



January-February 2026

# Friends of the Farm Show News



Volume 14 Issue 1



**Friends of the PA  
Farm Show**

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**Message from the Chairman:**

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Friends of the Pennsylvania Farm Show, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show - an annual tradition that celebrates the heart, heritage, and hope of our state's vibrant agricultural community. For more than a century, the Farm Show has been a gathering place for families, farmers, and friends to share in the bounty of our fields, the innovation of our producers, and the proud spirit of rural Pennsylvania.

As you walk through the bustling exhibition halls, you'll experience the very best of Pennsylvania - from worldclass livestock and fresh, homegrown produce to the newest technologies shaping the future of American agriculture. This year's show promises to be more exciting than ever, featuring live demonstrations, educational workshops, spirited competitions, and, of course, those beloved Farm Show milkshakes that bring everyone together. And, we can't forget the 250th celebration of our nation's birth. From the ancient wisdom of Indigenous stewards to the ingenuity of modern farmers, America's agricultural story is one of renewal, adaptability, and hope. The America250PA celebration invites everyone - growers and eaters alike - to recognize this legacy, cherish the land, and plant seeds for a flourishing future.

May the next 250 years be guided by the same resilience, creativity, and unity that have carried American agriculture through its first quarter-millennium. As amber waves of grain and fields of green stretch across the continent, they stand as living testaments to a nation's enduring promise - and its boundless potential.

We invite you to explore the creative achievements of our youth, meet the dedicated stewards of our land, and discover the rich tapestry of traditions that make Pennsylvania's agricultural landscape unique. Whether you are a seasoned farmer, an aspiring young grower, or simply here to enjoy the sights and flavors, there is something for everyone at the Farm Show.

Let us take this time to honor our shared heritage and look forward to a future filled with promise and opportunity. Thank you for being part of this special celebration and for supporting the people who feed, clothe, and fuel our communities.

Welcome to the 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show - where tradition meets tomorrow.



Warmest regards,

Mark K. Keller  
Chairman



We are looking for articles and pictures to publish in the Friends of the Farm Show News.

Mar.-Apr. Due by Feb. 1  
May-June Due by April 1  
July - August Due by June 1

Newsletter Editor: Lizzie Bailey  
**Questions?** Please call (717)254-9550  
**Email articles:** [fofsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:fofsnewsletter@gmail.com)

**March - April, 2026  
Newsletter  
Deadline  
is  
Feb. 1, 2026**

On the cover is The PA Farm Show's IAFE award-winning picture, "After months of dedication, hard work, and countless hours in the barn, this powerful moment at the 2025 PA Farm Show captures the heart of livestock showmanship. The banner showcases the passion, dedication, and hard work of the Supreme Champion."

**Foundation Contact Information**

**Email:** [farmshowfriends@gmail.com](mailto:farmshowfriends@gmail.com) **Website:** [www.friendsoffarmshow.com](http://www.friendsoffarmshow.com)

**Like us on Facebook:** Friends of PA Farm Show

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The Friends of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that was developed to stimulate, facilitate, and support educational programs, incentives, and events relating to the annual Farm Show event.



# Friends of Farm Show

## *Funding the Future of Ag*



### Attention Drivers & Sponsors

- Enter through the Upper Spine near Section 19 in New Holland Arena. Seating will be available in Governor's Box.
- You will be called down at the time of your race.

## Why Attend the Feed Scurry?



### AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Think you can "do it better?" Fill the participation ticket out (given at the event) and cross your fingers in hopes to have your name drawn!

### CHILDREN'S STICK HORSE RACE

Bring your kiddos (ages 2-12) to show of their horse riding skills - stick horse skills that is! You might even get a chance to race against a PA State Trooper!

***Event takes place during intermission, arrive at the beginning of the Scurry so you don't miss it.***



### FUNDRAISER

This is the most significant fundraiser for the Foundation. Come experience the energy of this show and cheer your favorite team on to victory!



FRIENDS OF THE  
**PENNSYLVANIA  
 FARM SHOW**  
 FOUNDATION, INC.

**Friends of Farm Show**  
*Funding the Future of Ag*

*Thank you.*

**2026 Friends of the Pennsylvania  
 Farm Show Foundation, Inc. — Sponsors**



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**\$20,000+**



**GOLD SPONSORS**

**\$15,000**



**SILVER SPONSORS**

**\$10,000**

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- Pennsylvania Army National Guard
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- United States Air Force
- PENNIE

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2026

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- PA Farm Bureau
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- PA State Association  
of County Fairs
- PA State Dairy Princess  
& Promotions
- PCNTV
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- Seneca Resources
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Sales Company
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of Technology
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## Martha Ebersole of the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs was elected IAFE Zone 1 Director

Martha Ebersole of the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs has been elected Zone 1 Director of the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE). The election took place during the association's annual business session at the 2025 IAFE Convention & Trade Show in Denver, Colorado.

Ebersole brings decades of experience and a deep passion for advancing fairs throughout Zone 1, which includes nine states and five Canadian provinces. Her personal philosophy centers on community involvement and positive leadership: "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference," she often says. As Zone Director, she plans to strengthen communication and participation among fairs within the zone and expand involvement in zone meetings and initiatives.

A lifelong supporter of the fair industry, Ebersole's involvement began in her youth, when she assisted her parents and the local Grange in restarting the Perry County Fair. She has served on the Perry County Fair Board for nearly



Martha Ebersole IAFE Zone 1 Director

20 years, leading efforts in sponsorship and grant development, managing the Queen program and stage entertainment, and coordinating advertising and production of the official fair book. Her leadership extends to the state level, with 15 years of service on the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF) Board. She served two years as Vice President (2021-2023) and two years as President (2023-2025), a period she describes as an honor and an opportunity to help guide the association's direction. She currently serves as Chair of the Legislative Committee, the Msgr.,

John W. Mignot Memorial Scholarship, and the Communications Committee, and remains actively involved in supporting the State Fair Queen Contest and Special Baking contests held during the Pennsylvania Farm Show each January.

Beyond her work with fairs, Ebersole is deeply rooted in her community. She is a lifetime member of Oliver Grange in Newport, PA, and a member of Perry County Pomona Grange. She has previously served as a state officer and as Youth Director, and currently sits on the board of The Friends of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Foundation.

Ebersole's leadership, collaborative spirit, and commitment to strengthening fairs and agricultural communities make her an outstanding choice to serve as IAFE Zone 1 Director.

**Learn more about the IAFE at their website:  
<https://fairsandexpos.com>**



**2026 PA Farm Show Visitor's Guide Book**  
**Visit the Friends of the Farm Show Foundation website:**  
**[friendsoffarmshow.com](http://friendsoffarmshow.com)**

# Stitching History Together

## America250PA Quilt Farm Show Offer



**Booths:**  
#1999, GEX  
#1128, MH

Raffle ticket sales supports both  
Pennsylvania Farm Show  
Scholarship Foundation and the Friends  
of the PA Farm Show Foundation.

Would you like to take home  
a Commemorative Coin?



**Purchase**  
a book of tickets (\$100)

OR

**Become a**  
**Lifetime Friend**  
Scan for application.



FRIENDS OF THE  
**PENNSYLVANIA**  
**FARM SHOW**  
FOUNDATION, INC.

**Friends of Farm Show**  
*Funding the Future of Ag*

**Thanks to the amazing support of our sponsors, the Foundation helps  
fuel more than 20 exciting programs and events during Farm Show!**

- Sheep to Shawl & Fleece to Shawl
- Draft Horse Pulling Competition
- AgExplorer Stations
- Antique Tractor Restoration
- Horse Power!
- Children's Pedal Tractor Pull
- Cumberland 4-H Drill Team
- PA High School Rodeo
- PSECU Stage
- Lancaster Farming Stage
- Horseshoe Pitching
- Horse Shoeing & Sheep Shearing Demo
- Coloring Contest
- FFA Mid-Winter Convention
- Speedhorse Demonstration
- Mike Waugh Celebrity Draft Horse  
Feed Scurry Competition
- Calving Corner
- Truck and Tractor  
Pull Demonstration
- Conservation Display
- PA Farms to Families Immersion Lab
- Canine Extravaganza – Meet the Breeds
- Draft Horse Hitch & Drive Demos
- Lumberjack Demonstration
- Mini Horse Extravaganza
- Ag Mechanics
- FFA Window Displays
- Women In Ag





# Celebrating Big Wins with the International Association of Fairs & Expos Awards

The Pennsylvania Farm Show is proud to announce an outstanding performance at this year's International Association of Fairs and Expos (IAFE) Competition Awards—an annual competition that recognizes creativity, innovation, and excellence among fairs and expos across the nation. As a longtime and active member of IAFE, the PA Farm Show embraces the opportunity to showcase its programs, displays, and special initiatives on a national stage and among peer fairs.

This year, the Farm Show brought home an impressive seven awards, highlighting the team's hard work, creativity, and dedication to agricultural education and community engagement. These awards also reflect the tremendous support of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the countless volunteers, and the exhibitors who allowed us to showcase their outstanding entries.



Non-Equine Jr. Market Grand Drive Photo

### First-Place Awards

We are thrilled to have earned two top honors:

**Farm City Day** - Recognized for its outstanding programming that bridges the gap between urban and rural communities.

**Agriculture Photo: Master Showmanship Supreme** - A powerful photograph capturing the spirit and skill of our youth exhibitors. (Cover newsletter photo)

### Second-Place Awards

Three entries earned second place, showcasing the wide range of experiences and visuals the Farm Show offers:

### Non-Equine Junior Market Grand Drive Photo

A moment of pride and achievement under the bright lights of the 2026 PA Farm Show Junior Market Grand Drive, a young exhibitor earns recognition for excellence in livestock, showcasing not just personal achievement but the future of agriculture. A dynamic moment from one of our signature youth competitions. This is the photo on the front cover of the newsletter.

### Apple Display Photo - Apples Unite PA.

A delicious display of unity and agricultural pride at the 2025 PA Farm Show, where apples take center stage in celebrating community and the Commonwealth's rich farming heritage. Highlighting Pennsylvania's rich agricultural bounty through an eye-catching visual presentation.



Apples Unite PA Farm

**Rodeo Photo** - Eight seconds of grit and glory at the 2025 PA Farm Show Rodeo. A crowd-favorite moment that captures the energy and excitement of the arena.



Agriculture Photo: Eight Seconds of Grit and Glory photo.

### Third-Place Awards

Two additional submissions were recognized with third-place honors:



Heidi Svonavec and Morgan Firestine accepting awards at the IAFE Convention.

**Staff Choice Ribbon Idea** - A creative and engaging initiative developed by our talented team. Staff members received one "staff choice" ribbon to honor an exhibit, entry, animal, etc that was entered. The exhibit did not have to win to be chosen by the staff member. The ribbon was displayed on the item all week and then it was given to the exhibitor to keep.

**Poultry Education Hall** - A hands-on, educational space that brings the world of poultry production to life for visitors of all ages. The hall was to allow visitors to still connect with the industry during a time that poultry was not allowed on site.

### A Celebration of Excellence

These awards reflect the collective effort of our staff, exhibitors, volunteers, and partners who bring the Farm Show to life each year. Without the help of our incredible volunteers, these awards would not be possible. Their time, passion, and dedication play an essential role in creating the meaningful experiences and exceptional exhibits that make the Farm Show shine.

We extend our gratitude to the International Association of Fairs and Expos for the opportunity to participate and for recognizing the meaningful work happening here at the Farm Show.

Congratulations to everyone who contributed to these award-winning entries—your hard work continues to make the Pennsylvania Farm Show one of the premier agricultural showcases in the nation.



## Honoring Our Senior Youth Exhibitors in their Final Year at the 2026 PA Farm Show

Each year, the PA Farm Show brings together hundreds of young people who dedicate their time, energy, passion, and skill in entering competitive entries. Among them is a special group of exhibitors whose journey in the show ring and youth divisions is nearing a meaningful milestone. We proudly recognize and celebrate our senior youth livestock and non-livestock exhibitors in their final year of competition, a group whose dedication has left a lasting impact on our event and agricultural community.

For these senior exhibitors, the Farm Show has been more than just a competition as it has been a place to learn, explore, and discover their strengths. Whether they found their passion in the barn with livestock projects or in non-livestock departments like baking, crafts, photography, horticulture, or agriculture education, each young person has contributed to the vibrant spirit of our event. Their final year represents the culmination of many seasons of hard work, practice, creativity, and personal growth. From perfecting showmanship skills to fine-tuning a recipe, capturing the perfect photo, or building a project from scratch for 4-H, these exhibitors have embraced the challenge and joy of hands-on learning.

Here are some thoughts from our exhibitors who will be showing in the youth divisions for the last time:

**Russell Cunningham** shared, "Showing at the PA Farm Show was an awesome experience. Qualifying for Master Showmanship with my turkey was a huge highlight, but what made it truly rewarding were the lessons I learned and the people I met along the way. Every day at the Farm Show pushed me to grow, and I'll always be grateful for the memories and friendships I made here."

**Mya Calhoun** mentioned that she and her father watched the 2025 PA Farm Show turkey show, and as soon as the birds entered the ring, she turned to her father and said she was entering her last year. So for the 2026 PA Farm Show, she raised two turkeys in her garage for the show. She said that in her last year, they are going all out. She isn't sure how she will place performance-wise, but she knows she's going to have fun—and that's what matters most to her. Mya has spent six years showing at the Farm Show,



Russell Cunningham, Caleb Miller, and Willow Smith showing their animals at the PA Farm Show.

starting with goats and later adding lambs to her lineup. And while this may be her final year in the youth division, there's a good chance she'll be back in the future to participate in the breeding portion of the show.

**Willow Smith** shared, "Farm show is especially memorable due to the special connections I create - not just with other exhibitors, but with industry professionals. These connections reach far beyond the show ring and influence both my educational and professional life, setting me up for success in my future endeavors."

**Caleb Miller** said, "The Pennsylvania Farm Show has taught me the value of hard work, determination, and perseverance; from my first year, when I didn't make the sale, to last year, when I earned a place in the Grand Drive. As I enter my final Farm Show, I'm excited to see what opportunities and experiences await."

### Leaders in the Making

Beyond the ribbons and trophies, these exhibitors have become leaders both in the show ring and in their communities. They, as the senior youth exhibitors, serve as role models for younger participants, sharing knowledge, lending a hand in the barn, and continuing the traditions that make youth livestock programs so meaningful.

Many will carry these experiences into future careers in agriculture, veterinary science, agribusiness, education, or community leadership. No matter where their paths lead, the discipline and determination learned through showing livestock and exhibiting in general will continue to guide them.

### A Community That Celebrates Its Success

This milestone would not be possible without the support of families, advisors, extension educators, FFA and 4-H leaders, and countless volunteers who encourage these exhibitors year after year. Their guidance has played a critical role in shaping confident, capable young adults who represent the future of agriculture.

As we celebrate these senior exhibitors, we also celebrate the community that has helped them grow.

To our youth, senior livestock, and non-livestock exhibitors in their final year: thank you!

Thank you for your dedication.

Thank you for your sportsmanship.

Thank you for inspiring the next generation of exhibitors.

Your time in the show ring and youth divisions may be coming to an end, but your influence, accomplishments, friendships, and the memories you've made will carry on for years to come. We are proud of you and excited to see where your next chapter leads. You always have a home at the PA Farm Show, even if it's entering as next year's show as an adult. Best wishes for all that lies ahead.

## 'Plant Yourself in Ag' Day is a dynamic platform for career exploration by Mikayla Bowen

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — “Plant Yourself in Ag” Day returned to Penn State this fall with major changes aimed at connecting even more students to the world of agricultural science.

The event, now in its second year, serves as a learning laboratory for agricultural education undergraduates while also exposing high school students to careers and research topics in agriculture. It took place at Penn State’s Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Springs, a hub for cutting-edge research and innovative education.

The day is designed to be an immersive and hands on learning event that introduces Pennsylvania secondary students to the diversity of agricultural careers and academic pathways, as well as acting as a capstone project for agricultural and extension education (AEE) students who work with researchers to deliver the event’s programming. The date was chosen to land on National Teach Ag Day, the third Thursday in September.

Organizers Rita Graef, director of Penn State’s Pasto Agricultural Museum, and Bethany Mathie, education program specialist, said this year’s event doubled the number of high school students and quadrupled the number of workshops, bringing in 11 principal investigators and 29 graduate student presenters. The number of stakeholders involved in the program also has grown, netting additional support.

During the event, students from a dozen regional high schools spent the day fully engaged on the research farm. Graef said they get hands-on experience doing the same science that researcher are



A high school student participant demonstrates a robotic gripper to another attendee. Credit: Penn State Creative Commons

doing in the lab, using some of the same processes, tools and instruments.

This initiative meets the shared priorities of Penn State, agricultural industry stakeholders, sponsors, and secondary educators,” she said. “It supports teacher training and workforce development by creating connections between high schools, undergraduates, researchers, and industry professionals, while fostering excitement for agriculture as a modern, STEM-rich career field.”research farm. Graef said they get hands-on experience doing the same science that researchers are doing in the lab, using some of the same processes, tools, and instruments.

College researchers, along with their graduate students, offered high school students authentic science activities that are reflective of real-world work that takes place in the lab and field.

Activities included workshops during which students learned about robotic technology in apple orchards that analyzes trees and their blossoms; identified pollinators and pests in the demonstration garden; and explored microgreens and the benefits of their micronutrients.

Mathie said opportunities for the AEE undergraduates were just as central to the day’s success. Students from all class years volunteered, building teamwork and community within their majors.

“We organize our students into cohorts, providing a support system and learning community for them as they move through their education major and into their professional careers,” Mathie said. “This event really helped them build a community and get to know each other beyond the classroom.”

First and second-year students took on the roles of “MacGyvers,” assisting with logistical support, and “Wingmen,” who worked side by side with workshop presenters. Third-year students, known as “Ambassadors,” took on leadership roles, guiding high school groups through their day-long experience and sharing their own experiences as undergraduates at Penn State.

Mathie said that undergraduate students in the agricultural and extension education major who were involved reported an appreciation for getting the chance to interact with both high school students and experienced ag educators, along with a greater feeling of connection to others in their major, according to a survey after the event.

Researchers and graduate students benefited too, Graef added, by getting direct experience in research communication.

“By the time we get to the day of the event, we’ve done a lot of work with the team to help craft their workshops,” Graef said. “We’ve met with the researchers, grad students and ag ed students to help coach and mentor them in honing that skill of research translation for this particular audience of high school students and their teachers.”

The event also featured a college and career expo for students to explore majors, talk with advisers and connect with industry sponsors.

“We want students to see that agriculture is dynamic, modern and full of opportunities, no matter their interest,” Graef said. “The day is an opportunity for high school students to see firsthand that there’s a place in the college to meet their passions and interests.”

Stakeholders and sponsors included research labs across the College of Agricultural Sciences, the Office for Undergraduate Education, RAC-Recruiting and Advising, the Office of the Dean, the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, the Center for Professional Personnel Development, the Pasto Agricultural Museum, John Deere LandPro, Friends of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Foundation Inc., Penn State FFA Alumni and Supporters, and Penn State University Libraries.



A group of students look at a robotic sprayer..



Presenter Lead Davis explains the science behind water quality to students. Credit: Penn State. Creative Commons

# Devotion Recognized As Allegiance to Leadership

JD Dunbar-Program Director/Senior Educator (Author)  
Tara Homan-Program Coordinator (Design)  
PA Rural-Urban Leadership Program (RULE)  
Penn State Extension

**Tom Brant, RULE VII (1997—99) Alumnus, Advisory Board Member (2004), Ag Council Representative (2010), ILAC Advisory Board Member (2015) and PA Farm Show Fundraiser “Captain,” (2009) was recognized for his years of service and commitment to the RULE Program at the International Leadership Alumni Conference in Sept, 2025. Tom has been attending ILAC Conferences since 2002. We are very proud to announce that Tom was recently elected as York Township Supervisor.**

RULE Program Director, JD Dunbar, shared, *“Tom Brant is as fiercely loyal to ILAC as he is to RULE, The Pennsylvania Rural-Urban Leadership Program. As a RULE VII Alumnus, Penn State Ag Council RULE Representative, and Advisory Board Member (including former President), Tom is intractable in his allegiance. His nickname with the RULE staff is ‘Captain.’ Tom Brant is a peerless ILAC promoter. For the record, Tom believed in the PA ILAC Conference (2025 was our third such event) with staunch resoluteness. To demonstrate accountability, Tom led the way with an inaugural contribution to, ‘Rurban: Two Sides of PA Coin.’ He then solicited similar donations from among those who share his tenacity for RULE. Such ardent devotion was celebrated at the ILAC Conference where 170 participants from 13 states and 8 countries attended. Please join us in a demonstration of reward to our constant anchor of fidelity, an empowered talent: Captain Tom Brant.”*

*“Tom is always at the ready when issues, items for discussion, and planning is underway in an ILAC setting. If there are questions, he has institutional knowledge and has kept up with the 'how to' within ILAC. His organizational asset value is very high!”*

~Mike Petter, ILAC Advisory Board Member  
Founder & President, Resource & Land Management



**Photo Credit:**  
**Edmond Bonjour, Oklahoma Leadership Program Director**

**It is fitting Tom and JD stood together after receiving their respective awards. Tom Brant received the Outstanding Alumni Award for his dedication to RULE and ILAC (where Pennsylvania RULE has hosted three ILAC Conferences). JD Dunbar received the Lifetime Achievement award at the ILAC Conference, Sept 5, 2025 as Conference Architect.**



## PA Fair Queen Ava Immel Reflects on her Reign

These last few months serving as the Pennsylvania State Fair Queen have been truly bittersweet. When I first began this journey, everything felt new and exciting—I was learning how to represent our fairs, how to speak with confidence, and how to connect with people from all across the Commonwealth. I remember feeling both eager and nervous, wanting to do the role justice while still figuring out what it meant to serve as the state queen.

As the year went on, those early lessons turned into experiences—experiences that shaped me, challenged me, and left me with memories I will carry for the rest of my life. I’ve traveled from one corner of Pennsylvania to the other, attending fairs, community events, parades and celebrations of all kinds. Looking back now, it amazes me just how many incredible

people I’ve met and how many moments have touched my heart.



2025 West Lampeter Fair Queen Brooke Rubincam and 2025 Miss Pennsylvania State Fair Queen Ava Immel.

Some of my favorite memories include riding in the Harrisburg Parade with the Farm Show, bundled up and feeling a little bit like Mrs. Claus as we waved to families lining the streets. Another special moment was attending my hometown fair and having the

honor of crowning my best friend, Brooke Rubincam, as the 2025 West Lampeter Fair Queen. Few things compare to sharing such a meaningful experience with someone you love.

I also had the chance to visit the Luzerne County Fair, where I got to hold a baby kangaroo and even an armadillo—something I never expected this role would bring! Moments like those reminded me that every fair has its own story, its own charm, and its own way of creating joy.

This year hasn’t been about rushing from event to event or collecting the most connections—it has been about slowing down, appreciating the small moments, and finding meaning in every handshake, every smile, and every memory made.



The PA Farm Show participated in the Harrisburg Christmas Parade highlighting the youth who participate through Fair Association, PA Farm Show Jr. Committee, 4-H, and FFA.



The Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs Convention will be held January 21- 24, 2026 at the Hershey Lodge & Convention Center in Hershey PA.

[www.pafairs.org](http://www.pafairs.org)



### **Caitlyn Shrodo's thoughts on the PA Farm Bureau Meeting -**

I had not heard about the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau before joining the State Council. Through all the events where we met with them and learned about their work, I gained a much better understanding of who they are.

Attending their annual meeting and helping out there really took my understanding a step further. We were able to listen in on their meeting, where they decided as an organization what they are going to support and advocate for or against in the upcoming year. I never realized how much they did, and we also attended their dinner, where they honored people in the agriculture industry for the outstanding work they had done that year.

For me, it was an amazing experience to see and learn more about such an important organization.

### **Patricia Shively's Thoughts on the PA Farm Bureau Meeting -**

When I first stepped into the policy hall, I was a little puzzled about how the day would play out, but I was also enamored by the representation. It takes a strong organization to bring together delegates from every county, especially counties that have alternates ready to step in and ensure they are still represented equally. I was quickly fascinated by the wide range of topics covered throughout the day, and it inspired me to take action in my own community as a farmer.

### **Giuseppe Schiano Di Cola's Thoughts on the PA Farm Bureau Meeting -**

It was a wonderful experience attending my first Pennsylvania Farm Bureau meeting, especially their 75th Annual Meeting!

Congratulations to the membership on 75 years of working for farmers and agriculture every step of the way. I was able to catch up with some great people whom I am proud to call friends, including Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi, PFB President



Pep With Penn State University President Bendapudi.

Chris Hoffman, PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, Tara Mondock, Dr. Troy Ott, Dr. Jeffrey Hyde, Chris Houser, Andy Bater, and so many other wonderful people working to make Pennsylvania better. I was glad to see so many people working to “Make the Best Better,” just like 4-H does for the over 204,000 youth reached across Pennsylvania. Patricia, Caitlyn, and I were amazed by the deep roots that the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau has throughout the Commonwealth, from awarding individuals to promoting agriculture everywhere,



Three Council Members with House Rep Eddie Day Pashinski (121st district), Sec of AG Russell Redding, Dean of the College of Ag Sciences, Dean Troy Ott.

PFB clearly demonstrates its passion for Pennsylvania. Under the leadership of President Chris Hoffman and Tommy Nagle, this organization has done an excellent job promoting what needs to be done for agriculture. It is not just state leadership, but also county leaders who attend, write, and ultimately decide the policies that PFB supports. Ordinary people create policies that are pushed into law; it sounds very similar to how our nation works: a government for the people, by the people. Overall, it was an amazing experience, and I cannot wait for next year!



Three Council Members with Sec of Ag Russell Redding, PSU President Neeli Bendapudi, and PA Governor Josh Shapiro.



## PA Farm Show Brings Holiday Cheer to the Harrisburg Christmas Parade by Lizzie Bailey



There's something special about seeing familiar faces and farm pride roll down a city street during the holidays.

This year, the Pennsylvania Farm Show joined the Harrisburg Christmas Parade, celebrating the cheerful theme "Deck the Paws," and bringing a little bit of farm country holiday spirit to downtown Harrisburg. The PA Farm Show float, proudly sponsored by the Friends of the PA Farm Show Foundation Inc., was a bright spot along the parade route. Waving to the crowd, sharing smiles, and soaking in the excitement reminded us that agriculture doesn't live only in fields and barns – it belongs right here in our communities, too.

One of the most meaningful parts of this year's float was the focus on youth. Riding along were young leaders representing 4-H, FFA, and the Pennsylvania Farm Show Junior Committee, alongside the Pennsylvania State Fair Queen and Alternate Queen. They are the faces of the future of agriculture, and seeing them celebrated during the holiday season was a reminder of why these programs matter so much.

Our float was such a joy to share with the people lining the streets. As we rolled by, we didn't just bring agriculture and farm fun with us – we brought a little bit of winter magic, too. A snow-making machine sent soft flurries drifting through the air, and suddenly the sidewalks were filled with laughter. Children stepped forward with open hands, trying to catch the falling snowflakes, while parents smiled and snapped photos. In that moment, it felt less like a parade and more like a shared holiday memory – one of those simple, happy scenes you tuck away and remember long after

the season has passed.

The float was coordinated by PA State Fair Queen Ava Immel and Alternate Queen Brooke Bemis Derper, whose care, creativity, and genuine enthusiasm helped bring everything together in a way that truly reflected the spirit of the season. A heartfelt thank you goes to the Bemis Durfer family for generously providing the float and truck that carried Farm Show pride through the parade.

Adding to the fun were familiar Farm Show favorites Daisy and Spud, who brought smiles, laughter, and plenty of waves from kids and adults alike as the float passed by. The Harrisburg Christmas Parade is a tradition that brings people together – neighbors, families, and visitors – to celebrate the season. For the Pennsylvania Farm Show and the Friends of the PA Farm Show Foundation, being part of that tradition was a simple but meaningful way to share the heart of agriculture, wrapped up in holiday cheer.

As we look ahead to the upcoming Pennsylvania Farm Show, this parade was a gentle reminder that agriculture is more than what we do – it's who we are, and it's something worth celebrating together.



## PENNSYLVANIA TEAM AG ED

The Pennsylvania FFA Association is a student-led organization whose mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. Across the Commonwealth, Pennsylvania FFA includes 164 chapters, more than 270 agricultural educators and advisors, and over 16,000 members. The past several months have been an exciting and productive time for our association. In June, we hosted the Pennsylvania FFA State Convention, marking the end of one FFA year and the beginning of the next. Members competed in Career and Leadership Development Events, served as delegates, and ran for state office.

At this convention, we selected our 2025–2026 Pennsylvania FFA State Officer Team:

President – Sarah Firestone,  
Vice President – Sally Bollinger,  
Secretary – Leah Flinchbaugh,  
Treasurer – Alexis Butler,  
Reporter – Samuel Parks,  
Sentinel – Jonathan Bradshaw  
Chaplain – Jaylene Everhart

The team began their year with Basecamp training in early July and then traveled to Washington, D.C., for the State Officer Summit. There, they connected with fellow state officers from across the country and met with federal legislators in the U.S. Capitol. Following the Summit, the team continued Basecamp training with a National FFA facilitator, focusing on teamwork and effective communication. In August, we attended Penn State's Ag Progress Days, where we engaged with agricultural leaders and explored emerging technologies shaping today's industry. We also spent time visiting many of our generous partners and sponsors. September marked the start of chapter visits, an opportunity for our officers to travel across the state, connect with



Vice-President Salley Bollinger, Chaplain Jaylene Everhart, Treasurer Alexis Butler, Reporter Samuel Parks, Secretary Leah Flinchbaugh, Sentinel Jonathon Bradshaw, President Sara Firestone.

members, and present leadership workshops. In October, we held our first conference of the year, the Fall Leadership Conference (FLC), designed for first-year members eager to discover the opportunities FFA offers. Later that month, we traveled to the 98th National FFA Convention & Expo, where our officers served as National FFA delegates on six committees and supported our National Officer Candidate, Rebecca Lehmen. As November wraps up, we continue to visit chapters and prepare for one of our biggest events of the year, FFA Day at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, taking place Monday, January 12. Our 97th Mid-Winter Convention will be held at 2 p.m. in the New Holland Arena. At this convention, with support from our Alumni, we will present more than 1,470 new FFA jackets, recognize outstanding Supervised Agricultural Experience projects, and award 536 Keystone Degrees, the highest degree a Pennsylvania FFA member can earn.

We are also gearing up for our winter an

and Spring Conferences. The Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success (ACES) Conference is a two-day leadership event in Harrisburg that brings members together for workshops, personal growth, and new connections. The State Legislative Leadership Conference (SLLC) provides members with hands-on experience in the legislative process, opportunities to discuss agricultural policy, and the chance to meet with their state legislators, along with training in parliamentary procedure.

To conclude the year, we will return to Penn State University for our annual State Convention, where our seven state officers will retire and a new team will be elected. As we look ahead, Pennsylvania FFA remains committed to empowering the next generation of agricultural leaders. We are grateful for the continued support of our partners, alumni, and friends of the Farm Show who make these opportunities possible. We look forward to an exciting year ahead and to sharing even more accomplishments in the months to come.



FRIENDS OF THE  
PENNSYLVANIA  
FARM SHOW  
FOUNDATION, INC.

"The **Trust** that our **Annual Friends** and our **Lifetime Friends** has placed in the hands of our 9-member Board of Directors of our Foundation is staggering in fulfillment of our **Mission Statement!**  
**What a Success Story!**"

-William L. Piper  
Former Chairman

# Friends of Farm Show

## *Funding the Future of Ag*

**About us:** The Foundation exists in order to , **facilitate, stimulate** and **support** educational programs, incentives and events relating to the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show.

**We invite you to partner with us  
to produce this truly stellar event.**

Participation at all levels is welcome. Organizations, businesses and individuals are welcome to explore varied sponsorship levels. Becoming a Farm Show Friend is open to any person or family.

- **Sign-Up for the Newsletter**
- **Become a Friend**
- **Stay Connected**



[www.friendsoffarmshow.com](http://www.friendsoffarmshow.com)

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FRIENDS OF THE  
**PENNSYLVANIA  
FARM SHOW**  
FOUNDATION, INC.

# Friends of Farm Show

## *Funding the Future of Ag*

### **Stimulate ♦ Facilitate ♦ Support**

The Foundation believes in its mission statement to contribute to educational programs, incentives and events relating to the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show.

### **Why is the Foundation important?**

The Foundation was established in August 2010 and since then it has contributed more than \$2 million to the educational programs at the Farm Show.

### **How can you get involved?**

#### **Become a Friend!**

\$65/annually ♦ \$500/lifetime

Email [farmshowfriends@gmail.com](mailto:farmshowfriends@gmail.com)  
or call 717-729-7158

#### **Donate to the Friends**

Along with the fee of becoming a Friend, donations of any amount are accepted and are tax deductible. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

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#### **Friend Application:**

Contact's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as you would like it to appear on signage:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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How did you hear about us: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive Friends' emails:  
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Annual-\$65

Lifetime-\$500

Billing: Check Enclosed

#### **Pay by credit card:**

Call Debby Griffith, Bookkeeper, 717-497-5660

#### **Mail checks to:**

Friends of the PA Farm Show Foundation  
c/o PA Farm Show Complex & Expo Center  
2300 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110

#### **I would like to sign-up for Friends' Emails**

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**Pennsylvania  
 Farm Show Complex  
 and Expo Center Schedule  
 Highlights of Upcoming Events**

**Jan. 10-17, 2026 PA Farm Show 2026**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Jan 20, 2026 | A Harness Horse Sale<br>Keystone Draft Horse Sale<br>Mid-Atlantic Breeders Sale |
| Jan 29, 2026 | PA Auto Show  |
| Feb. 7, 2026 | Great American Outdoor Show   |

Plus hundreds of other entertaining  
 and educational events.  
 See the full schedule here

