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First Lady Lori Shapiro Tours Mother Earth Organic Mushrooms, Highlights Pennsylvania's Role as a National Agriculture Industry Leader

Pennsylvania leads the nation in production of organic mushrooms and produces nearly half of all conventionally produced mushrooms grown in the U.S.

Shapiro Administration investments will boost PA mushroom growers' competitive advantage.

West Grove, PA – Pennsylvania First Lady Lori Shapiro joined **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** for a tour of [Mother Earth Organic Mushrooms](#)' farm in West Grove, among the businesses making Pennsylvania number one nationally in organic mushroom production. **Shapiro Administration** investments are feeding continued growth in the nation-leading industry through targeted investments to meet challenges unique to mushroom, and specifically organic mushroom production.

“It was a pleasure to join Secretary Redding this afternoon along with the representatives from the American Mushroom Institute and Mother Earth Mushrooms”, said **First Lady Lori Shapiro**. “Josh and I are proud that the Commonwealth is a national leader in the mushroom industry – and we will continue working to deliver the resources and support Pennsylvania’s agriculture community needs in order to keep innovating and thriving.”

Mother Earth is a USDA Organic-certified farm that has been in business more than 100 years. The family business encompasses every phase of mushroom production from compost, to growing, packing, and delivery.

“Our mushroom industry’s long history of innovation and resourcefulness demonstrates why the world looks to Pennsylvania for leadership,” **Secretary Redding** said. “Mushrooms grow in the dark, but Shapiro Administration investments are made in the light by listening to voices of producers like **Mother Earth Owners Jerry Yeatman and Tim Hihn**, and **American Mushroom Institute President Rachel Roberts** to hear what their challenges are, and learn where we can feed their growth opportunities and help them meet their challenges.”

Pennsylvania leads the nation in production of organic mushrooms and produces nearly half of all *agaricus* mushrooms grown in the U.S. The industry pumps nearly \$1.2 billion into our state economy annually and supports more than 9,300 jobs paying over \$313 million.

“The past few years, while challenging, have been an opportunity for the mushroom industry to show that resiliency is not just an attitude, but an ever-changing business strategy,” said **American Mushroom Institute President Rachel Roberts**, who joined the tour to represent additional voices of Pennsylvania’s industry. “Produce continues to fight for a bigger share of consumers' plates as well as a fair share of support from USDA and other regulatory agencies. Among produce, mushrooms are the original ecosystem servicer to the environment, whose taste and nutritional value are unique and exciting. The commitment of our Commonwealth to our industry, and vice versa, is not just a wonderful history, but an important partnership. We are grateful for the opportunity to join the First Lady today and discuss that.”

Among critical agriculture investments in the bipartisan Shapiro Administration budget for 2023-24 is \$1 million to create the first-of-its-kind **Organic Center of Excellence** to empower and support organic producers like Mother Earth. The center will support food safety testing to uphold product integrity and increase consumer confidence.

The new PA Preferred Organic™ Brand, created last week [when Governor Shapiro signed House Bill 157 into law](#), will offer an additional tool for organic producers to promote consumer confidence and build product sales.

Governor Shapiro’s 2023-24 budget continues to invest strategically where Pennsylvania’s agriculture and food industry needs it most through the PA Farm Bill, building on a foundation of more than \$150 million to date in strategic investments in challenges and strengths unique to our state’s food system.

A [diverse range of funding](#) supported in the 2023-24 budget is available to feed the mushroom industry’s future. Among these opportunities are PA Farm Bill Farm Vitality grants for business planning and expansion, Specialty Crop Block Grants to increase market opportunities and promote products, Agriculture and Youth Grants to build the workforce the industry needs to stay competitive; as well as conservation funding to bolster farm sustainability and decrease climate change impacts; and more than \$2 million in Agriculture Research grants to develop innovative solutions for pest control and disease challenges, and to strengthen organic and regenerative agriculture.

Find more information about Pennsylvania’s investments in a stronger more resilient agriculture and food industry at agriculture.pa.gov.