

Bucks County Farm Bureau

Volume 9, Issue 4

www.pfb.com

Fall 2024

President's Message

Hello to Bucks County Farm Bureau Members:

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas to all Bucks County members. We're coming to the end of another year; a very difficult year for many of our Farm Bureau members.

I've just returned from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Hershey, PA. This year we had 205 resolutions to debate on the floor. The most resolutions we have had in many years. Representing Bucks County Farm Bureau on the floor of the delegates, you get to hear Grass Roots actions taking place. With the resolutions that were passed, these resolutions will become the policies of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau for many years to come.

I would like to thank everybody that has already renewed their membership in Bucks County and I would also like to ask your friends and neighbors to join Farm Bureau. We are always looking for new members who have agriculture in their hearts and in their hands. So please become a Farm Bureau member.

I would like to thank my fellow board members who have put their trust in me to be their president again. I would also like to welcome Joe Dise to our Board of Directors and thank him for taking the time out of his busy schedule to be a board member. We welcome you to the Bucks County Farm board.

I wish all Bucks County residents a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas and a very prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,

Mark A. Scheetz

President Bucks County Farm Bureau

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—2024 Book: "Polly and the Birth Day" **\$11.00**

Books are still available. Contact Glenda Wismer 215-766-0675
pamperedchefglenda@gmail.com

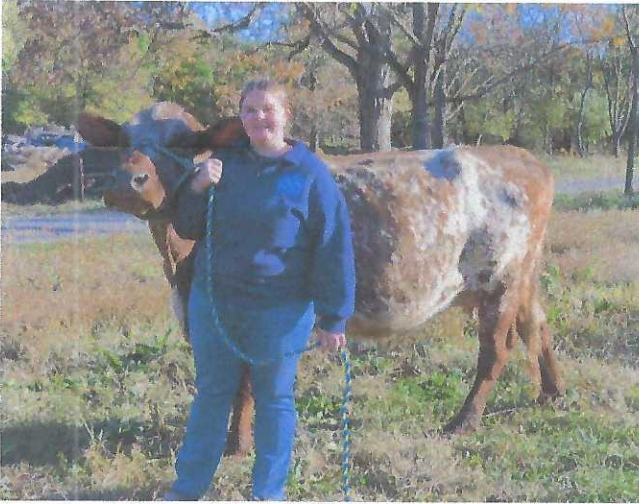
Harris/Hockman Young Ag Professionals Grant-2025

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 will be eligible after 1st year membership renewal.** 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.

Young Ag Professionals

**Upcoming Events: AFBF Fusion Conference, Denver Co, March 7-10, 2025
AFBF Annual Convention, San Antonio, TX, January 24-28, 2025
Go to: pfb.com for further information.**

Molly Scheetz—Harris/Hockman Young Ag Professional Grant



Molly with 14 year-old Jillian

Food From a Family Farm to Your Family

“Feeding the world one household at a time” is how Molly Scheetz describes her life’s work. Molly, 24, is the 2024 recipient of the Bucks County Farm Bureau’s Jerry Harris & Paul Hockman Young Ag Professional grant. This is her second award; the first came in 2021.

Molly radiates boundless enthusiasm for her work; she can’t stop smiling while showing a visitor around her family’s farm. She raises and finishes beef cattle

and hogs at Homestead Hog Farm on 22 acres in West Rockhill Township near Sellersville. Established in 1742 by Molly’s ancestors, it’s been in the family almost continuously. Molly and her brother, Mason, (a previous Young Farmer awardee) grew up on the farm and still reside there with parents, siblings, and nieces.

“For me farming means family,” she says. “Both of my grandfathers were involved in agriculture in their own way, but both taught me that more important than what happened in the barns was how it affected your family and the people closest to you.”

She’ll use the \$2500 grant to help upgrade electric fencing for cattle pastures. There are about 35 head of beef cattle grazed rotationally through the summer. The pastures are divided into lots by fences to keep forage in growing condition and reduce erosion. “Like most animals, they always think the grass is greener on the other side o the fence.” Improving the charger will support additional wire to better protect the pastures.

Molly used her 2021 award to rebuild 50- year-old hog pens, to house more pigs safely and efficiently. “By having better pens and pastures for our animals they flourish, and when our animals are flourishing we are happy farmers.”

It’s not just her own pigs that benefit: Molly is a leader with the Bucks County 4-H Swine Club. She relishes teaching and has opened up the farm for youth members to house their animals, “giving them the opportunity to learn and find the love of agriculture that I have through their projects.” Her love for farming started when she was just old enough to ride with her grandfather on his tractor. Most of her training came from working here and on other local farms; she also attended Upper Bucks Technical School for Animal Sciences and Horticulture, and she credits 4-H as a key learning experience.

Molly’s “passion is “to be in the barn with the animals.” She also helps with fieldwork on the farm and the 250-plus leased acres where the Sheetzes grown corn, grass, and hay to feed their livestock and to sell. And, like many Bucks County farmers she has a full-time off-farm job (in a Quakertown chick hatchery). After getting home from work she starts work again. “We stay up till the work is done.”

The Scheetz family's proposition is "farm to table" direct-sale products. They connect with an individual consumer and engage a butcher to provide exactly what the buyer wants.

Those consumers get why it is important to support local farmers. A challenge for Bucks County farmers, though, is "there are many people who don't understand farming, or where their food comes from." Sometimes that unfamiliarity can be hazardous. Molly's dad was in a bad tractor accident on busy Ridge Road this past summer while hauling hay (he's okay).

"Farming is a community that lends a hand wherever it is needed," Molly says. "One of my favorite things about being involved with agriculture is the people you meet, the relationships you build, and knowing that in the time of need you have those people to call on or in their time of need, they can call you."


"It's my passion and I look forward to continuing the legacy of our family on the farm."

article/photo by Susan Charkes, The Herald

E Chester Heim Scholarship

Farm Bureau members with a son/daughter studying for an ag degree at DVU or Penn State can apply for this scholarship. Check box on the application confirming your parents are in good standing with PA Farm Bureau. For information for all of our scholarships go to:

<https://pfbfriends.com/education/scholarships/>





Let's talk about
ATV safety

Having the safety talk with your kids isn't just important—it's essential.

In 2023, 19% of deaths in off-highway vehicle (OHV) accidents were children under 16, with only 2% wearing helmets! The Let's Champion Rider Safety® campaign, provides tips and resources for effective safety discussions and protection for young riders.

Learn more at
Nationwide.com/ATVsafety

Scan code to get safety tips for your young riders.

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PA FARM SHOW, JANUARY 4-11, 2025

Bucks County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting-September 21, 2024



Approximately 100 people attended the Annual Meeting. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal. Mark Scheetz addressed the audience, as did Representative Shelby Labs, Joseph Poppiti (ROD), Ruth Ann Moyer (Dairy Promotion), Sandy Herstine, and Glenda Wismer. Many went home with wonderful door prizes from our generous sponsors. An enjoyable evening was had by all.

Congratulations to Wawa Gift Card Winners for Membership Renewal Promo

Gary Atherholt, Quakertown
Daniel Crooke, Plumsteadville
Robert Fox, Kintnersville
Donald Steeley, Bedminster
Don Worthington, Doylestown

If you haven't renewed your Farm Bureau membership, please do so today. Ask a family member, a friend, or a neighbor to join. There are many benefits that are included in your membership. Please go online to sign up or renew at pfb.com or contact Sandy & Ken Herstine at ksherstine@verizon.net or any board member.

Thank you!

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION TO OUR
ANNUAL MEETING. YOUR PATRONAGE IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED**

Alfred Cox

American Arms & Ammo

Baringer Bros. Meats

Bishop Estate Vineyard and Winery

Bolton's Farm Market

Bucks County Farm Bureau

Byrne Sewing

Capri Restaurant & Bar

Carter Handcrafter Furniture

Dairy Queen Pipersville

Dolly & Bob Rutherford

Dominick's Pizzeria

Dublin Agway

Earthborne

F M Brown's Sons Inc.

Grocery Outlet

Growmark FS, LLC Bloomsbury

Haring Brothers

Harleysville Feed

Harrow Beverage

Hellerick's Adventure Farm

Kate Goldenberg

Landis Supermarket

Little's of Silverdale

Mark Scheetz Family

NAPA of Ottsville

Perkins Restaurant

Roman Delight

Roy Ann Diner

Tanner Bros. Dairy Store

Timac Agro Earthborne

Tractor Supply Pipersville

Trauger's Farm Market

Trinity Inc.

Vanderlely's Truck Sales & Service

Weis Markets Perkasie



Ag Literacy Week

MARCH 17-21, 2025

"The Soil in Jackie's Garden"

\$12.00/Book

pfb.com

THE PENNSYLVANIA FARM BUREAU'S 74th ANNUAL MEETING

The 74th Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau was held at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey beginning on Sunday, November 17, 2024. The three-day Annual Meeting commenced with a luncheon hosted by the Women's Leadership Committee. The luncheon featured guest speaker, Lisa Wherry, American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Northeast Regional Representative and Washington County Farm Bureau President. Lisa spoke of the AFBF's Farm State of Mind Campaign which sheds light on the mental health challenges faced by farmers and ranchers.

The Opening Business Session on Sunday afternoon featured guest speaker, Joby Young, Executive Vice President of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Mr. Young spoke on the importance of our County Farm Bureau's membership. He also emphasized engaging within our communities and with elected officials to further the issues of agriculture. Chief Administrative Officer, Todd Bailey, celebrated the accomplishments of our Farm Bureau Counties this past year.

The Sunday night festivities opened with an ice cream social, followed by an introduction of our Annual Meeting sponsors which was a new feature. A surprise visitor of the evening's events was Glenn "GT" Thompson Jr., the U.S. representative for Pennsylvania's 15th congressional district and Chair of the House Agriculture Committee. Representative Thompson spoke on the Farm Bill and the possibility of a vote during the upcoming lame duck session of Congress.

The Sunday evening's celebration concluded with the annual Young Ag Professionals (YAP) live and silent auction. This year's auction was a record fundraiser of over \$18,000 thanks to the donations of our County Farm Bureaus, including Bucks County.

On Monday morning, President Chris Hoffman opened the Business Session followed by Vice-President Tommy Nagle taking the gavel to begin the Voting Delegate Session. The delegates debated and completed the first reading of 205 recommendations for new policy.

A District 2 Caucus was held during the day on Monday which included Bucks, Lehigh, and Northampton-Monroe Counties. Bucks County President, Mark Scheetz, was elected Chair of the Caucus and Northampton-Monroe accepted the Recording Secretary duties. State Board Representative for the District, Don Buckman, (Bucks County) was unanimously re-elected. State Women's Leadership Committee member, Melanie Fink, (Lehigh County) was unanimously re-elected, as well. Mark Scheetz's participation on the Promotion and Education Committee ended due to term limits. The Caucus thanked Mark for his years of service on the Committee. Paul Semmel (Lehigh County) was elected as the new Promotion and Education Committee member from District 2.

Monday evening's traditional Banquet featured Dr. Troy Ott, Dean of Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. Dr. Ott spoke about his vision for the College of Agricultural Sciences to be the best in the nation including the collaboration between Penn State Extension and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau for the future of agriculture.

During the Banquet presentations, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau awarded its Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award to Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Russel Redding who was joined by his wife, Nina. The prestigious honor recognizes an individual whose dedicated work and service has significantly advanced agriculture across the Commonwealth. (insert photo of Russel Redding, wife Nina, and President Hoffman).

Redding, a native of Adams County, humbly reflected on his agricultural journey, and his gratitude for the recognition. "To have your vocation and avocation be the same is a gift," Redding said. "As a young FFA member of the Battlefield Chapter in Gettysburg, when I stood up and said the FFA creed, I believed in the future of agriculture—not just in words, but in deeds. Those deeds have defined my journey."

Tuesday morning's delegate voting session commenced with the second reading of all policy recommendations. At the conclusion of the session, the delegates approved 15 Board of Directors recommendations, 31 National policy recommendations, and 102 of a record 205 submitted State policy recommendations.

The Annual Meeting concluded with the Presidential election. Those seeking the position were Bucks County Vice-President, Don Buckman, incumbent Chris Hoffman (Juniata) and Lisa Wherry (Washington). Chris Hoffman won his second 2-year term to lead the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau which concluded the closing Business Session of the 74th Annual Meeting.



Secretary of Agriculture, Russel Redding, (right) with wife, Nina, accepting the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award from President Chris Hoffman.



President Chris Hoffman thanking the Voting Delegates after being re-elected for a 2-year term at the concluding Business Session at the 74th Annual Meeting.



Bucks County Farm Bureau Board members on Delegate Floor

**article/photos by:
Joseph Poppiti, ROD**

A note from Chad Davis, Davis Feed Owner—HURRICANE RELIEF We made it there and back twice and all I can say is thank you a hundred times over. This story started on September 28th, but I never thought that my family, friends, customers, and myself could have turned a tragedy into something good for all. One week after the hurricane, my wife, Beth, and I went to a family function where a cousin of mine and I got to talking about how he was working security in Asheville, NC. He was telling us how bad it was down there. The next day, I called my brother, Clayton, and I said “I feel like there is something we can do” and he had the same response. Five days later, we were headed down to Old Fort, NC to go and help and I decided to bring a load of hay, feed, and supplies for livestock and pets where I found a donation drop point in Marion. We spent the next few days down there helping do whatever we could. What we saw was total devastation of everything. It was truly heartbreaking, but we also saw and participated in a community and it’s people coming together to help one another out. It was amazing to see. On my trip back home late that Sunday, I started brainstorming what more I could do to help these people. I would like to think I had some help from God that day because in less than a week, a whole community of people up here helped us turn this little plan into something we never could have expected coming together the way it did. We were able to fill a **TRACTOR TRAILER** load of feed and supplies, and had **THREE** flatbed trailer loads of hay donations to take back down to the **McDowell County Agricultural Center**. They were so appreciative of everyone who helped make this possible; what all of you were willing to do for them. Below is a list of people, businesses, and groups that have gone above and beyond. To my customers and people who donated, thank you for your amazing generosity. To my wife, **Beth Carney Davis**, and daughter, **Bella**, thanks, I love you, you’re the best. To my Father, **Allen**, for all you do. You’re the best Dad. **My Children, you kids are great.** My brother, **Clayton**, great job for helping organize this. My Daughter, **Gabrielle Davis**, for helping with things, navigating, and keeping me awake through all of this. My son, **Russell**, for running things for me while I was gone and assisting in making feed, good job, boy. Thank you to all of my employees for really stepping up to help us with this.

Now for a list of all the locals that helped make this possible.

Joe Dise & Dean Overholt-Spiral Ash Farm, hay; **Bruce Weikel**, hay; **Indian Brook Farm**, hay; **Daniel Crooke**, hay & psalm; **Tom Wambold**, hay; **Ryan Buckwalter**, Bolton Farm Market, hay & fencing supplies; **Mark Hockman**, Penn View Farm, hay & hauling; **Andrew & Shawn Coleman**, Coleman Hay Farms LLC, hay, bundling, & hauling; **Rob Hale**, **Behlen Manufacturing**, stock tanks; **Co-operative Feed Dealers Inc**, stack tanks & boots; **McGeary Grain Inc/Blue Bomber Logistics**, feed & supplies transportation; **Schoeller’s Electric**, use of trailer for hay; **Ken-Jan Farm**, use of trailer for hay; **Corman Bag Corp**, feed bags; **Labelcraft Press Inc**, feed tags; **Kirby Agri**, feed tag analysis; **Middletown Grange**, donation; **Middletown Grange Fair**, donation **Bucks County Farm Bureau**, donation; **Froeshour Family Rushland**, generator donation; **Skyisland Retreat & Campground**, for hospitality & giving us somewhere to stay; **Cousin Ted**, for inspiration;

Andrew Coleman & Mark Hockman, I want to give you guys a **BIG THANK YOU** for not only assisting in hauling down hay, but joining us in helping out locals down in the N. Carolina community. It was a pleasure working with you guys.

A **HUGE** amount of praise to **Skyler Murray** at the **NC Cooperative Extension-McDowell County Center** for all she is doing, taking, & distributing all of the feed, hay, & supplies since this has happened. Also a thank you to all of the staff & volunteers that have been helping out there. **The Davis Country Store & Cafe** (I know crazy coincidence). Thank you for feeding the community during this crisis and helping distributing feed to the locals. You & your staff have big hearts. **Spencer’s Hardware** in Old Fort, providing a space for hay to be given out and distributed to locals. Another small business stepping up & helping their community. I am sure I am missing a bunch of people. All I can say is **THANK YOU!!!** Chad Davis, Davis Feed Mill

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau State Legislative Update From State and Local Affairs Specialist Mitchell Kurek

Summary of SB 67 (PN 1802):

Pennsylvania Game Commission Representation: The bill proposes changes to ensure that at least one member of the Pennsylvania Game Commission represents the interests of agricultural commodities and normal farming operations.

Crop Damage Reporting: It aims to establish a self-reporting system for farmers assigned to remove deer causing crop damage. Farmers could report each harvest via a toll-free number, online application, or website, simplifying the process and improving data collection.

Sunday Hunting Regulations: SB 67 seeks to repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting. However, it stipulates that hunters must obtain written permission from private landowners to hunt on Sundays, enhancing respect for private property rights.

Trespassing Penalties: The bill increases penalties for hunting on private property without permission, particularly on Sundays, to deter trespassing and protect farmers' lands.

Agriculture Access Permit List: It introduces an agriculture access permit system, allowing farmers to list their land for hunting access. This system would outline application procedures, criteria, guidelines, and conditions for both landowners and hunters, promoting better farmer-hunter relationships.

House Bills 2106-2108:

HB 2106-2108 mirror many of the objectives of SB 67, including increasing penalties for hunting trespass, improving crop damage mitigation programs, and facilitating connections between farmers and licensed hunters.

Potential for Integration: There is a possibility that provisions from these House bills and SB 67 will be combined to create a unified legislative package. This combined effort would streamline the legislative process and address wildlife damage more effectively.

Next Steps:

Committee Vote: The upcoming committee vote on SB 67 is a critical step. Approval would advance the bill to the full House for consideration.

Legislative Process: If the House passes SB 67 (with or without amendments), it will return to the Senate for concurrence on any changes. Successful navigation through both chambers would send the bill to the governor's desk for signing into law.

This legislation represents a significant opportunity to address the challenges wildlife poses to Pennsylvania farmers, including crop damage and property rights issues. We will continue to monitor the progress of SB 67 and HB 2106-2108 and advocate for solutions that support our agricultural community.

SB 153: This bill amends the vehicle code to allow milk trucks traveling to and from dairy farms or milk plants to operate 24/7 on highways, provided certain criteria are met. We support this bill as it will help ensure the smooth transport of perishable products like milk and prevent unnecessary delays.

HB 493: This bill allows senior hunting license holders to harvest antlered deer with two or more points on one antler or a spike at least three inches long. We support this legislation and will continue working to ensure it becomes law, offering greater flexibility to senior hunters.

HB 2414 has been introduced to the House Finance Committee and we anticipate a hearing in the coming weeks. This bill amends the Tax Reform Code to revise provisions related to the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, providing eligible farmers with a tax credit equal to five percent of the lesser of the sale price or fair market value of agricultural assets, up to a maximum of \$50,000. The bill also outlines the application process and eligibility criteria through the Department of Agriculture.

Over-Order Premium Return

Senate Bill 1297, introduced by Senators Vogel and Schwank, continues to propose a shift in managing the over-order premium (OOP) from the Milk Board to the House and Senate Ag Committees. This proposed reform aims to enhance legislative oversight and stakeholder involvement, though specific details about the premium's distribution are still under discussion.

PFB's official statement:

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) sincerely appreciates Senator Vogel and Senator Schwank's leadership and introduction of legislation to reform the over-order premium. After years of advocating on the issue, we now have specific legislative text to work toward achieving a more effective and equitable over-order premium. While critical questions remain, such as the premium's specific distribution, the introduction of the bill is an important initial step, and we look forward to working with the General Assembly and the industry collectively on accomplishing meaningful over-order premium reform.

Budget Information

On July 11, Governor Shapiro signed the 2024 budget, totaling \$47.6 billion. There were substantial investments in agriculture, with the Department of Agriculture's budget growing nearly 10 percent to \$228 million. Overall, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau was supportive of this year's budget and feels there were plenty of victories for the agricultural community.

For more information, read PFB's press release on the 2024-2025 budget: <https://pfb.com/pennsylvania-farm-bureau-applauds-agricultures-inclusion-in-2024-25-state-budget-several-pfb-priorities-signed-into-law/>

Federal Legislative Update From Federal Affairs Specialist Bailey Fisher

FRIEND OF FARM BUREAU AWARD -118th Congressional Recipients from PA: Every two years at the end of a Congressional session, PFB presents AFBF's "Friend of Farm Bureau Award" to members of Congress who have supported Farm Bureau policy as shown by their voting records. The voting records are based on AFBF priority issues, as determined by its Board of Directors. Recipients are nominated by PFB and approved by AFBF's Board of Directors. The Friend of Farm Bureau Award is not a political endorsement but rather a recognition of a lawmaker's support for agriculture as demonstrated over the past two years. The Friend of Farm Bureau recipients for the 118th Congress from PA are:

Senator John Fetterman (PA)

Representative Dan Meuser (PA-09)

Representative Lloyd Smucker (PA-11)

Representative John Joyce (PA-13)

Representative Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14)

Representative Glenn 'GT' Thompson (PA-15)

Representative Mike Kelly (PA-16)

APPROPRIATIONS

FY25 Appropriations: On September 25, Congress passed [H.R.9747](#), the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act of 2025, which was a continuing resolution (CR) to extend government spending levels to December 20 to prevent a government shutdown. The CR also included an additional \$231 million for funding for the Secret Service after two recent assassination attempts against former President Donald Trump. The House passed H.R.9747 with a vote of 341-82 and the Senate approved it with a vote of 78-18. On September 26, President Biden signed off on the CR. Congress has recessed and is expected to return the week of November 11, which at the point Farm Bureau hopes to see action being taken on farm bill.

FARM BILL

Farm Bill Advocacy Needed: A full extension was not included in the recent CR for FY25 appropriations as the hope is to get farm bill done this calendar year. We are optimistic that a lame duck farm bill is possible. Farm Bureau has done numerous sign on coalition letters recently to urge members of Congress to act on farm bill upon return in November. This is our top priority at the moment, so PFB would ask that every County Farm Bureau do their absolute best to actively engage their congressional member on why a farm bill must get passed this year for the sake of food security and family farms.

DAIRY

AFBF Submitted Comments for the FMMOs: On September 13, AFBF submitted their [comments](#) for USDA's Recommended Decision proposing to amend the uniform pricing formulas applicable in all 11 FMMOs. The only change AFBF made to their original positions, thanks to PFB's Dairy and Farm Policy Committee, was instead of remaining neutral on the Extended Shelf-Life Adjustment, we are now neutral on it due to the negative impact it will have on Class 1 milk. After a final rule is published, USDA will plan and hold a referendum of dairy producers to vote on whether to accept or reject the proposed amendments.

Proposed National Heat Index Standards Rule: On August 30, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published a [Notice of Proposed Rule Making \(NPRM\) for a federal heat illness standard](#). Farm Bureau's major concern with this proposed rulemaking is it would implement a national heat index standard of 80 degrees and would mandate 15-minute rest breaks at 90 degrees every two hours. A universal federal heat standard fails to account for diverse regional and commodity-specific needs. The comment period closes on December 30, 2024. AFBF will be submitting comments. There is a one pager and talking points available for this rule. Please email Bailey Fisher at bmfisher@pfb.com.

H-2A Worker Protection Rule Status: On August 26, in *Kansas, et al. vs. U.S. Department of Labor*, a judge in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia preliminarily enjoined the [Farmworker Protection Rule](#) in certain states (PA was not one of them). On August 28, Department of Labor (DOL) announced a nationwide delay of implementation of the H-2A worker protection rule until further notice due to a district court decision. On September 10, DOL announced that it was proceeding to implement the rule in the 33 states not covered by the order. This gave agricultural producers in those states only one day's notice before having to comply with the rule's new filing requirements.

LABOR

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Regulatory Affairs Update From Regulatory Affairs Specialist Grant Gulibon

Food Processing Residuals Legislation Moves from Pennsylvania House Committee

As referenced in previous Regulatory Affairs updates, Reps. Paul Friel (D-Chester), Barb Gleim (R-Cumberland), and Paul Schemel (R-Franklin) have introduced legislation on the topic of food processing residuals (FPRs). House Bill 2393 seeks to change how the use of food processing residuals (FPRs) on farming operations is governed in Pennsylvania by removing the existing permitting exception for the use of FPRs in normal farming operations and giving the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) greater authority to regulate them. House Bill 2594, which deals with certification of haulers and brokers of FPRs, was considered along with HB 2393 at a recent Pennsylvania House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee meeting.

While Farm Bureau continues to have concerns with several portions of House Bill 2393—and will continue to work to address those concerns as the bill moves through the legislative process—we believe that the changes proposed since its introduction are sufficient for our organization to adopt a neutral position on the bill at this time. With regard to House Bill 2594, while Farm Bureau does not currently have policy to support or oppose the bill at this time, but did lend its support to concerns raised by PennAg Industries in a letter of opposition that it provided to the committee. Both bills were ultimately approved by the committee and sent to the full House of Representatives for consideration. The Senate is not expected to take up either bill this session in the event that they pass the House.

For additional background on the evolution of efforts to address complaints about FPR usage, as well as the reasoning behind Farm Bureau's position on the issue, please refer to the June 2024 Farm Bureau Regulatory Affairs Update, or contact Grant Gulibon, Regulatory Affairs Specialist, at rgulibon@pfb.com or 717-731-3547.

State Conservation Commission Meets, Announces Next Round of ACAP Allocations

The State Conservation Commission announced the fiscal year 2024 allocations for the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) for each Pennsylvania county at its September meeting. Farm Bureau's advocacy was critical to securing the newly approved annual \$35.75 million appropriation to the Cleans Streams Fund for ACAP, and those funds will be supplemented in 2024 by more than \$7 million in interest earnings from the original funding allocated to the program.

Each county conservation district will receive at least slightly more than \$300,000 in 2024 for projects, including the City of Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation Department (pending the establishment of a conservation district). Districts will have the opportunity to monitor allocations over the next two years, and future allocations may be adjusted based on performance and reallocated to counties deemed to be using the money most effectively.

Currently, there are 609 open ACAP contracts totaling \$83.1 million, and 328 projects worth \$5.7 million have been completed. A total of \$93.275 million has been spent and committed to date, and overall, 1,396 applications requesting more than \$123 million have been submitted.

Farm Bureau Comments on EPA Mancozeb Decision

Farm Bureau recently submitted comments to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the agency's proposal to cancel the use of mancozeb for grapes due to post-application worker exposure hazards. Farm Bureau's comments focused on the fact that the consequences to the agricultural industry, specifically for grape growers, have not been adequately assessed in EPA's decision-making process regarding mancozeb.

High fungal disease pressure demands the frequent use of fungicides, and mancozeb is a cost-effective part of growers' disease management programs. It is also a critical resistance management tool, and without it, there will be serious issues with resistance development in the fungicides that remain. Additionally, mancozeb is the sole chemistry registered to protect grapevines from Phomopsis, a fungal disease that can weaken rachises and cause severe crop loss at harvest.

At the same time, mancozeb is a key component to integrated disease management for Phomopsis and downy mildew. Growers typically only use mancozeb until just before bloom because strong early season disease control prevents economically devastating disease for the entire season. The loss of this multi-site fungicide will only speed up the breakdown of the few remaining single-site chemistries available for downy mildew control, which will interfere with all resistance management practices, leading to higher pathogen pressure and higher rates of fungicide application broadly.

Removing mancozeb from the repository of registered chemistries will result in immediate loss of productivity and crop yield, creating cascading economic impacts through the grape industry and threatening the livelihood of thousands of producers. Winemakers and other grape processors will be forced to seek imported grapes, and an entire stable industry, which contributes an estimated \$276 billion to the U.S. economy, would be at risk of collapse.

Farm Bureau concluded its comments by calling on EPA to reconsider this proposed decision, and include grapes among the other commodities that will retain mancozeb usage through increased mitigation measures and label updates.

Governor's Invasive Species Council Holds Field Meeting

The Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council, of which Farm Bureau is a member, held a field tour on Sept. 19 at the Octoraro Plant Nursery and Stroud Water Research Center. The visits focused on the development and usage of Pennsylvania native plants and research on how such plants can be utilized in agricultural conservation settings. The council also heard updates from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) on its ongoing efforts to prevent the spread of non-native species across the Commonwealth.

DEP Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee Holds Annual Meeting

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee (LLWAC), which counts Farm Bureau among its 23 members representing local government, business, environmental, health, academic, engineering and public interest groups, and the Pennsylvania General Assembly, provides advice to the department regarding policies and issues related to the implementation of the Pennsylvania Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Act of 1988.

The committee held its annual meeting on Sept. 27, and received updates from DEP on the status of and recent developments concerning low-level radioactive waste disposal facilities; disposal information related to the Appalachian Regional Compact; and the decommissioning of nuclear power plants (including Three Mile Island Unit 2).

The joint Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA)-Department of Environmental PA Agricultural erosion & sedimentation), Chapter 105 (dam & waterway encroachments and access), and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

A primary focus of the meeting was an overview of the newly passed Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) program, which is set to launch this fall. The SPEED program is based on Senate Bill 350, introduced by Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York), and will allow applicants to use DEP-approved professionals for initial reviews of certain permits. DEP is then required to make a final determination or identify issues to address within a specific timeframe. Lawmakers and the economic development and business communities hope to provide the agency greater flexibility with this new approach while ensuring that permitting decisions are made efficiently.

Separately, DEP provided an update on its Chapter 105 pilot program, which focuses on improving the review process for water obstruction and encroachment permits. By refining application procedures and prioritizing critical projects, DEP expects to shorten the typical review timeline by nearly two months. This pilot program is similar in intent to an already-established Chapter 102 pilot program, which has received four applications to date, and DEP would like to broaden that program to encourage more participation, as both programs are currently limited to individual permits, rather than general permits.

Farm Bureau encourages members with comments on any of the three permit areas currently under discussion to contact Grant Gulibon, Regulatory Affairs Specialist, at grgulibon@pfb.com or 717-731-3547, to make sure these issues are included for consideration by PDA and DEP personnel.

Agriculture Permitting Roundtable Holds Quarterly Meeting

The joint Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA)-Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) roundtable dedicated to improving agricultural permitting held its fall quarterly meeting on Sept. 23. Farm Bureau is participating in the work group and in three work groups addressing Chapter 102 (agricultural erosion & sedimentation), Chapter 105 (dam & waterway encroachments and access), and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

A primary focus of the meeting was an overview of the newly passed Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) program, which is set to launch this fall. The SPEED program is based on Senate Bill 350, introduced by Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York), and will allow applicants to use DEP-approved professionals for initial reviews of certain permits. DEP is then required to make a final determination or identify issues to address within a specific timeframe. Lawmakers and the economic development and business communities hope to provide the agency greater flexibility with this new approach while ensuring that permitting decisions are made efficiently.

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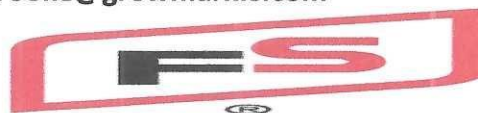
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Mark Scheetz, BCFB President

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