

Big Maple Family Farm, LLC

NEWSLETTER

October 20, 2025

Many Hands Really Do Make Light Work

The harvest season is always so busy. The tasks are many, the hours are long and we never feel like we have enough time in the day. Thankfully a few great people showed up and we completed a job faster than ever!

This time of year the jobs just seem to keep coming! It's like you never actually cross anything off the to-do list because

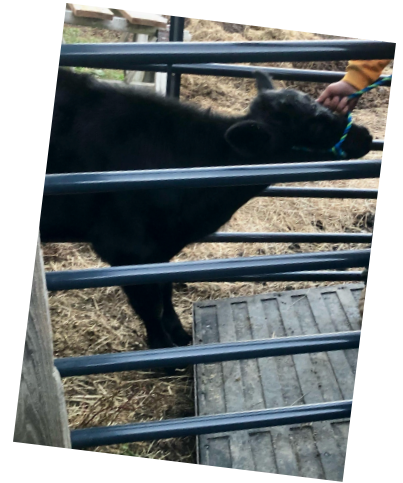
more and more seem to get put on there. It never fails that some jobs just take longer than others and when it comes to harvesting potatoes, they seem to take a lot longer than we always want them to. When working on them, we typically only do a couple rows here and there as we can, but we knew we were running out of time with possible rain coming in more frequently for the fall, so we went to social media. We just wanted to complete the job with 9 rows left. Our desire was to finish in one day and who knew if our plan would actually work. We had nothing to pay people this year, which was not exactly the best, but we tried. Well it was the most shared post we have ever done. With well over 15,000 impressions we hoped that maybe two people would come. The day came and the weather was not the best. It started raining which was not what they called for. We went with it anyways, Garrett got up early and caught the best rainbow over the field. Before we knew it people pulled in! We had enough people to show up that we had 9 rows of potatoes picked up in under 2 hours.



It was the best thing ever! There were kids here, families that came together to participate and just all around a great learning opportunity for those who came. No one was overworked, the kids loved every minute of it, and at the end of the day they still left with some great potatoes. We took an approach we have never taken before and just asked the community to help out if they were able. We gave everyone some potatoes upon leaving and we enjoyed their company while eating donuts in the field when the job was done. Some of the kids did not want to leave when the work was all done. They were hoping for more work, we just didn't have any more at the time that so many hands could help with. We loved the chance to talk with people about the struggles of farming this year, animals, and the best part was that they were able to see our newest addition on the farm. When everyone left, we were able to breathe a sigh of relief knowing that one more job was done and we were feeling beyond blessed with all the hands that showed up. It truly was a great way to help teach the next generation about their food and how things grow along with the struggles farmers face.

Learning New Things, Leads to Success

Do you remember the calf from the last newsletter? Well with lots of hand feeding through the halter and building a trusting relationship, he was able to get the halter on and not give any problems. Up next, moving him out. This was going to prove to be tricky. He was walking on the halter in the safe space of his pen, but the minute we wanted him to go out and towards the trailer, he was not interested. He was scared and would tug back. The idea of leaving this new found safe space with his people was scary. With lots of back and forth, Garrett and his new owner got him on. With his new name, Roscoe, he moved on to a new home. We can't wait to see the updates coming as he makes progress through till the FFA show ring. Roscoe will be learning how to hold his head, how to trust people, and stand in a squared up pose. He will learn how to like baths and brushing and all the good things! If you have never been to a market auction for students in an FFA program, we highly recommend attending. Not only could you win a quality raised animal, but you bidding and buying these animals helps benefit the student so they can do it again next year! We will keep you up to date when the market is and maybe you would want to come and watch Roscoe in his performance. We can't wait to see how this new program grows the next generation of farmers here in Elk County.



Farm Updates

Well, well, well, what do we have here? That's what we all said when we noticed this little girl out in the field. It's only Oct., how in the world would/could we have a lamb this early! In fact we have never had lambs this early. We all started calculating when the rams went in the ewes. Well we put the rams in at the beginning of May, so this was possible from that. However, in the past we have only raised wool sheep and they typically don't go into heat that early. Hair sheep can come into heat and lamb twice in one year as sheep only have a 5 month gestation. So again we knew it was a "possibility" however in our research the sheep need so much nutrition to help the reproductive system and the drought was taking away from what they were eating. So this was a true surprise as we thought all things were against us for these ewes to breed for this early. But here we are with one ewe raising our newest baby girl on the farm! Don't worry they are safe in the barn at the moment as lambs make us nervous with predators and the current state of weather. Stay tuned for more updates as it looks like we might have a couple other ewes getting closer to lambing. We can't wait to start showing off baby lambs!

Farmer or Teacher, It's All the Same Title

We can't say enough how much we love educating the next generation, so any opportunity to help someone learn, you can bet we will try to be there. Well the FFA students in Animal Science class were learning about poultry and so we were asked to talk about the poultry business. Well there is no better way then to bring the animal to school! So 5 chickens headed off to school one morning and we taught some students all about chickens, their parts, and the poultry business! It was a great morning and we hope that the students told everyone all about it.



The Sunrises On A New Project



A farm is always full of “need to do” projects and the ability to keep changing and growing. Well as the sun rose this past week, we finally broke ground on a long awaited project here at the farm, our heavy use area. We talked to the contractors from the field as that sun came up and hoped that this project will make a lasting impact for the future of the farm and the ground.

A heavy use area is to be considered a sacrifice area in which the animals will stay in the winter. Now if you are on a large cattle farm, you might find that this is an all concrete space, however we are talking horses and smaller animal unit numbers, so ours is made from stone. We have fencing to add yet around the pad so that we can control when the animals stand on the pad and when they can go to other paddocks for grazing. We also will have an added buffer zone in between the pad and water source (our creek). This buffer zone can also be grazed for minimal



amounts but with the fence around it, we have considered bringing bees back and using this area with easier access to raise bees. We will see what the future holds but for now we are excited to see a space that the horses can be on in the winter without destroying ground and we will not be able to move hay in and out easier. Now we realize this does bring more work as we will need to clean horse poop off it and so it will add extra things to caring for the horses, but in the end it will make their foot health better, reduce bacterial skin infections on their legs, and overall help their muscles and joints from not walking in the deep mud. The project looks great and we can't thank the guys at Rodich Construction for their hard work. The pad looks so pretty and we can't wait for the fence to go up and the finished product!

Upcoming Learning Opportunities

Many of you know that I work Part Time for the Penn State Ext. Office as the Master Gardener Coordinator. I truly enjoy the program and what it stands for because even though I am called to be a farmer and feed people, and in this position I can help a great group of individuals who are trained to teach others find new ways to help. We currently have a class at the End of October perfect for you to learn about growing some great food during the winter. Just because we live in PA, doesn't mean we can give up on growing ourselves some great food. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate reaching out.

Winter GARDENING

Growing Your Own Food can be year round!

Gardening is not just limited to outdoors and we can continue to grow certain items through the winter.

JOIN THE MASTER GARDENERS OF ELK/CAMERON COUNTIES TO LEARN

HOW TO:

- Utilize Grow Lights
- Temperature Control
- Good items to grow in the winter
- Types of containers to use/space for plants

October 23rd
5pm-7pm
St. Mary's Public Library
814-776-5331
arb334@psu.edu

REGISTER HERE:

A Little of the Good Stuff

If you can believe it this year we provided 48 bags every two weeks for the last 6 months! That was an amazing feat and honestly our biggest concern in the spring, is can we have enough for everyone? What if people don't like it? It's a huge fear and although a couple times this year things were short, overall we never had to switch people away from their choices. Our biggest fears have come to light though with the eggs, as we just don't have enough. We just can't keep supplying eggs to people at the rate they want. It's hurting us and we don't know what we are missing but we are hoping to have a break in this egg recession soon!



Aside from the eggs, we have been blessed with sending out pounds and pounds of food in the last six months and it's all thanks to you all who took a chance on our farm and wanting to be a part of the program. We hope that when we provide our followup email with our customer satisfaction you take the time to complete it and let us know what you enjoyed and what you didn't! We hope to see you back next year!

Your Local Farmers Becoming Famous Nationally

The Farmer's Almanac is a great resource for learning weather trends, up and coming methods in raising food, and learning from others. In the summer of 2024 we were approached by a writer for the farmer's almanac for our diverse income methods. She was writing about farmers who are making income from a variety of different methods and they were referred to our farm. She asked about the horse program, and the farm business with all the methods we earn money, and about our farm history. That was then turned into a really nice piece alongside some other great farmers doing awesome things as well! It took a whole year before the article was published and honestly, I had forgotten about it till my mom looked at me yesterday and goes "fun fact, did you know our farm is in the Farmer's Almanac" to which I was like oh yeah! That was a year ago LOL! We are grateful for the reminder from another farmer who we work with in the processing world noticed it and told her! This is a great way to get our farm known across many states and in fact possibly Canada as well! If you haven't yet, get your copy of the 2026 Farmer's Almanac because there just might be a little giveaway coming up on our social media based on what you learn!



Local Farmers Partnering Together to Provide Tasty Meals

The holidays are coming up and you know you want to make some great meals for your family. Why not check out some of our quality products to purchase? You can pair our Pasta Sauce and Shiitake Joe's Mushroom powder to make a tasty pasta dish or maybe have us turn it into a gift basket arrangement. We will be selling our gift baskets this year with some great new additions that you will not want to miss. This year instead of heading to Target or Walmart for those family gifts, look to give your family the gift of food. Check out our gift baskets or stop by and get some canned goods and create your very own basket. We are here to help you make your meals and your families' healthier. We hope to see you grabbing this great partnership throughout the winter

and spicing up your dinner table.

Dr. Connor Has Your Medicine for the Winter

It's almost time for the flu, colds, and other illnesses to hit so Dr. Connor is here to prescribe you farm fresh goods delivered to your door step all winter long! That's right, we deliver every Monday all winter long so why not keep your dinner table full of farm fresh chicken, lamb, beef, canned goods, fresh juice, and more! We are working on growing fresh lettuce and other greens throughout the winter and will have many other products waiting for you. Just shop our online store with your order by Sunday and have it delivered to you on Monday! Find us online at

www.bigmaplefamilyfarm.net

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