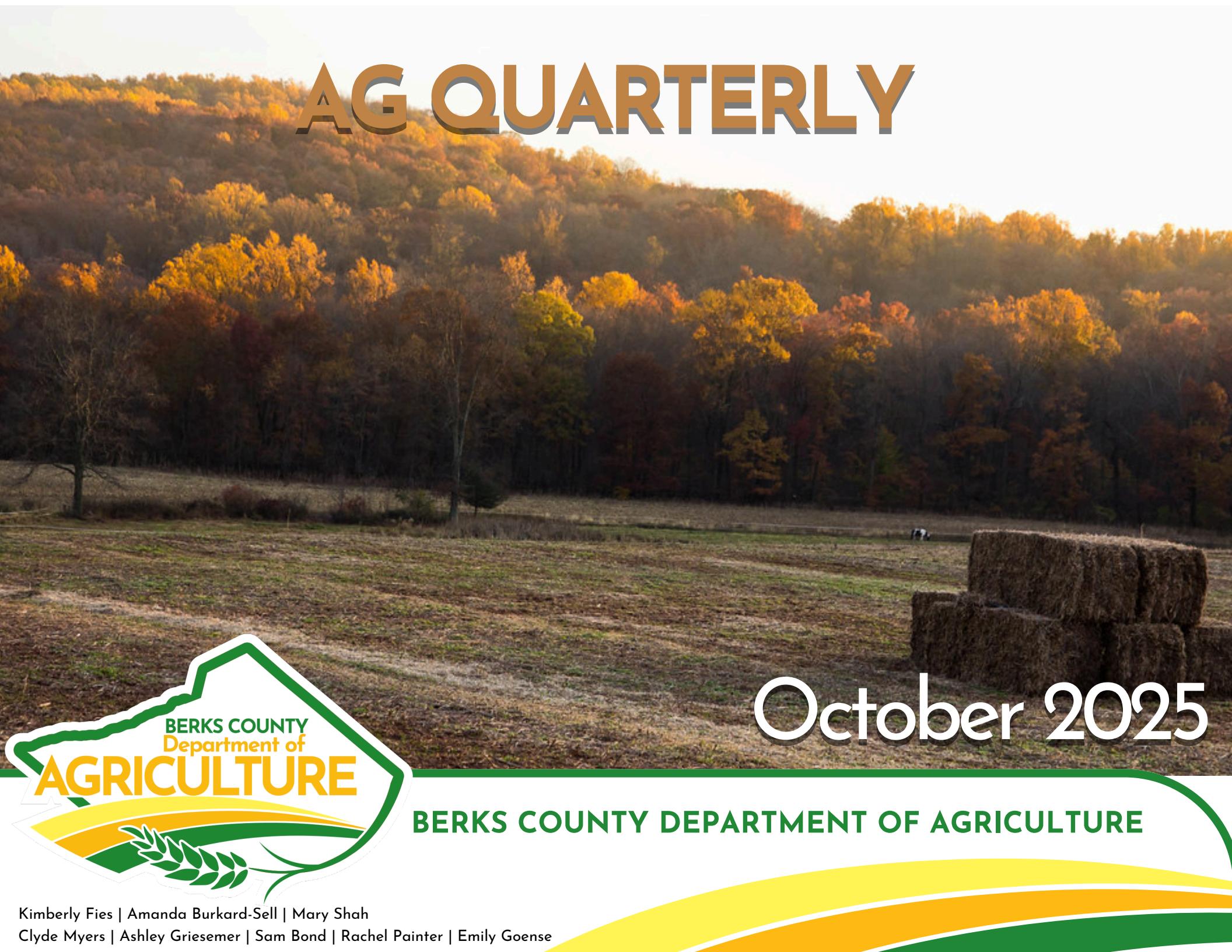


AG QUARTERLY



October 2025

BERKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Kimberly Fies | Amanda Burkard-Sell | Mary Shah

Clyde Myers | Ashley Griesemer | Sam Bond | Rachel Painter | Emily Goense



WHAT WE DO

The Berks County Department of Agriculture promotes agriculture in Berks County by preserving farmland, invigorating agricultural economic development, and connecting our community to agricultural resources.

WHO WE ARE

We are a department of the County of Berks, established in 2015 to serve Berks County residents. We are dedicated to ensuring a thriving agricultural industry in Berks County.

Credits

Content and editing by Berks County Dept. of Agriculture staff; template design by Rick Royer, Berks County Planning. Cover photo credit: Eric Maier

CONTENT

3

Preservation Spotlight.....	4
Tercha Farms	
Preservation Stats.....	5
Q2 Highlights.....	6
Our Work in Numbers.....	8
2025 Objectives.....	9
Ag Fact.....	11
Upcoming.....	12



2025 Berks County Dairy Princess, Brinley Hess and Lil' Dairy Miss, Jordie Kelchner

PRESERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Tercha Farms - Tercha Family Settlement #s 83, 128, & 734

Excerpts from "A Lifetime of Involvement in Agriculture" by Clyde A. B. Myers as published in the Reading Eagle.



- Tercha Farms is operated by Robert & Melinda Tercha, who are the third generation. They grow corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay on their 320 preserved acres in Longswamp Township (with a small portion in Lehigh County).
- Products are sold to FM Browns and Ron Kurtz Grain Hauling, supporting the local agriculture economy.
- The Terchas support the future of agriculture in the county as active members of the Kutztown Young Farmers, Farm Bureau, and Topton Pioneer Grange, along with renting land to a beginning farmer.

"Existing farmers need to help the next generation get started in farming. Along with Land Preservation, the real responsibility of the farming future is on the shoulders of the current farmers. They must allow and encourage their children to help make decisions on the farm and keep them involved if they want them to stay on the farm."

Please see our website for full articles on preserved farms.



AG LAND PRESERVATION STATS

2025 Report



839

Farms
Preserved

79903.8

Acres
Preserved

2025 Totals:

Farms preserved: 8

Acres preserved: **589.70**

Program Total:

County invested: **\$85.7M**

State invested: **\$95.9M**

Landowner Donated Value: **\$42.2 M**

The Berks County Department of Agriculture oversees the administration of the Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program, which permanently preserves Berks County's farmland. Berks County is a leader in both the state and the nation for preserved farms and celebrated the approval of over 80,000 acres of forever farmland, some of which will be settled later this year.

Q3 HIGHLIGHTS

Berks County Farm Market & Festival

The Berks County Department of Agriculture partnered with the Berks County Parks & Recreation Department to present Berk County's first Pop-up Farmer's Market in conjunction with a Farm History Festival at the Berks County Heritage Center, as part of the Celebration of America 250 PA Berks.

Participants were treated to demonstrations, wagon rides and tours of the buildings and grounds, including the garden area which is maintained by Penn State Extension Master Gardeners. 20 vendors and food trucks offered various local good for sale. Over Home Alpacas came with a mama alpaca and her baby cria. Danny Spec provided entertaining music and dialog while Jennifer Yount gave grilled corn salad recipe demonstrations with samples through out the day. There was even a stilt-walking scarecrow to top things off!

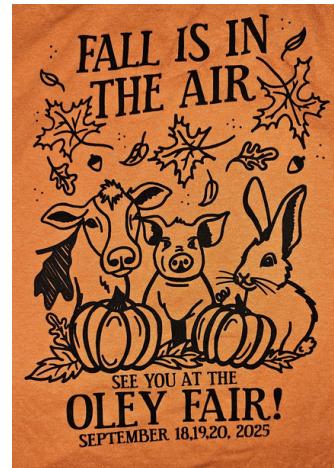


This initiative was to help introduce Berks County residents to some of the local products available to them which can be found on the Berks County Local Food Map. This map contains links to over 260 locations in Berks County to purchase local products direct from farmers and producers. Visit www.growtogetherberks.com/directory to see what you can find near you.

Q3 HIGHLIGHTS

Fair Participation

The Berks County Department of Ag is a sponsor of our local community fairs each year. You can find our booth packed with information at Kempton Fair (June), Berks County Fair (July), Kutztown Fair (August), & Oley Fair (September).



Penn State University Ag Progress Day Visit

The Berks County Dept of Ag was invited to join Commissioner Leinbach and students from Schuylkill Valley FFA and their advisor at Ag Progress days. We listened to several speakers discuss the future of agriculture in the State and nationally. PA Secretary of Ag, Russel Redding and Governor Shapiro spoke with the FFA students and thanked them for their role in the future of agriculture.



Executive Director Honored

Executive Director, Kim Fies, was honored with the Berks County Conservation District Chair's Award at their annual Banquet on July 28th. The award was presented to Fies for her commitment and dedication to the agriculture industry and her support of local farmers. Staff was in attendance to celebrate Fies and the other award winners, including Hamburg teacher Sherry Fuhrmann, who had been nominated by the Department for the Environmental Educator of the Year. It was a wonderful night to recognize some important members of Berks County's agriculture community.

OUR WORK IN NUMBERS



2025 Q3 Online Presence

Our staff continue to promote agriculture and share resources with thousands of Berks County residents via Facebook, the online Local Food Map, and the Berks Ag Event Calendar.

6412 GrowTogether Website Users

8779 Food Map & Events Calendar Views

264 Local Farms & Vendors Listed on Food Map

118 AgEvents on Calendar

55,146 Facebook Page Views

106 Facebook Posts



2025 Third Quarter Events

500+ Berks County Farm Market & Festival attendees

60+ Journalists & Social Media Influencers learned about Berks Ag at the MATPRA conference dinner

2000+ Promotional items & informational literature handed out at 5 fairs & festivals

70% Increase in Social Media Views

2025 OBJECTIVES

9

Third Quarter Update

Our team has continued to make key advances on our annual objectives in 2025.

Continue strengthening the agricultural land preservation program.

- Completed the selection process for the 2025 ranking.
- Conducted Agricultural Conservation Easement settlements on 2 farms totaling 217.4 acres
- Represented Berks County's leading ACE Program at milestone events in York and Cumberland Counties

Refining Department of Agriculture's strategy, function, and branding.

- Participating in Farm Bureau meeting and special events to enhance our messaging and goals.
- Participated in a municipal joint planning session to discuss agriculture programs and trends as they relate to zoning and ordinances.

Continue to promote the diverse ag career opportunities.

- Coordinated with Manufacture Resource Center to expand Ag industries participation in the What's So Cool competition, resulting in Giorgi Mushroom participating this year.

Facilitate exposure of our value added producers to wider audience.

- Co-Hosted first pop-up farmers market where 20 vendors were visited by over 500 consumers.



**Berks County
Department of Agriculture
GROWING BERKS
FOCUS AREAS**

**Want to know more?
Don't hesitate to reach out -
we'd love to hear from you.**

Berks Ag Fact

Can't have Baseball without agriculture

The anatomy of a baseball

About 80,000 Rawlings baseballs are produced for Major League Baseball each year in Costa Rica. **How they're constructed:**

The pill: A cork surrounded by two rubber coverings

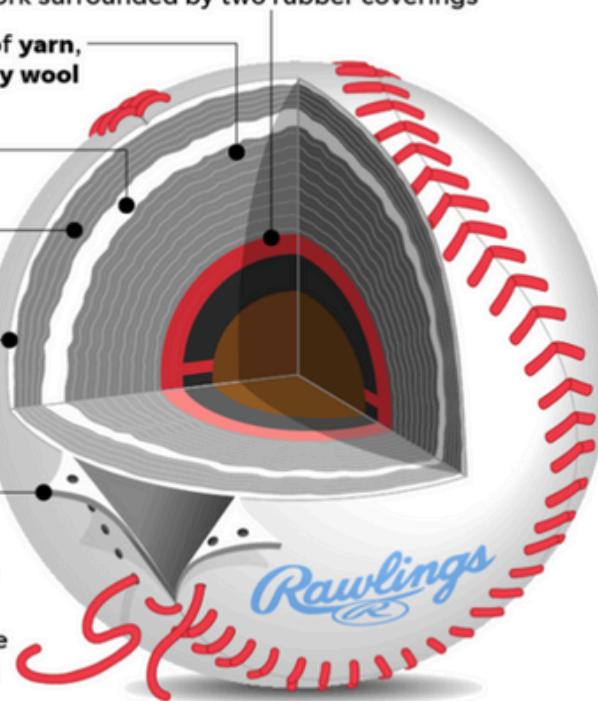
Four layers of **yarn**,
Four-ply **gray wool**

Three-ply
white wool

Three-ply
gray wool

White
poly/cotton

Two pieces
of **cowhide**
are glued
to the ball;
88 inches of
red thread
comprise the
108 stitches



Weight:
5.0 oz. to 5.25 oz.

Diameter:
2.86" to 2.94"

Circumference:
9" to 9.25"

■ Rubbed with Delaware River mud for off-white appearance and better grip



Although Cowhide and Steerhide leather are the most popular leathers for baseball gloves, other types of leather exist. Each type has its own set of characteristics and advantages

Pigskin Leather - Pigskin leather baseball gloves offer a unique combination of affordability, durability, and flexibility

Full-Grain Leather - Full-grain cattle leather baseball gloves are made from the top layer of the hide, preserving the natural grain pattern. This gives every glove a unique appearance and is the toughest part of the animal's hide

Kip Leather -

Kip leather baseball gloves are premium quality gloves. They are a top choice for professional and elite players. Kip leather comes from the hides of young cattle, making it soft and lightweight

Plus bats are made from maple or ash

UPCOMING...



Would you like to partner with us for future events? Give us a call or email us: 610-378-1844 or DeptofAg@BerksPA.gov

Superintendents Day | October 7, 2025

Audience: School superintendents and administrators

Description: One-day tour of the agribusiness industry of Berks County for administrators to better understand the agriculture industry and career opportunities for students.

Partners: BCIU and local agribusinesses

R-BAR Advocacy Breakfast | October 14, 2025

Audience: Berks County realtors

Description: The Department is partnering with R-BAR to help host their annual Legislative / Government Affairs breakfast and will discuss the Growing Berks Plan and how agriculture and preservation are part of SMART Growth.

Partners: Reading-Berks Association of Realtors

Agriculture & Natural Resources Career & Job Fair | November 13, 2025

Audience: Berks County High School Students and Job Seekers

Description: Exhibitors from various agriculture and natural resources careers connect with students and job seekers to showcase the varied careers in the industry and provide career opportunities and internships.

Partners: Local agribusinesses, colleges and universities, and agency partners

Agriculture Tire Collection | November 20, 2025

Audience: Berks County Farmers

Description: Free tire collection and recycling event that allows farmers to bring old tractor and large truck tires to stop the spread of mosquito borne illnesses and benefit the environment along with removing the tires from areas of the farm that can be better utilized for ag activities.



CONTACT US OR STOP BY!

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Office hours: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
www.berskpa.gov/departments/agriculture