

## **Taking Farming in a Non-Traditional Direction**

Pasture Pride Natural Meats has taken their preserved farm in a different direction. To take advantage of consumers desire to know where their food comes from and how it is produced, the Stutsman's have developed a direct market meat business. The Stutsman's unique farm operation raises and direct markets grass-finished beef and lambs, pasture meat birds, and natural pork animals. All the meat products are direct marketed via wholes, halves, quarters and individual cuts. That was one of the many reasons they decided to become involved in the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. Joy and Dave said, "Another reason we preserved the farm was to pass it on to our three children." To the Stutsman's, there is no better place than a farm to raise a family. Learning responsibility through required farm chores has instilled a love of agriculture as the children now have roles in the farm operation. Son Andrew is the motivation for the new agroforestry project, son Trevor is a partner in the lamb segment, daughter-in-law Adrienne has planted flower shrubs to expand her "Branch and Blossom" flower business. Dave's parents purchased the 110-acre farm in the 50's and sold it to Dave and Joy in 2001 and it was preserved in 2003.

When asked what is needed for the future of the agriculture industry in Berks County, they stated that "There needs to be a willingness to go against the grain, be innovated and pursue opportunities outside the box of traditional commodities and product markets." To this end, is son Andrew and Dave's agroforestry endeavor of planting 7.5 acres of pawpaw's and chestnuts to market in 5-7 years, for additional farm income. This idea resulted from planting an eight-acre buffer, along the Saucony Creek, under the USDA Conservation Reserve Program in 2018. That buffer program disallows commercial activity for 15 years. Daughter Adrienne is expanding her flower business with more plantings on the farm.

The Stutzman's are proud of many things. These include raising a farm family that now is an essential part of the operation, preserving the farm for the families' future and being able to produce healthy food for people because, "You are what you eat." For meat product information and to order meat products while supporting local farm families, visit their website: [Pasturespride.com](http://Pasturespride.com)