

Big Maple Family Farm, LLC

NEWSLETTER

May 05, 2025

A Family of Generations

Our farm is full of history here in Elk County. With 4 generations and now 6 Generations raised here on the farm, we are excited to bring farm fresh to your table.

This farm started in 1900 with Nellie Yonker purchasing 26 acres, but that is only the start of our story. Over the years the farm has carried on to having 4 generations of owners. The farm currently is owned by Ray and Michele (4th Generation), and is being farmed alongside with the 5th & 6th Generations (Amanda & Tony and their three boys). Over the last 12 years, the farm has started to turn into a place that is helping more and more people through quality farm fresh products.



Many knew the farm from the farmers markets, however since Covid, the farm has really started to navigate a different avenue to providing quality products. We created our home delivery system and our subscription program during the covid pandemic and have since grown it to what it is today. Each day on the farm is a lot of work, but we are a family that truly enjoys feeding the community farm fresh products and working hard to do it.



The generations before us have prepared the farm for this moment in time through the purchase of the land, building the barn, the buildings, and establishing the layout. We are just the next stewards in time, setting up the foundation for future generations. Throughout the season you will see the good, the bad, and the ugly of farming, but we are here to tell you our story while providing a product you enjoy. We are looking forward to serving you and your family throughout the season and showing you the farm life and just how far we have come since 1900 and that first purchase.

Raw Milk & What It Can Do For You

The one thing that we noticed over the last few years is how much food was changed from it's natural state. In doing some research for our family and health, we really wanted to take on drinking raw milk. We had read about allergies, digestion, etc and it seemed like a great option. Well as fate would have it, Henry Farms reached out to us about trying to get their milk in the area. However, the timing was off and we weren't ready, but with all good things comes patience. We are now in our 3rd year

as a partner with Henry Farms and each week is a surprise for how much milk is sold from our little farm store.



Henry Farm's Milk is an A2/A2 milk and it also tastes fantastic. In fact the kids here do not like any milk elsewhere anymore as it is quickly noticed. Not only is the taste fantastic but so are the benefits. The A2/A2 feature in itself has quickly shown itself in our family. We struggled with digestive issues, acid reflux, and allergies that truly at times had us stumped. In the last two and half years since drinking the milk, we have noticed a

decrease in the above issues, illnesses, and just overall feeling better. So what makes this milk different? The genetics A2/A2 does not carry the beta casein that makes dairy harder to digest and well the raw component allows for natural immunities in our body to work. Not only does Henry Farms have great tasting milk, but they also have some wonderful tasting cheese. They offer three different cheeses of colby, pepper jack, and mild cheddar. This dairy farm is doing great things and our partnership has been great. We love bringing fresh milk back to Elk County and sharing it with all of you.

Each Day Brings a New Adventure



Recently, I have started walking the fields almost daily. I strive for an early morning walk to catch the sunrise and just to prepare for the start of a new day on the farm. Many days do not go as planned and there are things that come up each day that were not on the agenda. It's almost like a new adventure story is written each day as we just never know what the day will bring. Some days are hard, while others we just have a good laugh. The sunrise the other day reminded me that each new day is a gift and no matter what is thrown at us with weather, animals, or just the day to day of it all, we need to enjoy each moment.

Farm Updates

The time seems to pass so quickly these days and maybe because we are in the middle of raising children or the to-do lists are long, we aren't really sure, but it is hard to believe we are sitting in May already. This time of year brings on many challenges, mostly weather, as we begin to start the planting process. Springtime brings new growth and a start of new things that we enjoy. We have been busy planting in the greenhouses, getting seeds

started, and we have sweet corn in the ground. The weather has us a little behind in planting the garden with some of the cold

crops, but we will get there. The farm is busy and things are changing this time of year but we enjoy each new challenge that is presented.

We have also been able to move our Goats, Rocco & Romeo to their job duty here on the farm and that is to eat the weeds in the chicken pasture. Over the last couple years, the chicken pasture has been overtaken with weeds as they can't keep up with things that they do not eat so the only option we saw to help with the problem was to purchase some true "weed eaters." Cue the goats. These boys have an important job which is to restore the look of our front pasture and make sure that what you see as you visit is something we can be proud of. So far the results speak for themselves and they have been hard at work making things look much better and we can't wait to see fresh

grass in the area and the riparian buffer doing its job for the stream.



Did You Say Home Delivery?

If you can believe it, we have been doing a delivery type of setup for five years. We started out as just our subscription program and in the last three years we have gone into full blown shopping experience online with home delivery. If you are newer to the farm, you can shop weekly on our online store and have items delivered to your home FREE with a \$20 minimum order. We have worked to increase this service and are running at least fifteen deliveries or more each week. Deliveries occur on Monday's between the hours of 4-7pm. We ask that as you order, please be mindful and set a cooler out for your products so that we can ensure they are cool till you are able to collect them. If you haven't tried our home delivery service, please be sure to check out our online store sometime and try it out. You can find our store right on our website at www.bigmaplefamilyfarm.net



Farming Always Calls for A Little Ingenuity

One thing about farming is there is always some tool you could use to make your life easier, however the costs usually play into all of it. One job on the farm that is usually most despised is cutting the potato seeds. The second most hated job is picking up the finished potatoes, but cutting them takes time. Well the boys have found that they make potato cutters and were wanting to purchase one, however that is a little out of the budget, so leave it to dad. He built them a potato cutter and we were told the results were fantastic. They cut a whole bag of potatoes in 15 minutes. Now they are done cutting potatoes and are asking for more bags because they enjoyed using the cutter. No one told them that the more bags they want us to buy, the more they have to pick up. (LOL)



Horses Creating Positive Outcomes

Are you new to our farm? Well one thing that has always been a part of the transition process for our farm is the ideas of the 5th generation (Amanda & Tony). Amanda was called to take the farm and create a place to help people. In March, Big Maple Farm's Natural Therapies celebrated 10 years and in that time, the program has done great things. They are on a mission to enhance the quality of life of individuals through positive equine interactions. Over the years they have helped autistic kids build confidence with sensory issues, verbal cues, and more. People have gained muscle strength to walk, and individuals with anxiety have found a safe space with the horses. This program would not exist without fundraisers, the dedicated volunteers, and the community who supports them. Each individual that donates their time, talent, or some finances has left an impact with the program and the riders we have helped over the years. There currently is a cutest farm pet contest and for a \$5 donation you can submit your vote and be entered to win a 30 Minute lesson. We have watched this program do some incredible things over the years and in order for it to continue for many more years, they need the support of our local community. Place your vote by sending a venmo or paypal or stopping at the farm. If you would like more information about this program, then please reach out to Amanda at 814-335-0804 there are still openings for therapeutic riding, horsemanship lessons, or horse powered reading program.

