

Big Maple Family Farm, LLC

NEWSLETTER

June 15, 2025

Education of Our Youth and Its Importance

They say knowledge is power and when you empower the youth with knowledge they can change the world.

Have you ever asked a young child where their food comes from? That is one of the most asked questions and the highest response is the grocery store. It seems that each generation becomes further and further away from where the food actually comes from. The cereal is made from grains grown by a farmer, or the spaghetti sauce is made from tomatoes. The biggest one is milk and where it comes from. Even adults my age think chocolate milk comes from a brown cow and that is scary. Some days I wonder how we got to this point, but then we look at how convenient the grocery store has become and how farmers markets are becoming a thing of the past.

Now don't get us wrong, Covid changed it for a short period but we are once again seeing that back slide to where convenience is becoming even more of an issue because we can't compete with Walmart, the Krogers, or Sam's clubs where you can order online and just sit in the parking lot at your allotted time. We can have tomatoes ready by a certain date for people to schedule when to make their sauce or the ability to have enough meat in stock throughout the year. Things run out here on the farm and we need time to raise more. And when we are short stocked or run low, it doesn't suit that convenience that people need and want right now. Trust us, we get it. We like the easy pick ups or the online ordering (just ask our mail lady how many packages she delivers a week), but there still needs to be an education to the youth on exactly where their food comes from and how it goes from farm to store so they know that without farms, there is no food. This education piece has led us to creating our "farmer for a Day" camp.

Camp is held one week in the summer and we take kids through an entire series of what it's like to plant, harvest, care for, and give to people from the farm. The kids help each day with specific items on the farm from caring for the chickens, cows, horses, and turkeys while also learning how to grow lettuce, greens, and other produce. We take them through the fields to learn about how animal nutrition and health is important too. This camp has been a great asset to helping to educate the youth in our local community on farming and the day to day life of a farmer. Kids have left ensuring their family eats more things from the farmer, some kids have been encouraged to start growing their own gardens, and others have a desire to become a farmer themselves. We can't wait for this year's camp and we are hoping to fill all the spots with some great kids. If you know anyone ages 5-12, camp will be July 28th through July 31st from 9:30am-1:30pm. You can scan the QR code in the picture to get into our registration. We hope to see your kiddos here gaining knowledge so that they can create change in the future.



**Farmer
FOR A
Day Camp**

Learn all about farming and engage with animals each day. Children will be learning the day to day life on the farm and how to grow food, harvesting, animal care, and more.

CAMP FUN INCLUDES

- ✓ Animal Care
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Crafts
- ✓ Educational Learning
- ✓ Interactions with other peers
- ✓ Hands on Farm Activities

July 28th - July 31st
9:30am-1:30pm
\$100/Child

814-335-0804
www.bigmaplefamilyfarm.net

REGISTER NOW



Babies, Babies Everywhere

If you have been with us for the last couple years, then you know how excited we are about these calves! A few years ago, we invested in some Cow, Calf pairs raising up the heifer calves till they were old enough to breed. Then it was time to look at making a decision to breed. We researched Artificial Breeding vs a bull and decided it was best in our situation to purchase a bull. Last year was our first time having calves on the farm 37 years and it proved to be a challenge. We struggled to say the least and learned ALOT! Knowledge is power and when we learned from others on how to pull calves, how to recognize signs for not feeding the calf and more, we were able to implement that knowledge this year. We changed feeding regimens over the winter and thus far, we have 3 healthy steer calves. One is a bottle baby because



mom just doesn't understand how to feed him and we are not exactly set up yet to bring them in and tie mom up to teach her. This is something in the works but finances play a part in getting a system set up. We also have had all three successful births without any assistance from us and we still have one more cow to have their calf. To have this improved success from one year to the next has really helped us grow and understand more about raising cows. We can't wait to see where this growth goes as we continue to expand and go into the future.

Farmers Supporting Other Farmers

Our mission on the farm is to provide you a plate that is as healthy as ours by raising quality products. As much as we want to be able to grow everything, we know it is impossible, but we work to find others who are growing quality products with similar views as us. Which is why we continue to find farm partners and bring their products to you through our store. This week, we need to talk about Shiitake Joe's! He has really upscaled and created an amazing facility and quality mushrooms. In fact, we just had some of his mushrooms with our dinner last night, and they were fantastic.

The mushrooms are a great protein source and they even have other benefits.



Joe is working to bring not only the fresh mushrooms, but you can now purchase his mushroom powder from his lions mane mushrooms. Lion's mane mushrooms are said to help with cognitive function, nerve regeneration, and boost your immune system.

The mushroom powder or eating the fresh mushroom can help you see the benefits. We encourage you to grab Joe's mushroom through his many outlets such as local grocery stores such as Elk County foods, Pfaff's Market, Save A Lot, of course you can order them weekly on our online store, and more. You surely won't be disappointed and we are so excited to continue to support other farmers.



Farm Updates

The farm has been a busy place lately. In the last two weeks since our last newsletter, Moose the bottle calf, has started nibbling hay and is eating grain with his bottles. We also got all our plants in the ground and went to Bell's Greenhouse in Kane to take advantage of their BOGO sale on some plants and we got more plants to help fill some space we still had in our 5 acre garden (LOL). We even cut a small portion of hay and while it was not a great yield in the number we were looking for, it was the start to the season and we were running out of hay and purchasing some for the horses. What else should we update you on? Oh yeah, Garrett got his cast off and is allowed to walk on his ankle and knee but he has to still be on limited activities so while we have him back to partial work, he is still taking it easy. He is excited to be working on the combine to get it up and running for the upcoming wheat that is almost ready to harvest. One other update that we feel is important to let you know is our meat chicken dilemma is working itself out. We are moving through the buildings and we pushed back our last order by a couple weeks so no worries we are still looking at raising around 700 birds this year, and we know that all of you will help us out on freezer space by purchasing all our chicken :)



FarmHer & Mom Is A Constant Struggle

With Garrett out, I have had to add some of his daily tasks to my list, because let's face it, Logan cannot do it all himself and although he has stepped up huge, there are things he is just not strong enough to do. What has that led to? Learning a whole new balance and it is one that I am struggling with on a daily basis because my time management is terrible. One task that I think will only take a few minutes, sometimes takes 20 - 30 minutes and then I am behind. It has led to later dinners, late appointments, dishes in the sink, and well laundry needing to run 2 times because I totally forgot I started a load in the morning. Although, I often go to bed at night worrying how I will get the things done I missed the day before, there is one thing that I am always thankful for that is the ability to be a mom and

see the boys smile. Connor usually is the one who has to entertain himself with toys and other things, but he also finds joy in helping where he can. If you haven't given our Facebook a follow, we encourage you to check out and see the reel that we compiled from videos and pictures Connor took while we planted with the water wheel planter. It was a look through his eyes and the best part was, Mommy let him ride with her and help with the plants. Sometimes having a full days worth of work is hard and the things that make me a mom don't get done and sometimes the things that make me a farmer also don't get done so I think it's all about the proper balance.

Crop Damage is No Joke

Farmers are faced with many challenges, weather, pests, diseases, etc. However, one of the biggest contenders is the deer. Last year the deer wiped out most of our tomatoes, a whole planting of green beans, and so much more. We truly needed to find ways to combat what they are doing, plus we really wanted to keep the garden in a more stable location where we can really grow our regenerative gardening practices. So when the guys drew this area out on paper, it really didn't seem that big, BUT here we are. Tony went through with Logan and placed a double fence the entire way around the perimeter. We did find some tracks in there but not as many as before, and we think it was possibly because of the solar



fencer being turned off. We are now fighting the smaller creatures, like ground hogs, rabbits, etc. So no matter what we try, it looks like the animals always find a way. Here's hoping that we can truly keep them away from the majority and not lose as much product this year.

Organization Updates

Here on the farm, we are proud to be home to where Non-Profit resides and is able to help individuals interact positively with equines. The program celebrated 10 years in existence in March of 2025 and truly has helped so many people. Each year though, they work to include new programs ways to bring positive impacts to the community through the horses. This year they have three new programs that they are bringing out and are looking for enrollments for.

The first is the Intro to Horses for Preschoolers. This program was inspire by Connor who loves the mini horse Fiona and Mini Donkey, Donkey. They get along great and there is so much that a toddler can learn not only about horses but also about themselves. They can learn patience, sharing,



independence, and more. This program is a 6 week program and starts June 19th with times on Thursday. It will be an exciting time and there is limited availability for registration so be sure you scan the QR code to get registered today.

The second Program is the Summer Horse Powered Reading series that starts June 18th for 6 weeks. This program is to help kids learn experientially through the power of horses. We can't wait to see this program grow and the things that kids and even adults learn through the power of horses.

The final summer program is the summer horse camp. Throughout the week, kids get to interact with the horses, learn riding skills, how to care for the horses, and so much more. Each year we focus on a particular aspect of the horse and how to interact with them through that way. This year we will be doing some fun challenges with our horses on the ground as well as riding them to overcome our own fears and "I can't" attitudes that stop us from creating change. If you are interested in any of these programs, please reach out to

Amanda at 814-335-0804 to learn more, ask questions, and enroll.

The outside of a horse is always good for the inside of a man and there are no truer words than those spoken by Winston Churchill have always been something that the organization strives to encourage and grow. Interacting with horses is powerful and changing lives for the better each and everyday. Don't miss out on opportunities like these and register now.

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