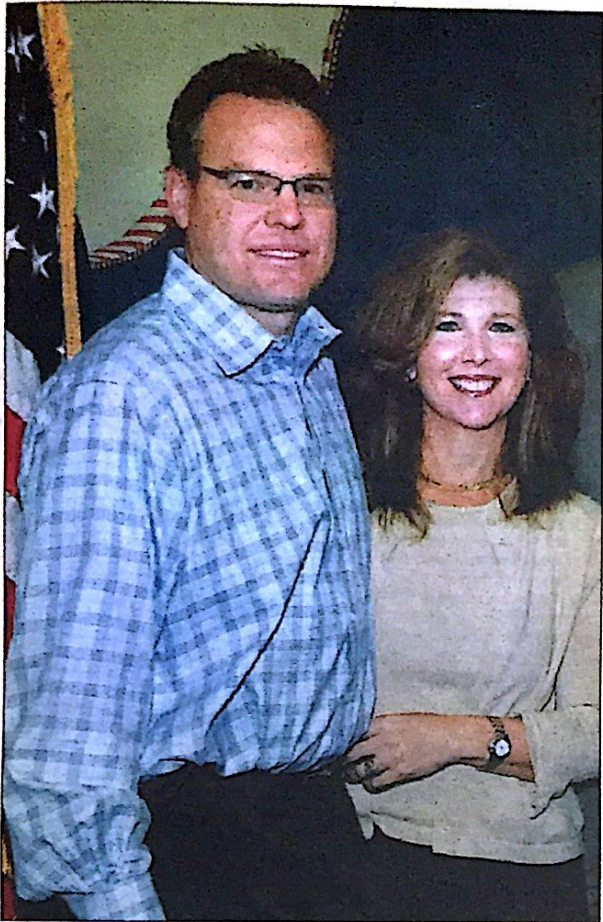


Lancaster County Farm Bureau Elects Deborah Benner



Submitted photo

Lancaster County Farm Bureau president Deborah Benner and her husband Arlin raise 865 cows and 1,300 heifers on their Yippe! Farms in Mount Joy.

LOU ANN GOOD

Food and Family Features Editor

After a long day's work helping milk 750 cows, feeding 1,300 heifers and overseeing 18 employees on Yippe! Farms' 700 acres, Deborah Benner often feels like she has little energy to devote to attending meetings.

"But our livelihood depends on farming and I believe it's important to preserve agriculture in Lancaster County," she said of her reason participating in several ag organizations.

Recently Benner was elected president of the Lancaster County Farm Bureau, which has about 800 members.

She said, "Farm Bureau is the largest and most powerful lobbying force in the nation for agriculture. It helps farmers pull together on issues that are important. I think every farmer should belong to the organization."

Benner, Mount Joy, has an unusual background for becoming a staunch ag supporter. A former actress from New York, Benner married her husband,

Arlin Benner, a fourth generation Mennonite farmer and was thrown into an entirely different way of life. She eventually gave up commuting to New York to help on the farm and quickly perceived the importance of joining agricultural organizations.

She was a director for the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board, which pushed to have more milk-flavor choices and milk products in vending machines installed in schools.

For seven years, Benner served on the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce ag committee and on the Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit board, where she is on the audit committee. On the county's Farm Bureau, Benner has served on committees such as government audit, special events and is media communicator for the county.

Some of Benner's efforts for promoting agriculture have been quite novel. She has appeared on the Today Show and been interviewed by several major networks after their farm appeared on an episode of Discovery Channel's programming for Dirty

Jobs. Benner said taping featured hoof trimming and was voted number two on the show for the dirtiest job. Benner was pleased that the episode showcases agriculture in a positive light and reveals how the farm promotes animal herd health. Ironically, the Benners hear from people from all over the world as a result of the show, which has often been rebroadcast.

Benner said that many senators and congressmen started political careers through membership in Farm Bureau. But as fewer people remain in agriculture, the voice for agriculture is fading.

"Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization that remains the most powerful ag advocate in government. It's important for farmers to become members to keep ag-friendly policies," she said.

If interested in joining Farm Bureau, contact a member or call Benner at (717) 572-3593.

Vegetable, Berry Growers Seminar to Focus on Food Safety

BUTLER, Pa. — The Western Pennsylvania Vegetable and Berry Grower's Seminar is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 18, at the Days Inn, Butler, Pa. The seminar runs from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. The focus of this year's production session is on vegetable disease control and food safety for vegetable and berry growers.

Discussion topics include basic steps growers should take to minimize any risk of food borne

pathogen contamination on produce, bacterial diseases of tomatoes, phytophthora wilt of peppers, vine crops and powdery and downy mildew management on vine crops.

Other topics include day neutral strawberry production in Pennsylvania, low spray and organic pest management options for berry crops and horticulture educator from Lancaster County. An afternoon marketing session will follow.

Registration fee is \$30 if received

by Wednesday, Nov. 12. Walk in registration costs \$35. Contact your local Penn State Cooperative Extension office or the Westmoreland County Office at (724) 837-1402 for more information and a brochure with the program and registration form. Also you can find the brochure on the Web sites of Westmoreland <http://westmoreland.extension.psu.edu/> and Washington <http://washington.extension.psu.edu/> county offices of Penn State Cooperative Extension.