

# Local B&B highlighted on 'Today Show'

## County farm featured on travel segment from Baltimore

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Local "Today Show" viewers may see some familiar places on this morning's broadcast.

A reporter and crew from the show were in the area last week filming a segment for "Today's Travel" on two-day getaways from Baltimore with travel expert Peter Greenberg.

"Lancaster County is a destination that's within driving destination of a number of large metropolitan areas. It's affordable, and it's a great family destination, and that's what we promote," Cara O'Donnell, Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau media relations manager, said.

Greenberg and the "Today Show" crew visited Lancaster's Central Market and Sturgis Pretzels in Lititz and took a buggy ride before visiting Rocky Acre Farm Bed & Breakfast.

"Farm B&Bs are one of the things that are unique about Lancaster County," O'Donnell said.

Located at 1020 Pinkerton Road in Rapho Township, Rocky Acre Farm is owned and operated by the Benner family. Debra Benner said her in-laws, Eileen and Galen Benner, manage the B&B, while she and her husband, Arlin, manage the family's dairy operation, Yippee! Farms.

The Benners farm 700 acres and the dairy has 700 milking cows and 530 heifers. The home farm where the B&B is located has 130 acres. Yippee! Farms also rents 10 other farms.

The 200-year-old dairy farm and the limestone farmhouse at Rocky Acres have been in Eileen Benner's family since the 1920s. The house is believed to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad.

"The original part of the house



Pictured, from left, are Galen, Eileen, Debra and Arlin Benner of Rocky Acres Farm Bed & Breakfast.

was built in the 1700s around the end of the Revolution. They tell us they hid slaves here around the time of the Civil War — there's a false wall in the attic," Eileen Benner said. Both Eileen and Galen Benner's families have lived in the area for generations, and Eileen relates some of the local history to the guests.

The Benners began offering farm vacations in 1965, opening one bedroom and bath to guests. The B&B operation was expanded in the '90s, and now most of the home is used as a B&B.

There's even a suite, and the oldest part of the farmhouse is used as an apartment that sleeps up to seven. There's also a guest house in the woods that's an eight-minute walk from the main house.

The Benners have six children, and most of the family is involved in the B&B in some fashion.

Before the main farm was turned into a dairy in 1965, the family raised beef and tomatoes. Debra Benner said her husband expanded the dairy operation in the '90s after buying it from his

father.

Having a working farm is what sets this B&B apart, she said. "Most of the guests come from big cities in the Northeast, and this is an opportunity for them to see how the milk ends up in their local grocery store.

For a number of our guests, this is the first time they've seen a cow." Benner herself came to Lancaster County in the mid-'90s from New York City. "I was an actress, and I came to Lancaster for a part," she said.

"It takes the two of us working full-time to run the dairy operation. Coming from New York, there's so much to learn, but I feel blessed to be here — we have rich soil that produces an abundance of crops, and we're one of the few counties that doesn't rely on irrigation to do so," she said.

Eileen Benner prepares the hearty family-style breakfast that's served daily.

"She's amazing — she doesn't use any recipes and whips up an incredible breakfast for all of 40 people," Benner said.