

Farm To College Networking

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — Have you heard about the "Farm to College" movement?

Colleges and Universities across the nation are looking to local farmers to supply fresh, locally raised products for use in campus dining halls. Ever wondered how these kinds of projects get started? Attend Southeast Regional Farm to College Networking Session to learn more.

On Tuesday, December 9 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., PASA (PA Assoc. for Sustainable Ag) will be hosting a southeast regional Farm to College meeting at West Chester University's Graduate Business Center.

Food service directors from the nine-county southeast regions have been invited to meet farmers in the area who might be able to supply a college with fresh, local products. Producers of dairy, meat, produce, or value-added products, are all welcome.

Though this meeting is primarily an opportunity for food service directors and farmers to network, others who may be able to influence a college or university food service purchasing decisions are also welcome to attend. This includes students, professors and citizens with connections to area colleges or universities. The session will not be addressing the K-12 school lunch program.

Farmers interested in supplying the college market should keep these general considerations in mind: Most food services will require a minimum \$2 million in liability insurance coverage, some will require more.

Food services interested in local purchasing tend to be willing to substitute a product they are currently using for one purchased locally. For example, most would consider switching from California tomatoes to Pennsylvania tomatoes. However, many will hesitate to try something radically different, like offering water buffalo milk for breakfast.

Food services require regular, predictable deliveries in quantities that match their needs and storage capabilities. This varies from school to school.

Most schools are going to want one-stop-shopping. This means that a school is likely to work only with one farmer or with one cooperative. If there are several farmers in your area who might benefit from cooperating, PASA can offer some organizational assistance.

Most schools will pay more for a product if quality and/or student demand warrants. But price is definitely a consideration and you should be ready to answer. How much more/less does this cost?

If you are interested in attending this meeting, contact Phyllis Laufer (610) 746-1970 at the Northampton County Cooperative Extension.

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Women Run The Farm When Hunting Season Opens

CARLA MARTIN
Pennsylvania Dairy Princess

The wind swept the leaves up in a forceful dance to the sky, only to plummet gently back down to earth. Golden rays of sun shown clearly through the bare branches of the trees. Cool, crisp air hung in the atmosphere with no hint of relenting. The fields lay bare, stripped of their produce.

There was no denying that autumn had come to stay, and winter was close behind.

With the season of autumn also comes a sport that many men choose to join, hunting. Although many people think of this sport as fun for men, not many realize that on a dairy farm it means sacrifice for those left behind. For the years of hunting in our family, when the men took to the woods, it meant the women ran the farm.

Before the sun could peek its shiny head above the horizon, we started out to the barn. My sister was the main girl in charge, and I was her side kick. We started with milking. That was an easy task to do in the dark and a very important one at that. Milking our 100 head of cattle seemed a little more challenging because if anything went wrong, we didn't have dad or my brother to come fix it. We made sure the cooler was on in the milk house and silently hoped nothing would go

wrong while the women were in charge.

The next thing to do was feed the cows. This was also challenging, because although we milked often, feeding cows was my brother's job and he rarely needed our help. We were given detailed instructions before the men left as to how much haylage, grain, and silage was needed in the feed mixture.

With that done, the most difficult task was next. We had to drive the tractor into the barn around sharp corners and unload feed into the cows trough. Although it may not sound hard, I found it very challenging I got the tractor stuck in the barn once, but my sister was able to bale me out. I was quite thankful I didn't take the barn down when the women were in charge.

With the cows milked and fed, the two biggest tasks were complete. My sister had to walk the chicken house and pick up the dead chickens and make sure they were getting fed. We had to make sure there were no cows starting into labor, feed the calves at the home farm and the rented farms, scrape the free stall barn, and straw the cows.

After this was all complete it felt as though we had put a whole days work in, but it was only lunch time. In only a few hours we would have to start all over again.

I was glad that hunting season only came once a year, because life was a lot harder when the women were in charge.

This past year while we women kept the fort down, the

men were quite successful in their hunt. My brother got an eight-point buck, my dad got a six-point buck, and my brother-in-law got a doe. I don't know if I've ever seen them so excited and thrilled as they were the night they brought home their trophies.

But deep down inside they know that some credit goes to the women in their lives. With out us, there would have been no hunt. Even though they did the hunting, the women at home were in charge of running the dairy farm.

Here is a hunting recipe our family enjoys.

SWISS ELK STEAK

- 2 pounds elk steak
- All-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- ½ cup red wine or beef broth
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup diced onion
- ½ cup diced green pepper
- 1 can (2¼ ounces) sliced ripe olives, drained
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 4 slices Swiss cheese, optional
- Cooked noodles

Dredge elk steak lightly in flour; shake off excess. Melt butter in a large skillet; brown steak on both sides. Place in a shallow baking pan. Combine the next nine ingredients; pour over steak. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 1½ hours or until cooked to desired tenderness. If desired, place cheese over steak before serving. Serve over noodles. Makes 4 servings.

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