



Centre County Farm Bureau *Newsletter*

From the Desk of the President C. Allen Ishler

This spring has definitely been different this year, warmer in February and March, dry in April, and now wet for early May. With corn just starting to be planted and soybeans ready to be planted, it seems we always have 101 operations going on at the same time. Hopefully the summer rains will be good to us and we will have a good growing season.

The first item of business is for you to mark your calendar and plan to attend this year's summer picnic which will be held on Tuesday July 12, 2016 at the Lion's Club in Centre Hall. We will provide the Bar-B-Q chicken and everyone should bring a covered dish and tableware for themselves. Reservations are due by June 30th by calling Evalene Ishler (814 422 8776) or Cinda Corl (814 238 8742). This year we will also have activities for the kids while the parents are meeting.

As you know, we are holding a raffle at this year's summer picnic to benefit the PA Friends of Ag Foundation which supports the Mobile Ag Labs and also the Ag in the Classroom Project. Any additional money raised is used to support the county scholarship programs. If you haven't already done so, please send your ticket stubs and money to Rick Homan whose address is on the back of the raffle ticket. You can also return ticket stubs to any of your directors or bring them along with you to the picnic (see the website for a list of current directors: <http://www.centrecfb.org/meet-the-board.html>).

If you need more tickets, contact centrecountyfb@gmail.com and we can get them to you. Your continuing support of Farm Bureau is what makes us a strong organization. We will again be conducting a survey at the picnic to help identify policy issues for this fall. Please bring your thoughts forward.

The Board of Directors visited with and met the new County Commissioners earlier this spring. We had a very good exchange. We intend to continue this activity into the future. If you have any issues you would like to be discussed, please talk with a board member, we'll be sure to carry it forward. Our next meeting with the Commissioners is in October.

Our annual summer Farm Legislative Tour is coming together nicely. The topics for this year will include Field Spraying Protocols, Manure Hauling regulations, and Grain Handling and Marketing. Every year the committee attempts to identify a diverse panel of industry representatives for presentations. Many of the issues common to one industry are issues for many other Ag enterprises. This is an excellent opportunity for the board to share our agricultural issues with our lawmakers.

We had a very successful membership year last year, as a matter of fact, we made goal! As many of you know, the new membership year begins July 1st. This year, we are planning to have local businesses throughout the county offer discounts to farm bureau members as part of incentives to belong to farm bureau. Once the list is compiled, we will include the information on our website so that it is easily available to you. If anyone has any suggestions about businesses that would like to

participate or which would be a good fit, please contact me so that we can answer any questions they might have.

Thank You for your continuing support of Centre County Farm Bureau. It is the support of the members like yourself and the hard work and support for your Board of Directors that makes our organization successful. You should be proud of what you have built. With your help we can also make this year successful for the Centre County agricultural community. Please support our local Allied Industries. They always support our efforts.



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Until we meet again,
Allen

PFB Reiterates Opposition to Sunday Hunting in Hearing

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau does not believe the quest to grow the ranks of hunters will be solved allowing Sunday hunting. Instead, the move may harm relationships built between farmers and landowners, PFB said in testimony before the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

Senate Bill 1070, introduced by Sen. Jim Brewster and sitting in the committee, would allow the Pennsylvania Game Commission to expand current Sunday hunting options. Joel Rotz, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's senior director of state government affairs, said categorizing the restriction on Sunday hunting as an "arcane blue law" fails to acknowledge those who will be most closely impact by that repeal—farm families.

"What is most frustrating to farmers in this debate is the arrogance of the assumption that private land should be available to hunters seven days a week with no recognition of the fact that farms are not only privately-owned businesses, but family homesteads as well," Rotz said.

While proponents have argued opening Sundays will allow more youth to hunt, they fail to acknowledge that youth sports and other activities already occur throughout the weekend, Rotz said. Pennsylvania farmers support additional days afield, as long as they are not held on Sundays. And there are options the Game Commission can consider—without needing approval from the General Assembly. For instance, the Game Commission could open a youth, rifled deer season on the Friday following Thanksgiving. While landowners are welcoming of additional hunting opportunities, a survey suggests 80 percent of landowners do not support an expansion of Sunday hunting. In addition, 18 percent of those respondents said they would close their land if Sunday hunting was expanded. Private land represents the vast majority of land open to hunting.

Farmers and landowners have concerns about trespassing—whether intentional or otherwise. If just one percent of the estimated 950,000 hunters trespass on private property "it is 9,500 instances of someone violating the privacy of the landowner and his or her own family," Rotz said. Keeping the current Sunday hunting restrictions in place has long been a stance of our farmer members, developed through our grassroots policy process. Farmers are not convinced that opening Sundays to hunting can



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be done in a way that will alleviate their concerns, Rotz said. Instead, farmers want to continue to develop programs that assist with wildlife damage, while allowing hunter access.

Farmers Warned to Watch for Palmer Amaranth and Waterhemp

Penn State is encouraging farmers to watch for two aggressive weeds throughout the planting season. Researchers at Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences are encouraging farmers to scout for Palmer amaranth and waterhemp—both of which are gaining a foothold in the state.

Palmer amaranth is a pigweed, native to the southwestern United States that has spread from the Delmarva area over the last five years, according to Dwight Lingenfelter, an extension educator. The weed may have come to the region through

cottonseed meal as part of dairy rations, or with shipments of hay, he said. Seeds can spread through combine movement. The weed was first found in Pennsylvania in 2013 and is now present in 14 counties. Researchers have also found pockets of waterhemp in Pennsylvania. Both grow aggressively and are prolific in seed production.

Both weeds have the ability to significantly reduce crop yields. Research has shown that both crops reduced soybean yields by upwards of 78 percent. In corn, Palmer amaranth has reduced yields by up to 91 percent, according to Penn State. Experts recommend focusing on prevention strategies—aiming for the complete control of the weeds to prevent escapes. Among the strategies Lingenfelter suggests:

- Harvest infested fields last to prevent the spread of the weed through combines.
- Cover crops can prevent weeds from becoming established.
- Growers must use a two-pass system for herbicide application for effective control. Herbicide costs will at least double if Palmer amaranth becomes established in fields.



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IRRC Rejects Proposal to Cap Generating Systems Qualifying for Net Metering

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission rejected a proposal from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission that would have capped the capacity of generating systems operated on farms and private lands that would receive “net metering” treatment of excess electricity supplied to the public. “Net metering” essentially allows farmers and other generators of renewable energy to receive a rate on excess electricity

supplied that offsets the retail rate they pay for electricity they consume. The PUC had proposed to cap the generating capacity of systems qualifying for net metering treatment at 200 percent of the annual amount of electricity the generator’s actually uses. Net metering is one way that renewable energy users are able to pay back the costs of the system. Farmers have utilized methane, wind and solar systems on their properties to run their businesses. Net metering helps pay down those up-front operating costs. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau opposes caps on net-metering, and lobbied the PUC and General Assembly against adoption of proposed regulations during the public comment period.

**Remember to RSVP for the Summer Picnic,
call Evalene Ishler at 814-422-8776 or Cinda Corl at 814-238-8742 by June 27th.**

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DATES TO REMEMBER:

July 12th: Summer Picnic at Centre Hall Lions Club – Raffle Drawing

August 3rd: Legislative Farm Tour

October 11th: Fall Meeting at New Hope Church