



# Berks County Farm Bureau Berks Newsletter

Elizabeth Peifer, Editor

Summer Edition ♣ 2016

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

**BerksCoFBnews@aol.com** to let us know your preference: paper vs. email/online.

## Berks County Farm Bureau Board of Directors

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Joe Rosenbaum \_\_\_\_\_ 610-323-4448

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### Women's Leadership Committee Director

Elizabeth Peifer \_\_\_\_\_ 610-689-4934

### Young Farmer & Rancher

Rachael Kirkhoff \_\_\_\_\_ 610-750-1531

### CID/Newsletter Editor

Elizabeth Peifer \_\_\_\_\_ 610-689-4934

### State Director District 3

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

## Fall Banquet & Annual Meeting

September 30, 2016

6:45 Registration, 7:00 Dinner

Adults \$10 - Children 10 and under FREE



Banquet Menu: Ham, Potato Filling, Salad, Apple Sauce, Corn, Lima Beans, Strawberries & Ice Cream

Fleetwood Grange

2864 Moselem Springs Road • Fleetwood PA

*(there are road detours in Fleetwood so allow time to get lost)*

*Make reservations by September 15th:*

*Robin Lincoln • 315 S. Baumstown Road*

*Birdsboro, PA 19505 • Phone: 484-925-4132*

## Great Food, Election of Directors, Voting for Polices for 2017 and door prizes!

Don't miss your chance to propose and vote on policies to be promoted by Farm Bureau in the year ahead. All Regular Members can present and vote on policies. Management doesn't choose what's important, WE DO! See our website [www.pfb.com/berks](http://www.pfb.com/berks) for a listing of policies proposed as of our September 9th Board Meeting.

## Local Policy Development Meetings

Oley Area – hosted by Dorothy Wagner – August 24, 2016

Call for directions – 610-689-5496

Myerstown Area – contact George Moyer – 717-933-8748

Bernville Area – contact Dennis Essig – 610-488-7126

## Measure the Candidate

Thursday, October 6, 2016, 7:30 p.m.

Berks Co Ag Center

1261 Welfare Road • Leesport, PA 19533

Bring your friends and family. Become informed voters.

See and hear the people you are voting for.

Get your own questions answered.

Refreshments will be served following the program.

*Voting is a right, a privilege and a responsibility.*

*Election Day is November 8, 2016.*



## Important Notice

August 12th Board Meeting Is Canceled!

## Learn How Farm Bureau Works for You at Ag Progress Days!

Visit Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's building during Ag Progress Days this summer to learn how we are working for you, your family and the future of agriculture. At our building, you can learn about our latest legislative initiatives and money saving benefits. Ag Progress Days will be held Aug. 16-18 at Rock Springs on Route 45, nine miles southwest of State College. PFB's building will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on August 16, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on August 17 and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on August 18. Here's what you will find at PFB's building, located at East 5th and Main Streets:

**MSC Business Services**—Farm Management Service account supervisors will be available to discuss the many business services available through PFB, including record keeping, tax planning and preparation; farm accounting software and computer leasing; and a no-hassle payroll service that takes the headaches out of payroll tax preparation.

**Government Affairs and Communications**—Staff will be available to provide you with information and updates on the issues affecting agriculture and to discuss Farm Bureau's state and national lobbying efforts on behalf of members.

**Health Insurance**—A PFB Health Services representative will have information on health insurance available to members and associate members.

**Young Farmers & Ranchers**—The State Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee will be on hand to discuss the leadership development and fellowship opportunities available to young farm families through YF&R programs. The State YF&R Committee will host a pedal tractor pull this year! Each participant will receive a customized participant certificate!

**Woman's Leadership Committee**— Committee members will hold an educational display and will discuss their role of developing leaders within the organization.

**Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation**—The foundation will have a hop-sotch activity for kids where they learn about healthy behavior.

**Member Benefits**—Representatives from Safemark, Nationwide Insurance, Amerigas and PFB's Health Services Division will be on hand to discuss valuable member benefits.

## New Members

The following list contains the names of 58 people who joined Berks County Farm Bureau as Regular Members in the most recent membership year (7/1/15 to 6/30/16). Please welcome these people and their families into our organization. We encourage our new members to join in our activities and participate in the legislative process through our Policy Development Program.

Emily Bau-Madsen	Nancy Kuser
John Bender	Roscoe Loump
Susan Blatt	Marshall Lytle
Joanna Lynn Blessing	Emory Martin
Amanda Britt	Gerald Martin
Rufus Brown	Michael Martin
Cleason Brubaker	Terry Moser
Daniel Burkholder	Joel Nicarry
Michael Burkholder	Patrick Nicarry
Jason Davey	Joshua Noll
Aleesha Dixon	Gloria Pierce
Amos Esh	Marco Rangel
Sherry Fidler	Carter Reese
Steve Fink	Bill Royer
Sherry Fuhrmann	Nelson Sauder
Tony Gallina	Issac Schaeffer
Steven Gehris	Sharon Stalter
Richard Geisinger, Jr.	Todd Stitzel
George Grieb	James Tomanelli
Jean Grim	Trainer's Midway Diner
Mark Hadden	Jason Troutman
Timothy Hoover	Jeremy Troutman
Diana Howard	Rachael Vezzosi
David Kauffman	Steven Vollers
William Kershner	Zachary Wagner
Cade Kindred	Ken Walker
Lelayna Klein	Irvin Weaver
Verna Kopicz	Travis Zweizig
Kenneth Kratz	

## Rosetree Consulting Agricultural • Environmental

Rosetree Consulting provides soil sampling, crop consulting, and government regulatory documents for agricultural operations of all sizes. Our goal is to provide clients with the information and understanding needed to make better decisions and have a more profitable operation.

Rosetree Consulting offers a 5% discount on regulatory services (manure management plans, nutrient management plans, conservation plans, odor management plans) to Berks County Farm Bureau members.

Eric Rosenbaum: 484-788-7263

## USFRA Ag Progress Days Workshop: Communicating Sustainability

Participants can learn new ways to talk to consumers about sustainable farming and ranching during Sustainability Communications Training at Ag Progress Days this summer.

The U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA), in conjunction with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB) and Penn State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, will host the workshop on August 16 at 2:30 p.m. The training session, which is free and open to farmers and ranchers, will focus on new messaging that can be used when talking with and

answering questions from consumers about sustainability. It will be held in the Special Events Building on the Ag Progress Days grounds in Centre County.

USFRA conducted research to determine the key areas of sustainability that consumers are most concerned about. They include, water, air, soil, and habitat. The training session will provide tools, including hard copy takeaways, for communicating your message of sustainability in those key areas. The event is one of several training sessions USFRA will host throughout the summer of 2016. USFRA, of which PFB is a member, was created to earn consumer trust in U.S. food and agriculture.

### MSC Business Services Account Supervisors

Carl Ganster - 610-678-1816  
Vance Getz - 717-945-6645  
David Mory - 610-419-0250  
Jason Seibert - 717-274-0217

### SAFEMARK DEALERS

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**Nationwide®**  
On Your Side

### Berks County Nationwide Agents

<b>Kathy Barry *</b> Robesonia, PA 610-693-5000	<b>Richard McFeely</b> Reading, PA 610-777-2224	<b>Jeffrey Spotts *</b> Wyomissing, PA 610-374-2911
<b>Michael Davidheiser</b> Boyertown, PA 610-367-6095	<b>Hugh McGinley</b> Birdsboro, PA 610-582-2862	<b>Daniel Williams</b> Kutztown, PA 610-683-6823
<b>Brian Hunsinger</b> Douglassville, PA 610-582-5204	<b>James McIntyre</b> Morgantown, PA 610-286-6170	<b>David Wilson</b> Birdsboro, PA 610-582-9233
<b>David Koefler</b> Reading, PA 610-929-9951	<b>Christine Ramsey</b> Shillington, PA 610-777-3258	<b>William Young</b> Reading, PA 610-779-8064

\* Farm Certified



## Protecting Everyone

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[www.pfb.com/healthinsurance](http://www.pfb.com/healthinsurance)



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## MSC BUSINESS SERVICES

PFB Members' Service Corporation

*Continuing to Add New Services & Partnerships  
Creating the Best Total Program of Its Kind*

**Services**

• Farm Management Service	• RFD Tax
• PFA FACCTS®	• Consulting Services
• Write-up Services	• REAP Credit Resale
• Benchmarking	• Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor
• Payroll Services	

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Email: [FMS@pfb.com](mailto:FMS@pfb.com) [www.msccbs.net](http://www.msccbs.net)

# IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
August 12	BCFB Board Meeting	CANCELED	
Aug 16-17-18	Ag Progress Days	Rock Springs, PA	
August 24	Local Policy Development Meeting	Dorothy Wagner, Oley, PA	
September 9	BCFB Board Meeting	Ag Center, Leesport, PA	7:00pm
September 30	BCFB Annual Meeting	Fleetwood Grange	Registration 6:45pm; Dinner 7:00pm
October 6	Measure the Candidate	Ag Center, Leesport, PA	7:30pm
October 14	BCFB Board Meeting	Ag Center, Leesport, PA	7:30pm
November 8	General Election		
November 11	BCFB Board Meeting	Location to be determined	7:30pm
November 14-16	PA Farm Bureau Annual Meeting	Hershey, PA	
December 9	BCFB Board Meeting	Ag Center, Leesport, PA	7:30pm
Jan 6 – 11 2017	AFBF Annual Convention	Phoenix, AZ	

## General Assembly Adopts New State Budget

The Pennsylvania General Assembly — with bipartisan support — approved a \$31.6 billion state budget that gives strong support to agriculture initiatives, including Penn State Cooperative Extension, the PA Preferred Program and veterinary services. The budget now heads to Gov. Tom Wolf for consideration. Gov. Wolf said he would sign the budget provided that lawmakers approved a “sustainable revenue package.”

While the General Assembly has not approved a tax code bill, the budget agreement does not call for any increases in sales or personal income taxes, but instead calls for new revenue through an expanded cigarette tax, additional gambling options and reforms in the state liquor system. Under the budget, Penn State Extension will see a 2.5 percent increase in funding, while programs like agriculture promotion, PA Preferred and livestock and dairy shows will receive an additional 10 percent in funding. The budget does not address pension or property tax reform. PFB thanks Senators Jake Corman and Elder Vogel for their efforts in securing funding for agriculture priority issues.

## Farm Bureau Supports Compromise on GMO Labeling Bill

Farm Bureau is supporting a compromise to a GMO labeling bill that would create national standards for the labeling of biotechnology ingredients, but would require mandatory labeling.

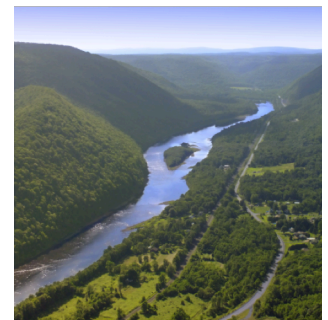
Farm Bureau’s Board of Directors recently decided to support the proposal. The board of director’s input was needed because portions of the bill both agreed and conflicted with current Farm Bureau policy. While the decision to support the bill is a tough one, it will help avoid a patchwork of state laws that could cause consumer confusion and disparaging of agriculture technology, AFBF President Zippy Duvall said.

The bill, if passed, would preempt state laws, such as one in Vermont set to go into later this year, and would instead

establish national standards. The U.S. Department of Agriculture would be in charge of establishing those standards. Meat and dairy would not fall under the labeling law, even if the animals were fed GMO feed. It would also exempt products such as soup where meat is a primary ingredient. In addition, the USDA would have no authority to recall products that do not comply with the labeling requirements. Farm Bureau is encouraging support for the bill in Congress.

## USGS Report Points To Water Quality Improvements in Bay Watershed

Monitoring of water quality in the Susquehanna River and its tributaries points to improvements in several key areas, according to a federal report. A report by the U.S. Geological Survey found that monitoring stations in Pennsylvania are recording reduced levels of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment levels



in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. While there are documented reductions in those nutrients, the levels are still above limits established by the federal Environmental Protection Agency in its Chesapeake Bay cleanup plan, Mike Langland, a USGS hydrologist told members of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau’s Natural & Environmental Resource Committee.

Reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus can be contributed to a number of factors, including best management practices used by farmers, improvements at wastewater treatment plants and a reduction in the number of coal-fired power plants used for electricity generation, Langland said. The USGS survey collects data from 117 collection points in the watershed, including 34 in Pennsylvania. While improvements are being documented in several locations in Pennsylvania, there is still a concern in the southeastern portion of Pennsylvania’s Bay Watershed, with its concentration of agriculture and housing developments, Langland said.

## **DEP, Conservation Districts, Begin Farm Visits**

Pennsylvania's state and local agencies will begin a more concentrated program of farm inspections in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed this summer. Visits by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and conservation district staff will focus on verifying whether farms have developed and are following their plans for erosion and sedimentation control and manure management.

The visits are part of a revised strategy by DEP for improvement of water quality in the Bay. The state's "reboot" strategy is being driven by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, which is claiming that Pennsylvania is behind in meeting nutrient reduction goals in the watershed. Conservation district visits will focus on conservation practices and documents that farmers are required to have under current state law. That includes a written soil conservation plan, along with a manure management plan for animal farm operations and farms that use animal manure. Compliance of farms with state planning requirements has been part of the state's strategy for the bay cleanup since 2011.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau has serious concerns with the EPA's approach in cleaning the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The EPA's model used to determine the amount of nutrients reaching the bay failed to account for voluntary practices adopted by farmers. That's why Pennsylvania Farm Bureau partnered with Penn State on a best management practices survey, conducted this spring. Once those results are compiled, they will be shared with the appropriate state and federal agencies. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau wants to make sure that the men and women of agriculture are not unduly burdened during the Chesapeake Bay cleanup.

Farmers have made strides in reducing the nutrients reaching local tributaries that feed into the bay watershed. Farmers should get credit for those water quality improvements. Some of those conservation plans followed by farmers in their businesses may not have been recorded in formal plans. Help is available for farmers who need to update, or write, their conservation plans. Contact your local conservation district, or National Resource Conservation Service, for more information.

## **Minimum Royalty Bill Passes House Committee**

A bill that would protect natural gas leaseholders and their royalty payments passed a state House Committee. House Bill 1391, sponsored by Rep. Garth Everett, a Lycoming County Republican, will establish that a minimum royalty payment will not be less than 12.5 percent. The bill was approved by the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and now heads to the full House for consideration.

Some natural gas companies have been taking out post-production costs from royalty payments, bringing payments well below the 12.5 percent level. House Bill 1391 would establish the minimum payment, regardless of the costs incurred by natural gas companies to transport gas to market. Several state

lawmakers who co-sponsored the legislation said they will continue to push for the protection of gas lease holders.

"There has been a great deal of work done with legislative colleagues and stakeholders on this issue for some time and House Bill 1391 represents a more simplified effort to provide fairness for natural gas drilling lease holders," according to the joint statement. "We anticipate the floor debate to include an amendment process and we look forward to a spirit of cooperation as we get to the final passage of this legislation."

## **Golfers Drive Foundation Forward**

The Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation will continue to spread the message of agriculture thanks to the support of golfers and donors. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, which provides support to the foundation, hosted an annual golf tournament in Hershey to raise money for the foundation. The 24th Annual Richard Prether Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Golf Classic raised \$45,000 to support the foundation's activities.

Since 1993, the event has generated more than \$779,000 in contributions to the foundation. The foundation funds a number of projects, including the popular Mobile Ag Ed Science Lab program, and the annual Educator's Ag Institute. The Ag Lab program operates as a classroom on wheels, delivering agriculture-themed lessons to children in kindergarten through eighth grade. In addition, the foundation recently started the "Ag on the Go" program, which takes lessons taught in the labs to schools that cannot host an Ag Lab.

The foundation thanks the 128 golfers and sponsors who made the outing a success, including platinum sponsors Nationwide Insurance and Firestone Farm Tires.

## **New Slate of FFA Officers Selected**

Pennsylvania FFA has selected a new slate of State Officers for the 2016-2017 school year.

The new officers are:

- State President—Libby Baker-Mikesell, Perry County
- State Vice President—Jacob Kline, Lebanon County
- State Secretary—Sarah Gonzalez, Lancaster County
- State Treasurer—Madeline Buss, Somerset County
- State Reporter—Jill Palmer, Fulton County
- State Sentinel—Garrett Jenkins, Lancaster County
- State Chaplain—Tricia Hojnowski, Bradford County

The new officers were chosen during the 87th PA FFA Convention held recently in State College.

Officers give up a year of their post-high school career to travel the state promoting agriculture. State officers represent Pennsylvania agriculture at events, and frequently speak to businesses throughout the state about the commonwealth's leading industry. They also visit chapters to help with leadership development among FFA members. State officer candidates go through an intensive interview process, and are chosen by a committee of their peers.

## New Rules Pave Way For Drone Use in Agriculture

Agriculture producers and businesses will be able to use drones for farm scouting with new rules from the Federal Aviation Administration. FAA officials unveiled a new set of rules for the commercial use of unmanned aircraft—commonly called drones—weighing less than 55 pounds. Here are some of the highlights from the FAA’s new rules for drones:

- Commercial operators must avoid all piloted aircraft and keep drones in sight at all times. Operators can use a visual observer to track the drone.
- Operators can fly at a maximum height of 400 feet above the ground, of higher if the drone is within 400 feet of a structure. Flight is restricted to between daylight and twilight.
- Operators cannot fly drones over anyone who is not participating in the operation, not under a covered structure or inside a vehicle. Operation from a moving vehicle can only occur in sparsely populated areas.
- Operators must be at least 16 years old and obtain a remote pilot airman certificate.

The FAA is working on establishing privacy education as part of the drone registration process, and is also providing guidance to state and local governments about insuring privacy.

## MSC Reminds Clients of IRS Scam

MSC Business Services is warning clients about a national phone scam of individuals posing as IRS agents and demanding payments for back taxes. MSC is reporting that some members have been targeted in scams and in at least one case, a member lost money through these fraudulent practices. The IRS has received more than 90,000 complaints across the country, and estimates victims have lost \$5 million from these scams. Most of the scam calls involve someone posing as an IRS agent and verbally threatening and intimidating victims to turn over credit card information for payment, or to wire money to an account. Representatives from the IRS say they do not use the phone as the first point of contact and never ask for credit card or other information over the phone. Contact the IRS at 1.800.366.4484, if you receive such a call.

The IRS provides the following tips to prevent falling victim to a scam:

- Scammers may demand payment, usually through a prepaid debit card, or wire transfer.
- Callers use IRS titles and fake badge numbers to appear legitimate.
- The IRS will never demand payment over the phone, or call about taxes without first having mailed a bill.
- The IRS will never threaten to bring in local police or other law enforcement groups and have you arrested for not paying.
- The IRS will not demand you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal.
- The IRS will not ask for credit or debit card information over the phone.

## Member Benefit Spotlight Agricultural Educator Uses Services to Support Students

As an educator, Doreen Jamison knows resourcefulness is a key on-the-job skill. So smart teachers know to look for value, and find deals when they can. That’s exactly what Jamison, a Farm Bureau member from Somerset County, did when planning a trip to Louisville, Kentucky. Jamison looked to Farm Bureau to find savings as part of her membership. Jamison is an agriculture education teacher at the Meyersdale School District and is advisor for the Meyersdale FFA Club.

Her FFA students were set to travel to Louisville to attend the National FFA Convention, where students network with future



employers, colleges, universities, and other FFA members from across the United States. The trip is also an expensive undertaking. Jamison realized the trip could stress the FFA club’s finances, so she looked for ways to cut costs. She used her Farm Bureau membership to save at Choice Hotels, which made significant savings on the trip. Jamison used her discount before with family vacations, but now used this membership benefit to provide a critical piece of these students’ education experience. Using her Farm Bureau discount, Jamison saved 15 percent off the cost of the rooms for students to stay at while attending the convention. All Farm Bureau members can save on travel when staying at Choice Hotels. To use this program, call the Choice S.O.S. system toll-free number 1-800-258-2847, and use the membership code of 00209780. Advanced reservations are required to receive the discount.

## Pennsylvania Makes Largest Change to Liquor Sales in Decades

Pennsylvania lawmakers approved the first significant overhaul of the state’s liquor system in decades. A bill signed by Gov. Tom Wolf will allow grocery stores to sell wine, allow wineries to ship wine and provides for six-pack sales in gas stations.

The bill opens new options for wine sales, including allowing restaurants and hotels to sell up to four bottles of wine for take-out. The same option will be available for grocery stores that currently sell beer. Bed and breakfast establishments will also have the option of offering wine to guests. Wineries will also have the chance to be licensed as “direct wine shippers,” which gives them the authority to send wine to in-state residents. It also creates an excise tax of \$2.50 per gallon of wine sent to consumers, which will be used to support programs under the Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program Board. In addition, the bill removes Sunday sales restrictions at state-owned stores and allows gas stations to be licensed for six-pack sales.