercer County Farm Bureau members. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to George Gregg by August 3.

SUMMER PICNIC

Once again, the Beaver/Lawrence Farm Bureau is inviting Mercer County Farm Bureau Members to attend their summer picnic. This is a great family event and begins at 6pm. They ask for a donation that will go to the Ronald McDonald House Charities. There will be a band, food for purchase, and mechanical bull. This will be held at SNPJ Rec Center in Enon Valley.

NEW BILL FOCUSES ON PURCHASE OF LAND BY FOREIGN ENTITIES

Foreign entities own 40.8 million acres of U.S. agricultural land, or 3.1 % of the privately owned land in the nation, according to USDA data. Half of the foreign-owned land is forests. Canada accounts for one third of the foreign-owned land. Lawmakers often worry about purchases by China, which owned 347,000 acres at latest count.

Sponsors Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), said their bill would strengthen U.S. oversight of foreign ownership of U.S. ag land. Two House committees voted last week to block or heavily tax farmland purchases by foreign adversaries such as China, Russia, North Korea and Iran.

USDA and the FDA would become members of a powerful U.S. committee that rules on the national security implications of foreign ownership of U.S. assets under a bipartisan Senate bill unveiled on Tuesday. The legislation would also empower the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), led by the Treasury, to consider retroactive divestment of real estate owned by foreign entities. Under the bill, the USDA and the FDA would become members of CFIUS, now limited to seven federal departments and the White House, and CFIUS's powers would be expanded to better consider ag needs when it decides if a purchase would create national security risks. The bill also would require CFIUS to consider retroactive divestment of real estate and require it to review all ag land purchases in the past three years that exceeded 320 acres or \$5 million.

As reported by Ag Web/Farm Journal/ Drovers Daily, June 23, 2023



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412-977-3076

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FARM BUREAU MEETS WITH PA DEP

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau met with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Acting Secretary Richard Negrin to discuss improving DEP's permitting process, the rollout of the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program and how it will help farmers protect and enhance water quality throughout Pennsylvania. The need for more "boots on the ground" to ensure that conservation dollars are spent where and how they can have the greatest positive impact was also discussed.

CROP DAMAGE FROM DEER?

If you are a farmer who wishes to participate in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) please follow the directions provided below by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Applications for 2023 are **due July 1**. If you wish to participate in the Agricultural Deer Control (AG Tag) Program (formally Red Tag) please contact your local Game Commission Region Office to sign-up. To learn more about ways to protect your farm from wildlife, check out: <https://pfb.com/farmerno-code/>

PRESENTERS WANTED FOR STATE ANNUAL MEETING

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) is offering educators, associations, businesses and others an opportunity to host presentations on issues that appeal to a wide variety of farmers, during the state's largest farm organization's 73rd Annual Meeting, scheduled for Nov. 13-15, 2023, in Hershey. PFB is seeking proposals from potential presenters for several educational sessions. Presentations typically cover a wide variety of topics, such as, but not limited to, agricultural economic trends and forecasts, agricultural education, animal health, commodity promotion and marketing; communicating about controversial subjects, environmental conservation practices, family wellness, farm and food blogging and social media, farm business planning; farm management, finance and marketing, farm safety, farm-to-table promotions and direct marketing, invasive species, leadership development, new farm technologies, and rural entrepreneurship.

More than 600 people from across Pennsylvania typically participate in PFB's Annual Meeting, where county Farm Bureau leaders debate policy positions of the organization, set PFB's agenda for the coming year and recognize achievements of the past year. The deadline for submission of proposed presentations is **July 10, 2023**.

Temporary Pause on Mobile Ag Ed Science Lab Registration

The Mobile Ag Ed Science Lab program will be on pause for a brief time. Registration opened in March for the 2023-24 school year with an extremely high response rate. So far, more than 130 schools registered. This is exciting news. However, we only have 15 teachers returning in the fall. Due to the limited teaching staff, we have made the difficult decision to temporarily pause registration.

Don't Forget! MONEY AVAILABLE - 2023 Winter Newsletter: Nick Trivelli

The Pennsylvania state budget establishes a new Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP). The Pennsylvania state budget includes \$154 million for a new Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) that will provide cost-share grants for farmers to install best management practices (BMPs). The new program will be accessed by producers through their local county conservation districts with Mercer County Conservation District (MCCD) projected to receive over \$2 million for conservation practice implementation on agricultural operations. The money must be spent by December 2026.

ACAP will help pay for projects from helping convert farming practices to no-till and planting cover crops to more expensive projects such as barnyard management and manure management systems. Please direct any questions about this program to Agricultural Resource Conservationist Nick Trivelli at 724-662-2242 or at ntrivelli@mercercountypa.gov

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, September 29 is the anticipated date of the Fall dinner meeting. Details will be in the next newsletter.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

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A total \$6 portion of annual member dues covers subscriptions to these publications, \$3 for Positively Pennsylvania and \$3 for Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Grassroots Advocate (formerly Country Focus). Members receive 4 issues of each publication per year on a quarterly basis. Publication frequency and details are subject to change.



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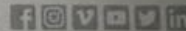
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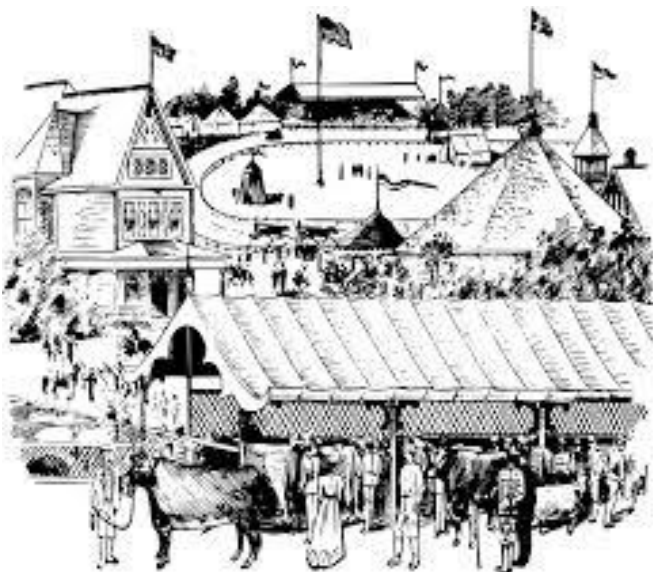
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56th Annual Mercer County Grange Fair – July 18-22

Jefferson Township Fair – August 8-13

145th Transfer Harvest Home Fair August 22-26

155th The Great Stoneboro Fair August 30-Sept. 4

Jamestown Community Fair – September 5-9