

Annual Fall Dinner Set For Sept. 21

Mark your calendar for the annual fall membership dinner, which will be held Sunday, September 21, at 1 p.m. at Ron and Connie Richards’ pavilion located at 2800 Cito Road, Big Cove Tannery. As always, the dinner will include a free pig roast as a special thank you to our members for their continued support of our organization.

In addition to discussing policy and hearing updates on what your Board of Directors has been up to over the course of the last year, the day will also include policy talk, door prizes and maybe a surprise or two! More information to come, so watch your mailbox for your reminder post card!

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WLC Hosts Event For
Medical Center Residents

The Women’s Leadership Committee hosted another special event for long-term care residents at the Fulton County Medical Center during the last several months. Residents enjoyed a special Valentine's Day-themed celebration in February. The party included delicious snacks, a sweetheart photo booth, games, prizes and lots of fellowship. Women’s Leadership Committee members assisting with the party included Tammy Decker, Amanda Shives, Amber Brant, Abigail Metcalfe, Laura Buchheit and Chanin Mountz. The residents shared with the women a little bit about their lives growing up and their occupations. Many of those on hand were raised on a farm or farmed for a living as adults.

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Fulton County, PA



Cultivating New Ideas ...
Is recreational cannabis coming to PA?

As you may have been seeing over the last few months, Gov. Josh Shapiro is determined to make the recreational use of marijuana legal in the Commonwealth of PA.

HB1200 was introduced several months ago and quickly passed the house along party lines but when it arrived in the senate, the Law and Justice committee voted it down 7-3. Now he remains "hopeful" that the legislators will be able to deliver a bill to his desk by the budget deadline by the end of this month.

Shapiro was quoted, "There have been some good conversations that have been ongoing, particularly on the skill games side." He feels that "folks understand the importance of finally regulating and taxing both of those issues--and we're going to continue to work through it over the next few weeks."

Shapiro claims the new cannabis bill alone could generate more than 2 billion dollars in tax revenue over the first 5 years if passed. What are your thoughts on this issue? Any comments can be directly sent to your state legislators and will be reviewed before the next step occurs.

Submitted by: Kevin Mountz,
state board director and county president



Farmers, Legislators Invited To Special Breakfast

The Fulton County Farm Bureau Board of Directors will be hosting its first-ever farmer’s legislative breakfast on Friday, August 22 at 8 a.m. The breakfast will be held at Krazy Rayz BBQ located at 182 Buchanan Trail, Suite 135, McConnellsburg and includes an all you can eat breakfast buffet.

In addition to having extended invites to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, others officials invited to attend include U.S. Congressman John Joyce, U.S. senators John Fetterman and Dave McCormick, state Rep. Jesse Topper, state Sen. Judy Ward as well as Pennsylvania Farm Bureau officials dealing with federal and state affairs.

Furthermore, Greg Hostetter, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture executive deputy secretary, has signed on as an attendee for the breakfast, which will include keynote speakers as well as time to ask questions and interact with your legislators on topics that interest you.

Seating is limited. Register and pay prior to August 8. Cost is \$10 but does not include gratuity. Contact Chanin Rotz-Mountz at 717-552-0071 to register and make arrangements to submit payment.



Hunting, Dairy and HPAI Top Concerns At Farm Bureau Day

A contingency of seven, local Farm Bureau members traveled to Carlisle March 3 to receive legislative updates as part of the region’s annual Farm Bureau Day while also providing feedback and updates on matters of concern in their area.

Amy Nabozny, information and education supervisor for the southcentral region of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, was among the impressive list of presenters on hand for the event that drew in a crowd of 65. Nabozny, who was accompanied by Regional Director Seth Mesoras, touched on shooting for crop damage, the ag tag program, deer management assistance program and hunter access.

Changes are in the works for several of the programs mentioned, including ag tag, which was previously known as the red tag program. Proposed modifications include land certification by the owner, no limit on the ag tags possessed and a lengthened harvest time.

Nabozny also reviewed the “drastic changes” intended for the hunter access program that has been in existence since 1936. Topping the list of “rebuild” suggestions for the program is a three-tier, online enrollment system for landowners.

Tier 3 would offer the highest level of control for landowners, who would be allowed to determine who has access to their property. In addition, hunting reservations would be limited to one day and the number of hunters permitted in a day would be decided upon by the landowner, Nabozny said.

Mitchell Kurek, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau state and local affairs specialist, also touched on wildlife management as part of his legislative update that spanned the topics of the 2025-26 state budget, dairy premium reform and transparency, animal health/HPAI, environmental reform, energy and labor. Kurek specifically noted Senate Bill 67 has been reintroduced this legislative session and officials are awaiting a response from the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

The bill aims to provide expanded hunting opportunities for statewide Sunday hunting with days being determined by the Game Commission thereby removing the current three-day limit. The expansion would also provide an additional tool for managing

wildlife populations and allow for additional hunting opportunities for sportsmen who may have limited time.

With the highly-pathogenic avian influenza back on the radar in Pennsylvania since late January, Farm Bureau Federal Affairs Specialist Bailey Fisher recapped a recent announcement by USDA Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins to roll out a five-prong plan totaling \$1 billion to combat HPAI. The plan, USDA officials hope, will make eggs more affordable for consumers while addressing relief for farmers with affected flocks and delve into exploring vaccines.

International trade within the broiler industry has brought about concerns regarding vaccine usage. In addition, due to the various strains of HPAI, vaccines may not be effective unless specifically targeted.

Fisher went on to discuss the reintroduction of the Whole Milk For Health Kids Act as well as the Dairy PRIDE Act and the Dairy Pricing Opportunity Act as well as the Farm Bill, which will expire September 30, rules on H2A workers and commercial and solar wind.

Grant Gulibon, head of the Farm Bureau environmental affairs division, broached the ongoing topic of food processing residuals. Concerns surrounding the use of FPRs remain a growing issue in Fulton County as well as Franklin, Cumberland and Adams counties. Those in attendance discussed the Farm Bureau’s stance on the topic, with the conversation becoming heated at times, and the desire to seek a quick resolution to ongoing problems within the region (see related article in this week’s “News.”)

Other featured speakers included Jodan Bassler, field agronomist with Seed Consultants, Inc.; Sarah Xenophon, project manager with TeamAg, Inc.; Ethan Howard, client relationship manager with Penn State Extension; PFB President Chris Hoffman; PFB Chief Administrative Officer Todd Bailey; Charlene Espenshade, executive director of the Friends of Ag Foundation; and Todd Givler of senior consultant of Ag Sponsor Relations with Nationwide.

Membership was also a high point for attendees, as Regional Organization Director Kenny Sechrist made note of those leading the way in the organization. Fulton County members signing two or more members for 2025

included Tina Swope, Lonnie Palmer, Olivia Buchheit and Kevin Mountz. Meanwhile, Chanin Rotz-Mountz took top honors in the nine-county region for having signed 22 new members for the 2025 calendar year.

The county was also awarded the “Traveling Trophy” for being the first county in the region to reach membership goals set forth by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. Fulton County was also most notably first in the entire commonwealth to have reached membership goal. In attendance to accept the trophy were Kevin Mountz, Lonnie and Debra Palmer, Charles and Tina Swope, Michael Glenn and Chanin Rotz-Mountz. ●

Farm Bureau organizes event for local firefighters, farmers

Just shy of 40 firefighters from a three county, two state region converged on the Needmore Firehall May 24 to take part in a one-of-a-kind manure pit training offered by the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) based out of Peosta, Iowa.

The event organized by the Fulton County Farm Bureau is only the second to be held in the state of Pennsylvania with the first being in Erie. A similar training was to be held the following day in Wellsville, Pa as a result of the efforts of the York County Farm Bureau.

NECAS instructor Dan Neenan oversaw the training program, which included the use of a confined pit manure pit rescue simulator on a 20-foot trailer that holds 150 gallons of water. The simulator allows first responders to work through a series of roles they can encounter when arriving on the scene for a distress call involving a manure pit.

Neenan taught those on hand the procedures they should follow to safely enter a manure pit to perform a rescue operation in low-oxygen situations using a team of seven responders. He stressed the need or importance of air-quality monitoring before, during and after rescues; harnessing; knot tying; rope rigging necessary for below-grade rescues; how to use a rescue tripod and proper use of self-contained breathing apparatus.

Firefighters hailing from Needmore; Hustontown; McConnellsburg; Mercersburg, Montgomery, Peters & Warren Township; and Hancock, Md. each had the opportunity to go inside the simulator to go through the steps of rescuing a person in distress and even a fellow responder who may be overcome due to the affects of gasses present in a pit.

In addition to hands-on experience, the class also



included classroom training led by Neenan, who touched on farm-related fatalities nationwide; situations in which they occur; and the age ranges of those involved.

The toxic atmosphere and gases present in a manure pit were also a large portion of the training with Neenan touching on hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane and ammonia. Potential hazards such as slipping or falling, flammable atmosphere, ignition sources and oxygen deficiencies should also be considered, he said.

Perhaps the most significant piece of advice or reminder shared by Neenan to the firefighters was to “never work alone.”

Organized by the Farm Bureau in conjunction with their heritage partner Nationwide, the event was made possible as a result of the generous donations made by event sponsors: Country View Family Farms, Robert Snyder Agency, Fulton County Medical Center, Dairy Farmers of America, Center for Dairy Excellence, Farm Credit and Fulton County. A Growing Communities Grant from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau also contributed toward offsetting expenses for the event.

“The day wouldn’t have been possible without the support of our sponsors. Their financial contributions allowed us to not only cover training and travel costs for the instructor but provide both breakfast and lunch to our area first responders,” said Fulton County Farm Bureau President Kevin Mountz.

“These responders are an integral part of our community. So often they go without thanks and unnoticed for all they do. This is our way of giving back and saying thank you to them,” he concluded.

– Farmers Converge On State Capitol –

Almost 250 farmers from around the commonwealth converged on the state Capitol last Tuesday to spread their message on the importance of agriculture and bring light to the issues affecting them.

Of those numbers, 31 represented Region 3 of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, which spans Fulton, Franklin, Cumberland, Adams, Mifflin, Juniata and Perry counties. On hand from the Fulton County Farm Bureau were Jim Buchheit, Lonnie and Debra Palmer, Alonna Bradshaw, Michael Glenn, Chanin Rotz-Mountz and county President Kevin Mountz.

The group was joined by several Farm Bureau members from Blair and Juniata counties as they sat down with Nathan Akers, chief of staff for state Sen. Judy Ward, to highlight key issues affecting both agriculture and agribusiness. Sen. Ward, it was noted, was unable to attend the annual legislative day in Harrisburg due to engagements within her district.

With animal health being a top concern due to the widespread highly pathogenic avian influenza, the group led by K. Mountz touched on the state budget and funding for new animal testing labs that could not only prevent the outbreak of disease but also safeguard livestock. As part of the budgetary talk, focus was also shed on the need for continued investments in ag education and funding Penn Vet, due to the definite shortage of veterinarians in the commonwealth.

As wildlife is always at or near the top of the list of important discussions being had by Farm Bureau members, the group also talked about the importance of supporting Senate Bill 67 and House Bill 851, which offer solutions to mitigating wildlife damage and expanding hunting opportunities. Several of those on hand, including Buchheit and Matthew Matter of Juniata County, shared with the chief of staff the degree or percentage of crop loss they've suffered in a growing season due to bear and deer.

The return of whole milk to schools also remains a top priority for both farmers and many legislators as is the need for increased in-state milk processing, which was mentioned by the Palmers of Pigeon Cove Farm. Keystone Opportunity Dairy Zones would allow for tax incentives thereby encouraging new dairy processing plants to set up shop in the commonwealth and create new markets for Pennsylvania farmers and their milk.

Solar energy and the strengthening of policies

surrounding the decommissioning process, oversight and financial accountability were also topics shared with Sen. Ward's office as were suggestions for the support of reforming food processing residual (FPR) regulations. FPRs have been an ongoing and controversial topic in Fulton County as the residuals continue to be spread in various locations, most recently in the Fort Littleton area.

Rep. Jesse Topper was able to meet briefly with the Fulton County Farm Bureau members over lunch, which included a variety of keynote speakers including Department of Ag Secretary Russell Redding; ag chairs Sen. Judy Schwank, Rep. Dan Moul and Re. Eddie Day Pashinski and Governor Josh Shapiro.

Gov. Shapiro reinforced his commitment to Pennsylvania's agricultural industry at the event. Shapiro also emphasized the partnership between the legislature, Farm Bureau and his administration which has been working hard to continue to keep agriculture a top priority in the 2025-26 state budget.

"I made a commitment that we would put agriculture at the center of our work to grow our economy here in Pennsylvania and create opportunities for farmers across our commonwealth to help our ag industry grow," Shapiro informed the crowd.

"I told you that agriculture would be a top priority for my administration and I'm back here today to say that we delivered. That is because of the extraordinary partnership that we have with the folks in this room and the Farm Bureau here in Pennsylvania, who do incredible work representing you every single day in the halls of power," he added.



Membership Discounts Available At The Fair

The Fulton County Farm Bureau Board of Directors will once again be setting up at the annual Fulton County Fair in McConnellsburg slated to run from July 27 through August 2. As part of their display, the Farm Bureau will be offering a variety of discounts to new and returning members.

According to county President Kevin Mountz, any new individuals signing up for a Farm Bureau membership Monday through Friday evenings at the fair will receive a \$10 discount on their upcoming 2026 membership fee. That same discount will also be applied to membership renewals for existing members.

In addition, the Farm Bureau will also be giving away five free memberships throughout the course of the fair. Each weeknight, fairgoers can wager a guess as to how many seeds are inside a jar. The individual coming closest without going over will be given a free, one-year membership.

Whole milk will also be available to passersby compliments of board member Lonnie Palmer and his wife Debra of Pigeon Cove Farm in Warfordsburg.

Treats will likely also be available for local children stopping by the booth, and plans are under way for an interactive area for children to learn about different aspects of farming including milking a cow and harvesting and planting.



We hope to see you at the fair!

Second Annual Farm Bureau Scholarship Awarded

Reuben Knepper, a member of the McConnellsburg High School Class of 2025, has been awarded the county's second annual Growing Together Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. A total of three seniors applied for the scholarship, and Reuben was chosen following an application review process by the neighboring Franklin County Farm Bureau.



Reuben, the son of the late Craig Knepper of McConnellsburg, plans to attend Black Hawk College located in Moline, IL where he will major in both ag business and ag production.

Known to many within the county through clerking auctions for his father and competing in livestock shows, Reuben was a member of the Pennsylvania 4-H State Council in 2024 and has been an officer for both the Fulton Liberty 4-H Club and Cove Mountain 4-H Club since 2019. He is also a 4-H Diamond Award recipient.

"From the time I was three years old just fully getting involved in my family's farm to now, I've gotten to experience many different leadership opportunities thanks to agriculture," said Reuben in his application. "Another major reason why agriculture has influenced me was when I lost my father at the age of 17."

"Now at the time, I wasn't sure about what was going to come in the future, but the more I looked around the more I saw my community gathering around me and supporting me through difficult times. This community was made up of many different people involved in agriculture. I truly realized the importance of agriculture and what its true meaning is."

"If you asked me five years ago what agriculture was, I'd say it was raising livestock, growing crops and putting food on people's plates. Now, although all of that is true, I'd now say agriculture is a big family that will always be there for one another through the ups and downs," said Reuben, who is in his first year as a Fulton County Farm Bureau member.

Reuben was awarded his scholarship check in May as part of the Farm Bureau's monthly Board of Directors meeting.



YAP Members Attend Annual Conference

The 2025 YAP Leadership Conference "Bridging the Future" was full of good food, dancing, networking and some were caught taking naps in between it all. There were a lot of discussions and tours to choose from. I opted to attend a tour of the Masonic Farmer's Market and cattle farm and a discussion on artificial intelligence in agriculture.

The Masonic farm began in 1910 and is currently 1,600 acres. They have a beef farm, an orchard of over 16,000 trees, a farmers' market and a housing development designed mainly for retirement. The tour was specifically about the beef farm and those who attended were especially interested in how the beef cows were managed. Many of the questions asked were centered around their grazing and feeding practices, land management style and the specifics of their herd care. While they operate cow/calf pairs through rotational grazing, they also have a barn for post-weaned calves to finished out for butchering. This connects to the farmers market end of the business and they touched briefly on butchering. One of the neat things is those who live in the housing center are provided meat sourced from the farm!

I also attended a discussion by Andy Bater on Artificial Intelligence. While Andy teaches yoga, he is also a huge advocate for ag and is passionate about keeping up with modern effects of artificial intelligence. This discussion was packed with so much information, it was hard to retain it all. Andy began by saying his PowerPoint presentation had over 100 slides and this was a topic he could spend an entire day on, but the session only allotted him 45 minutes. He was an amazing speaker and shared his passions about the topic, not afraid to discuss the positives and negatives of AI. He broke down the evolution of it; where it began, how far it has come as well as where it is expected and predicted to go.

There's no doubt AI has the power to transform how the world operates. We've already witnessed it firsthand with ChatGPT, Alexa or Siri, face recognition software, and those of us who have been placed in FB jail because something we shared was flagged by various software detectors. While AI is expected to change the future of the working world, it is actually predicted and statistically expected to affect agriculture the least out of all careers. This is mainly because the majority of AI is currently programmed for stagnant jobs, meaning it can be programmed to do one thing and it can because there are no or extremely limited variations.

Agriculture, however, is an extremely fluid workforce. Things vary so much from day to day, season to season. For example, AI currently cannot replace a farmer who one day may spend all day treating sick animals and the next bale hay and the next attend a county business meeting. Agriculture involves too much hands-on activity and too much free thought to be taken over by AI.

This isn't to say AI won't continue to be brought into agriculture and be used to progress farming practices and increase efficiency. Modern tractors can be programmed to map out fields to aid in planting and harvesting crops. Many dairy farmers are adopting technology that tracks their cows physical activity, feed intake and will alert the farmer if a cow is coming into heat or beginning to get sick.

These are just a couple examples of how AI can be used for the good of humanity and work to increase efficiency on the farm. Andy stressed that AI can be used for good despite the common fear and hesitation associated with it. While it continues to change and progress every day, it will never be able to replace real human connection with other humans, animals and plants. AI has not been able to replicate the likeness of the soul and free thought behind God's natural creation. It is, after all, artificial.

In summary, the 2025 YAP Leadership conference "Bridging the Future", was stacked full of information important for young people in agriculture to learn and think about. It is important to be aware of the current world state and prepare those in agriculture as we make take every step closer to being in the future.

Joining me from Fulton County at the conference were Olivia Buchheit, Kyle Brant, Ryan Shields and Glenn McMullen.

Submitted by: Evelyn Stephens



Over \$8K Raised For Ronald McDonald House

The Fulton County Farm Bureau wrapped up its annual Farmers Care project in March, which raised just over \$8,000 in support of Ronald McDonald House (RMH) located in Hershey.

Organized by longtime Farm Bureau members Vice President Lonnie Palmer and wife Debra, the fundraising campaign kicked off in early January and wrapped up March 14 with the last of the donations being received and totaled.



According to the Palmers, checks, cash, gift cards and supplies totaling \$8,076.20 were gathered from 17 drop off locations within the county setting a new record here for generous donations offered by churches, businesses and local residents. Last year the organization raised a total of \$7,410.51.

Fulton County once again led Region 3 in the amount of donations collected. We raised almost two-thirds of the \$12,242, which was gathered in the entire seven county region that also includes Franklin, Adams, Cumberland, Perry, Juniata and Mifflin.

Drop off locations here this year included Warfordsburg Presbyterian Church, Crazy Rayz Smokehouse & BBQ, MacDonald's Pharmacy, McLaughlin's Pharmacy, Mamma's Pizza, McConnellsburg True Value, Car Quest, K's Place, Knobsville Florist, Pineloft Landscape and Garden Center, Keller's Country Store, Ridgeline Hardware, Harr's Store, Eader's Butcher Shop, Cathy's restaurant in Crystal Spring, Burnt Cabins Grist Mill and Yunker's Meat Market.

In addition to collecting monetary donations and gift cards, goods accepted locally ranged from single-serve pantry items like juice boxes and granola bars to household items such as cleaners, paper towels and laundry pods.

The Palmers praised the community for again coming together, even when times are tough, to help others in need. They also offered special thanks to all of the local businesses that agreed to host donation cannisters and accept supplies.

The donations are slated to be delivered to RMH Hershey, and plans will soon be under way for the 2026 Farmers Care event.



New ROD Selected For Region 3

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau recently announced a selection has been made to fill the regional organization director vacancy slated to take place on April 1 following the retirement of Kenny Sechrist.

Chanin Rotz-Mountz of Hustontown was hired and is slated to step into the position effective April 14.

A native of northern Fulton County, she is a graduate of Forbes Road High School and Lock Haven University where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications with an emphasis on print journalism.

She has worked for "The Fulton County News" in McConnellsburg since 1997 as a staff writer and news editor covering a myriad of topics ranging from county government and community events to sports and agriculture.

In addition to working at the "News," she is the co-owner of Pineloft Landscape and Garden Center in Hustontown, a full-service greenhouse offering plants, trees, shrubs and hardgoods as well as home heating products during the winter months.

A Farm Bureau member since 2016, Rotz-Mountz serves as the Women's Leadership Committee chair, county secretary, oversees social media and the quarterly newsletter and organizes countywide activities. She was the 2024 recipient of the Outstanding Woman In Ag Award.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time at the barn with her chickens and cats and grows cut flowers and produce for sale locally. She also assists the Glenn Bros. with their annual sweet corn and pumpkin marketing, harvest and sales.

She has one son, Logan, who is her pride and joy and works as a music teacher at Southern Fulton Elementary.