

Newsletter of the Mercer County Farm Bureau

August 2020

A quarterly publication

#### DATES TO REMEMBER

#### **MCFB Board**

7:30 p.m. 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the Month Extension Center

#### County Legislative Tour

10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Aug. 20 Jefferson Twp. Picnic Shelter

#### MCFB Annual Meeting

6:30 p.m. Oct. 1

Format to be announced



#### Membership – The Lifeblood of County Farm Bureau

Now is the best time to look for new Farm Bureau members. Membership now provides membership now through December 31, 2021. Membership chairman, Larry Moose, is asking everyone to look around their neighborhood and along the places within Mercer County where they travel for potential members for Farm Bureau.

Give Larry a call or send him an email with names that you come up with. He will check to see if that person is already a member, if they are not, he will make a visit to encourage them to join Mercer County Farm Bureau.

Don't hesitate to give Larry a call. He wants to see the county make goal this year. You can reach Larry at: 724-533-4376; or <u>Imooseacres@gmail.com</u>

#### Mercer County Legislative Tour

The annual legislative farm tour will be held at the Zahniser Pavilion across from the Jefferson Township Fairgrounds, 7409 Lamor Road, Mercer, Pa. 16137, from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 20. All legislators who serve Mercer County have been invited to visit with Farm Bureau members about legislative issues that impact agriculture. Attendees will be asked to wear masks and social distancing will be practiced.

Members interested in attending should contact George Gregg, county legislative director, at 724-372-9587 or <u>GeoRGregg9@hotmail.com</u> no later than Aug. 15.

#### Children's Books Still Available

Anyone wanting a copy of "The Tree Farmer" or "Milking Time," please contact Sandy Craft at 814-715-4244 or <u>craft5@windstream.net</u>

#### **MCFB DIRECTORS**

ROBERT CRAFT 716-499-2381 <u>craft5@windstream.net</u> President

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LARRY MOOSE 724-533-4376 Imooseacres@gmail.com Membership chair

#### STATE BOARD MEMBER ROBERT CRAFT 716-499-2381 craft5@windstream.net

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION DIRECTOR AL WEBER 412-897-6991 aweber@pfb.com

#### President's Message Summer 2020

Hoping this message finds you healthy. This time of year, in the heat of summer. Harvesting crops should be foremost in your minds, but there is a major distraction.

COVID 19 is constantly interrupting our lives. It has us social distancing when summer picnics and vacations were the plans of past summers to enjoy the weather and the company of others, we have to be a summer solution of the summer of others.



summers to enjoy the weather and the company of others, we have to try to flatten-the-curve. This pandemic has caused major market disruptions, uncovered serious food chain weaknesses, weakened market prices, increased market costs, and interrupted markets for the farm products.

Mercer County Farm Bureau has continued to interact via teleconferencing this spring to finally conducting small in-person meetings. Farm Bureau on the national, state and local levels is working closely with state and federal lawmakers to assure there is financial aid made available to help farmers through this difficult time. Also, there is constant focus on promoting domestic and foreign markets for ag products.

As your focus and labor continue on your businesses this summer, please remain vigilant and avoid the pandemic.

#### Bob Craft

up:

#### Responding to Action Alerts Is Easier For Smartphone Users



It is important for members to respond to the Action Alerts from PFB. This is how our legislators and regulators find out how we as farmers feel about the current issues. Responding is easy by computer but now is also available through a text messaging system.

In less than five minutes, you can send a timely message to members of the General Assembly, Congress or regulatory agencies that could influence important legislation or regulations to the benefit of the agricultural community.

Now, you can receive and respond to Action Alerts via text message. Here's how to sign

1. Text "PFB" to 50457. 2. You will receive a text message thanking you for signing up. Just click on the link highlighted in blue to complete the registration. 3. The link will send you to a registration page. Fill out the information and click SAVE. 4. Start receiving and responding to important Action Alerts from PFB, right from your smartphone!

#### Make Your Voice Count by Responding to U.S. Census

If you have not responded to the 2020 U.S. Census, learn more at **pa.gov/Census**. **Your response benefits your community.** Census data directs how \$675 billion in federal money is spent each year. Your response is needed to make sure your community receives important investments in areas like infrastructure, health care, education, food security and technology.

Please support the companies listed in our business directory.

#### Legislative Update Held Via Zoom

Mercer County Farm Bureau legislative committee members participated in the recent Legislative Update. This event usually includes legislative committees from across the region meeting for supper prior to learning about the current legislative topics. This time, the event was a Zoom meeting through the internet with about 100 Pennsylvania Farm Bureau members participating from across the state.

Darrin Youker, state legislative director, encouraged members to contact their members of the General Assembly about issues important to agriculture.

"Even though they may not have their offices open to the general public, they are still available by phone and they need to hear from Farm Bureau," he said.

#### Topics to discuss with your legislators

State Budget issues: The state legislature passed a five-month budget in May because of the impact COVID-19 had on income sources and additional expenses. This action is in effect through November. There will be cuts in every part of the budget. PFB is encouraging members to contact their legislators about the importance of agriculture to the state.

Farm Bureau is asking for continued support for the core programs that impact agriculture. Ask legislators to continue to support Penn State Extension, the Department of Agriculture and Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. These three entities also work together to provide important animal health diagnostic services that are vital to animal agriculture that is the largest segment of the industry.

Ask legislators to support programs like The Dairy Development Grants and Small Meat Processing Grants to aid onfarm diversity and to strengthen our food supply chain.

Let legislators know that by supporting the state's agriculture they are helping the people who grow food in Pennsylvania.

Other legislative issues to discuss with your legislator include: finding ways to bring broadband services to the rural areas of Pennsylvania; tax fairness for farm families; and civil liability reform for agritourism businesses

Senate Bill 835 has been introduced. The bill would create a designated fund that can be used as seed money by companies, or rural cooperatives, who want to deploy service in underserved rural area. The state has not set money aside to help incentivize the build out of highspeed broadband in rural areas. Senate Bills 2438 and 1118 are companion legislation that would make it easier for rural cooperatives to run fiber optic cable on existing rights-of-way.

House Bill 2032 has been introduced to exempt farmers from paying into the state unemployment fund for their H2A workers since these workers cannot benefit in this program.

House Bill 1348 would set a higher bar for a plaintiff to collect damages from an injury that occurred while participating in an agritourism activity.

#### Contact information for our national and state legislators:

#### U.S. Senator Bob Casey

17 South Park Row, Suite B-150 Erie, PA 16501 Phone: 814-874-5080

#### U.S. Senator Pat Toomey

United States Federal Building 17 South Park Row, Suite B-120 Erie, PA 16501 Phone: 814-453-3010

#### Congressman Mike Kelly

33 Chestnut Avenue Sharon, PA 16146 Phone: (724) 342-7170 www.Kelly.house.gov

#### **State Senator Michele Brooks**

100 Hadley Road Suite 9 Greenville, PA 16125 (724) 588-8911 mbrooks@pasen.gov

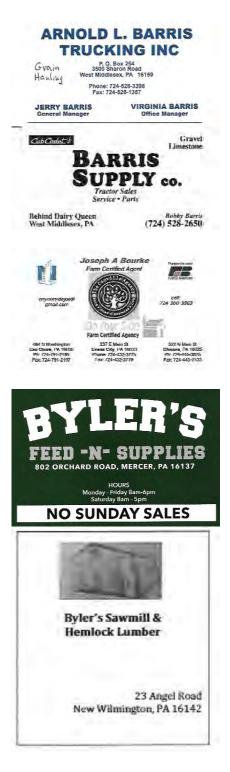
#### State Representative Mark Longietti 2213 Shenango Valley Freeway,

Unit 2-E Hermitage, PA 16148 Phone: 724-981-4655 mlongiet@pahouse.net State Representative Tim Bonner 234 West Pine St. Grove City, PA 16127 724-458-4911 tbonner@pahousegop.com

# State Representative Parke Wentling

395 High St. P.O. Box 17 Conneaut Lake, PA 16316 Phone: 814-382-7200 pwentling@pahousegop.com

### The Mercer County Farm Bureau Business Directory









We specialize in water pumps & conditioners

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If you would like your business card here. Please email a clear copy of your business card to: Carol Ann Gregg, <u>cagregg2003@yahoo.com</u>



#### PFB Member Finds Savings, Convenience with Staples Member Benefit

As a member of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, you have access to a variety of local and statewide benefits that can add value to your membership by offering valuable savings.

One program that is open to all PFB members is the Staples Advantage program, which offers a one-stop online shopping experience and free next-day delivery. There are more than 4,000 office product discounts on items such as copy paper, staples office supplies, and break room and cleaning supplies. The program also offers bulk furniture discounts, high quantity product discounts as well as facility and cleaning procurement programs.

For more information on how to register for this program, visit pfb.com/membership/benefits/876-staples.

You can learn more about the member benefits available to you at **www.pfb.com** or by contacting PFB's Member Relations Division at **717.761.2740**.

#### HELP WANTED

Looking for someone who enjoys writing and communicating with farmers. MCFB is looking for a future newsletter editor. To learn more contact Carol Ann Gregg at: 724-372-9792 or <u>cagregg2003@yahoo.com</u>

#### **County Board Meets Monthly**

The board of the directors of the Mercer County Farm Bureau meets the first Monday of each month to conduct the business of your county farm bureau.

During April and May the county board met via conference call. By June the board felt the need to be meeting again in person. To enable social distancing, the board has been meeting in the parking lot of the Mercer County Extension Center.

The weather has cooperated and allowed board members and committee chairs to conduct MCFB business.



Mercer County Farm Bureau Robert Craft, president 27 Cassidy Drive Mercer, PA 16137 stamp

## Invite your friends and neighbors

To join

Mercer County Farm Bureau