

# Big Maple Family Farm, LLC

## NEWSLETTER

August 18, 2025

### A Farmer's Work

The work around a farm is never done and the to do list continues to grow with each passing day. Sometimes though the days call for a little bit of play.

This past week, we took the day off which is rare and we closed the store for everyone to head to Ag Progress Days. If you have never been to Ag Progress Days, it is a full on ag experience. It's a place where you can find every ag dealer imaginable along with every type of equipment. It's every little boy's dream to be there and to sit on the big tractors.



Connor was so excited, we think he is still sleeping off the excitement. He loves the New Holland brand and we sat in all their tractors and combines 3 times over because his dream is to have a workmaster 70. He even knows exactly which tractor it is and found it with no problems. It's hard to believe that he is only 4 sometimes with the knowledge he has about tractors. However, don't let all this tractor looking, think we weren't doing some sort of work while we were there. The best part of Ag Progress Days is you can shop different types of things that you might need as well as do research while you are there.

We found some great information on soil and different uses for the micronutrients that are missing from soils and how to get them back. We shopped around for a cattle chute as we really need to have a plan in place for handling the cows better and more effectively. We think we found a system we really like, we just have to figure out finances for it. And we also stopped to talk to a contractor about an estimate for building on to our store as we have outgrown what we currently

have. Finally, we also made our way around to some of the vendors that were there to get information on grants, farm transitioning, business development center, insurance, and some other things that we are looking at for expanding our farm in order to feed more people. The best part of the day though, was when the rain finally came through and cooled it down a little and we left with those wonderful PA Dairyman's Milkshakes! No matter what whether you go to the farm show or Ag Progress days you should always stop and get some great tasting milkshakes. You will not be sorry because they are delicious. Even though the farmers left the farm for the day, it certainly wasn't all play, because a farmer's work is never truly done.

## *Stepping Back and Refocusing Is Important*

We are not going to fool you and tell you everything is fine here on the farm this year. We have some major concerns. Concerns that sometimes require moments like this to just step back and wait it out. As we were picking what little stuff we did, a beautiful sunset fell over us. And its these moments that remind us we live this life for this. It's not every day that people can stand in a wide open field and have a view like this. God certainly creates a masterpiece each and every day, but this doesn't always stop the worrying happening either. We are dry, so very dry that the plants just aren't staying healthy. We can only water so much and there just is no rain happening. When we thought it was going to rain, we got quick showers that didn't do enough to wet the ground because of how dry it has been. We have some true concerns with how we can continue to provide for people, will we have enough for canning, how much more water can we pull from the wells, where else can we conserve water. We are already pulling hanging baskets down to stop watering them, we halted microgreen growing to conserve water, and we as a family are reducing by buying drinking water, laundry at the laundry mat, and quick, quick showers. This year is particularly testing not only this farmer but every farmer. We are feeling defeated, worn down, struggling with finances after large breakdowns, hay fields dying, crops drying out, deer damage, people looking for things and we have no answers as to when, animal illnesses and death, and so much more. Farmers across the nation are dealing with the load of it all. Some of us have flooded fields and too much water, while others are so dry that we can't get our crops to grow. This point of the year is when we need time and moments like this to remind us to refocus, change course, and keep holding the faith that we can get through this year, but it might look a little differently.



### **Farm Updates**

The farm remains busy, but in a different way. We are trying to save what produce we can and keep things growing and providing by watering the garden. We had our sweet corn come and go. We had horse camp, attended ag progress days, and we also worked the Elk County Fair with the Farm Bureau Booth! We have been busy and things are about to enter a whole new level of busy as the kids start more back to school formalities. This year we are changing things up a bit and Garrett is now a dual enrolled student and will be attending school at St. Marys Area High School as part of the FFA program! We are excited to see how this path changes his outcome for his career path and his leadership. It will certainly change things around the farm and our daily routine but we are excited to take on the new journey for the betterment of the future of the next generation.



## *Playtime is the Best Time to Learn*

Sometimes we want to spend the whole day playing, but there is always some sort of task to do. Thank goodness Connor reminds us that we have to take a moment to play even with the work. Watering the garden takes a while, but don't worry, Connor has developed a plan to make it work for him by using a little of the water we haul in to make a puddle. He then farms around the mud and gets all his tractors stuck. His other favorite thing right now is to find Caterpillars that will turn into Monarch Butterflies. We have three currently in chrysalis waiting to hatch and release. No matter what work needs done, there is always time to play.





## Weekly Delivery Options!

Have you heard that we deliver? Now some of you already know because of your subscription, but have you heard about our weekly program? Have you ever checked out our online store? If not you should seriously get looking. We know so many enjoy our products and we hope that you are able to keep them coming to your house even after the bags are done for the season through our weekly program.

It's such an easy process, you can place a delivery order by checking out our online store through our website. Place your order and the date you want it delivered or picked up. From there, your items will be ready on a Monday. That's right, every Monday evening we travel around all of Elk County and deliver milk, farm fresh meat, and produce. We carry a variety of items and for a small \$20 order it can be brought right to your door. So if you have not checked it out, then head there now and check out our website at [www.bigmaplefamilyfarm.net](http://www.bigmaplefamilyfarm.net)

and place your first delivery order today.

## The Ever Changing Markets

Our farm has changed many times over the last 125 years, but one thing we never went into was beef cows. The boys have a true passion to raise beef and looking at the current market, we are glad we took the leap when we did to start growing our own herd. The market is such an ever changing place at this time and it changes fast. Beef is becoming something that is hard to find for the growing market and the prices reflect it. We are hoping that the market stabilizes itself out. We are wanting to grow the herd and change some things, but in order to keep the herd moving and growing we are hoping to purchase a couple more cows, however that means we need the markets to come down. Not only do the markets affect the beef industry right now but the markets are also changing with lamb, chicken, and pork as well. The regulations that keep changing, the legislation making new rules, and more are what is affecting some of the market changes as well. There are things such as Prop 12 that affect the pork industry, then you have the milk board that affects the cost of milk, and of course the USDA has rules in the selling across state lines as well which also affects the market. Sometimes regulations drive the market and sometimes demand does. Farmers are constantly watching markets, legislation, changes among state legislation, and learning where to make their moves as well. Even though we say our job title is farmer, we do way more than that on a daily basis. We also can be considered market watchers or what ever the stock traders title is. We want this farm to provide for the next 6 generations and beyond so we want to set it up for success and a way to move it through the market highs and lows. Thankfully we are small in beef right now but we know these cows and calves are going to hold the future.





## Sweet Corn, Here and Gone Already?

Sweet Corn has been something our farm has been known for over the years. From the time we had tents at the bottom of the driveway, till we started building a store that people could come to. I always remember selling sweet corn. Every year we try and grow it and keep that tradition alive. This year was no different but the corn is a little different thanks to the weather. We had the best of intentions to have corn from late July to hopefully middle of August but the weather really changed course. So what is really happening? Well we lost most of our first planting and our second planting grew as it should. We picked it over great over the last two weeks and we estimate 220 dz left the field. There is hardly anything left. Then there was our third planting which was to follow immediately so there was no drop off, but that third planting saw the most moisture at a crucial time for the seed. The seeds all rotted and so we made the

decision to repurchase seed and replant. That planting is looking ok, but not very tall. We are hoping that it will produce in the next 2.5 to 3 weeks so please stay with us, you might just see that sweet corn come back on the shelves.

## Snuggling is Good For the Soul

We love animals here at the farm, and as a person who also wants to help people with what God has given us, I enjoy seeing people smile. That is part of what motivated the horse program. Then came the donkeys. Logan desired to own donkeys and a chance to rescue one and then a second came so we took it. Folks, if you have never snuggled a donkey before they are seriously the most loveable creature ever. They just love your attention and the desire for you to sit with them and remain calm. It is so fun to see them and sit with them. The whole bonus behind all of this, is they are going to help you more than you might help them. Sitting and snuggling with them releases oxytocin in your brain and makes you happier. It reduces your cortisol (stress hormone) and it helps you remain calm, even once you leave. Check out opportunities to snuggle the animals here at the farm and come get your happy on this fall and winter.

