



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 8, 2026

Contact: Shannon Powers, Agriculture - 717.603.2056, aginfo@pa.gov

Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, American Founding Father Benjamin Franklin Lead Tour of 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show Must-See Exhibits, Events

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Founding Father Benjamin Franklin led a tour of must-see exhibits, new events, competitions, and quality Pennsylvania-produced foods — to be featured during the 2026 PA Farm Show, Pennsylvania’s State Fair™. The 2026 theme, *Growing A Nation*, celebrates Pennsylvania’s critical role in shaping the United States through agriculture and how Pennsylvania’s agriculture and food industries continue to drive economic growth, innovation, and prosperity.

“The Pennsylvania Farm Show is reason to celebrate every year,” **Secretary Redding** said. “This year in particular, commemorating agriculture’s role in the life of our nation makes these eight days an even more meaningful opportunity to foster understanding, positive relationships, and connections with the men and women who grow our food each day. Bringing Americans of all walks of life together in this great million-square-foot classroom is the best way I know of to explore where we have been, and where progress in Pennsylvania agriculture is taking us.”

The 2026 Farm Show is the official kickoff of [America250PA](#) celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. America250PA celebrates Pennsylvania’s pivotal place in U.S. history as one of the original 13 colonies and its contributions to the nation’s founding, democratic traditions, and future prosperity.

Pennsylvanians who have been key figures in our commonwealth and nation’s history will make appearances throughout the week, alongside innovative Pennsylvanians in agriculture who are revolutionizing the way we do business.

“I am told this Farm Show tradition of some one-hundred and ten years — fairly recent in my estimation — is this Commonwealth’s State Fair, a celebration of agricultural pursuits that seeks to bring together those who farm and those who reap the fruits of their labor,” said **Franklin**, a Philadelphia inventor, entrepreneur, organizer, and proponent of freedom, as well as success through industriousness and frugality.

“I applaud my fellow Pennsylvanians for this noble tradition of bringing the citizenry together to foster education and understanding. This is the path to civil discourse, understanding, and ultimately, *Growing A Nation*. By understanding each other, we

create a fertile ground for solving our collective challenges and the pressing problems of this day and the days ahead, as our nation embarks upon the next 250 years.”

Tour stops included:

A Walk Through Penn’s Woods — with host **Jonathan Geyer**, director of the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture’s Hardwoods Development Council** — Learn how Pennsylvania’s 17 million acres of forest are sustainably *Growing A Nation*, feeding \$39.1 billion annually into our state economy and supporting more than ten percent of our state’s manufacturing workforce. Learn what biochar and thermally modified hardwood, Pennsylvania maple products, and Real American Hardwoods have in common. And see where the future of Penn’s Woods is headed, with investments from the **Shapiro Administration** supporting innovations that are driving sustainable solutions to improve soil health, boost crop yields, and reduce carbon emissions — while creating opportunities for farmers and homeowners to live in a greener world.

The New **Pennsylvania Homestead** at **So You Want to Be a Farmer**, with host **Jen Brodsky**, farmer and regenerative food business consultant with [True North Collective](#) and [Piebird Farm](#) in Ottsville — The popular exhibit with trendy new twist features activities, experts, and answers for farmers and aspiring farmers, no matter their age, experience level, or area of land owned. Learn how to be part of the rapidly growing homesteading trend, and explore vermiculture, DIY greenhouses, smokehouse preservation methods in use just as they were 250 years ago, and the Three Sisters planting method used by native Americans and adopted by early settlers. Whether you’re a farmer or a wannabe farmer, find resources available through the [Pennsylvania Agricultural Business Development Center](#) to grow your own little slice of our nation greener.

Pennsylvania Charcuterie Revolution with host **Chef Kurt Wewer**, award-winning chef and consultant with [Central PA Chef Consultants](#). Chef Wewer and representatives of food producer associations highlighted a sampling of the Pennsylvania-grown and made food and beverages that will be featured throughout Farm Show in the Main Hall Farmers Market to take home and on the [PA Preferred® Culinary Connection Stage](#). Visit the Culinary Connection to see revolutionary recipes whipped up by celebrity chefs alongside the farmers whose products are the source of their creations. Try a delicious sample prepped by future stars from six Pennsylvania culinary schools, grab a cookbook, and inspire your own local farm-to-table adventures. Featured products include Pennsylvania wine, cheese, meats, honey, maple, potatoes, and mushrooms.

PA Apple Growers Apple Wall with host **Ellie Hollabaugh Vranich** of [Hollabaugh Brothers Orchards](#) in Biglerville, and the **Pennsylvania Apple Board** — back by popular demand, the Apple Wall is an outsized visual with apples as the creative medium illustrating the quality and variety of Pennsylvania’s apple industry. The wall includes a hidden message revealed on smartphones. It is a not-to-be-missed photo backdrop, and hot spot for sampling a delicious variety of apples and apple, cider and other products to take home.

Fantastic Fiber — Learn what flax, hemp, and wool of all kinds bring to Pennsylvania's past and future. Host **Madison Shaw** enlightened previewers on rabbits, and the youth who are putting the fiber in the food, fiber, and fuel agricultural equation. Maddie is a youthful, but seasoned veteran of Farm Show competitions including the 4-H rabbit shows, square dancing, the Farm Show Jr. Committee and a wide array of on-stage and behind-the-scenes experience. Maddie's furry friends will star in the perennial fan favorite **Angorapalooza** competition Saturday, January 11 at 5 p.m., when youth spin angora rabbit fur — directly from a bunny on their lap — into yarn and weave it into soft, finished products, judged on aesthetics, within a strict time limit.

America250PA Mobile Experience — join host **America250PA Executive Director Cassandra Coleman** and put yourself in Pennsylvania's story! Play trivia to test your knowledge of Pennsylvania's rich history and civics with questions from the U.S. citizenship test. Test your skill in a retro-style Pennsylvania adventure video game and meet representatives of iconic Pennsylvania food brands that make us the nation's snack and confectionery capital.

The tour concluded with a mouthwatering preview of the [Farm Show Food Court](#) hosted by **Pennsylvania FFA State President Sarah Firestone**. Firestone introduced foods visitors can purchase at the Farm Show's Food Courts in GIANT Expo Hall and Main Hall to support Pennsylvania food grower and producer organizations and youth scholarships that feed future growth in Pennsylvania agriculture.

The food court will open to the public from noon to 9 p.m. on Friday, January 9, prior to the opening day of the 2026 Farm Show on January 10. A [full menu of items](#) and the organizations represented can be found at farmshow.pa.gov under 2026 Farm Show.

The [Pennsylvania Farm Show](#) draws scores of visitors to our capital city every January to connect with the people and products who make Pennsylvania agriculture great. The largest indoor agricultural expo in the nation, the 110th year of the event will feature more than 5,000 animals, 12,000-plus competitive entries from more than 4,600 competitors, plus more than 250 commercial exhibits and hundreds of educational and entertaining events.

Pennsylvania's State Fair showcases top competitors from 108 county and local fairs, and the diversity and quality of Pennsylvania's agriculture industry, the innovative people who make it thrive, and the faces of our proud past and promising future. The show offers visitors a peek into the industry that supports nearly 600,000 Pennsylvania jobs and contributes \$132.5 billion to our state economy every year.

The 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show runs from Saturday, January 10 through Saturday, January 17 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center in Harrisburg. Admission is free. Parking is \$15 per vehicle.

Hours, a [daily schedule of events](#), maps, and much more information to help visitors enjoy the show can be found at farmshow.pa.gov under 2026 Farm Show.

Note: Photos and video from the tour will be available at pacast.com.

#