



# CULTIVATIONS

Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Young Farmers Association

## Spring 2024

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

## SPRING HIGHLIGHTS

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pennsylvania Young Farmers Association is to educate and promote the agricultural industry.

**PYFA is a member organization of the PSCFO** and has representatives participate in the quarterly meetings. At the meeting March 18th, Lewisburg YF member Robert Pardoe was elected vice president of the PSCFO for 2024. The new president is Kim Paley, representing the Mushroom Growers of PA.

The purpose of the PSCFO is to bring all agricultural organizations together to discuss current issues and find consensus so agriculture can lobby the legislature with a common voice for greater influence. Issues of interest mentioned at the March meeting were country of origin labeling, rural broadband, commercial scale solar, the PA Milk Marketing board, and the Governor's budget proposals for agriculture.



The PA Department of Agriculture reports at each meeting. Cheryl Cook, Deputy Secretary for Strategic Initiatives and Market Development, spoke of issues they are working on: vector borne diseases and invasives, climate smart agriculture, small woodlot management, water quality, workforce development, broadband, and ag technologies.

Dr Laszlo Kulcsar, Interim Dean of Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, gave an update on college activities. PA Farm Link's Tyler Hoffman gave a presentation on the mission and programs of the PFL, including their website which can link retiring farmers with new farmers looking to lease or buy farms. They also present many programs on farm transition and free online Farm Link Academy courses.

Representatives from the PA Co-operative Potato Growers- Nathan Tallman, and PA Livestock Association- Mike Firestine, spoke on their industries and issues currently facing them.

The meeting was followed by the annual Cornucopia reception, where many Representatives and Senators attended to mingle with the ag community and PDA staff. Delicious PA products and good conversations were enjoyed by all.

***"...issues they are working on: vector borne diseases and invasives, climate smart agriculture, small woodlot management, water quality, workforce development, broadband and ag technologies."***



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michelle Dietrich

Colder weather stuck around a bit longer than we thought it would, but planting time is here! While our landscapes and farms show promise of renewed life, so can you in making sure to renew your memberships and dedication to your local young farmer organizations. I look forward to serving as your 2024 President.

*D. Anthony Dietrich*



## 2024 PAAE Summer Conference July 8-11, 2024

Salisbury-Elk Lick High School • Salisbury, PA (Somerset County)  
Jessie Shafer, Conference Coordinator • Email: shaferj@selsd.com

The Summer Conference of the Pennsylvania Association of Agricultural Educators is held annually to conduct the business of the association and to provide opportunities for professional development, strategic planning, and building partnerships.

The conference, attended by nearly 100 agricultural educators as well as over fifty agricultural, educational, and industry stakeholders, takes place in July of each year and rotates among each of PAAE's four regions.

All Young Farmers are invited and encouraged to attend the annual conference of the PA Association of Agriculture Educators this summer. Wednesday tours:

9:00am Depart for Tours - Salisbury High School

Flight 93 National Park

Somerset County Industry/Manufacturing Tour

Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium International Conservation Center, Somerset County

Lunch - All tours will have box lunches from Bluebird Cafe

1:00pm PAAE Business Session Room 107

3:45pm PA Young Farmers board meeting- Room105

6:30pm PAAE Banquet; catering by Toll House BBQ, Tall Pines Distillery. Attire: Business/Professional



Scan the QR code to be directed to the registration form. A copy of your responses will be emailed to you as well as a personalized invoice you can use to process payment.

There are a variety of registration options available depending upon your schedule during the summer. You can preview the registration form, pricing, conference schedule, and workshop descriptions before completing the form.



Scan this QR code to be directed to the conference schedule and workshop descriptions.

Registration: Wednesday tours and lunch- \$50 • Wednesday banquet- \$50  
Please mark your registration "Young Farmers"

**We hope to see a good turnout of Young Farmers for this day!**

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE STATE

## WESTERN VP REPORT

Anita Weimer

Howdy from your new Western PA Vice-President. My name is Anita Weimer. I was born and raised on a dairy farm near Rockwood, PA in Somerset County. I graduated from West Virginia University and am currently working with Intellectually Disabled people in Somerset County. I have been a member of the Rockwood PYFA for three years.

The Rockwood Chapter of PYFA had an educational 2023-2024 year. They opened their season on November 2, 2023 with their initial business meeting. Later in November the members toured **Van Grouw Farm** near Berlin to learn how they produce their cheeses. They enjoyed sampling the various flavors of cheeses after the tour and videos.

Classes resumed in January with a presentation followed by a question and answer session conducted by the **PA Farm Bureau representative Megan Hostetler**. Members were enlightened on how the Farm Bureau fosters relationships with not only farmers, but inform government officials who produce policies that benefit the farmers, and school students to educate the next generation on farm products and services. Next, **Dr. Croushore, DVM** discussed bovine reproductive technology utilizing visuals to the Rockwood group with a question and answer time. He explained some of the advances in technology which help farmers have stronger herds and healthier animals.

The following week was a County Meeting with our own **State Representative Carl Walker Metzgar** diving into detail as a representative of a highly rural area in Harrisburg discussing topics affecting farmers from animal drug regulations to whole milk offerings in schools to digesters, to energy production to farm stickered vehicles to name a few. The following

chapter meeting hosted **Tammy Colt** who explained the differences in weasels and why and how it is necessary to trap, photograph, video and study them for the good of the agricultural environment.

**Officer Brian Witherite from the PA Game Commission** started off February with a discussion on various facets of his work in the agricultural communities on everything from deer, to the various gamelands access improvements and management plans to various animal and bird habitat and restocking information. Next was **Kim Peck from Laurel Hill State Park** with a presentation on the various grasses and habitats being created for bees, other pollinators, birds, butterflies plus animals and how this is being accomplished. A detailed presentation on herbicides, the varying types, when and how to use them including licensing was given by **Doug Benford**. An interesting talk on "Shrink" in farming including a game which highlighted the bottom line shrinkage which can/does occur on a farm was the topic of Rob Singo. **Melanie Barclay** finished off February with a presentation covering various animal parasites - which species get which pests, what it does to their bodies, how they are transmitted and how to keep parasites under control.

**Trinity Farms owners Paula and George** run their non-profit farms to meet needs under "Commission on Hope" assisting those dealing with addictions and incarceration to better themselves by meeting needs and developing skills. The various animals - alpacas, sheep, dogs, baby doll goats, donkey, etc. - an Air B&B including their "rent-a-goat" program were discussed. The Annual Ag Advisory meeting concluded the season of classes with the County Banquet in Berlin rounding out the year.

May you all have a delightful and productive year!

## BERLIN BROTHERSVALEY

Berlin Brothersvalley Chapter winter activities featured several interesting tours:

### Ponfeigh Distillery



### Pesticide Updates



### VanGrouw Cheese





# 2024 PYFA WINTER CONFERENCE

Lewisburg • Pennsylvania

Hosted by the Mifflinburg Young Farmers • February 8-10, 2024

## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The conference began with the board meeting Thursday evening. Tours departed at 9 am Friday, beginning at **Bright Farms**, a hydroponic greenhouse with four acres of lettuce and basil under roof. Bright Farms has six locations in the U.S., with Selinsgrove being the largest.



This location supplies fresh basil and six types of lettuce year-round to the Philadelphia and New York markets. From seeding to harvest, it takes 14-21 days depending on the variety.

The next stop was **Weaver's Archery**, opened in 2008 by the Weaver family with a shooting range and store with all things relating to archery and bowfishing. Their busy season is July through October, but they are open all year with a techno-hunt room and archery competitions in the winter.



Members next traveled to **SUN Tech** school for a delicious lunch prepared by the culinary students.



This career & technical school serves Snyder, Union, and Northumberland counties with 19 programs available to mostly high school seniors. Students

served as tour guides, beginning in the diesel mechanic program where students become state inspection certified and can do co-op programs in industry, preparing them for immediate careers. Other programs include cosmetology, health professions, HVAC, electrical, carpentry, masonry, and many others. All the students we spoke to were excited and happy to be there.

The last stop of the tour was **Old Mill Creamery**, where we enjoyed fresh made ice cream and a tour of their milk and ice cream processing facility. The family milks 60 cows, selecting genetics for A2-A2 milk which is helpful for lactose intolerance. The business is housed in a 190 year old mill in a beautiful setting beside the mill race.



The Friday evening banquet featured speaker **PA Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding**, who reviewed the Governor's budget just released this week, emphasizing innovation, economic development planning, and site readiness for new businesses. The local school Superintendent and Principal were guests for the evening. Dr. John Ewing from Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Center for Professional Personnel Development, also brought greetings, and the evening wrapped up with entertainment from the band **Eighty+6**.



The annual delegates meeting took place Saturday morning, with election of new officers for the year. Workshops filled the afternoon, with the first being Jonathan Guseman from the National Weather Service. He spoke on first frost and last frost dates, degree days, fire weather, and available resources from the NWS for rural residents, including **WARN**, Weather Awareness for a Rural Nation.

David Hoover from **Spruce Run Farm** has raised reindeer since 2015, currently owning seven. His busy season for agritourism events is November-December. He brought one of his beautiful, friendly animals to meet us.



The third workshop featured **Dave Hackenberg**, major beekeeper in the area. His bees travel to seven states, from Florida to Maine, and sometimes California. He spoke about colony collapse disorder, which was first noticed in 2006, and other diseases and problems for honeybees. He showed a film

which he appeared in that discusses the dangers of crop chemicals to bees.

Saturday night was the **Annual Awards Banquet**. Hoover Tractor LLC of Mifflinburg received the Agri-Business award. Lenny and April Wagman of the Hometown Eatery were selected as Honorary Young Farmers for their generosity in hosting the Mifflinburg Young Farmers meetings for several years. The Richard Hoppes Memorial Award was given to Steve Kline, long time advisor of the Mifflinburg YF Chapter and PYFA board member, and his wife DeElma.



**New officers for 2024** were announced: President Anthony Dietrich, Past President Michelle Dietrich, President Elect Keith Weimer, Secretary Tammy Rentzel, Treasurer Ed Zug, PR Denise Leydig, Membership Debbie Zug, Eastern VP Linda Krall, South Central VP Jason Rentzel, Northern VP Matt Dersham, and Executive Secretary Betsy Huber. The Western VP will be filled by the board.



**Next year's PYFA Winter Conference will be February 6-8, 2025, hosted by Shippensburg Young Farmers.**

## MORE NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

### NORTHERN REGION NEWS

Matt Dersham

With the State conference behind us and another President elected from the Northern YF organizations, we will continue our efforts to encourage more youth to join our organizations to keep our legacies alive. Mifflinburg Young Farmers has a busy schedule for the rest of the year. Please feel free to join us if you see something of interest – our calendar is on the PYFA website under News - Local Chapter News.

### KUTZTOWN YOUNG FARMERS NEWS

Ken Sanner

The Kutztown Young Farmers held their winter meetings mid-January through March. The topics of discussion were:

**Tar Spot Management**  
Dr. Craig Austin, Syngenta

**Alternative Crops**  
Del Voight, PSU Extension

**Mental Health in Agriculture**  
Allison Maloney, PA AgriSafe Network

**Valentines Night Out**  
Kutztown FFA Members

**Pesticide Updates**  
John Stutzman, Advisor

**Toxins in Grains**  
Dick Cole from Snavely's Flour Mill

Special thanks to Jon Stutzman for coordinating meetings and Bobby Tercha for bringing refreshments.

The Kutztown Chapter has agreed to host the February PYFA Winter Conference in 2026. Stay tuned for information in future newsletters.



# Somerset County Young Farmers Third Annual st. patrick's Day Banquet

BY DONNA L. PAUL

Ninety-five members of the Somerset County Young Farmer Association along with their families met on March 21st, 2024 in the Berlin Brethren Church for their third annual St. Patrick's Day Banquet. The tables were adorned with green tablecloths, Shamrocks, gold coins, and pots of gold (chocolate coins) for favors.

Gary Weimer, past Advisor to the Rockwood Young Farmers and Teacher at Rockwood School District gave the invocation. A delicious Swiss Steak dinner was served by the Mission Team of the church. Judy Bird who was the chief cook and Hospitality Chairperson of the Mission Team gave a brief talk on how the team has served abroad and locally during the past year. The team has joined with the Menonite Disaster Team for a better outreach. A collection was gathered from the group to help fund their efforts.

Samuel Dively, Advisor to the Berlin Brothersvalley Young Farmer Chapter served as MC for the evening. He introduced special guests including: Carl Walker



Metzgar, Pennsylvania State Representative; Molly Metzgar, Somerset County District Attorney; Denise Leydig, Pennsylvania State Young Farmer Public Relations Director; Leanna Weimer, Rockwood Area School District FFA Advisor and Rockwood Young Farmer Advisor; Matt Webreck, Berlin School District FFA Advisor; and Anita Weimer, Western Region Young Farmer Vice President.

Door prizes were awarded before the beginning of the Jeopardy Game that was hosted by none other than the famous Edith Rhoads who MCs the Tractor Buddies Performance at the Farm Show. Tim Rhoads assisted Edith along with Jessica and Ryan Landis, Denise Leydig, and Samuel Dively. The banquet attendees were divided into sections and with the help of a hand-held buzzer indicated what team knew the answer first. The categories were farm related and not only informative, but sometimes the answers were hilarious.

Table decorations, door prizes, and favors were provided by Donna Paul in memory of Doyle Paul.



## PYFA Membership Application Form • Join us today!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

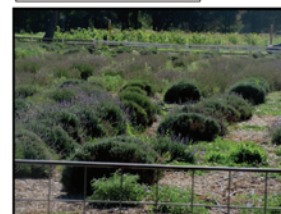
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\$15 annual fee • Make check out to: PYFA**

Mail this form and payment to: Debbie Zug • 390 Peters Creek Rd. • Peach Bottom PA 17563

# The 2024 Institute: New Mexico

Institute Preview



## 58th Institute in Albuquerque (Wednesday, Dec. 4 — Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024)

The New Mexico Institute will provide new experiences and open eyes to extraordinary adventures. During the 2024 Institute, attendees will see how agriculture impacts lives in an area that is part desert and part mountain. From farming to marketing to agricultural value-added production, this will be an adventure filled program.

Discover the secrets of ag in the desert like raising chile peppers, forages and beef cattle. Learn about the opportunities for agri-tourism as Pumpkin Festival park, a lavender/honey bee farm and a community garden. Touring the masterful work of the New Mexico State University College of Agriculture (Los Lunas Station) will provide perspective on the challenges and opportunities of agriculture with limited water resources.

In addition, see the Pueblo Museum, the International Hot Air Balloon museum, the art scene of Santa Fe and Christmas in the Southwest.

There will be trips to fabulous local restaurants for authentic Southwestern food.

Two optional tours are available: (1) a trip to the top of Sandia Peak Tramway or (2) a behind the scene tour of the Albuquerque film industry. Remember the show Breaking Bad? See where the series was filmed and the unique features of a city where Netflix has a studio. The hotel will be the Embassy Suites in downtown Albuquerque.

The Institute has a long standing tradition of excellent tours, unique learning experiences, great people (who become lifelong friends) and outstanding food and entertainment. The 2024 Institute will exceed those goals!

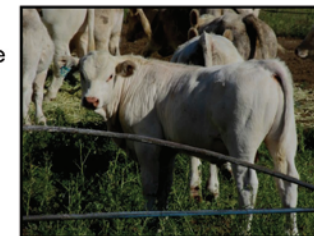
### The Schedule —

Wednesday: Board / Delegate/Contest Meetings.

Opening Reception and Optional Tours

Thursday/Friday: Off-site Tours

Saturday: Ag Decision Makers College, Awards Programs/Auction and the Big Show Entertainment



Registration for the Institute is best accomplished at [www.nyfea.org](http://www.nyfea.org)

Registration: Online: [www.nyfea.org](http://www.nyfea.org) or mail to: NYFEA: Box 20326, Montgomery, AL 36120

Deadline preferred registration is 10/31/24.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Registration will be confirmed by email.)

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

NYFEA Full Registration: Attendance to all events: \$395 each  
# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$395 = \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Tour: Sandia Peak Tramway \_\_\_\_\_ or Film Industry Tour -  
\_\_\_\_\_ // # \_\_\_\_\_ @ 85/person

Weekend Rate (great for those who want Friday/Saturday only)  
# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$350 = \_\_\_\_\_

NYFEA Daily Rate  
\$200 per day: Thur - # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$200 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Fri - # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$200 \_\_\_\_\_ Sat - # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$200 = \_\_\_\_\_

NYFEA Student Rate (ALL events —no hotel) = \$375  
# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$375 = \_\_\_\_\_

NYFEA Student Rate ( ALL events & w/ hotel) =  
\$525 (includes hotel room for four nights) (Students must attend Ag Decision Makers College & YALE. Students must be willing to share an assigned room if the room rate is included)  
# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$525 = \_\_\_\_\_

NYFEA New Mexico Student Only—Rate (Daily Attend—no hotel) =  
\$100/person/day  
# \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$100 x # \_\_\_\_\_ days = \_\_\_\_\_  
(for group discounts or Saturday events, call 334-546-9951)  
Circle days: TH / FR

Child Registration (under 12) # \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$185 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Hotel Reservation Information

Reservations must be made separately and should be made by Nov. 5, 2024 to insure rate. (If problem call 334-546-9951).

Rooms and meetings are at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque—Downtown. Contact number for the hotel is 505-245-7100.

The room rate is \$121 per night. Go to [www.nyfea.org](http://www.nyfea.org) for hotel details.





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### **CHAPTER DUES ARE DUE!**

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