

AG QUARTERLY



July 2026



BERKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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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: Hoffman's Produce Facebook

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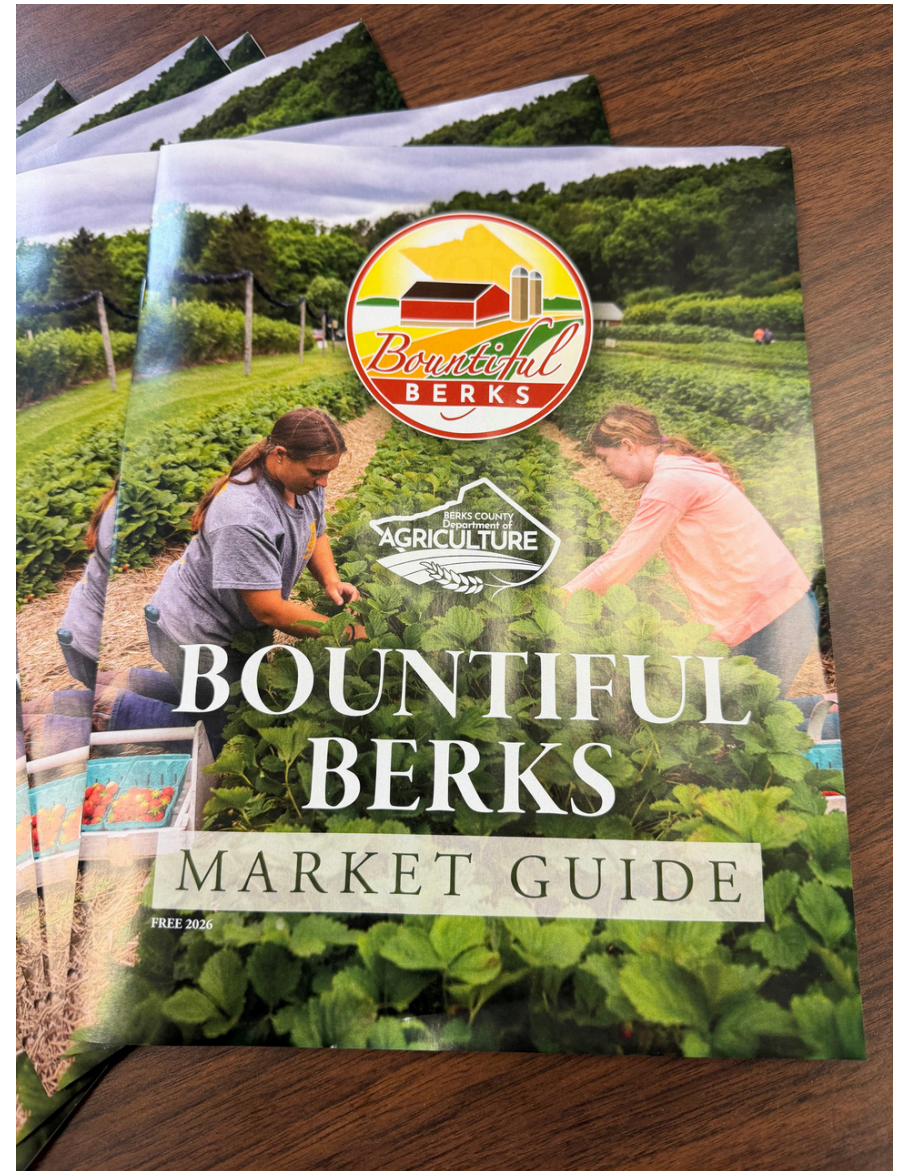
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The Bountiful Berks Market Guide is now available! Pick up a copy at the Ag Center or at your local retailer today!

Fantasyland Farms LLC - Pool Family Settlement #172

Excerpts from "Keeping the Next Generation in Production Agriculture"
by Clyde A. B. Myers as published in the Reading Eagle.

- The Pool Family: David and Martha, daughter Caitlyn and her husband John and their children, and daughter Taylor and her husband Brian, run Fantasyland Farms LLC. They raise dairy and beef on 133 acres in North Heidelberg Township.
- They have been farming their current farm for 34 years and preserved it with an ag easement in 1998.
- Row crops are grown on the farm and an additional 350 rented acres to feed 450 dairy animals, 60 American Wagyu beef cattle, and a small flock of sheep. Milk is marketed through Maola Local Dairies and Fantasyland American Wagyu is sold directly to local customers and restaurants.



Caitlyn Gibbel on , "Raising the next generation to farm, whether it was my siblings and I or my parents' grandchildren (my children), and watching them fall in love with agriculture and farming is our proudest accomplishment."

Please see our website for full articles on preserved farms.

AG LAND PRESERVATION STATS

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856
Farms
Preserved

81,098.8
Acres
Preserved

2026 Totals:

Farms preserved: **10**

Acres preserved: **733.10**

Program Total:

County invested: **\$86.6M**

State invested: **\$98.2M**

Landowner Donated Value: **\$42.6M**

The Berks County Department of Agriculture oversees the administration of the Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program, which permanently preserves Berks County's farmland.

Ag in the Classroom

Teachers from four Berks County school districts joined the Department for a two-day educational course on agriculture and the agriculture industry. We visited local farms and agri-businesses including Redner's Markets, Hoffman Produce, Spring Creek Farm, DFA, and Reading Bakery Systems to learn about the diversity of the industry, technology, and career pathways. Teachers were provided a behind-the-scenes look at a variety of agricultural operations and had valuable discussions on the future of the industry, food labeling, and workforce needs. They were connected with lesson plans and information to take back to their classrooms. Educating our educators is important to ensuring that agriculture continues to be part of our education system.



Imagine Berks Comp Plan Regional Meetings

The Department worked with the County Planning Commission, Department of Community and Economic Development, Workforce Development, and the Industrial Development Authority to provide local municipalities with information about the upcoming Imagine Berks Comprehensive Plan and encourage them to look at land use and their vision for the future. Representatives from 43 of Berks County's 72 municipalities and 7 of the County's 18 school districts attended the meetings.

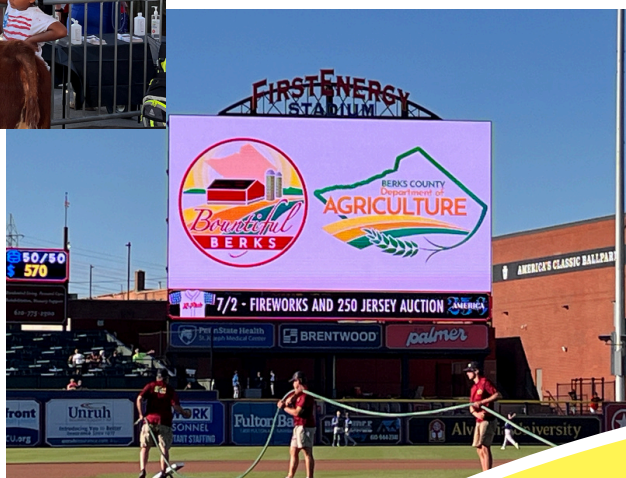


Q2 Highlights

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Bountiful Berks Ag Night at R'Phils

The Department partnered with the Reading Fightin Phils to celebrate agriculture with a baseball game featuring a tribute to the ag industry. The Berks County Farm Bureau brought farm animals and a tractor. The Mobile Ag Lab and community partners such as the Penn State Master Gardeners and the Beef Council helped to educate the public on the importance of agriculture and its connection with baseball. The Berks County Dairy Royalty threw out the first pitch and thier advisors got to sing Take Me Out to the Ball Game. It was the perfect night to celebrate our farm families and connect the public with agriculture.



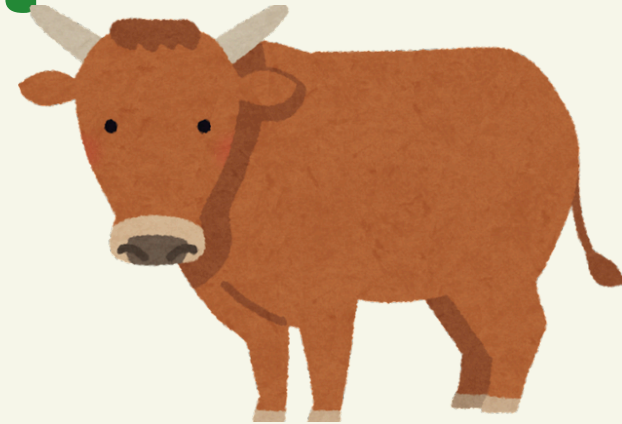
Pop Up Farmers Market

The Department hosted the second Pop Up Farmer's Market, this time at the Oley Fairgrounds. Twelve diverse vendors and four food trucks were invited to show off their bounty of Berks County. Community partners including the Berks County Dairy Princesses and Experience Reading & Berks County provided information about agriculture and events around our County. These events provide the public with opportunities to meet vendors and truly learn about where their food comes from and who is producing it. It also allows vendors to network to share advise and even help supply needs.

Berks Ag Facts

Agriculture in Sports

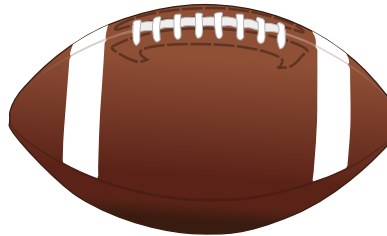
One Cowhide can produce



12 Basketballs



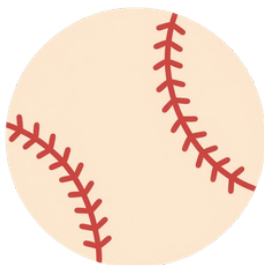
20 Footballs



18 Soccer Balls or Volleyballs



144 Baseballs





Pop-up Farmers Market: September 12th

Audience: Members of the public

Description: A pop-up farmers market at the Berks County Heritage Festival featuring Berks County grown and produced food products for sampling and purchase. This event will also serve as the wrap-up for Barnopoly.

Partners: Local farmers and producers, Berks Ag Resource Network, Berks County Parks Department

Ag & Natural Resources Career & Job Fair November 12th

Audience: Local high school and college 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, internships, and fill open positions.

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

Tire Collection: November 19th

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.



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



CONTACT US OR STOP BY!

610-378-1844 | DeptofAg@BerksPA.gov

1238 County Welfare Rd., Leesport, PA 19533

Office hours: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

www.berskpa.gov/departments/agriculture