



BERKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Ag Quarterly Q2 2023

The Team

Emily Wangolo
Kimberly Fies
Amanda Burkard-Sell
Clyde Myers
Mary Shah
Jennifer Smilko
Ashley Rice
Sam Bond

PRESERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Daydream Farm – Settlement # 665



- Richele Grieb operates Daydream Farm, a 52-acre horse foaling and breeding business, working mostly with Thoroughbreds that race on Pennsylvania's racetracks.
- Her childhood dream was to own a horse farm.
- Preserving the farm provided funding to upgrade the barn and fencing and fix the rundown house.
- Daydream Farm purchases feed and hay from other local businesses, supporting the County's larger ag industry.



Richele is most proud of: *"Making my dream come true by taking this rundown farm that stood empty and having it become a successful horse breeding and foaling operation"*

AG LAND PRESERVATION STATS

2023 First Quarter

Farms preserved: **809** Acres preserved: **77,743**

2023 Total: Farms preserved: **4** Acres preserved: **440**
Modification requests: **17** Farms transferred: **9**
County invested: **\$45 K** State invested: **\$1.1 M**

Program Total: County invested: **\$84.3 M** State invested: **\$91 M**



**BERKS COUNTY
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Q1 HIGHLIGHTS

National Ag Day & America250PA – Historic Barn Tour



More than 60 people joined us for lunch and a lecture by barn historian and author Greg Huber. Following the lecture was a bus tour of 2 historic farms in the Oley Valley: the Yoder-Cleaver Farm circa 1743 and the Kauffman Farm circa 1763.



Covered Bridge Farmstand & Valley Milkhouse

The Kauffman Barn



Q1 HIGHLIGHTS

National Ag Day – Home School Event



...for Homeschoolers!
Ag Day events mark a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture. We're so fortunate to have dedicated, LOCAL growers and producers who feed our nation.

Celebrate with us on Friday, March 24 from 10am - 2pm!

1114 Mountain Road, Hamburg, PA 19526

FREE EVENT

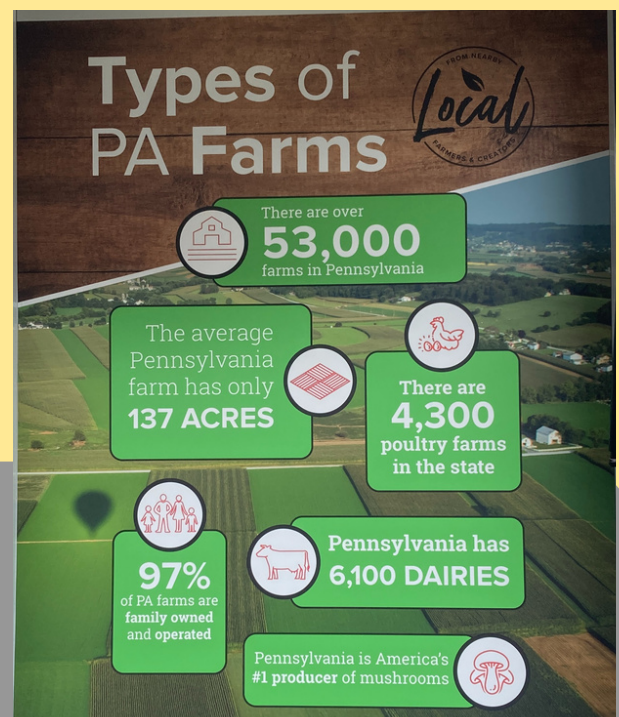
Penn's Woods Farm Bureau Pennsylvania Friends of Agriculture Foundation Berks County Dairy Promotion Berks County Conservation District Tully River County Taproot Farm (DIVERSITY OF FARM TYPES & PRODUCTS) PennState Extension

****Porcupine Pat will join us from 10am to noon & a few more surprises are in store!****

Hands-on, educational displays and activities will be available from these groups and local farmers, on a real crop farm! Various types of agriculture and careers will be represented.



We participated in celebrating 50 years of National Ag Day on the Ridenhour farm with about **100 parents and home schoolers**. Students experienced hands-on activities while learning about agriculture-related careers.



2023 OBJECTIVES

Quarterly Update

Our annual objectives reflect the transition and expansion of the department occurring in 2023, while still maintaining focus on our six strategic areas (illustrated below). Below is the status of selected activities that contribute to our objectives.

1. Establish the Dept. of Agriculture's strategy, function and branding.

- Completed hiring and onboarding of four new staff.
- Departmental roles, norms and project assignments in process.
- Departmental logo development is in progress.

2. Fortify the Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program.

- New staff training in process.
- ACE Program database meetings scheduled to review two options.
- Field staff manual created.

3. Expand the Dept. of Agriculture's community outreach.

- Launched Grow Together with GRCA and completed Berks Ag Event Calendar.
- Organized National Ag Day/America250PA event; participated in Ag Literacy Week and Homeschool National Ag Day event.

4. Increase local sourcing of agricultural products.

- Provided all farm listing data & site design input for local food map.

Six strategic focus areas of the Berks County Department of Agriculture.



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MEET THE TEAM!



Department of Agriculture staff pictured L to R: Clyde Myers, Jennifer Smilko, Emily Wangolo, Amanda Burkard-Sell, Ashley Rice, Sam Bond, Mary Shah, and Kim Fies (not pictured).

Welcome, Mary, Jennifer, Ashley and Sam!

Thanks to the support of County leadership, the Department of Agriculture is now fully staffed! We completed hiring of four new team members on April 5th. All of our staff are dedicated, skilled, and passionate professionals, and we are incredibly grateful to have them on our team!



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UPCOMING...

Ag in the Classroom | June 20-22

A 3-day tour of the agribusiness industry of Berks County for teachers and school administration. This year, we'll be joined by 15 administrative staff of Schuylkill Valley School District, which is starting an agricultural education program in the coming school year.

Partners: approx. 12 agribusinesses of Berks.



June 20-22, 2023 | 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Ag in the Classroom:

Traditions & Horizons of the Food & Fiber Industry of Berks County

Educators are invited on a 3-day tour of the agricultural industry in Berks County! Each day we'll travel together by bus to visit suppliers, producers, and processors of our food & fiber system, including well-established sectors such as dairy, while exploring the horizons of agriculture with technology, direct-to-consumer businesses, and niche agricultural products. The course includes visits to ag education programs in schools and developing customized lesson plans for your classroom.

Course cost: \$50 for Berks County educators; \$75 for educators outside Berks County. Includes lunches & transportation.



Questions? Contact Emily at
ewangolo@countyofberks.com or
610-378-1844 x2543

To register, scan the QR code or go to:
<https://www.mylearningplan.com/WebReg/ActivityProfile.asp?D=13543&t=4418512>



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**Earn
24 Act 48
hours!**

As always, we invite Commissioner participation in events!

Please contact Jennifer Smilko
(jsmilko@countyofberks.com
or 610-378-1844) to coordinate timing.



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Berks Ag Event Calendar & Online Local Food Map

In February, we partnered with GRCA to launch the **Berks Ag Event Calendar**. Community members may submit events related to agriculture.



GROW TOGETHER
BUY BERKS. SUPPORT FARMS.

Find fresh, local and delicious products in your own backyard while supporting your neighboring farmers.

Scan me to browse ag-related events or submit your ag-related events.



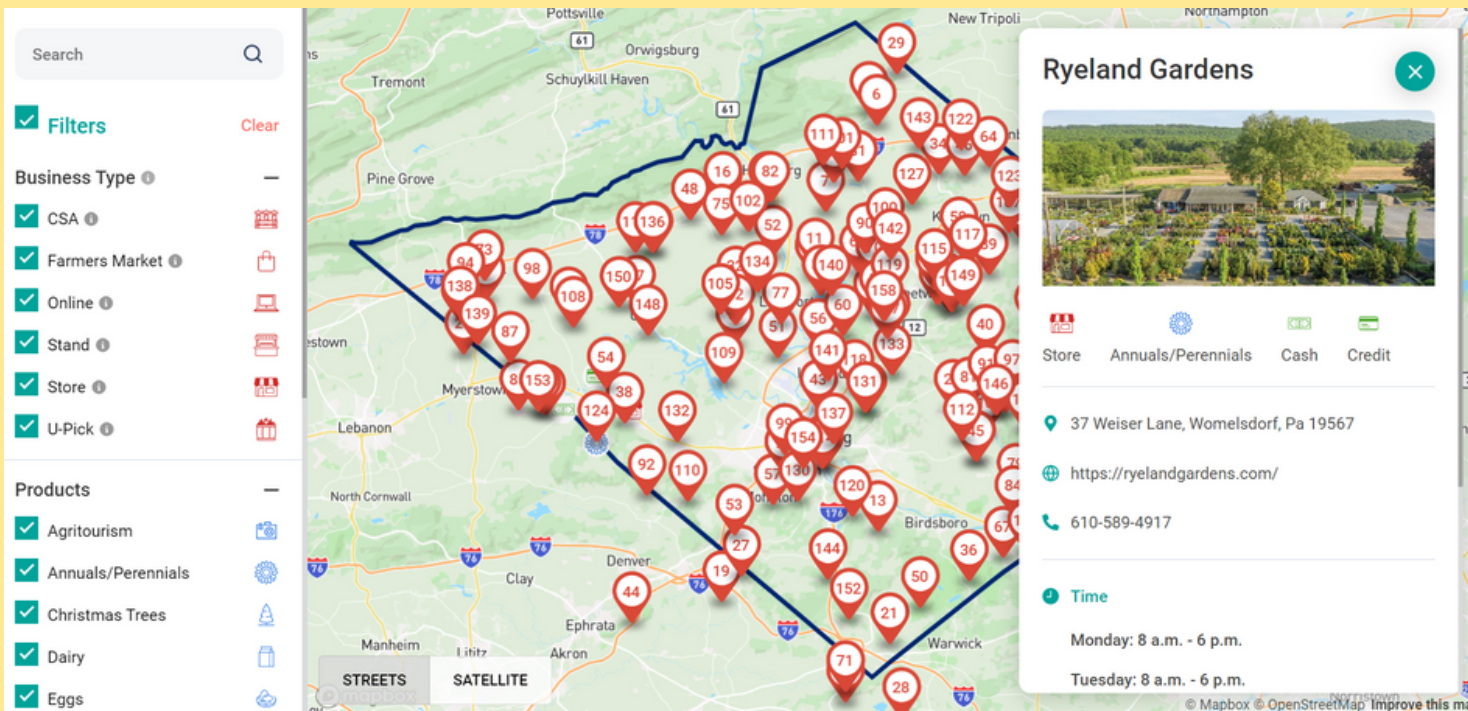
Brought to you by:
GRCA
GREATER READING
Chamber Alliance



GrowTogetherBerks.com is now LIVE!

Check out the **NEW** Berks ag events calendar

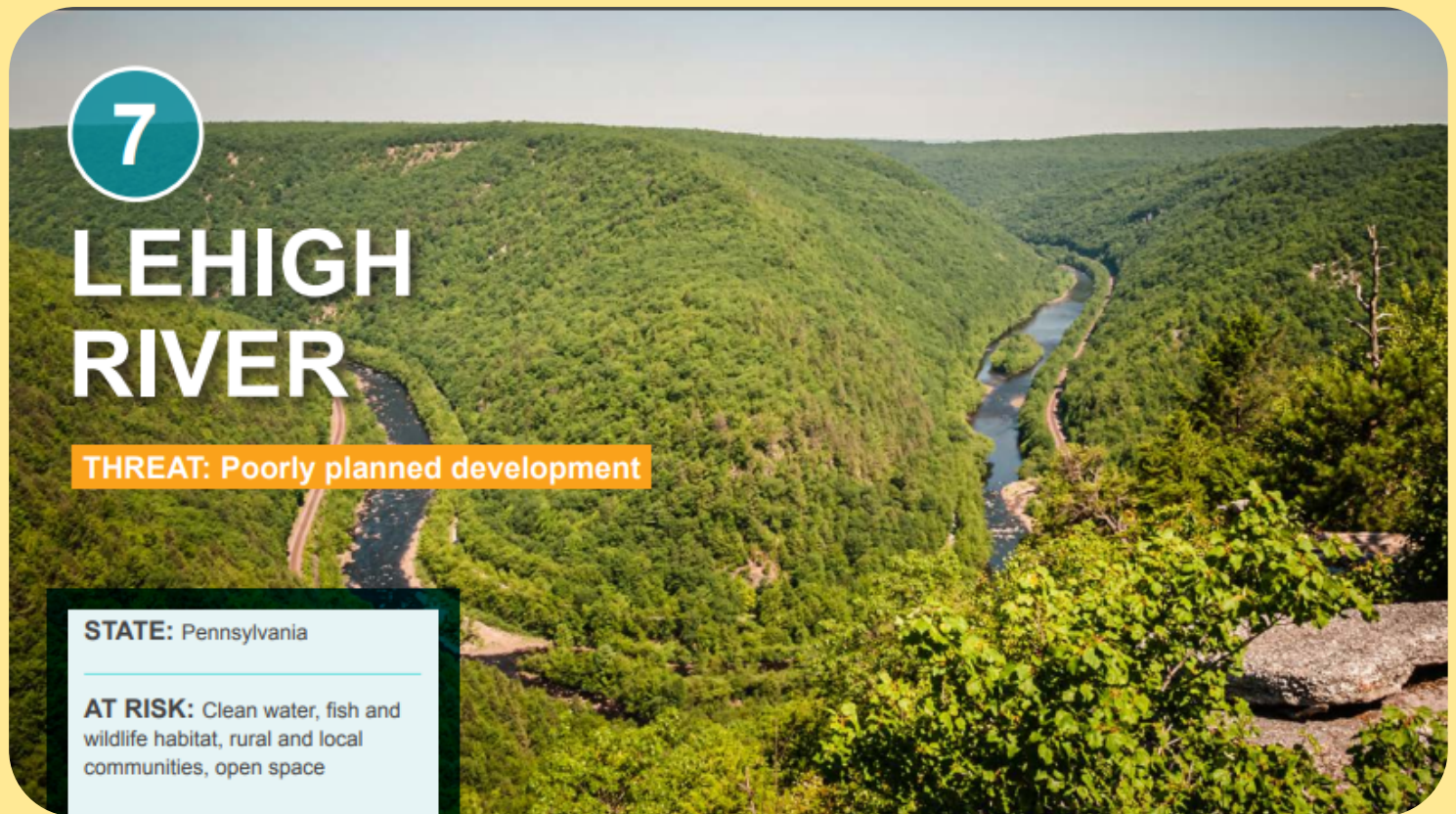
Just in time for summer, Grow Together will include a newly created **Berks online local food map**. Watch for the official launch!



The screenshot displays the Grow Together Berks online local food map. On the left, a sidebar contains a search bar and filter options. The filters are categorized into Business Type and Products. The Business Type filters include CSA, Farmers Market, Online, Stand, Store, and U-Pick, all of which are checked. The Products filters include Agritourism, Annuals/Perennials, Christmas Trees, Dairy, and Eggs, all of which are also checked. The main area of the screen shows a map of Berks County with numerous red location pins, each labeled with a number. A detailed information panel for 'Ryeland Gardens' is open on the right side of the map. This panel includes a photo of the garden, a list of services (Store, Annuals/Perennials, Cash, Credit), the address (37 Weiser Lane, Womelsdorf, Pa 19567), the website (https://ryelandgardens.com/), and the phone number (610-589-4917). It also shows the operating hours: Monday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

AG NEWSFLASH

Lehigh River Ranks No. 7 for
"America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2023"



Maintaining water quality is critical to agriculture, as it depends on robust, healthy ecosystems. However, Pennsylvania was the only state to have two Rivers on 'America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2023'. The Lehigh River Ranked Number 7 who's watershed includes parts of northeast Berks County. The main threat is "Poorly planned development". This threat puts clean water, fish, and local communities at risk. Ranked Number 2, was the Ohio River which starts in PA and flows into the Mississippi River. The main threats to this river are pollution and climate change.

The article and more information can be found at:

https://www.americanrivers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/AR_2023-Most-Endangered-Rivers_lowres-3.pdf

BERKS COUNTY AG FACT

Berks ranks in top 100 counties nationally for market value of products sold:

- **14th** for nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod;
- **51st** for cultivated Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops; and
- **66th** for milk from cows.



*Source: 2017 NASS Census of Agriculture



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Covered Bridge FARM STAND

pasture raised • locally grown • handmade

WELCOME

*We are a cooperative
of growers + artisans
producing food for
Oley and beyond!*

Valley
MILKHOUSE

the
Cottage
Kitchen

Oley Valley Mushrooms



**Thank you for your continued support of
the Berks County agribusiness economy!**