



Pennsylvania  
Department of Agriculture



Pennsylvania  
Department of Labor & Industry

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## **Shapiro Administration Applauds Workers Critical to Pennsylvania's Economy, Naming First PA Farmworkers of the Year**

**Biglerville, PA – Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Secretary of Labor & Industry Nancy A. Walker joined PA State Council of Farm Organizations President Kimberly Paley at Hollabaugh Brothers** in Biglerville to recognize three frontline agriculture workers as Pennsylvania Farmworkers of the Year. **Jose Mateos** of Hollabaugh Brothers, **Stephen “Cowboy” Kulp** of **Clemens Food Group** in Hatfield, and **Charles “Cam” Bishop** of **Pennsylvania Packinghouse** in Washington County were honored as the first recipients of the new award.

The new awards highlight outstanding frontline farm and food-processing employees who work tirelessly to produce a safe, secure food supply, feeding families and local economies across Pennsylvania. The three honorees are among the 593,000-plus workers whose jobs sustain Pennsylvania's \$132.5 billion agriculture industry.

“Skilled, diligent team-players like Jose, Stephen, and Charles feed our families, inspire their coworkers and are the foundation of their employers’ success,” Secretary Redding said.

“The **Shapiro Administration** applauds the contributions agriculture workers make to our communities and our economy and to every one of our daily lives. **Governor Josh Shapiro** has made the agriculture industry a top priority since day one, recognizing agriculture as central to Pennsylvania's future economic vitality.”

Workers eligible for the award included frontline field and livestock workers, seasonal workers, meat-packaging, and food-processing workers. Nominees were selected for their initiative, determination, and positive impact on their coworkers and their employers’ daily operations.

The awards underline Shapiro Administration support for building the skilled workforce Pennsylvania farmers need to grow and sustain their businesses. Governor Shapiro's bipartisan 2024-25 budget includes new investments to keep Pennsylvania a national leader in agriculture, including a \$10 million Agriculture Innovation Fund, and continued investment of \$13 million annually to support PA Farm Bill programs to build the skilled workforce ag employers need.

“Today, we celebrate not just the vital work of Jose, Stephen, and Charles, but the dedication of every agriculture worker who contributes to Pennsylvania's prosperity. Their commitment exemplifies the spirit of teamwork and excellence that drives Pennsylvania's \$132.5 billion agriculture industry,” Secretary Walker said. “The Shapiro Administration is proud to support these exceptional individuals

and to invest in the future of agriculture, ensuring that every worker has the opportunity to thrive and continue feeding our communities and our economy.”

Award winners were praised by their colleagues as follows:

“Jose learned a lot about modern fruit production and used that knowledge and experience to pass along to his co-workers and to scores of new employees over the years.” **Brad Hollabaugh** said of Mateos, a 23-year employee who started as a seasonal orchard worker. “His careful, patient guidance helped those with lesser skills achieve at a level that met company standards. That same patient style has been a trademark of Jose’s personnel management. He is strict about company policies and proper techniques. But he is also kind in his approach as he works with people. One could say his people skills are as finely tuned as his ability to understand and train an apple tree.”

“Beyond his technical skills, Stephen’s standout quality lies in his exceptional teamwork,” said **Mark Musselman** of Clemens Food Group in nominating Kulp. “He seamlessly collaborates with our doctors and USDA inspectors, fostering a cohesive and efficient workflow. His ability to communicate and address challenges head-on ensures that our operations run smoothly, maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety. Cowboy’s dedication to his work is truly inspiring. He understands the importance of his role in delivering safe and high-quality products to our customers, and he approaches each task with a sense of pride and responsibility. His willingness to share his knowledge and expertise with his colleagues speaks volumes about his commitment to the success of our team.”

“Cam is a wealth of knowledge about cutting meat, but also exemplifies what seem to be lost character traits like timeliness, perseverance, and the willingness to learn even after all of this time,” said Pennsylvania Packinghouse owner **Doug Patterson** of Bishop, whose 48 years in the meat industry include 20 with Patterson’s family business. “He has been with us since day one and is absolutely an irreplaceable employee.”

Under Governor Shapiro’s leadership, L&I and the Department of Agriculture have partnered to create more [apprenticeship opportunities and training programs](#) in Pennsylvania’s agriculture industry. Since the start of the Shapiro Administration, L&I’s Apprenticeship and Training Office has supported the creation of more than 45 new apprenticeship programs in Pennsylvania – [including two new apprenticeship programs serving the agriculture industry](#).

Learn how Governor Josh Shapiro’s [Economic Development Strategy](#) recognizes agriculture as key to our future economic success, and find more investments in a strong future for Pennsylvania agriculture at [shapirobudget.pa.gov](#).

Photos and video of the event are at [pacast.com](#).

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