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CONTACT:
Lesley Kistner
814 769-9490
LesleyK@happyvalley.com

Local farms, ag-related businesses awarded grants for facility improvements

State College, PA, May 23, 2022 – Twenty-eight Centre County farms, farm stands and agricultural businesses were awarded grant funding for projects that will enhance the visitor/customer experience through facility improvements or help them prepare for visitors. The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB) and the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County (CBICC) made the announcement Monday, May 23 at a news conference at RE Farm Café at Windswept.

“It’s a great feeling to know the projects being funded today will enhance agricultural offerings in the county and allow farms and ag-related businesses to grow their operations,” said Greg Scott, president and CEO of the CBICC. “Agritourism helps to fuel our local economy and contributes greatly to the prosperity of our shared communities.”

Grants of up to $10,000 were available. All 28 applicants received a portion of the funding, which in turn, will generate approximately $200,000 in matching private investment by grant recipients.

HVAB President and CEO Fritz Smith said the grant funding also provides a boost to farms and ag-related operations at a time when visitors are seeking unique, authentic experiences that connecting with animals and farm life provides.

“Inviting visitors – and local residents – to enjoy what we grow, craft and create is the mission of Happy Valley Agventures,” Smith said. “The projects put forward will make it even more inviting to visit Happy Valley, and enjoy and appreciate our agricultural heritage.”

Several grant recipients spoke at the news conference about their projects.

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Leslie Zuck, owner of Common Ground Farm in Spring Mills, said the vision for the 80-acre diversified farm is to share their family farming experience, including growing vegetables and flowers, landscaping with native plants, regenerative farming, and climate-smart agriculture.

“Upgrades made possible through this grant will help us provide safe and comfortable farm visits and educational opportunities for schools and organizations,” Zuck said. “We are firm believers in learning by doing, and really look forward to offering hands-on farming activities to farm and garden enthusiasts, especially children and youth, Earth’s future stewards.”

Rimmey Road Farm owner Keith Brainard said the grant funding would “definitely allow” the farm to become a viable agritourism destination that can contribute to the county’s tourism economy. Rimmey Road Farm raises heritage breed Mulefoot pigs on the grounds adjacent to Rhoneymeade.

“Our growth hit a plateau this year because with feed prices as high as they are right now, any potential profit or infrastructure money went into operational expenses,” Brainard added. “This funding could not come at a better time.”

Rimmey Road Farm’s grant will fund upgrades to the farm for retail and events.

Centre County Grange Fair will use its $9,000 grant for technology improvements to the livestock judging area.

“We at Centre County Grange Park/Centre County Grange Fair are very grateful and excited to be chosen as a recipient of the Happy Valley Agventure Grant Program,” said Darlene Confer, General Manager of Grange Park/Grange Fair. “This grant will assist in providing technology enhancements, such as live streaming capabilities, for agricultural shows and events held at Grange Park.

“Agriculture and agritourism are very integral parts of our facility and surrounding communities,” Confer continued. “With these grant monies, we hope to promote even more agribusiness in Centre County.”

State Sen. Jake Corman assisted the HVAB and CBICC last fall with securing funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Marketing to Attract Tourists program.

2022 Happy Valley Agventures grant recipients:

- **Bear Meadows Farm** - $7,800 for additional paved parking spots, road widening and beautification
- **Bee Tree Berry Farm** - $8,600 for controlled outdoor storage for fresh fruits and vegetables
- **Central PA Tasting Trail** – $10,000 for two promotional billboards in Centre and Mifflin counties
- **Centre County Farmland Trust** – $5,000 for the reprinting of three Farm Routes guides and program postcard
- **Centre County Grange Fair** – $9,000 for technology improvements to the livestock judging area to attract different agriculture shows
- **Common Ground Farm** – $9,500 infrastructure and resource improvements to be visitor ready
- **Ferguson Township** - $8,000 for infrastructure needs for Route 45 Getaways participants, Tourist Oriented Directional (TOD) signage, banner displays
- **Goot Essa** - $9,800 for pavilions and an outdoor picnic area at the cheese shop
- **Happy Valley Vineyard & Winery** – $9,000 to expand the outdoor seating area, including a pergola, sail shade covers and picnic benches
- **Harners Farm** - $4,100 for a parking lot and deck
- **J.L. Farm and Cidery** - $9,800 for a paved driveway and outdoor pavilions
- **JNJP Holdings (University Wine Company)** - $5,000 for stone signage for better driveway visibility
- **Meyer Dairy Farms** - $9,800 for the renovation/enhancement of public restrooms
- **Nittany Meadow Farm** - $9,000 for construction to meet Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture licensing requirements for goat dairy operations
- **Nittany Meadow Farm** - $2,000 for bus retrofitting to travel with goats to promote agricultural and educational opportunities
- **Pasto Agricultural Museum** - $8,000 for improvements to the museum entrance, including lighting and a gift shop
- **Pine Grove Hall** - $9,500 for parking lot expansion
- **Pole Cat Hollow Farm** - $5,500 for the conversion of a farm shed into an ag education area for visitors
- **RE Farm Café at Windswept** - $9,800 for the addition of an outdoor, ground-level deck with canopy, seating, stairs and a fire pit
- **Rhoneymeade** - $8,800 for sound system, DJ equipment, lighting and other needs to support Rhoneymeade Fest
- **Rimmey Road Farm** - $8,500 for upgrades to the farm for retail space and events
- **Rooted Farmstead** – $9,000 for site enhancements, point of sale equipment and the establishment of a peony garden
- **Schaeffer Farm** - $6,000 for a year-round farm stand, refrigeration/freezers, parking enhancements
- **Scott’s Roasting** - $8,000 for food truck vehicle wrapping of farm
- **Seven Mountains Wine Cellars** - $8,500 for a permanent outdoor food facility
- **Sinking Creek Meats**- $8,500 for the construction of retail space
- **University Wine Company** - $5,000 for enhancements to the outdoor seating area
- **Wasson Farm** - $8,500 for facility expansion to increase production, meet customer demand for ice cream

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*Happy Valley Agventures is a joint agritourism initiative of The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau and the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County. For more information about ag-related things to see and do in Centre County, visit [www.happyvalleyagventures.com](http://www.happyvalleyagventures.com).*