



# Berks County Farm Bureau Berks Newsletter

Elizabeth Peifer, Editor

Fall Edition 2017

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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### CID/Newsletter Editor

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### State Director District 3

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



## Annual Banquet

Friday, September 29, 2017

**6:45 p.m. Registration; 7:00 p.m. Dinner**  
**Adults \$10 - Children 10 and under FREE**

Banquet Menu: Ham, Potato Filling with Gravy, Sweet Potatoes, Corn, String Beans, Apple Sauce, Lettuce with Bacon Dressing, Rolls and Butter, Coffee, Tea, and Cherry Crisp with Ice Cream.

Virginville Grange  
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*Mail your payment and reservation to*  
*Robin Lincoln • 315 S. Baumstown Road*  
*Birdsboro, PA 19508*  
*by September 15th.*

*Questions? Call Robin at 484-925-4132.*

## LATE SUMMER NEWSLETTER ERROR:

**Robin Lincoln's zipcode was listed wrong, now corrected.**

**If you think you may have mailed a banquet reservation to the wrong zipcode, please call her to be sure she has your reservation.**



## Upcoming Events

### Measure the Candidate:

*October 5, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.*

### BARN Farm Tour:

*October 14, 2017*

### Bountiful Berks Banquet:

*(formerly the Farm City Banquet)*

*October 27, 2017*

### PFB Annual Meeting:

*November 13, 14, 15, 2017*

## Thank you!

The following teachers helped out by manning PFB's Mobile Ag Lab at the Reading Fair:

- Jimmy Griesemer, Milton Hershey School
- Michele Beekman, Brandywine School District
- Kacey Rice, Oley Valley School District
- Darla Romberger, Cumberland Valley School District
- Kelly Kauffman, Schuylkill Valley School District
- Donna Intoccia, Oley Valley School District
- Adam Serfass, Conrad Weiser School District
- Jennifer Neiman, Fleetwood School District
- Heather Drzal, Elanco School District

These teachers made it possible for kids from all walks of life to learn about farming and Farm Bureau.

## PA Farm Bureau to Offer Webinar on New "Form I-9" on September 6th

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is sponsoring an educational webinar on Wednesday, Sept. 6th to learn about changes to the new Form I-9 that must be used beginning September 18. Participants will receive an overview of recent changes and new resources available to assist with the employment eligibility verification process.

The presentation will review basics about the form – including step-by-step instructions and rules for retention and storage – even the most seasoned business professionals will walk away with something new.

The presenter will be Harry Nash of the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services' Verification Division. The session begins at noon and will last approximately 1 ½ hours. Go to

<https://uscisconnect.connectsolutions.com/pafarm/> to access the online materials and join the conference call by dialing 866-928-2008 and entering the code 716533.

## PFB Website Provides Answers To Transportation Questions

Farmers with questions about moving agriculture vehicles on roadways can visit [www.pfb.com/transportation](http://www.pfb.com/transportation) to get numerous answers on transportation or other issues. Copies of PA Farm Bureau's updated transportation booklet can be downloaded from this site.

Transportation laws governing the various types of agriculture equipment and vehicles are often complicated. That's why PFB has put together a comprehensive document to give farmers the resources they need when faced with questions about agriculture transportation.

## New Issue of *Positively Pennsylvania* Available



A new issue of *Positively Pennsylvania* is now available. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau members can access the magazine, which introduces readers to the food and culture that make Pennsylvania a great state, for free online. Featured in the July/August issue are stories about a unique community market in Wayne County, the next generation taking on new challenges at a

Washington County beef farm, how a Berks County sliced apple producer embraced technology to get ahead, a winery meeting the challenge of growing European grapes in Bedford County and much more. To read the issue, visit: <https://www.pfb.com/positively-pa->

### MSC Business Services Account Supervisors

Carl Ganster - 610-678-1816  
Vance Getz - 717-945-6645

David Mory - 610-419-0250  
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## No Resolution Yet as State Budget Talks Continue

State legislators and Gov. Tom Wolf are continuing discussions over how to complete the 2017-2018 state budget but an agreement has not yet been reached. While a \$32 billion state spending plan was adopted in July, agreement has yet to be reached over a plan to come up with the additional revenue needed to pay for it. The state Senate approved its version of a revenue plan last month but that proposal has not been taken up by the House. The spending bill in place now allows the state to release money for most programs, including the Department of Agriculture's operations, once the revenue is in place. But funding for two other programs important to agriculture - University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine and Penn State Cooperative Extension - remains held up because it requires the approval of separate spending bills. Both the Penn State and Penn Vet funding bills were approved by the Senate but have not yet received a vote in the House. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is continuing to advocate for agriculture's priorities as the budget talks continue.

## Attention Dairy Producers: Your Input Could Help Shape Risk Management Tools




American Farm Bureau Insurance Services is asking dairy producers to complete a survey that will be used to inform policy makers about the sector's risk-management needs. This comes as a Farm Bureau-

proposed risk management program for dairy producers is being considered for implementation by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. Farm Bureau's proposal, Dairy Revenue Protection, seeks to give producers an option that's tailored to fit their needs. The proposed program would close a gap not covered by other insurance programs by protecting farmers against quarterly revenue losses. It would be designed to fit farmers' specific circumstances to account for the differences in economic conditions between states and types of production. The FCIC recently approved funding to help with development of the program, a major step toward it becoming reality. AFBIS is conducting the survey to gather feedback on the plan and help it make sure the plan fits producers' needs. Individual responses will be kept confidential. Please respond to the survey at: <http://bit.ly/2ie1kBZ>. Make best management decisions on animal health. That work also helps farmers improve their productivity and bottom line.

Find out more about these and other Member Benefits and Services at [www.pfb.com](http://www.pfb.com)!



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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.

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# IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

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DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
September 8	BCFB Board Meeting	Berks County Ag Center	7:30 p.m.
September 29	BCFB Fall Banquet	Virginville Grange	6:45 p.m. registration; 7:00 p.m. dinner
October 5	Measure the Candidate	Berks County Ag Center	7:30 p.m.
October 13	BCFB Board Meeting	Berks County Ag Center	7:30 p.m.
October 14	BARN Farm Tour		
October 27	Bountiful Berks Banquet (formerly Farm City Banquet)		
November 13-15	PFB Annual Meeting		

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## Congress Poised for Tax Code Overhaul

A joint statement on tax reform released recently by Republican congressional leaders and administration officials signals that lawmakers plan to make good on their promise to overhaul the tax code as soon as this fall.

“America’s farmers and ranchers are encouraged to see that key congressional leaders and the administration understand how important tax reform is to all Americans. Fixing our tax system now is crucial to creating economic opportunities for farmers, ranchers and other family-owned businesses. This is especially important as farmers continue to face down tough economic challenges,” American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said in response to the statement.

Among farmers’ and ranchers’ top priorities are comprehensive tax reform that helps all farm and ranch businesses; the reduction of combined income and self-employment tax rates to account for any deductions or credits lost; and cost-recovery tools like allowing businesses to deduct expenses when incurred; and a continuation of cash accounting, Section 1031 “like-kind exchanges,” and the deduction for state and local taxes.

The repeal of estate taxes and the continuation of stepped-up basis, along with reduced capital gains taxes, are important as well.

“Not only will reform strengthen our economy, but by addressing key issues like overall tax rates, capital gains taxes and enhanced expensing, it will be good for farms and other businesses,” Duvall said.

The group of congressional leaders and administration officials who released the joint statement on tax reform includes House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas).

In the statement, the group issued its support for lower taxes for individuals and businesses, with specific references to reduced business tax rates, expanded expensing and permanence. Noticeably absent is the border adjustment tax championed by House leadership.

### *Share Your Tax Reform Message with Congress*

With key lawmakers pushing to make headway on tax reform over the next several weeks, now is the time for farmers and ranchers to share with their representatives and senators why

reform is so important for people involved in agriculture. August isn’t a total vacation for Congress. Seek out lawmakers on your home turf at meetings, town halls, fairs or other local events. You can also send your tax reform message in a few clicks using AFBF’s “Take Action Now” web page - <http://www.fb.org/advocacy/tax-reform-needed-now/>.

## New Legislation Would Delay Logging Device Requirements for Drivers

A recently introduced bill would provide a much-needed delay to the problematic electronic logging device mandate for certain drivers, which is set to go into effect in December, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The Farm Bureau-backed ELD Extension Act of 2017 (H.R. 3282) would delay the mandate for two years to allow stakeholders to work with FMCSA to address numerous unresolved issues.

“This delay is necessary to adequately account for costs, allay technology concerns, minimize impacts to livestock and other live animals under our members’ care and allow for the proper training to ensure uniform compliance and enforcement,” AFBF President Zippy Duvall wrote in a letter to the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Brian Babin (R-Texas).

Unless Congress acts, carriers and drivers who are subject to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s ELD rule must install and use ELDs by Dec. 18. While most farmers and ranchers should be exempt because they can claim covered farm vehicle status, drivers who haul livestock, live fish and insects are likely to fall under the requirements.

Drivers who have to use ELDs would be limited to current hours of service rules, which restrict a driver to only 14 “on duty” hours, with no more than 11 active driving hours. Once a driver hits those maximum hour allotments, he must stop and rest for 10 consecutive hours, which would be problematic when transporting livestock and other live animals.

The requirements imposed by the mandate would be harmful to both small business owners, who could be forced out of the marketplace, and livestock, which could suffer if they were no longer hauled by highly skilled and trained drivers and stockmen, Duvall wrote.

“Time spent on a truck can be stressful for cattle and other live animals. Unnecessary stops or multiple loads and unloads add additional stress resulting in potential livestock weight loss and increased animal sickness and death,” he said.

## Poll: Tax Reform Needed for Farmers and America

A commanding majority of American voters support tax reform, a nationwide poll shows, while most voters also support tax changes that would benefit America's farm and ranch families.

The survey conducted by Morning Consult found that seven out of 10 voters agreed passing tax reform legislation should be a priority for Congress. More than half of voters polled also expressed support for specific tax reform provisions that would benefit farmers and ranchers, such as:

- Allowing farmers to deduct machinery purchases in the year those purchases are made;
- Allowing farmers and ranchers to average their income;
- Decreasing capital gains taxes; and
- Repealing the estate tax.

"Americans are ready for tax reform, and many know the toll that taxes take on our farm and ranch families," AFBF President Zippy Duvall said. "Congress must take action to provide tax relief, and farmers and ranchers will be sharing that message with their lawmakers until this job gets done."

Tax rates are one key area ripe for reform, according to the Morning Consult poll. A majority of voters polled (63 percent) say federal income tax rates are too high. Seventy-two percent of voters support lower federal income tax rates for farmers, a matter supported strongly across party lines. There was even greater support for lower federal income tax rates for individuals (82 percent), small businesses (80 percent) and family owned businesses (77 percent).

By a 3-1 margin (52-18 percent) voters overwhelmingly recognize that the current U.S. tax system is unfair to farmers in many regards. Two in three voters went so far as to say that farmers and

ranchers should be extended special tax treatment due to the combination of challenges and risks that are specific to agriculture. That sentiment was shared across party lines.

The poll also included the following findings concerning specific tax provisions:

- A strong majority (73 percent) supports the ability of small businesses to write off business-related expenses.
- Voters overwhelmingly support (81-7 percent) allowing small businesses to deduct equipment purchases in the year the purchase is made.
- Voters support reducing the capital gains tax (54- 26 percent).
- Three in five voters (61-18 percent) say farmland that is sold to a member of the next generation should be exempt from capital gains taxes.
- Three in five voters (60-23 percent) say farmers or small businesses should not pay taxes on equipment sales if money goes toward replacement.
- By a 17-point margin, voters say farmers should not pay taxes when they sell farmland and use the money to buy different farmland.
- A strong majority (64 percent) supports repealing the estate tax.
- Three in four voters (74 percent) support allowing farmers to deduct interest paid on business loans.
- Three in five voters (58-19 percent) said farmers and ranchers should be allowed to average their incomes for tax purposes due to wide variations in annual income.

Morning Consult conducted the online survey of 1,996 registered voters from July 20 - July 24, 2017, on behalf of AFBF. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of +/- 2%.

More information about agriculture and tax reform is available at: [www.fb.org/taxreform](http://www.fb.org/taxreform).



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## Center for Dairy Excellence to Hold Financial Risk Management Conference

Registration is now open for the Center for Dairy Excellence's upcoming Financial Risk Management Conference. The one-day session offers the latest information on changing market dynamics and business tools for Pennsylvania dairy farm families. This year's keynote speakers include Ben Buckner, head grains economist for AgResource Company; Jackson Takach, economist for Farmer Mac; Dr. Andrew Novakovic, E.V. Baker Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Cornell Dyson School of Business; and Dr. Mark Stephenson, Director of Dairy Policy Analysis at University of Wisconsin - Madison. The conference is from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sept. 13 at the Central Penn Conference Center in Summerdale, Cumberland County. The conference costs \$200 per person, including meals. There is a \$50 discount for attendees who represent Center Allies for Advancement. For more information or to register, visit [www.centerfordairyexcellence.org](http://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org) or contact Heidi Zimmerman at 717.346.0849 or [hzimmerman1@centerfordairyexcellence.org](mailto:hzimmerman1@centerfordairyexcellence.org).

## New Food and Farm Facts Book and Related Products on Sale Now

The new Food and Farm Facts book, map and pocket guide, produced by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, are now available.

"Food and Farm Facts provides the opportunity to learn about the many ways modern farmers produce food to meet the needs of today's consumers. I hope it also puts into perspective how blessed we are to be Americans," said

Foundation Chairman Zippy Duvall, who also serves as president of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Food and Farm Facts helps answer the questions "Where does our food come from and who grows it?" by exploring topics about agriculture in the U.S. The 32-page, full-color book features updated facts and easy-to-read infographics that can be used in a variety of ways to help increase agricultural literacy. The book would be a valuable resource in the classroom, at fairs and events, for student leadership organizations and on social media.

Check out What's Inside for a sneak peek at page titles of the book organized by section (Consumers, Modern Farmers, Trade & Economics, Environment and Production).

Related Food and Farm Facts products created by the Foundation will be available in the fall. These include classroom activity cards (for grades 4-6 and 7-12) developed using national learning standards and state "common core" standards that reflect the knowledge and skills young people need for success in college and careers.



Copies of Food and Farm Facts may be purchased for \$4.25 each (up to 49 copies). Price breaks are available for multi-copy purchases starting at 50: 50-99 copies, \$3.50 each; 100 or more copies, \$2.50 each. Each copy of the book includes a color "America the Bountiful" map poster depicting top agricultural products produced in every state. A pocket guide version of Food and Farm Facts is also available (100 copies for \$10) and features several popular infographics from the book.

Purchase Food and Farm Facts books and related resources online at <http://bit.ly/2vxwM3u>; visit the Food and Farm Facts resource page for tips on using the publication.

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