

PYFA WINTER CONFERENCE 2022
WYNDHAM GARDEN YORK
Hosted by the state board
February 1-3, 2022

The 2022 winter conference of the PA Young Farmers Association began with a bus tour and lunch at the Greystone Brew House in Dillsburg. A delicious meal was enjoyed and brewmaster Jesse described their beer-making process.



The bus then traveled to Cedar Hill Farms, owned by the Eisenhower family since 1964. Through the years they have purchased additional farms so they now own 1600 acres and farm 6500 acres in the Wellsville area, with 1400 steers, 750 sows, and many chickens. The farm grew 3500 acres of corn in 2021, averaging 200 bushels/acre. A large portion of the feeder steers diet is outdated produce from area grocery stores. The Eisenhowers were very gracious hosts and joined us for the Wednesday night banquet.





The next stop was Wags Brothers Meats, owned by Byron Wagner. Kelly Young led the tour through the entire process, from loading off the truck to the processing room



where butchers were dividing the meat and processing hamburger, sausage, jerky and other products. The Wagners have their own steers and pigs, and in addition do custom butchering of all types of meat animals including 300 deer this hunting season. Wags Brothers recently opened a retail store in

nearby Dover for convenience of their customers. We enjoyed samples of their delicious sweet bologna.

Tuesday evening's banquet featured the Spokesperson Contest and Greg Gipe, PA State FFA Vice President, was declared the winner. He participated Tuesday morning in the Media Blitz at the nearby Weis Market, where a lucky customer's food items were purchased for them by PYFA. Greg pointed out that much of what is purchased at the grocery store is not food.



Conference attendees

enjoyed music by Dave Kline and an ice cream social to close out the evening.

Wednesday morning was the Delegates meeting, where new officers were elected: President Becky Nas, Past President Ken Sanner, President Elect Michelle Dietrich, Secretary Anthony Dietrich, Treasurer Ed Zug, Membership Chair Debbie Zug, Public Relations Denise Leydig, Northern Region VP Matt Dersham, South Central VP Jason Rentzel, Eastern VP Dale Hawkins, and Western VP Keith Weimer.

Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Greg Hostetter was our guest for luncheon and he gave an update on PDA activities and the PA Farm Bill that was passed two years ago. Agriculture in PA has an impact of \$132 billion on the economy.

Kutztown Young Farmers won the award for having the highest conference registration this year.

Wednesday afternoon featured three educational workshops. Dwayne Salem talked about the types and benefits of crop insurance and how to get involved in grain trading and futures.

Mike and Sharon Reifsnnyder described their experience with growing hops, the challenges and opportunities. Hops are a perennial crop that take 3-5 years from planting to begin production. They grow on an 18-20 foot high trellis and are difficult to grow in Pennsylvania's climate.

The third workshop was presented by Marty Clemmer of Paradise Solar. He explained how solar panels can be installed, the various incentive programs and tax credits currently available, and the benefits of ownership rather than leasing.



Wednesday night's banquet featured the award winners



from the various contests sponsored by PYFA. Michelle Dietrich of Mifflinburg YF received the Community Service award for all her work with emergency services, Young Farmers, and other local groups.

Ag Choice and Mid Atlantic Farm Credit were named Honorary Young Farmers for 2022. Both offices have been very supportive of the PYFA with sponsorships to support our contests and conferences.

The Richard Hoppes Memorial Award for years of continual service to PYFA was given to Jason Rentzel of Gettysburg.

Jason has served as regional vice president several times, as well as state president 2017-18.



The community service project for the conference was the food pantry operated by the Myerstown Church of the Brethren, with attendees donating \$406 to the cause.

Speaker for the evening was Dr. Elizabeth Hines of Penn State. Her talk explained the various programs available for swine producers as well as the new PSU Butcher School and upcoming animal science apprenticeship program.

On Thursday, attendees took off on their own to visit downtown York, touring the Agriculture and Industrial Museum and Central Market.

Next year's conference will be in February in the Gettysburg area. Watch for more information.



2022 PYFA Officers