

Pasture walk event to be held in county

By [April Feagley](#)
Staff Writer

A pasture walk event, hosted by local farmer Dennie Cramer of Cramer Farms in Shade Gap, will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 22, to provide an immersive day of learning geared toward those in the agricultural community.

Organized by the Huntingdon and Blair county conservation districts, the pasture walk will highlight innovative agricultural practices designed to yield superior results while preserving the quality of the land.

“They’re going to be able to listen to some pretty good speakers,” said Cramer. “A lot of this is about learning how to extend the grazing season. It costs money to bring cows in on concrete and feed them round bales of hay. In our area, we can’t graze year round, so anything we can do to extend the grazing season and minimize feeding hay — which is labor intensive — is something we are focused on.”

Pasture walks offer a daylong opportunity to network with their peers, hear from experts and enjoy time spent on the farm.

“They are a fairly informal agricultural event,” said Abbe Hamilton of the Huntingdon County Conservation District. “This will provide up-to-date information about animal nutrition and animal health, as well as getting the most out of pastures.”

As Cramer is well-known as a producer of high-quality beef cattle and was recognized as Pennsylvania’s 2017 Cow/ Calf Beef Quality Assurance award winner, the pasture walk will focus particularly on raising beef.

“One thing that sets this pasture walk apart is that there will be a lot more focus on quality of the animal,” said Hamilton, adding that an ultrasound demonstration will be offered at 11:30 a.m. by Matthew and Michael Kasanicky Identical Genetics to evaluate carcass traits and optimum harvest endpoint.

Another demonstration will highlight the practice of setting cattle to graze on standing corn.

“This pasture walk is about extending the grazing season,” Cramer said. “The Beef Quality Assurance organization will be offering chute-side training certification, so well be running cattle in the chute.”

Penn State Cooperative Extension veterinarian Dr. Ernest Hovingh will also be a part of the training, which will be the last certification of its type for this year.

“It’s not too often we get to have them held at this end of the county,” he said.

Other specialists offering presentations include representatives from Purina Animal Nutrition, LLC; Huntingdon Veterinary Service; Summit Ag Systems, Penn State Cooperative Extension; Forester Equipment; USDA/NRCS (United States Department of Agriculture/National Resources Conservation Service); and the PA Beef Council.

“It’s a mix of public and private organizations,” said Hamilton. “There will be some talks at the farmstead and then we’ll take a wagon ride out to the fields to observe what Dennie has been doing on his own land.”

Cramer credited the support of the Huntingdon County Conservation District with helping his operation to flourish.

“I work closely with the soil conservation and we’ve done projects here together. Conservation really does work,” he said. “Having them helping me has changed my whole farm operation. I consider them friends.”

Cramer Farms is located at 12727 Mountain Shadows Lane, Shade Gap. Registration for the pasture walk should be made by Saturday, Sept. 15, by contacting Beth Futrick at the Blair County Conservation District by calling 696-0877, ext. 3329, or emailing bfutrick@blairconservationdistrict.org.

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