

BUTLER COUNTY FARM BUREAU

SPRING NEWSLETTER



Editors: Linda Halstead & Rachel Altman

Edition 2026-V1

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Butler County Farm Bureau Member,

I am James Thiele, President of the Butler County Farm Bureau. I am writing to ask for your continued support of our organization through payment of your membership dues for 2026. Your membership is crucial to assure the future and strength of our county Farm Bureau.

Butler County Farm Bureau was founded to help assist and educate farmers and rural landowners as well as promoting and protecting agriculture and rural life. In the past year these are some of the issues our Farm Bureau has worked on:

- Finally got the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act Signed into Law
- Went to Hershey for Farm Bureaus Annual Meeting and Advocated for Local Butler County Issues
- Sponsored a farm tour for our elected federal, state, and local representatives to enlighten them on important farm issues
- Sponsored Farm Bureau policies for adoption at the State level
- Promoted youth education through Ag in the Classroom, Farm Bureau's Ag Science Labs, FFA and 4H programs
- Travelled to Washington, D.C., and Harrisburg to meet with our representatives on current issues
- Supporting Local Business with the Buy Local Business Directory
- This is just some of the work that Butler County Farm Bureau has been engaged. Your membership is vital in dealing with and keeping abreast of farm and rural issues. Butler County Farm Bureau is relevant with over 1004 voting members, and part of over 32,000 members statewide!

Your \$95.00/year membership gives a tremendous return in terms legislative representation and educational activities not to mention the wide variety of member services and discounts that can easily return your annual dues.

Please help us continue to make our voices heard! Please make your check payable to Butler Co. Farm Bureau and mail to: PENNSYLVANIA FARM BUREAU, PO BOX 8736, CAMP HILL, PA 17001. Or visit www.pfb.com to renew electronically with a credit card.

Thank you for renewing today!
James Thiele, President

SAVE THE DATES

Picnic: July 19, 2026 @ Butler Farm Show

Fall Meeting: September 30, 2026

LETTER FROM THE MOCKS

Thank You

Our family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you and our deepest appreciation to everyone who reached out to support us after our barn fire. Your donations, prayers, and kindness have meant the world to us!

This has been an incredibly difficult and devastating time, but the generosity of friends, farmers, and our community – both near and far - has reminded us that we are not facing this alone. Every contribution, whether financial help, meals, supplies, or your prayers has made a meaningful difference in our lives.

As we begin to move forward into our next chapter, we are reminded of how truly blessed we are! We wish we could thank every single person individually, but the outpouring of support has been so great that it has been impossible to reach everyone personally.

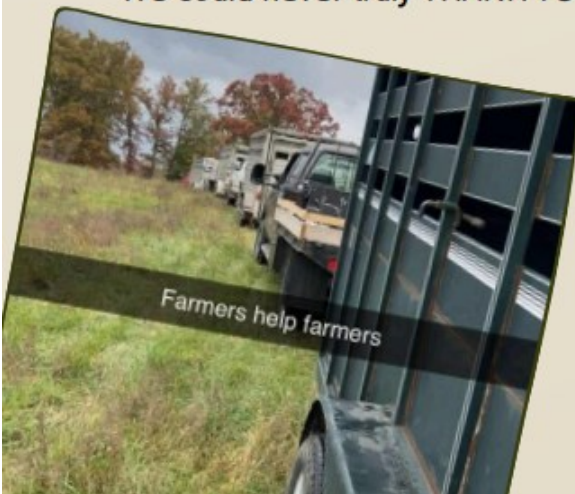
We want to express our deepest gratitude to the Butler County Farm Bureau, the Jeff Kennedy Family, the Ansell Family, the Thiele Family, the Davis Family and the Roger Kennedy Family for stepping up and taking in our girls - the need we faced immediately on the day of the fire! Taking on the extra work and expense, especially when you all have your own responsibilities, meant more than you will ever know!

We would also like to thank every member of our farming community who showed up within hours, trailers lined up and ready to help in any way possible! That is what it truly means to belong to this community. Your support touched our hearts and left us speechless!

We will never forget the heartbreaking sight of losing a piece of our lives, but the dedication of every single fire department that responded brought us comfort in the midst of devastation. There were so many departments involved that we couldn't begin to list them all, but please know that your courage and determination did not go unnoticed! While we lost our family barn, we are grateful beyond words that our home and many other buildings were saved because of your efforts.

Although our lives have forever been changed and we miss "our girls" greatly, your support is helping us heal and eventually rebuild. We may not build back the same, but we will remain a part of Butler County agriculture. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you all. We could never truly THANK YOU ENOUGH!!

Dave, Dawn
Wyatt, Hunter
and Sierra
Mock



MEET OUR BOARD

James Thiele - President
James & Linda Halstead - Secretary
Thomas Goldscheitter - Treasurer

Evelyn Minteer
Jed Wilbert
William Thiele

Guy Daupenspeck
Bill Duncan
Rachel Altman

ADVOCACY AT WORK

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted in favor of H.R. 1147, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2023, on Wednesday. The bill, introduced by Rep. Glenn GT Thompson (R-PA) and Kim Schrier (D-WA), would allow whole and reduced-fat, low-fat and fat-free flavored milk in school cafeterias.



2025 FARM BUREAU SUCCESSES

State:

State budget finally passed, very good for Ag

Wildlife Crop Damage Legislation pass.

Built and strengthened our relationship with the DEP.

Substantial progress on the Over Order Premium (OOP) Legislation

Federal:

One Big Beautiful Bill passage which had a lot of good things for Agriculture

Department of Labor (DOL) made Substantial changes to the adverse effect wage rate

New proposed definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS)

Passage of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act.

12 Billion dollars of economic assistance to row crops farmers

PENN STATE EXTENSION

June 11th we are hosting a Pasture Walk with Extension over in Mount Chestnut at the Whippoorwill Farm with Harold Dunn and his sheep operation. SW Project Grass will be having a quarterly meeting and lunch afterwards. The event is free however if staying for lunch please consider donating \$10 to SWPG for the cost of lunch. BCFB Members can register on our website: <https://extension.psu.edu/>

Sometime in Mid to Late July I will be hosting a soybean and corn field day at the Vettori's in Saxonburg. We are still working on figuring out a date but we plan on having some specialists out to talk about some different things with Beans and Corn. With that we are looking at putting in some herbicide plots for competitive herbicide programs that Dwight Lingenfelter puts together. Members should keep tabs on the county extension Facebook page if they are interested in participating and to look for more info. RSVP's will come to me to help plan for a light lunch.

Ag Progress Days is August 11th - 13th in Rock Springs.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Big Butler Fair: July 3—11, 2026

Picnic: July 19, 2026

Butler Farm Show: August 10-15, 2026

Annual Meeting: September 30, 2026

PA Farm Bureau Annual Meeting November 15-17, 2026

NEW PROGRAMS

Promotion and Education Committee

Junior Farm Bureau Academy:

From Barn to Banner

A social media initiative to follow and support local youth from where they raise their project animals, to the show ring where they win ribbons and banners at the Butler Farm Show and the Big Butler Fair.

Ambassadors

To promote local farms in Butler County, build partnerships, and educate the public about modern agriculture. Ambassadors represent the organization at local events, such as educational farm tours, and support the "[Buy Local](#)" mission. The program connects with youth and provides opportunities to learn about agricultural career paths and advocacy. It operates as part of the grassroots which encourages volunteer members to become involved in promoting agricultural awareness in local communities.

Follow on Facebook—

Butler County Farm Bureau PA

Butler County Farm Bureau Women Leadership

Butler County Farm Bureau Promotion and Education

Policy Development

Farm Bill

[ABOUT](#)[NEWS](#)[SUBCOMMITTEES](#)[EVENTS](#)[POLICY](#)[RESOURCES](#)

"It is clearer every day that farm country needs updated policy that reflects current challenges, and the 2026 farm bill fills that gap. I look forward to seeing Chairman Boozman and the Senate make progress on this important legislation so we can get the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 sent to President Trump's desk as soon as possible.

"I especially want to thank all parties who were involved in the negotiations that allowed the farm bill to proceed to the floor and secure a future vote on year-round E15. Members of the Biofuels Caucus are tireless champions for rural America, and I look forward to joining them May 13 in advancing that important legislation."

Background:

With a vote of 14 Democrats in favor, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 obtained the highest number of votes from the minority party on a House farm bill since 2008. Similarly, with over 96% of the GOP Conference voting in favor, this is the highest level of Republican support for a House farm bill in history, affirming the commitment of House Republicans to rural America.

STATE ISSUES

Budget

The 2025-26 budget offers a major boost to Pennsylvania's agricultural sector, with increased funding for innovation, food security, animal health, and education—key investments that will drive growth and ensure a sustainable future for farming communities. Support from legislators is crucial to keep these initiatives on track for success.

Dairy

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is advocating for a stronger, more competitive dairy industry through fair milk pricing, transparent premium reform, and resilient supply chains. We support legislation to modernize the Milk Marketing Law, allow milk hauling during emergencies, and expand processing opportunities through initiatives like the Keystone Opportunity Dairy Zone (KOZ). Together, these efforts strengthen Pennsylvania's dairy farms, processors, and rural communities.

Energy

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau supports responsible, balanced energy development that protects farmland and ensures affordable, reliable power for rural communities. We advocate for solar decommissioning standards to protect landowners, expanded access to on-farm digesters, and policies that incentivize renewable projects on brownfields and commercial sites rather than productive farmland. PFB also tracks emerging issues such as data center energy use and its potential impact on electricity costs and agricultural input prices across the Commonwealth.

Labor

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau supports fair, practical labor policies that sustain farm businesses while protecting workers. We oppose one-size-fits-all mandates, such as blanket minimum wage, overtime, or unionization proposals, that overlook the seasonal and economic realities of agriculture. PFB also works closely with Pennsylvania's agricultural universities and institutions, including Penn State University and Penn Vet, to strengthen workforce development and support the next generation of farmers and agricultural professionals. In addition, we advocate for programs like the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit, which helps new and transitioning farmers access land and capital, ensuring a strong and sustainable agricultural workforce for the future.

Transportation

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau supports policies that keep agricultural supply chains moving safely and efficiently. We advocate for continuous, reliable milk hauling to prevent disruptions to the dairy industry and broader food supply. PFB also encourages infrastructure improvements and clear, practical regulations for drivers and road safety, ensuring both farm operations and rural communities can thrive while maintaining regulatory integrity.

Wildlife

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau supports science-based wildlife management that protects farmers and farmland. We work with legislators and the Pennsylvania Game Commission to improve programs like DMAP and Ag Tags, giving landowners more flexibility to manage deer and reduce crop damage. PFB advocates for enhanced harvest reporting, processing centers, and cold storage to maximize use of harvested deer, including donations to local food banks. We also support public reporting tools and programs to track and manage wildlife that impacts agriculture, ensuring efficient, data-driven programs that benefit farmers, hunters, and rural communities.

NATIONAL ISSUES

Animal Health

Increase funding for resources to prevent the spread of livestock and poultry diseases as well as educating the agricultural community and the public on the importance of biosecurity.

Dairy

Encourage policy making that will restore the country's fluid milk consumption, enforce FDA's standard of identity for milk, and make dairy a profitable business again to prevent the continuous decline of losing generations of dairy farmers.

Energy

Create a diverse, domestic energy supply to fuel America's economic growth and prosperity while strengthening our energy security.

Environment

Ensure conservation practices remain voluntary as farmers and ranchers already are working to improve air, water, and soil quality in addition to reducing regulations that impacts farmers' ability to put food on tables.

Farm Bill

Educate and advocate on the need for a farm bill in 2026.

Labor

Enact legislation that helps farmers and ranchers meet their labor needs, and update H-2A rules that enhance farmers' ability to hire the workers they need.

Transportation

Ensure farmers have safe and quality roadways to deliver their products while increasing supply chain efficiency and working to reduce regulations for transporting agricultural goods.

Wildlife

Reform legislation such as the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to address the modern-day population of species that are harming crops and livestock, while working to increase data collection on wildlife species to provide for accurate decision making in the process

To Learn More

<https://pfb.com/advocate-for-policies/issues/national-issues-new-format/>

BUTLER COUNTY NATIONWIDE INSURANCE FARM CERTIFIED AGENTS

ALLEGHENY COUNTY				
United States Casualty Corp	3824 Northern	Monroeville	PA	15146-2121
My Preferred Insurance LLC	9840 Old Perry	Wexford	PA	15090-9311
John C Lee Insurance Group LLC	629 Monongahela	Glassport	PA	15045-1607
BUTLER COUNTY				
Michael J Raisley	1120 N Main St	Butler	PA	16001
Daniel Conville Agency LLC	308 E Main St	Evans City	PA	16033-1224
Richard W Kotch Jr	201 S Duffy Road	Butler	PA	16001-2754
Keystone Insurance Brokers	1074 Pittsburgh	Valencia	PA	16059-1926
Raisley Insurance	1120 N Main	Butler	PA	16001-1947
Richard W Kotch Jr	201 S Duffy Rd	Butler	PA	16001-2754
Keystone Insurance Brokers	1074 Pittsburgh	Valencia	PA	16059-1926
Daniel Conville Agency LLC	308 E Main St	Evans City	PA	16033
ARMSTRONG COUNTY				
Dinnin & Parkins Associates Inc	213 Market St	Kittanning	PA	16201-1579
Tgif	331 Arthur St	Kittanning	PA	16201-2178

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.¹ 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.



¹ U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

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Are You Turning 65 This Year and Going on Medicare?



 **Pennsylvania
Farm Bureau**

Health Services

Choosing your Medicare plan can be overwhelming. It can be hard to figure out what you want, or more important, what you need.

Farm Bureau's experienced and trained staff are ready to help. At no cost to you, we can:

- Answer your questions
- Explain and compare options
- Work within your budget
- Help with informed Medicare coverage decisions

Knowledgeable. Helpful. Dedicated.

To check availability in your county call **800.522.2375**.



Member Benefits

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau knows you work hard for your money and your membership should too. Visit www.pfb.com/services or scan the QR code to see how to get your share of **\$2.7 million** in **annual savings**.



To redeem discounts, use the required codes, websites, and/or phone numbers found by logging into the Members Only website at www.pfbmembers.org.

Member Benefits are subject to change without notice. Membership Dues Are Non-Refundable

Home and Auto



www.pfb.com/ford
to download certificate
Must be a member for 30+ days.
rebate not always stackable,
some exclusions may apply

\$500.00 off exclusive Ford trucks



Code: 11361045
National Fleet Discount



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Code: 1586181 PHL
www.StaplesAdvantage.com
Online purchases



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855.763.8213
www.affinitycellular.com/pafb

Farm and Business



Account# 855488417
www.grainger.com/farmbureau

Renewals code: PAFB
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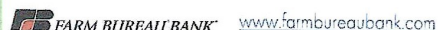
Legal



717.761.2740
www.pfb.com/lsp

PFB's Legal Services Plan offers complimentary informational consultations from local law firms

Financial and Insurance



Nationwide® offers a variety of insurance and financial services to Farm Bureau members including farm*, auto*, home*, pet*, travel*, powersports, commercial and life insurance.
*Select discounts may apply.

To learn more, contact your local Nationwide agent or visit Nationwide.com/pfb.

Travel



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800.258.2847



Corporate Rate: 8000002941
877.670.7088



AWD Disc Code: A298838
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www.avis.com/pafb



BCD Offer Code: Y775738
800.527.0700
www.budget.com/pafb

Health and Wellness



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www.scriptsave.com



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Additional Benefits

Save even more with County Farm Bureau Local Discounts!

For a complete list of discounts offered by +375 locally-owned businesses in nearly 50 counties visit pfb.com/localdiscounts.
Local discounts not offered in all counties

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pfb.enjoymydeals.com

Publication

PFB adds value to membership and keeps members informed through a variety of print and digital publications. Members receive 5% off advertising rates in our print publications. Contact advertising coordinator for details.

A total \$6 portion of annual member dues covers subscriptions to Positively Pennsylvania. Members receive 5 issues of Positively Pennsylvania per year. Publication frequency and details are subject to change.



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