



And the Winner is . . .

— Decorating Contest
Winners Announced —

The Fulton County Young Ag Professionals (YAP) organized a fall decorating contest during the month of October with winners announced on the heels of the annual Fulton Fall Folk Festival. Judges were Devin and Kaytee Tew, YAP members from neighboring Bedford County. Winners of the contest were as follows :

- Spooky: Charles and Tina Swope, Swope Farms
- Tractor: Trenton Romig, Romig Farm
- Falling for fall: Tammy Decker, Decker Turkey Farm
- Haybale: Ethan & McKayla Love, Rustic Ridge Farm

Prizes were donated by local businesses and Farm Bureau members and included a honey basket, a doggie-themed basket, crocheted pumpkins, a Wrangler purse and more!

Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting

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honeybees; a spring picnic for the membership; a t-shirt fundraiser. All activities and projects are self-funded, it was noted, as WLC does not receive any general membership monies.

The event wrapped up with door prizes and a raffle that raised \$494 for WLC community service projects.



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Fulton County, PA



Injured Farmers Return Home



Two northern Fulton County farmers have returned home to their families after having suffered unexpected injuries in accidents in the year 2024.

Harold J. Knepper of Waterfall was released from Hershey hospital August 23 after having undergone a trio of surgeries over a four-day period for injuries sustained to his arm. Emergency responders were alerted to the combine auger accident on August 19 at 3:41 p.m. and quickly responded to the dispatch for extrication at Knepper’s Blacks Mountain Road farm.

Those assisting that day were Medic 60, Life Net 81 and fire companies from Hustontown, RW&BT, Franklin, Fannett-Metal, West End and McConnellsburg.

In true Fulton County spirit, the community rallied in the hours following the farming accident, sending up prayers for the family and plans got under way for fundraisers to assist the family. Financial contributions were accepted by the Fulton County Farm Bureau to help offset medical costs, and a ham dinner benefit was held September 15 at the Hustontown firehall.

The dinner was held thanks to the efforts of the fire company and members of the Forbes Road Lions Club, according to reports. A basket raffle will also held that day to help raise additional monies.

Another farmer also made a joyous return home that same weekend after suffering extensive leg and other injuries in a power takeoff shaft accident on March 27. Bryan Kling and his wife Rita received a warm welcome Saturday, August 24, from the community, which included a fundraiser at Wild Annie’s and a homecoming parade from Hustontown to their Wooden Bridge Road farm.

The parade included emergency responders and apparatus from Hustontown, motorcycles and even off-road vehicles. The roadways leading to home were lined with welcome home signs, tractors and farm equipment and well-wishers wanting to catch a glimpse of the Kling family.

In the months between the accident and his return home, Bryan underwent 19 surgeries as well as rehabilitation. Rita stayed by his side during the duration of his time away from home.

The quick response time and actions of local paramedic Tammy Cook as well as that of first responders along with the efforts Fulton County Medical Center trauma team are lauded as being the reason Bryan is alive and well.

Multiple fundraisers were held in the weeks and months that followed the accident, including a fund drive coordinated by the Farm Bureau, benefit dinners by churches and the firehall, tshirt sales and more!

Farm Bureau Spreading Christmas Cheer

Members of the Fulton County Farm Bureau are planning on spreading a little Christmas cheer with a series of upcoming events.

On **Friday, December 6 and 13** between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., the Farm Bureau will be offering its annual photo display as part of the Fulton County Fair Association’s Festival of Lights at the fairgrounds. The group will be utilizing a "National Lampoon Christmas Vacation"-themed display in the upper show ring, which will include several four-legged surprises as well as cookies and treats for the kids.

We are asking visitors at the display to donate a canned or non-perishable boxed good. All food items collected will be distributed to food banks operated by Center United Methodist Church, Warfordsburg Presbyterian Church and Needmore Bible Church.

In addition to the Festival of Lights, the Young Ag Professionals (YAP) are sponsoring another outdoor decorating contest for the holidays. All Farm Bureau members are welcome to participate and decorate in one of the following categories: haybale, traditional/primitive/rustic, inflatables/light display; barn, tractor or religious. The contest will run through Christmas Eve. Prizes will be awarded in each category.

To participate, please contact Amber Brant at 717-658-2147 or Kyle Brant at 717-830-6341.

YAP is also organizing a trip to Country Creek Produce in Franklin County to visit their light display. For more information, contact the Brants at the numbers listed above.

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— Women's Leadership Committee Continues To Grow —

A Farm Bureau member recently called and inquired about our Women's Leadership Committee (WLC). Is it a strong group? How many women participate? How do you become a member?

Becoming a member of WLC is as easy as making a phone call or sending a text or email. How active you are depends solely on you! You are welcome to come and participate as little or as often as you'd like. Maybe there is a class you're interested in or a presentation you'd like to sit in on or maybe you're looking for monthly fellowship?

We offer educational classes and presentations on a variety of subjects ranging from gardening and canning to honeybees. Some events are free, while others require a nominal fee/donation to cover supplies. We are already working on our schedule of events for 2025.

Don't want to come alone? Bring a friend! Community service? We do that too! We enjoy light refreshments and fellowship with every meeting. It's a great way to try out a new recipe or share your favorite, like "Barb's granola bars."

If you're interested in getting more information on our monthly activities, please contact Chanin Mountz at 717-552-0071. We would love to have you!

Submitted by Chanin Mountz

County Farm Bureau Takes Stand On FPRs Here

While some neighboring counties and their residents have been experiencing the effects of food processing residuals being applied within their communities for several years, Fulton County is now getting its first taste, and in some cases the smell, of this food waste here.

Food processing residuals (FPRs) are the waste or leftover by-products that remain following the production of commercial foods. The leftovers can contain any number and types of materials whether it be bones and blood or vegetable peelings and feathers. The FPRs can also possess by-products and chemicals that are utilized in the food production process.

In many cases, certain FPRs are being hauled to Pennsylvania from other states that prohibit its application to the soil. Concerns from commonwealth residents include the nuisance odor issue affecting the quality of life but just as importantly are questions regarding water contamination and over application.

The Fulton County Farm Bureau Board of Directors along with the general membership tackled the issue of FPRs as part of its annual meeting held September 21. The consensus of the group was that additional work and monitoring be done at several governmental levels to ensure both the health and wellbeing of the general public and fellow farmers.

As a result of the discussion, the group unanimously approved two policies to be sent to the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) for consideration by legislative committees. If approved in Camp Hill, the policies would in turn be a topic of debate and vote at the annual PFB state meeting in Hershey this November.

The first policy stipulates that the county Farm Bureau supports the application of FPRs on agricultural and other ground for the enrichment of soil as long as the following criteria are met:

- *Guidelines are established outlining storage, handling and application
- *FPRs containing animal or animal product waste be processed by a digester or other appropriate means prior to storage and/or handling
- *FPR nutrients must be documented prior to application

*Application plans are submitted for review and approval by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Conservation District

*FPRs may not contain hazardous or residual waste

*Criteria listed above are monitored and reviewed in a similar manner to that of nutrient management and waste plans by the Department of Environmental Protection and the county Conservation District.

The policy is modeled after a bill introduced by state Rep. Paul Friel of Chester County as an amendment to the 1980 Solid Waste Management Act addressing the hazards the waste can cause for communities "if care is not taken." The bipartisan bill was referred to the Environmental Resources & Energy Committee in June.

Action has also been taken in taken in the home district of Rep. Friel. The East Coventry Township Board of Supervisors in Chester County during the month of February enacted an ordinance that amended a section of code to include addressing both the land application and storage of FPRs. The ordinance is in accordance with rules and regulations set forth by the state Department of Environmental Protection and outlines multiple areas including minimum setback of land application; slopes; groundwater, seasonal high-water table, bedrock; erosion and sediment control, field markings; quality, sampling, testing and certification; storage; water supply protection; nuisance prevention; and records and compliance. The ordinance also addresses violations and penalties.

According to reports, the ordinance has not received any opposition since being enacted.

The second policy approved by the county Farm Bureau membership, while certainly not as detailed but straight to the point, asks for additional research to be done by the Department of Agriculture defining what FPRs are and for additional clarification between acceptable and unacceptable FPRs for soil enrichment.

A follow-up article on the status of the county's FPR policies will be available in the next edition of "The Agrarian Connector."



Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting

The Fulton County Farm Bureau drew in a record crowd to its annual membership meeting Saturday 21 with a full agenda covering by-law changes, keynote speeches from legislators and an election to appoint new members to its Board of Directors.

One hundred county Farm Bureau members along with county, state and federal officials gathered at the farm of Ron and Connie Richards in Big Cove Tannery for a free pig roast catered by Ron Rosenberry Catering, which was followed by the annual meeting overseen by county President Kevin Mountz.

Mountz was re-elected to a two-year term of office by the membership, which also cast deciding votes from a pool of five candidates to fill three positions on the board. Ricky Leese stepped down from his longtime position, and a change in by-laws resulted in the addition of two new seats.

Vying for those three seats on the board were Alonna Bradshaw, Warfordsburg; Kyle Brant, Harrisonville; Cody Golden, Needmore; Amanda Shives, Needmore; and Charles Swope, Needmore. Each candidate was given an opportunity to speak to the crowd about their agricultural background and desire to hold a position on the board.

Members were presented with ballots, which resulted in Swope, Shives and Brant being selected to serve two-year positions.

In other matters during the annual meeting, local farmer Harold J. Knepper of Waterfall took a few minutes to address those in attendance, expressing gratitude for their support and donations on the heels of a recent farming accident. Knepper sustained an arm injury during an incident with a combine auger but is already back to doing what he loves.

State Senator Judy Ward was among the legislators on hand to take center stage that evening and noted the legislative session is soon coming to and end. Much of her legislation, such as the milk haulers bill that would oversee tankers being on the road during emergency weather declarations, is “homegrown,” Ward said.

Nancy Bull, district director for U.S. Congressman John Joyce, and Benjamin Martin for U.S. Senator Bob Casey, were also in attendance at the annual dinner. Martin made special note of three bills recently cosponsored by Casey, including the Dairy Pride Act, the Whole Milk for Healthy

Kids Act and the Dairy Nutrition Incentive Program.

Steve Wible, Fulton County commissioner, urged area farmers to inquire about the county’s Farmland Preservation Program through Chief Clerk Stacey Shives. Wible stressed participation is needed in order for the program to continue. One of the prerequisites for participation is that the tract must contain 50 contiguous acres.

Fellow Commissioner Hervey Hann talked about life growing up on the farm. “Farming is difficult...but what would we do without farmers,” he asked.

Don Buckman, a Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) state board director hailing from Bucks County, shared his desire to be elected to the position of PFB president, which is currently held by Chris Hoffman. Buckman spoke on the need for new, fresh ideas to rejuvenate the mobile ag lab programs and the ag teachers institute as well as membership statewide.

Buckman also stressed the need to make sure “everyone’s voices are heard.” “If there’s an issue, we need to make sure we’re able to freely talk about it,” he said.

Kyle Brant, Young Ag Professionals co-chair, gave an overview of activities that have occurred in the course of the last year, which included a second annual summer picnic, attending a baseball game in Altoona and attending conferences. Upcoming events include a fall decorating contest, family fun night at Country Creek and the Festival of Lights.

The President’s Report provided by Mountz revealed a busy year for the county Farm Bureau. In addition to leading the district, region and state in membership initiatives, Fulton County also conducted many events including a successful Farmers Care project, a legislative farm tour, legislative ice cream social, two fundraisers for injured farmers, a pie in the face contest, the immersion lab at the annual fair and purchased and distributed Farmtastic books and ag crates.

Chanin Mountz, Women’s Leadership Committee chair, detailed activities that occurred over the course of the last year as well, such as Thanksgiving blessing boxes for local farm families; Christmas treat boxes for local fire companies, state police and the hospital emergency room; educational classes such as pressure canning and

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Timber Valley Farm Hosts Legislative Tour

When Joseph “Joey” and Melinda Bytella picked a random spot on the map to relocate and start the farm of their dreams, little did the couple know their dreams would quickly morph into reality. Five years later, the couple owns and operates Timber Valley Farm, a one-of-a-kind rehabilitation center for off-track thoroughbred racehorses in Fulton County.

The farm located at 11387 Timber Ridge Road, Needmore was the site for county, state and federal legislators along with the Fulton County Farm Bureau Board of Directors on September 21 to hear not only about the farm’s beginnings but its bright future. On hand for the legislative farm tour were Sen. Judy Ward along with Kathleen Gunnell, Benjamin Martin representing the office of U.S. Senator Bob Casey, District Director Nancy Bull for U.S. Congressman John Joyce and Commissioner Steve Wible.

Getting Started —

Growing up on a dairy farm in Butler, Melinda,40, has always had a soft spot for animals and an interest in horses. Attending Westminster College, she had the opportunity to join the school’s equestrian team and got her first taste of riding.

Later on, she and her then boyfriend Joey would look at videos online from the New Holland auction where horses were being sold. Their thought was wouldn’t it be nice to able to give a horse a second chance.

The Bytellas certainly got their wish when they relocated from Annapolis, Md., to Fulton County. What started out as a pair of horses, four goats and eight chickens, has morphed into 17 horses, chickens and ducks galore, a handful of friendly farm cats and their four lovely children. Many of the horses on-site the family gathered through their contacts in Charlestown.

No longer suitable for breeding or racing, the thoroughbreds now call Timber Valley Farm home. Much like spoiled children, the horses have the run of the place. You can often find them meandering up the driveway munching on grass and moving from pasture to pasture without restriction but never wandering far from the family, who shower them with love and affection.

“We were bashed by a lot of people,” said Joey, a U.S. Marine veteran. “They would tell us horses were nothing

but hayburners, and we would never make it.”

Melinda noted thoroughbreds often get a bad rap for being hot headed and always ready to run, which stems from their training at the track. At Timber Valley Farm, the Bytellas address a variety of issues whether it’s dental and hoof work, retraining, riding lessons or weight. Their farm also gets the horses acquainted with everyday life on the farm and interaction with people and other animals.

In 2023, the Bytellas rehabilitated and rehomed a total of 26 horses.

Of course, the system isn’t perfect. There have been some foster failures. Melinda’s grey horse Harbor is one of those examples. Prospective buyers come, ride Harbor, comment what an exceptional horse she is and then end the conversation with,” She’s your horse. You should keep her.”

“The more I ride, the more I work with them, the harder it is to part with them,” said Melinda.

Both Joey and Melinda stated this adventure has made them better people and teachers as it causes them to take charge of their emotions, which can easily be picked up on by their herd.

“It’s great to make money, but giving these horses another chance in life is what’s most important to us,” said the Bytellas.

Looking To The Future —

With 17 years of accounting experience, Joey, 37, refers to himself as the businessperson or risk taker in their operation. Always looking ahead to the future, Joey envisions expanding their farm in several different directions.

Work is currently under way to create a certified foaling facility on-site for the racehorse industry. The center will be up and running in 2025 and during the mamma and baby’s month-long stay at their facility, various issues are addressed such as registration papers, microchipping and DNA testing. Unlike other facilities, they’ll be given plenty of room to stretch their legs during the duration of their stay.

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Farm Bureau Hosts Legislative Ice Cream Social



Armed with a bevy of questions, ice cream scoops and sprinkles, the Fulton County Farm Bureau general membership gathered August 29 with county, state and federal legislators to discuss agricultural topics of interest and share some dairy delights.

The legislative ice cream social drew in 50 attendees from across the county, interested in not only ice cream but wanting updates on the status of some key issues ranging from farmland preservation to the use of food processing residuals (FPRs) on farmland here in Fulton County.

Fielding questions and concerns on FPRs were county Commissioner Hervey Hann and Rep. Jesse Topper.

FPRs are a waste by-product of commercial food production and can contain any number of materials such as bones, blood, vegetable peelings, hair and feathers as well as byproducts and chemicals needed to process them. Other nearby counties, such as Cumberland and Franklin, have seen opposition raised resulting from the application of FPRs in their area citing concerns such as horrific stench and groundwater contamination.

Most recent action taken on the matter was by state Rep. Paul Friel, who introduced House Bill 2393 that is aimed at amending the 1980 Solid Waste Management Act. The bipartisan bill, which was referred to the Environmental Resources & Energy Committee in June, would do the following if enacted into law:

- differentiate between sources of FPRs and establish a classification system outlining storage, handling and application
- require FPRs derived from animal products or animal product waste to be processed by a digester before application or stored on farms
- require documentation of the FPR and nutrients before application
- require the application plan be reviewed by the county Conservation District before being applied.

Action has also been taken in taken in the home district of Rep. Friel. The East Coventry Township Board of Supervisors in Chester County during the month of February enacted an ordinance that amended a section of code to include addressing both the land application and storage of FPRs.

The ordinance is in accordance with rules and regulations set forth by the state Department of Environmental Protection and outlines multiple areas including minimum setback of land application; slopes; groundwater, seasonal high-water table, bedrock; erosion and sediment control, field markings; quality, sampling, testing and certification; storage; water supply protection; nuisance prevention; and records and compliance. The ordinance also addresses violations and penalties.

As was pointed out during the gathering, FPRs are currently prohibited from being applied in the commonwealth of Virginia. Those FPRs are, however, being hauled from Virginia and applied in Pennsylvania and here in Fulton County. Concerns regarding the smell and FPRs laying on the roadway and washing into nearby streams were also mentioned.

Rep. Topper noted his gut feeling is always to go with what local farmers are telling him on issues such as this where he currently doesn't have enough information. This matter will also be a topic of conversation by the Agricultural Committee this fall.

The state representative along with Commissioner Hann discussed the need for farmers to also bring these issues to the attention of their township supervisors, who are able to enact ordinances as they've done in recent months on the topic of solar panels and the decommissioning process.

"Township supervisors wield more power than anyone else," added Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Regional Organization Director Kenny Sechrist.

Rep. Topper also touched on funding for higher education and ways to retain college graduates here in Pennsylvania for high demand jobs such as large animal veterinarians. In some instances, such as with the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Science, out of state students are graduating and returning home after having received a degree here. The school receives state funding.

Topper was joined at the event by Kathleen Gunnell, who provides constituent services in McConnellsburg on behalf of Sen. Judy Ward. Gunnell shared with those on hand the ag related bills she has been involved with including the

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Farm Bureau Hosts Legislative Ice Cream Social

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repeal of the Frozen Dessert Law from 1965; Senate Bill 116 providing limited exemption for barns and other structures used for events from the requirements of Uniform Construction Code; and Senate Bill 153 addressing milk hauling during disaster emergency declarations.

Nancy Bull, district director for Congressman John Joyce, was also on hand for the ice cream social reminding those in attendance that agriculture is the number one industry in the congressional district, which covers all or portions of 12 counties.

Bull stated one of the congressman's priorities is for the Farm Bill to be tackled prior to the election. "Food security is national security," she emphasized.

Commissioner Steve Wible touched on the topic of Farmland Preservation, which has gotten off to a bit of a slow start here. At this time only one application has been received for consideration in the program. That farm, however, was not eligible as it did not contain 50 "contiguous" acres.

There is an estimated \$30,000 in the Farmland Preservation account here in Fulton County. However, more state monies can be made available once a farm is identified and approved for preservation. The monies continue to roll over annually and accrue until enough money is secured to reach the purchase price.

Individuals interested in the Farmland Preservation are urged to contact the county's Chief Clerk Stacey Shives.

Farm Bureau Float Wins At FFFF

The Fulton County Farm Bureau float project spearheaded by the Women's Leadership Committee took top honors at the Grease, Steam and Rust Association's parade in conjunction with the Fulton Fall Folk Festival in October.

The float focused on a farm to table theme proposed by WLC member Amanda Shives. County Board Director Charles Swope oversaw the construction of the key design elements of a float-a market table and barn. Swope's wife Tina provided props along with assistance painting and staining. The float was pulled

Timber Valley Farm Hosts Legislative Tour

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In addition, Joey is already working on leveling an additional 12 acres recently purchased from a neighboring landowner. His goal is to create a training track around the perimeter for riding and rehab and construct a two-story tavern for visitors to properly view the property and serve as an office space for the growing farm.

Melinda jests it will simply be her "she shed."

Their hope is to also expand their operation beyond their two-person operation as both Melinda and Joey work full-time jobs. They are looking forward to employing possible interns or other help and apply for grant money to aid in their expansion projects.

Joey is also unveiling a new clothing line called "Farm Life Clothing Co." His vision is apparel designed, produced and shipped locally using materials that is comfortable, safe and rugged enough for farmers to wear while making machinery repairs and working with livestock while also being suitable for all types of weather without the usual bulky weight in the winter months.

by a Massey Ferguson driven by Michael Glenn of Big Cove Tannery.

Thanks to all who gave their time, donated candy and rode on the float parade day! Special thanks to Kaylee Middaugh and her goat "Spot" for helping on parade day as well.

