

AG QUARTERLY

CELEBRATING 80,000 ACRES OF FOREVER FARMLAND AND THE FARMING COMMUNITY



R-Phils

July 2025



BERKS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WHAT WE DO

The Berks County Department of Agriculture promotes agriculture in Berks County by preserving farmland, invigorating agricultural economic development, and connecting our community to agricultural resources.

WHO WE ARE

We are a department of the County of Berks, established in 2015 to serve Berks County residents. We are dedicated to ensuring a thriving agricultural industry in Berks County.

Credits

Content and editing by Berks County Dept. of Agriculture staff; template design by Rick Royer, Berks County Planning.
Cover photo credit: Rick Royer

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Peonies from State Hill Fruit Farm. Courtesy of Louise Rick, Berks County preserved farm owner



PRESERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Meadow Glen Farm, LLC - Adam Family Settlement #TBD

Excerpts from "Our Families' Goals" by Clyde A. B. Myers and an additional article by Dustin Adam to be published in the Reading Eagle.



- Meadow Glen Farm is owned by the Adam family, who purchased the property in 2022. This farm brought Berks County to over 80,000 acres of preserved farmland.
- Dustin Adam is passionate about being a steward of the land and wanting to protect its integrity, which prompted their journey into the preservation program.
- Not all preserved farm families are full time farmers, many have jobs off of the farm and rent the land, like the Adams. However, the family is looking forward to a future on the farm, starting by planting a small orchard and making plans to raise livestock.

"After all, in a day and age where so much is temporary, there's a lot of appeal in a the label of "a forever farm."

Please see our website for full articles on preserved farms.



Q2 HIGHLIGHTS

Twin Valley to Farm Field Trip

Culinary Arts students from Twin Valley visited Weaver's Orchard to see the pressing of apple cider and learn about orchard operations. They then took a trip to Allegheny Valley Farms for education on dairy cows and yogurt making!



Penn State Extension Events

The Berks County Dept of Ag sponsored 2 Penn State Extension events. Dairy Field Day at Rohrer's Dairy in Washington Boro on April 17th which provided participants with information about all things dairy and Women Rooted in Ag on May 23rd where guests were given information on diversifying their farm businesses.



AEC Market Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Staff joined local representatives to celebrate the grand opening of AEC Market in Hamburg. AEC Market brings fresh food products direct to consumers from local farms and producers.



Q2 HIGHLIGHTS

80,000 Acres Preserved Celebration

On June 18th the Department joined the Agricultural Land Preservation Board to celebrate the preservation of 80,000 acres of preserved farmland with a banquet and baseball game at the Redner's Event Center at the R-Phils stadium. This milestone had been reached at the State Board of Farmland Preservation meeting the previous week. Thanks to generous sponsorship, including from the County of Berks, preserved farm owners, guests, and sponsors were treated to charcuterie by Dietrich's Meats, a catered meal, favors created by Bailey's Wood Products and Unique, and centerpiece baskets filled with local ag products. Speakers included the County Commissioners, State Senator Judy Schwank, and PA Secretary of Agriculture, Russell Redding. Cupcakes from Kim's Bakery and Way-har ice cream capped off the event.



Agriculture was also the highlight of the baseball game that evening, with a cup fan giveaway and ag exhibits by the Berks County Farm Bureau which included mules and a tractor. The Berks County Dairy Princesses were in attendance. Ag representatives including Executive Director Kim Fies, threw out the first pitch, and former Dairy Princesses, Angie Davis and Mikayla Orr, sang the national anthem.

It was the perfect night to celebrate the ag community and Berks County's preserved farm owners!



Q2 HIGHLIGHTS

Ag in the Classroom



Twenty teachers from 7 different school districts joined us on June 25 & 26 for our annual Ag in the Classroom Course. This year, participants visited 8 different Farms and Agribusinesses in Berks County. The stops included: Zimmerman Farm Service, Light Dairy Farm (robotic milking), Hidden Pearl Farm (breeding event horses and Angus beef), Over Home Alpacas, Clover Farms Dairy Processing Plant, Sweet Street, Reading Philly's Turf Management, and Unique Pretzels.



OUR WORK IN NUMBERS



2025 Q2 Online Presence

Our staff continue to promote agriculture and share resources with thousands of Berks County residents via Facebook, the online Local Food Map, and the Berks Ag Event Calendar.

7,200 GrowTogether
Website Users

21,974 Food Map &
Events Calendar
Views

263 Local Farms &
Vendors Listed
on Food Map

145 Ag Events
Listed

37,808 Facebook
Page Views

118 Facebook
Posts



2025 Second Quarter Events

500+ 80,000-acre Celebration
ballgame and banquet
attendees

20 Educators participated
in Ag in the Classroom

250 Promotional items
handed out at Kempton
fair

4 ByGone Berks Recipes
Tried and Posted on
Social Media



2025 OBJECTIVES

Second Quarter Update

Our team has continued to make key advances on our annual objectives in 2025.

Continue strengthening the agricultural land preservation program.

- Selected and began offer process for farms selected in 2025 ranking
- Conducted Agricultural Conservation Easement settlements on 5 farms totaling 288.8 acres
- Landscape software:
 - Scheduling and reporting of stewardship visits

Refining Department of Agriculture's strategy, function, and branding.

- Growing Berks - Ag Study:
 - Continue to populate and promote the Food Map and Events Calendar
 - Participated in Conservation District Legislative Breakfast to promote the findings of the Ag Study and support our cooperating agencies.

Continue to promote the diverse ag career opportunities.

- Hosted the 2 day Ag in the Classroom to expose 20 educators to the diverse careers available in the Food and Fiber Industry.
- Initiated connections between Ag businesses and the organizers of the What's so Cool about Manufacturing to expand Ag entity participation.

GROWING BERKS and Berks County Department of Agriculture FOCUS AREAS

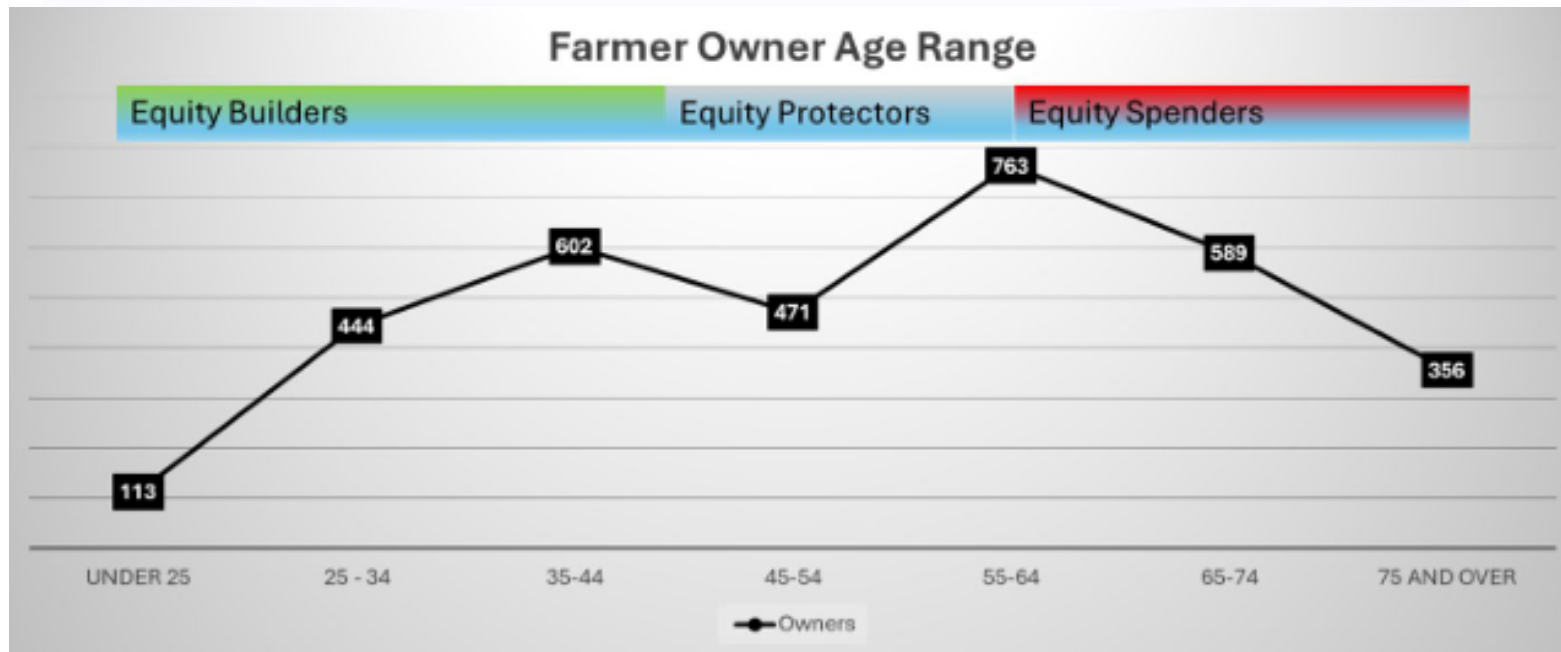
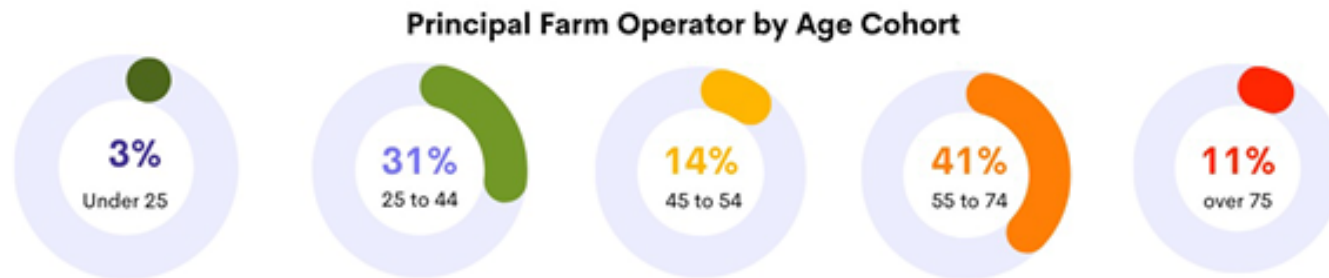
Want to know more?

Don't hesitate to reach out -
we'd love to hear from you.



Berks Ag Fact

41% of Berks County Farm Operators are 55 to 74 years old



Source: USDA NASS, Census of Agriculture, 2022

UPCOMING...



Would you like to partner with us for future events? Give us a call or email us: 610-378-1844 or DeptofAg@BerksPA.gov

Berks County Farm Market & Festival September 6, 2025

Audience: Everyone

Description: Here is a chance to see what buying local means in Berks County. We've partnered with the Parks Department to bring farm history to farm present. Look for shopping, demonstrations, entertainment, and food. All activities are open to the public and FREE for the day. From 9-2. Located at the Berks County Heritage Center.

Partners: Berks County Farmers and Producers

Agriculture & Natural Resources Career & Job Fair | November 13, 2025

Audience: Berks County High School Students and Job Seekers

Description: Exhibitors from various agriculture and natural resources careers connect with students and job seekers to showcase the varied careers in the industry and provide career opportunities and internships.

Partners: Local agribusinesses, colleges and universities, and agency partners

Agriculture Tire Collection November 20, 2025

Audience: Berks County Farmers

Description: Free tire collection and recycling event that allows farmers to bring old tractor and large truck tires to stop the spread of mosquito borne illnesses and benefit the environment along with removing the tires from areas of the farm that can be better utilized for ag activities.



CONTACT US OR STOP BY!

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www.berkpa.gov/departments/agriculture