

Big Maple Family Farm, LLC

NEWSLETTER

Sept. 1, 2025

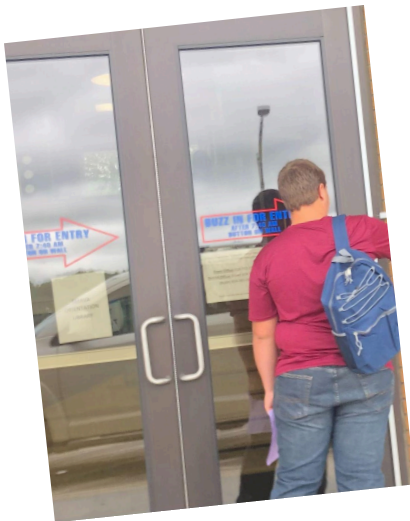
Sometimes Life Calls for a Little Change

As parents we strive to give our kids the best in life. We want to see them grow and excel, and truly find great opportunities. Change and moving forward helps us grow and this school year

looks just a little different here on the farm.

The beginning of school has come and gone for all the local students here in the area. This time of year always brings back sports, school clubs, and more. It becomes hectic and at times a little crazy for families with all the running.

However, the start of school here on the farm looks a little different. As many of you know we homeschool the kids and it was decision we made before covid even happened, so our days are not full of busy mornings and school buses.



This year though, we saw an opportunity for Garrett and decided to dig into how to get him to participate. If you're not aware, the St. Mary's School District has created an FFA program (Future Farmers of America). This program is full of different classes related to ag careers as well as opportunities for leadership conferences and community projects. It is something I truly wish that was available when I was in school. We worked closely with the schools and we were able to dual enroll Garrett so that he could attend some of these classes and participate in the program. This is only a high school program so as soon as Logan is old enough he too will get to go (we hope).

With Garrett now attending school from 11:30-1 each day, our routines are changing, our hours of operation will be changing, and well things seem a little more crazy with trying to get things done. However, you don't grow and learn with out change. During Garrett's school time in the school, the other two boys will be working with mom at the library in St. Marys on school stuff. Not everyday

will look like this as we have some days with different plans and schedules but we are making it work so far. We know that this will prove to be a great opportunity for Garrett's future. He picked classes that relate to what his passion is and that is mechanics. He will be doing a small engines/welding class, and the ag mechanics class. This ties right in with him currently rebuilding a tractor and having a passion for fixing small engine equipment. If you haven't yet, we encourage you to check out the FFA program and see how you can support the youth. The enrollment for year one is fantastic and these kids will be able to have great opportunities with these hands-on classes in high school.

Wildlife and Farming

Who doesn't love cute pictures of wildlife? We have been getting some good pictures of the many wildlife critters on the farm this year as we changed it up and got a different style of camera. This camera allows for direct alerts when something is there, and it has a faster reaction time. This time of year, it never fails the bear come back. The field corn is milking up and it just becomes irresistible for them. They just love it. Although we know they need to eat, we also need them to save the corn for us too. Much like the deer have destroyed crops that bear are really busy also. We have on camera at least two different bear in the field and the damage shows that there might be more than one. However, when you see pictures like this it just makes them look so cute and fluffy. We are working with the Game Commission to try and trap and this guy was so close, he all the donuts outside the trap but he chose not to go in. Once he goes in, the Game Commission is able to relocate him to another home, which will keep him from destroying our corn. They usually try to pick spots on mountain ranges. Often times the bears return because they can travel very far and somehow end up back here, which we don't mind them living here, but we do mind their destruction particularly this year when crops aren't growing well already and we need everything we can get to pay bills or feed the animals. The wildlife certainly are beautiful to watch and look so cute and cuddly, but they truly can be devastating to a farmer and their way of life.



Farm Updates



These last two weeks have been a busy time, in fact just when you think it will slow down, things seem to speed up. Moose has graduated into some pasture time with the horses, we had our preconstruction meeting to start our ACAP project for the heavy use area, we continue to harvest items, and we have started canning products. It just doesn't seem to slow down. The turkeys are growing fast and we will be putting out the registration for them because before we know it, they will be ready to go. We also received our last order of meat chicks! The year is quickly coming to an end with holidays just around the corner but with each season comes different movements on the farm.

Turkey Time

The turkeys are growing fast! It's amazing to watch them go from these little tiny birds to these massive birds as quick as they do. It never fails, as soon as we start having them eat grass, they blow up.

Much like the meat chicks we have to watch over these guys close and the wildlife once again struck here also. The turkeys just didn't grow fast enough to be too big for a hawk and bald eagle. We believe we only lost 4 turkeys to them but it could have been more.

While we love the wildlife, especially knowing that we have a bald eagle pair that lives around here, it can be frustrating watching them take away our investments. The turkeys are finally too big for them and so we think we are in the clear for now but we still watch them closely. If you have never had one of our farm fresh turkeys this is the year to grab one. Ordering opens this week and we will see them

sell out as they do every year, so get in on it fast before they are gone.



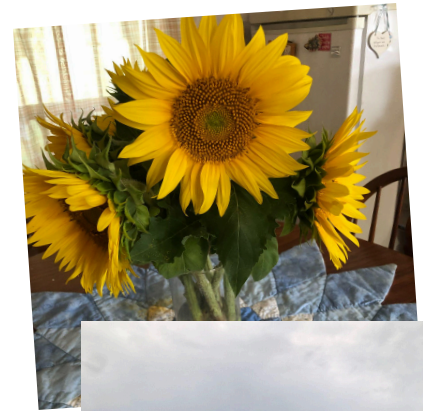


Canning For Days

The one thing that we opted to about 6 years ago was advance into a more value added product. We could see how much people really valued a finished product that they didn't have to make on their own. The production numbers have increased over the years and last year we finished with 1,200 jars of canned goods! We are hoping to beat that this year and we see that we need to increase our numbers on certain products. If you are a lover of our dilly beans, they will be back in a couple weeks, so will some pickles, tomato soup, pasta sauce, peaches, and more! The canning process is in full force here and so if you see a light on late at night, just know that's what we are doing. Canning, canning, and canning some more. It's our love for feeding people that makes the days seem worth it.

Everyone needs a Sunflower

The last 3 years we have planted a field of sunflowers. It is truly my most favorite field to see when ready and I just love the look of them for the 2 weeks they are in bloom, however this year, the weather, the field we planted them in, and the weeds just over took them and we didn't get any. I was devastated. However, as we were walking through the corn one day, I noticed some sunflowers popping up but I didn't realize just how many seeds got left behind in the planter when we planted the corn again. There are several sunflowers that grew mixed in with the corn. So, I still got my sunflower display in the house, and I could go to the field to look at them too. There are still some in bloom. Not sure what it is about Sunflowers but I just love looking at them and how their brightness can instantly bring a smile to someone's face. If you are looking for a little pick me just look at the sunflowers and they will help you smile and enjoy the amazing things that God created.



Sweet Corn Update

We told you to hang with us when it came to the sweet corn. We know how much everyone loves it for labor day, but here we are at Labor day and no corn. We are looking at maybe mid week but hopefully by the next weekend for sure, however there is more to the story. When we opted to reinvest in this planting, we made the decision to disc under what little seeds germinated. However after walking through the field some of those seeds (more than we thought) actually came back and their corn is ready, right on schedule. However it is not enough for us to advertise and so we have it added to your bag as an option and we will put it in the store as there won't be much at all. The corn is coming and we hope people are ready to enjoy some more when it is back on the shelves again!

Fall Fundraiser Coming Up

The horse program is gearing up for fall as we start looking at the needs of the horses and the program, it's time for a fundraiser. Our program is fully volunteer only and we strive to keep costs low by working hard to raise the needed funds for things. As volunteers become sparse, we have opted to move into smaller style fundraisers as we are no longer able to put on the fall festival. This year we want to present a "Grand in your Hand." We have 100 squares to sell and one lucky number is going to win \$1K in cash. This type of fundraiser helps us provide for the horses, and our riders, and keep costs low. This fall we are preparing for a local school to come for a 6 week program. These kids will get to engage in positive equine experiences. Our goal is to charge the school a very small fee for our services so that they can use the funds to provide the transportation in order for these students to have this experience. That is where fundraisers come in so that we can continue such things for our community and allow others to have their lives enhanced through equines. If you would like a number or two, please reach out to Amanda today. The support of the



program

means so much to us, the volunteers, and those who experience these equines.



Donkey Snuggling Schedule Is open for Fall

The world is full of so much worry and stress and fast paced day to day expectations, that our bodies never get a chance to settle down. So why not take 30 minutes and visit with a cute cuddly donkey and let those things just pass by? The idea of snuggling animals has come from dogs and cats. When we snuggle our pets our oxytocin rises and allows us to relax and feel happy. It calms our body and helps reduce cortisol levels. It is a great feeling after snuggling. Donkey is a snuggler, in fact most donkeys are, so we want him to help you today so that you

can get a snuggle or two in. Let him help you calm your body and feel relaxed in this crazy world. You can now schedule at this link:

<https://calendly.com/ambalon46/30min>

**Our Snuggles and Succulents event is coming up!
Register Today and help support the Horse Program!**

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