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Chesapeake Bay Foundation proud to salute and be part of efforts on behalf of Pasa Sustainable Agriculture



The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) in Pennsylvania is proud of its efforts and salutes industries and individuals striving to, as Pasa Sustainable Agriculture (Pasa) puts it, “cultivate environmentally sound, economically viable, and community-focused farms and food systems.”

“We realize the farming community is the backbone of our rural economy and beautiful landscape,” said Bill Chain, CBF’s Senior Agriculture Program Manager in Pennsylvania. “We respect farmers’ interest in building sustainability that includes practices in regenerative farming while building economic viability for the future. Farmers inherently want to leave the farm better than they found it. Increasingly farmers are including conservation improvements, like building soil health, as a point of pride and legacy goal.”

CBF has been working in the Commonwealth since 1986, supporting the win-win relationship in building soils, profitable crop production, healthy livestock, and clean water.

Here are just a few highlights of CBF’s efforts in 2020.

Financial support for farmers

CBF, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and Penn State Agriculture and Environmental Center worked jointly to propose the program that would direct funding to conservation districts, and provide the needed technical assistance to farms and the flexibility to determine conservation practices specific to local watershed needs.



In 2020, State Senator Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming) introduced Senate Bill 1272, that would establish the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) and target funding for local farms through their county conservation districts. It would provide financial support that farmers in Pennsylvania want and need so they can keep soil on the land, reduce polluted runoff into local streams, and protect their long-term viability.

ACAP is the agricultural cost-share program Pennsylvania sorely needs to get the Commonwealth back on track toward meeting its clean water goals.

“Farmers are willing to do the right thing, and conservation districts are standing by to help. But both lack the resources. We thank Senator Yaw for an important first step,” said Shannon Gority, CBF Executive Director in Pennsylvania. “Everyone wants agriculture to succeed and it is long past time that it gets the resources and technical assistance to finish the job. Our economy, health, heritage, and quality of life depend on it.”

“Agricultural practices are some of the most cost-effective ways to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution, and they have the double-benefit of improving soil health, nutrient efficiency, and the long-term viability of farm operations,” Senator Yaw said.

Senate Bill 1272 garnered bipartisan support and sign-on by myriad agriculture and conservation groups but was not able to pass before the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session.

CBF, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center and others are preparing to work hard for the program’s passage, anticipating that it could be re-introduced when the next legislative session begins in 2021.

In ACAP, funding was to be prioritized for counties based on factors like the amount of crop acres and livestock near streams impaired by agriculture.

Conservation districts would be required to invest in and approve pollution reduction measures that might include cover crops, streamside trees and more, and devise criteria for which ones will have the most immediate impact on local water quality. Districts would work with farmers and landowners to ensure that conservation practices are installed properly and functioning as designed.

The cost-share program would authorize a broad spectrum of funding sources to support the program, including state dollars, federal allocations, grants, and private enterprise investments.

“CBF stands with farmers to request greater state support for conservation strategies to be put in place

Chesapeake Bay Foundation proud to salute and be part of efforts on behalf of Pasa Sustainable Agriculture (cont.)



with greater simplicity and cost-effectiveness that include local decision-making with our support of the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program legislative bill or one similar to it in 2021," Bill Chain added.

Partnership launched

CBF launched the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership in 2018, focused on Pennsylvania's Clean Water Blueprint goal of planting 95,000 acres of forested buffers by the end of 2025.

Planting trees enables farms to improve soil quality and keep valuable soil on the land, instead of in the local water.

Trees are the most cost-effective tools for cleaning and protecting waterways by filtering and absorbing polluted runoff, stabilizing streambanks, and improving soil quality.

Since 2018, cumulative efforts by CBF, the partnership, and others across Pennsylvania have planted roughly 1.74 million trees. CBF is planning to spend about \$2.6 million on 710,000 trees, shelters, and stakes to supply the effort for the next two years.

A spectrum of native species is good for people too. "We're trying to bring back the native, fruiting plants like the pawpaw, elderberry, persimmon," said Molly Cheatum, CBF Restoration Manager in Pennsylvania. "They have health benefits."

"People often don't think about fruit-bearing trees and shrubs other than the orchard varieties, but there are many wild varieties available," Partnership Manager Brenda Sieglitz added. "We have a partner doing a lot with elderberry for use in consumer end products. The landowner could harvest those fruit and nut bearing trees and make an income."

Trees in pastures

Farmers may know about the benefits that trees have on livestock and landscape, but they may not know how to combine the two in cost effective ways that both survive and thrive. A study on five Pennsylvania farms and led by CBF is exploring just that.

The collaborative effort to find the best ways to implement the practice of silvopasture is supported by a three-year grant from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program Research under the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"You are putting more factors into your pasture, but there could be some serious benefits, long-term, especially economic," Molly Cheatum added. "You get healthier soils, grasses and trees. You are also reducing polluted runoff and sequestering carbon."

When planted and mature in a pasture, trees can enhance herd health by offering shade, shelter, better quality grazing, and reduced stress on livestock, especially during summer's relentless heat.

This research will look to guide farmers on how to get productive trees established in active pastures given eradication, livestock damage, limited resources, and different types and quality of forage and soils.

Silvopasture research plots of 120 trees have been planted on three farms in Lancaster County and two in Lebanon County. Trees planted were honey locust, black locust, persimmon, willow, poplar, mulberry, redbud, and tulip poplar.

The study is monitoring tree-planting techniques with and without mulch, plastic and metal shelters, and live stake trees in combinations with electric fence, barbed wire, and no shelters. The study will also track costs of site preparation, seedlings, planting labor, and materials like fencing, metal and plastic shelters, and mulch so that farmers can decide on the best approach for their own properties.

"Our research work with farmers blending trees with productive pastures to increase pasture resiliency, animal performance, and natural habitat improvement is testament to farmer creativity and interest in advancing the natural world," Bill Chain added. •



The seven components of a farm business plan

The best way to set yourself up for success both in business and with your lender is to have a detailed plan. It doesn't need to be pretty, but you do have to show that you're willing to put the time and effort into creating a well thought-out course of action for your operation. Already operating but don't have a plan? That's okay! It's never too late to put thought into how your operation can grow.

There are seven components to an agricultural business plan to set you up for success.

1. TITLE/COVER PAGE

Keep it simple. The most important information here is accurate contact information. Include the business' mailing address, phone, and email.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although it will be the first page of your plan, this will be the last section that you write, summing up all of your plan's key points. Remember that this is the first section your business partners or lenders will read, so they'll expect to learn how working together is a good financial decision. Include your expansion plans, market opportunities, financial trends, and projections in an easy-to-read summary.

3. INTRODUCTION

Treat this section as if you're telling a stranger about your operation and provide an overview of what you do and what sets you apart from your competition. Start with a brief description of the operation: what you do, what you produce, how you market it, and the size. Then go into detail on the location and facilities,



mission statement, goals, and capital request. If you're starting a new operation, include a plan summary that describes how you'll start the operation and the course of action you'll take to build it.

4. PRODUCTION

Include your products and/or services and their corresponding systems, production practices and value-added practices, policies on quality control, inventory management and customer service, risk management, licenses, permits and regulatory requirements, and goals for growth and expansion. Be as specific as possible in this area to explain what you do and how you do it!

5. MARKETING PLAN

Provide an industry description, outlook, trends and projections, any target market information and the market share to gain for your operation, pricing (mention competitor research here), promotions, programs and marketing tools, and distribution.

6. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT


Here is where you get to describe how your business is organized (corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, etc.). Include the names, titles, and positions of owners, managers, directors, etc.; the organizational chart or personnel plan (who facilitates which roles and potential new hires); any benefits offered or rewards structure for employees; and a contingency plan.

7. FINANCES

Be sure to include your income earning potential, plans for growth, expansion, and industry trends. Lenders also like to see three-to-five years of historical performance, a balance sheet, cash-basis income trend, breakeven analysis, and sensitivity analysis. Asset management, benchmarks, and describing your capital request are also appropriate here.

If you have supporting documents for any information described in your plan, attach it to the end in an appendix and describe each attachment in the order it is included.

Looking for help to fill out your business plan? Check out our on-demand educational content, which will help walk you through the process or visit farmcredit.com to find a lender near you. •



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Farmers lead on-farm research with Northeast SARE support

Kristy Borrelli, Northeast SARE Pennsylvania Coordinator



Farmers are the center of [Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education](#) (SARE)'s vision to ensure agricultural resilience and foster conditions where farmers have a high quality of life and agricultural communities thrive. Farmers are empowered to participate in this vision through [Northeast SARE's Farmer Grant](#) program, where they define and lead projects that explore production, conservation, marketing, and social issues. The following are a few examples of the more than 850 projects where farmers have taken innovative steps to address agricultural sustainability on their farms with the hope of inspiring other farmers to do the same.

The owners of [Codman Community Farms](#) wanted to maximize productivity and profit while supporting healthy poultry on pasture. When they asked, "How much feed space do pasture birds need?" they found an absence of quality information suitable for a small farm like theirs and decided to tackle the question themselves. They explored ways to maximize efficient feeding systems and confirmed that feeder space was less important than a consistent supply of feed. By using fewer feeders, they could save money on supplies and the labor. These farmers appreciated the framework their SARE project provided that allowed them to focus on a specific issue and helped them discover a new data-tracking tool that has positively impacted how they manage the farm.



Northeast SARE

In a similar but unrelated project, farmers from [Letterbox Farm Collective](#) developed an addendum to the publication, *Pastured Poultry Profits*, by Joel Salatin. The project sought to update the important original publication, which is now over 20 years old, with findings from their current poultry operation. [21st Century Pastured Poultry](#) highlights the farm's own story by taking an in-depth look into its production methods, up-to-date enterprise budgets, as well as marketing plans, and sales reports.

Farmers at [Elliot Farm](#) were tired of blackbirds damaging their sweet corn and reducing farm profits. After working with a university team on a laser scarecrow feasibility study, they found that these expensive bird repellents were effective but not affordable. A SARE Farmer Grant allowed them to create a laser scarecrow that was reliable, effective, and affordable for small farms that might require multiple units. Their [Build-Your-Own Laser Scarecrow Manual](#) shares information, so other farmers can build their own bird deterrents.

[Soul Fire Farm](#) farmers recognized the important role they have in supplying fresh, healthy food to low-income consumers but also understand that farmers often cannot lower the price of their products. Building from their own success to maintain a viable business while reaching vulnerable populations, they developed the [Sowing the Seeds of Justice Manual](#) with strategies for accepting SNAP benefits, sliding scale CSAs, institutional partnerships, neighborhood organizing, and social justice marketing.

Attendees of the 2019 Pasa Sustainable Agriculture Conference might remember tasting chestnuts from [Windswept Agroforestry Farm](#). Farmers explored various chestnut varieties as well as cooperative and aggregated marketing opportunities suitable for the Northeast.

Because farmers learn best from other farmers, Northeast SARE requires and supports Farmer Grant recipients to include farmer outreach as part of their projects. Publications, like those listed above, presentations, and on-farm events are some examples of the farmer-to-farmer sharing SARE makes possible. Visit Northeast SARE's Partner Exhibit Profile and website for more information about the Farmer Grant other programs. [Project summaries](#) are also searchable online. •

Left: Farmer Grant recipients examine how pastured chickens respond to feeder spacing in order to maximize feeding efficiency and farm profit.

Banking on buffers: PA DCNR's riparian forest buffer initiative

Over the past few years, DCNR has focused on addressing streamside afforestation, or planting riparian forest buffers to improve water quality.

The term “riparian” comes from the Latin word “riparius,” meaning “bank,” as in riverbank. The current definition for riparian associates “the bank of a natural watercourse (such as a river) or sometimes of a lake or a tidewater,” so a riparian forest is simply a forest along a stream.

Streamside forest plantings are one of the most cost-effective ways to improve water quality, and Pennsylvania has much work to do in this arena. Riparian forest buffers are essential to Pennsylvania’s future ecological health.

Pennsylvania (literally Penn’s woods) was aptly named because it was once almost entirely forested. Aquatic ecosystems that evolved here are designed to function in forested environments. Appropriately, aquatic organisms rely on native leaf litter for food. If streamside trees are absent, the aquatic food web loses essential producers

and rapidly degrades. Without the shade from trees in the summer, water temperatures become unsuitable for many fish species, like the brook trout.

Streamside forests uptake nutrient pollution from farm fields, pastures, and lawns, reducing algal blooms that deplete dissolved oxygen and make water unsafe for recreation and for aquatic life. Buffers keep nutrients on the land, where they can do the most good while causing the least harm.

Riparian forest buffers serve as excellent wildlife habitat, migration corridors, and food sources for native pollinators. The co-benefits of riparian forest buffers beyond clean water are plentiful.

Unfortunately, the positive outlook on buffers is not unanimous. Some think trees are messy, while others want to be able to see the streams on their properties by maintaining lines of sight. Sometimes, farmers are hesitant to undo the work of others who cleared the land for farming (during a time that preceded our understanding of the value of riparian forests). Economic hardship can also dissuade farmers from giving up productive ground to plant trees.

However, the multiple benefits of buffers can offset losses by increasing privacy, conserving soil, adding windbreaks, increasing native pollinator populations (elevating crop productivity), and improving fishing opportunities. One agroforestry concept, *multifunctional buffers*, provides landowners an option for growing alternative crops in forest buffers. Native fruits and nuts like paw paws, persimmons, hazelnuts, and walnuts often thrive in streamside environments and can be harvested for income.

We need everyone’s help to change the minds and hearts of all Pennsylvanians, so that streamside trees are the norm once again. A paradigm shift that helps restore riparian forests will be essential to assuring cleaner water and healthier aquatic ecosystems, while improving the lives of all living downstream. •

For more information on riparian buffers, please visit:

dncr.pa.gov/Conservation/Water/RiparianBuffers/Pages/default.aspx

dncr.pa.gov/Conservation/Water/RiparianBuffers/Buffer-MyStream/Pages/default.aspx



Bobby Whitescarver

Top: Before fencing and planting, 2004.

Bottom: After fencing and planting, 2018.

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Alyssa Walsh, M.S., Fertrell Animal Nutritionist



Fertrell feeds dinosaurs. Yes, you read that right. Chickens and ostriches are the closest living relatives to the Tyrannosaurus rex. Chickens and T rex have similar body structures, only chickens are 1/10,000 the size! Fertrell can help you feed your dinosaur.

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Even though we can't help you raise a flock of T rex, we do have solutions for your pasture, sustainable, and organic poultry production. Fertrell is your trusted partner, creating superior products for healthier soil, plants, and animals. Healing the earth and feeding the world—*Better Naturally.* •



Alyssa Walsh is an animal nutritionist for the Fertrell company. She is experienced in working with poultry, swine, and large and small ruminants. She received an M.S. in Animal Nutrition from The University of Nottingham.



Wholesale best practices and building strong wholesale relationships

Terry Brett, Owner



At Kimberton Whole Foods, we've based our business on providing an outlet for products made by local, small family farmers and artisans. We believe the true value of being a community market is in making contributions to the lives of our neighbors and the larger local economy. That's why we work with over 200 local producers in the Greater Philadelphia area.

To help new growers and producers get their products into the hands of consumers at their local retailer, we asked our seasoned team of buyers, marketers, and distributors to share their tips and standard practices:

Working with buyers

- The goal of working with a buyer is to build a strong partnership. Remember, the retailer has the same goal as the vendor: to sell the product as quickly as possible for a fair price and retain customers.
- Buyers will initially look to receive a list of products and wholesale prices from potential vendors. Be prepared to provide samples and additional information about your mission and practices.
- Buyers will usually recommend pricing. They've been known to take lower margins in order to help new vendors be more competitive, although this varies by retailer.
- Initially, a retailer may consider running sales on new products in order to get customers excited about a great local product. In return, you'll need to supply enough product to support the promotion.



- In general, you must do your best to ensure that you, as the vendor, can supply enough product, deliver on a consistent basis, and are following all the Department of Agriculture laws, with proper labeling, list of ingredients, etc.

It's all in the details

- Be prepared to complete simple forms—such as new vendor applications and W-9s—that include company name, address, EIN, etc.
- Communication is essential! Let the retailer know when and where you'll be delivering your goods, and work within their established delivery timeframes. Supply them with a typed invoice that contains your business name, address, list of items delivered, and prices. Most importantly, include a unique invoice number.
- Make sure to package your product(s) to withstand movement from truck to truck and onto retailer's shelves without damaging the product.
- Ideally, a unique UPC code on the package simplifies checkout and aids in POS tracking.

Telling the story

- Help the retailer share your story with their customers. Be prepared to provide details about your ingredients, quality, process, and business history. Having photographs on hand of the people and places behind the product is essential to any good story!

- Have a presence on social media or a website that customers can be linked to. Share with your followers where they can find your product, and announce new products and retailer partners on these platforms to help create awareness.

These guidelines are meant to help you prepare your product(s) for market and to build a mutually beneficial relationship with your retailer. We wish you much success. •



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Take a look at *The Stockman Grass Farmer* magazine

Here is a smorgasbord of articles from past issues of *The Stockman Grass Farmer*



Click any of the articles here to access them for free on *Stockman Grass Farmer*!

[Just One Thing](#)

[What Is An Investment in Paddock Fencing Really Worth?](#)

[Are You An Accomplished Grazer?](#)

[Grassfed Beef Expectations for Fattening and Genetics](#)

[Warning, This Could Get Intense—Stock Density](#)

[Farm Reboot](#)

[Flexible Grazing Cells Work Almost Anywhere](#)

[Business Trajectory](#)

[Multi-Species Adds Income and Soil Wealth to Farms](#)

[Fat Is The Critical Element In A Good Eating Grassfed Beef Animal](#)

[Grassroots of Grazing: Using Annual Forages To Beef Up Perennial Pastures](#)

[Plants Don't Need Soil But Soil Needs Plants](#)

[Heritage Pigs Put North Carolina Beef Grazer In The Clear](#)

[Perpetuation Planning: Putting a Value on the Farm](#)

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WE HELP FARMS SELL DIRECT ONLINE

Diversify and increase your farm revenue by selling to food hubs



Selling your farm products to local buyers is important not only for environmental reasons, but also for building a strong local economy. However, it can be difficult to coordinate logistically, wasting time, money, and resources for farmers. Instead of spending your spare hours brokering deals with numerous small buyers, consider selling to a food hub.

Food hubs aggregate local farm products in wholesale quantities for sale to nearby restaurants, facilities, and other small buyers. When you sell to a food hub, you keep your farm operation sustainable, your products stay in the local food economy, and you can focus more of your time and energy on running your farm. With all these advantages, a food hub could become your go-to buyer of choice.

Appalachian Food Works is an emerging food hub serving Centre County and its surrounding counties. We specialize in local meat products, and we are looking to increase our product line to include a wide range of products grown and raised in Central PA, from produce to

dairy to everything in between. We will work directly with you to ensure you receive a fair price, and we will even keep your farm's branding the entire way to the menu.

If you haven't considered purchasing from a food hub, email Travis at Appalachian Food Works today to schedule some time to discuss your current sales channel pains, needs, and priorities. This consultation is free for conference attendees and Pasa members! Contact us today at: info@appfoodworks.org.

Appalachian Food Works is a 501(c)3 non-profit food hub located in State College, Pennsylvania, with a mission of supporting small and mid-size Pennsylvania farms by working with them to create a more sustainable business, while simultaneously creating a more equitable food system. •



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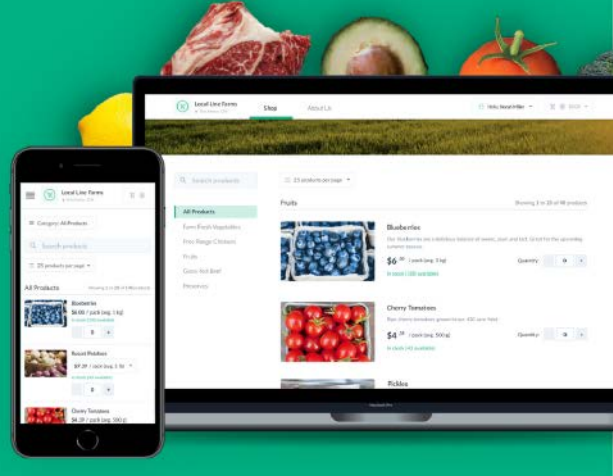
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Farm-made compost sifter and spreader

Josh Volk



This article was condensed from the version that ran in the October 2020 **Growing for Market** magazine; check it out for more photos. The **Tools for Growing for Market** column runs in every issue of **GFM**. Learn more about **Growing for Market** and subscribe at growingformarket.com.

This month I picked two tools from Farragut Farm in southeast Alaska that they posted short videos of on Instagram. The first was their compost sifter in action, the second of a compost spreader they use to cover direct-seeded beds.

Anyone who has spent any time sifting compost for potting mix using a box screen over a wheelbarrow has probably dreamed of a better way to do it. The improvement I always imagined was pretty much what Farragut Farm built. Unlike them, I gave up on using sifted compost before I got around to building a rotary screen (also known as a trommel screen). I may be re-inspired to build a sifter and go back to it.

There are a number of features that Bo of Farragut Farm designed into their sifter that make it work well and that aren't obvious from the video but are worth keeping in mind if you decide to build your own. The basic concept here is that the sifting screen is shaped into a long barrel. The barrel is rotated by an electric motor while compost is fed into one end. The compost tumbles down the inclined barrel as it rotates and the siftings fall through the screen, filling a cart below, while the pieces too big to go through the screen come out the far end of the barrel and drop into a bin.



Above: Compost spreader used to cover direct seeded beds.

In my correspondence with them they wrote:

One thing Bo wanted to emphasize with the compost sifter is that the devil is in the details. It's easy enough to make a functioning barrel sifter, but it is the small stuff that makes this sifter really effective and really pleasant to use. The ample loading chute, the lip that holds the compost in at the entrance and keeps it from spilling out, the articulated drag bar that can work in either direction, the outflow shoot that directs sticks/rocks/debris into a collection bin, easy grip handles on front and rear to make it easy to transport (adding a set of wheels on one end would be great if you planned to move it around a lot). He also made the front legs adjustable so that you can raise and lower the angle to find the perfect degree for whatever it is you are sifting. As you might imagine, the compost has to be relatively dry, otherwise the screen just gets caked and it can't function properly.

You can see from the photos and their video that the whole thing is made from lots of repurposed pieces. For the hoops they found some rebar that had already been rolled into rounds (not uncommon for making the supports for large concrete columns). Straight rebar makes up the spokes that hold the barrel to a central axle that runs out both ends of the barrel and sits on pillow block bearings.

The screen is ¼-inch rock screen which is much heavier duty than hardware cloth. For the end that the compost is fed into, the hoop and spokes are inset by a few inches to allow a feed chute to project into the barrel. That end of the barrel also has a lip made from a metal drum lid that is a couple inches high to keep the compost from falling back out as it's loaded into the drum. I particularly appreciate the use of appropriate angle bracing on the frame, a feature I often find lacking on farm-built tools.

Above the barrel, the frame holds up an AC gear motor and that turns the barrel using a chain drive. The gear motor runs at about 20 rpm and the chain drive further reduces the speed of the drum rotation down to about 7 rpm. The motor direction is reversible, and one of my favorite features of the sifter is a scraper bar that rides along the inside of the screen helping to keep the

Farm-made compost sifter and spreader (cont.)



screen from clogging. Because the motor is reversible, the scraper hangs on an articulated arm so that it doesn't bind up. The weight of the bar is what keeps it from coming off of the screen.

The whole sifter sits low enough that it's not difficult to load compost into, but that required a custom low cart to catch the sifted compost. They've built a cart that matches the size of the barrel and that is low enough to roll under. In all, they run about 6 yards of farm-made compost through the sifter each year.

One of the things they do with the sifted compost is cover direct-seeded beds in their field. Southeast Alaska is a challenging growing climate. Usually, the soil in the field is too wet for using a push seeder to open a furrow and then cover the seeds. So, instead they use the seeder just to drop the seeds directly on the surface of their beds and then they cover the seeds with sifted compost using the spreader. To speed up this process and get an even layer of compost, they designed a spreader that is similar to a peat moss spreader, but unlike a peat moss spreader it rides above the bed supported by two large wheels that roll on the pathways.

For the spreader, Bo worked with a fabricator friend who primarily works in aluminum to get it built. Aluminum is lightweight and corrosion resistant which is a nice benefit for a tool that is being pulled around and that lives in a wet climate. The drum on the spreader is made from expanded aluminum mesh, which is larger than what the farm ultimately thought they needed. Yet, it allowed them to line the drum with finer mesh, potentially adjusting the flow rate by using different sized mesh liners. In its current set up, they load the barrel with about 2 cubic feet of sifted compost and then roll out and back twice on a 30-foot-long bed to put down about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of compost. The barrel of the spreader distributes the compost evenly across the full width of a 30-inch bed. •

Josh Volk farms in Portland, Oregon, and does consulting and education under the name Slow Hand Farm. He is the author of the book Compact Farms: 15 Proven Plans for Market Farms on 5 Acres or Less, available from Growing for Market. He can be found at slowhandfarm.com. Check [#ToolsForGrowingForMarket](https://www.instagram.com/ToolsForGrowingForMarket) on Instagram for more farm tool ideas and submit your own to be featured in the magazine!



Above: Demonstrating the handles on the rear of the sifter that make it easy to transport



Easy Steps for IPM



The principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) may be familiar to you, but is IPM *for* you? The beauty of IPM is that it is completely adaptive and scalable for any growing enterprise—including livestock. IPM begins with getting your soil or soil medium right and moves on to pest prediction, trapping and monitoring, using cultural, biological and (carefully vetted) chemical controls and, throughout it all, conscientious observation and record-keeping to plan for the future.

The key to creating an effective IPM program is to thoroughly understand the environment you are working with and what you can expect from it. Knowing the quality of your soil, or the drawbacks it presents, is an essential first step so that you can take steps to remediate whatever problems may exist. For livestock this means manure control. Knowing what climatic conditions may come your way will help you determine the best ways to protect what you're growing. Many destructive pathogens can be predicted and treated proactively in this way. Using traps to identify and monitor the insects in your

area can tell you which ones are present. Cultural controls (crop rotation, intercropping, trap cropping); sanitation (removing organic and inorganic residues); mechanical controls (netting, traps, barriers); and beneficial insects are all on the table during this step. By the time you reach this point in your pest control, you will know if you need to spray. Lastly, recording your steps, and any changes you had to make, will give you a clear path for your next crop.

IPM can be done on a small scale (think houseplants) by simply closely observing your plants, putting out some sticky traps, and closely observing some more. When done right, each step in your IPM will become easier than the last. •

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Feeding Pennsylvania is the statewide association of nine Feeding America affiliated food banks covering all 67 counties across the Commonwealth. The mission of Feeding Pennsylvania is to promote and aid our member food banks in securing food and other resources to reduce hunger and food insecurity across the state and to provide a shared voice on the issues of hunger and food access within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In Pennsylvania, there are more than 52,000 farms spanning over 7.3 million acres. With this abundance of resources, there should be no reason anyone should be struggling with hunger, yet more than 2 million Pennsylvanians, nearly 630,000 of whom are children, are struggling with hunger every day. That is why agricultural partnerships are of the utmost importance to Feeding Pennsylvania and our member food banks.

The issue of food security requires various partnerships and collaborations across a range of stakeholders to provide increased access to fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, dairy, protein, and grains to Pennsylvania families

who need it most. Thanks to our relationships in the agriculture community, Feeding Pennsylvania's food banks are able to offer a diverse range of food to our clients while supporting local Pennsylvania farmers, processors, and distributors.

Our Director of Agricultural Partnerships, Tom Mainzer, plays a critical role in bridging the gap between Feeding Pennsylvania, our food banks, and Pennsylvania farms. Establishing these relationships between the Commonwealth's charitable food network and agricultural producers is crucial to help reduce waste, support local farms, and distribute nutritional agricultural products to those in need. •

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