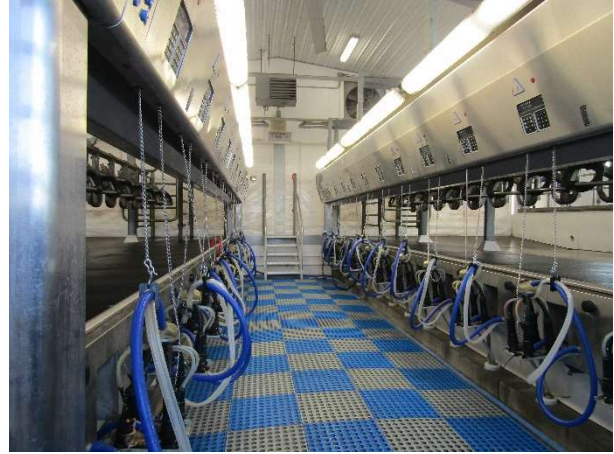


PYFA 2025 WINTER CONFERENCE

The 2025 Winter Conference was hosted by Shippensburg Young Farmers at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel and Shippensburg University Conference Center, February 6-8, 2025.

Friday featured tours of four sites in the Shippensburg area, beginning with the Randall Martin dairy farm. Martins milk 320 Holsteins three times a day in a large milking parlor, shipping to Mt. Joy Co-op. The parlor was constructed in 2023, replacing Lely robots at another location. They grow corn and triticale on 250 acres.



The next stop was another Martin family, Woody Martin who operates three businesses—Martin’s Custom Farming, D.L. Martin Trucking, and Clearview Farm. Each is operated separately but cooperatively from one location. Martin Custom Farming, begun in 1992, mainly focuses on manure and dairy processing waste hauling, spreading 150 million gallons per year. They also do custom combining and other services.





D.L. Martin Trucking operates 23 trucks and 60 trailers, hauling various products such as chocolate, pulp wood, Martin's Potato Rolls, and eggs.

Clearview Farm raises 550-600 crossbred steers from 14 weeks to 14 months, finishing at 1500 pounds. Steers are fed a dry ration of shelled corn, chocolate, straw, and minerals and are mostly sold to Cargill. They farm 1200 acres.



A delicious lunch prepared by Mr. & Mrs. Zimmerman at Cedar Grove Farm Store was enjoyed by all, followed by a visit to the store operated by their son Jason. The store offers everything a farm might need, from hardware to animal health products to equipment and ag chemicals.

Final stop of the day was Bob and Barb Kieffer's farm, Hard Earned Acres. Bob retired three years ago, selling his 750-cow dairy herd and farm. Then they constructed new barns and a house on another 140 acre property nearby, and now raise 500 Black Angus steers.



Bob's feeding plan is much different from Clearview Farm, feeding corn silage, triticale and soy beans until the steers are about 1600 pounds.



Following the tours, the Spokesperson Contest took place with a visit to nearby Weis Market, where PYFA purchased the groceries of a lucky couple. The purpose is to demonstrate to the consumer how much of their store purchases are



actually food and how much are non-food items. The Spokesperson winner was Jaylene Everhart of State College, who spoke at the evening banquet about "What Agriculture Means to Me." She wins a trip to the NYFEA Institute in December in Nashville to represent Pennsylvania in the national competition.

On Saturday morning the delegate session was held, where Keith Weimer of Rockwood Young Farmers was elected President, succeeding Anthony Dietrich of Mifflinburg YF. The spouses enjoyed a tour of the Shippensburg Historical Society and lunch at Knute's Tap Room.

Afternoon workshops began with a presentation by Joseph Conklin and Matt Svez, Penn State Extension Educators, on Large Scale Solar in PA. They spoke about the three levels of solar projects—residential, community scale (10-60 acres,) and large scale (60+ acres or 20 megawatts.) They reviewed the many things landowners should consider before signing an agreement or lease on their land. Companies are offering option agreements to many landowners, but only about 10 percent of these properties will actually be developed.

Next Bill Chain of Swift AeroSeed LLC brought his large drone and spoke about his business of custom aerial seeding of cover crops. Drones have many uses in agriculture—smaller drones in monitoring and mapping, and larger drones for spraying and



seeding. He told of the lengthy and complicated process of licensing and regulation by the FAA and state government.

Lizzie Bailey, Shippensburg YF member and executive director of the PA State Council of Farm Organizations, led a discussion on how to attract members to the Young Farmers, especially young people in FFA and 4-H.

Saturday evening banquet speaker was Lisa Graybeal, Deputy Secretary of the PA Department of Agriculture. She updated the attendees on issues and challenges of the Department as well as opportunities offered through the PA Farm Bill.

Awards were presented to Becky Nas of Gettysburg YF, Outstanding Young Farmer over 30; Jason and Tammy Rentzel of Gettysburg YF, Outstanding Community Service; and Betsy Huber of



Solanco YF, Richard Hoppes Award for contributions to the PYFA. The largest chapter attendance at the conference was Mifflinburg Young Farmers.



Next year's winter conference will be hosted by Kutztown Young Farmers, February 4-6, 2026.