



# Berks County Farm Bureau Berks Newsletter

Robin Lincoln, Editor

November Edition 2018

The newsletter is always available online at [www.pfb.com/berks](http://www.pfb.com/berks)

*Thanks to those of you who have opted to receive your newsletter electronically. So far, 2% of our members have agreed to stop their paper/snail-mail newsletters. We encourage you to help us move into the 21st century by letting us know that you want electronic only, or that you'd still prefer the paper version.*

Please e-mail  
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Your Name Here \_\_\_\_\_ Please Volunteer!

### Young Farmer & Rancher

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### CID/Newsletter Editor

Robin Lincoln \_\_\_\_\_ 484-925-4132

### Regional Organization Director

Ethan Howard..... 610 533 2558

### State Director District 3

Howard Robinson \_\_\_\_\_ 717-529-2508

## MEMBERSHIP KICKOFF MEETING

Tuesday, December 11, 2018; 6:30pm

Hoss' Restaurant

121 S Centre Ave

Leesport, PA 19533

Join us for food, fellowship and help with membership!!  
New attendees call or text Paul Hartman: 484-955-8590

## Policies approved at BCFB's Annual Meeting held September 28, 2018

### State

1. We recommend the establishment of a licensing board for grain dealers and brokers, which would also require bonding of members. Dealers and brokers may choose to be unlicensed and unbonded, but farmers must be made aware of the risks in dealing with unlicensed businesses.
2. We recommend that we oppose changes to Berks County Farmland preservation guidelines. We oppose buffer zones to future growth areas, buffer zones for water and sewer lines, and a one mile buffer zone for interstate highway exits.
3. We recommend that a person graduating with a trade school degree must acquire three months of work experience in their field before obtaining their degree.
4. We recommend that insurance companies show discounts on their billing statements for being a Farm Bureau member.
5. We recommend telemarketers be illegal.
6. We recommend tenants be responsible for their own past due electric bills not the owners.

### Berks

1. We recommend that Berks County take measures to insure that the Berks Heim remains under County ownership and control.

### National

1. We recommend that farmer members be included on committees of USDA/PDA/Extension that are established to administer funds allocated to research and control of the Spotted Lantern Fly.
2. We recommend that incentives both tax and otherwise, be made available for the modernization and diversification of existing milk product processing plants.
3. We recommend that lab grown meat not be labeled as meat.

*In memory of Phyllis Whitten her family has made a donation to BCFB. We have sent that donation of \$2,500 to the Ag Lab where it will be greatly appreciated and utilized.*

## Measure the Candidate

The Measure the Candidate night was held in October and it was an opportunity for people to ask questions to the candidates. It was again a success!

## Safety Contest 2018 "Check It Out First"

Coloring contest ages 4-6  
Poster contest ages 7-12.

Photography Contest ages 13-18.

Entries must be submitted to Berks County by May 1st. Full details along with the coloring

page can be found online at: [www.pfb.com/safety-contests](http://www.pfb.com/safety-contests)

Entries can be given to any board member or mailed to: Robin Lincoln 315 S Baumstown Rd., Birdsboro PA 19508



Women's Leadership Committee



**Kathy Barry \***  
Robesonia, PA  
610-693-5000

**Michael Davidheiser**  
Boyertown, PA  
610-367-6095

**Brian Hunsinger**  
Douglassville, PA  
610-582-5204

**David Koeffler**  
Reading, PA  
610-929-9951

### Berks County Nationwide Agents

**Richard McFeely**  
Reading, PA  
610-777-2224

**Hugh McGinley**  
Birdsboro, PA  
610-582-2862

**James McIntyre**  
Morgantown, PA  
610-286-6170

**Christine Ramsey**  
Shillington, PA  
610-777-3258

**Jeffrey Spotts \***  
Wyomissing, PA  
610-374-2911

**Daniel Williams**  
Kutztown, PA  
610-683-6823

**David Wilson**  
Birdsboro, PA  
610-582-9233

**William Young**  
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# IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

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DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
December 11	Membership Kickoff Meeting	Hoss', Leesport PA	6:30 pm
December 14	BCFB Board Meeting	Berks Co Ag Center	7:30 pm
January 11	BCFB Board Meeting	Berks Co Ag Center	TBD
February 8	BCFB Board Meeting	Berks Co Ag Center	TBD
March 8	BCFB Board Meeting	Berks Co Ag Center	7:00 pm
March 29	Spring Banquet <i>Donate unperishables for Harvest For All.</i>	Ag Center	6:45 pm
June	Night at the Fightin Phils <i>Tickets can be picked up at March Banquet</i>		

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## Governor Signs Bill to Give Farmers Greater Opportunity for Input on Environmental Regulations

A Pennsylvania Farm Bureau-supported bill that would give animal agriculture representatives more opportunity to offer input on proposed environmental regulations is now law.

Gov. Tom Wolf recently signed Senate Bill 1171. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Michele Brooks of Crawford County, adds two concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) representatives to the Department of Environmental Protection's Agricultural Advisory Board and clarifies that two appointees to the State Conservation Commission's Nutrient Management Advisory Board must be CAFO permit holders. The bill also requires that all regions of the state are represented on the Nutrient Management Advisory Board. State agencies will also be required to present a wider range of regulatory issues to the Agricultural Advisory Board, including draft permit changes and technical guidance documents.

Both boards offer input related to proposed environmental and nutrient regulations that affect agriculture.

## PFB Advocates to Clear the Way for Association Health Plans

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and other advocates recently met with Pennsylvania Insurance Commissioner Jessica Altman to advocate for the removal of barriers preventing Farm Bureau and similar organizations from being able to offer group health insurance in Pennsylvania.

In June, the U.S. Department of Labor finalized a rule that would make it easier for industry organizations to offer group health plans to their members, including certain sole proprietors and small employers. Such plans would be able to take advantage of the cost savings afforded to larger employers with group plans.

However, Pennsylvania organizations cannot yet take advantage of so-called association health plans due to Altman's interpretation of state and federal law. Adding to the uncertainty

a federal lawsuit from several state attorneys general, including Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, challenging the legality of the final rule is currently pending a decision.

Nonetheless, PFB has made advocating for association health plans a priority. The organization has also retained outside legal counsel to provide advice on health insurance matters and assist with that advocacy.

PFB offered group health insurance to members for nearly 40 years but had to stop in 2014 due to implementation of the Affordable Care Act. The organization hopes to be able to once again offer group plans to provide its members with high-quality insurance. In the meantime, Farm Bureau members can currently sign up for group dental and vision insurance through PFB Health Services and the division can help members find high-quality medical insurance that best fits their needs.

## Farm Bureau Asks Court to Block WOTUS Nationwide

Farm Bureau is asking a federal district court in Georgia to expand nationwide its order blocking the controversial Waters of the U.S. rule from going into effect as the Environmental Protection Agency works to repeal and rewrite the regulation.

Rulings by that court—and two others in North Dakota and Texas—have blocked WOTUS from taking effect in certain states. But in 22 states, including Pennsylvania, the rule is technically in effect, although it's uncertain whether the rule will be enforced in those states.

EPA had sought to delay the effective date of the regulation as it worked through the process of repealing and replacing it. However, the delay was struck down by federal district court in South Carolina, which ruled that the agency did not follow proper procedures.

The 2015 WOTUS rule would potentially subject an estimated 98 percent of Pennsylvania land to federal water regulations. Farm Bureau believes the rule attempts to regulate land areas well beyond what is allowed by federal law and has advocated for replacing it with one that protects water quality without trampling on landowners' rights.