



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

[For Multigenerational Fox Meadow Farms, the Cream \(Ice Cream\) Rises to the Top](#)

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Proactive planning and innovation – a win-win for the family farm and the urban communities they serve

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By Kimberly Merlau, County Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency

Fox Meadows Farms, located in Ephrata, Pennsylvania is owned and operated by brothers Chad and Corey Fox, their wives Krista and Andrea and their parents Bob and Ruthie. This generational farm demonstrates the importance of family farms, diversifying farming operations and recognizing opportunities in urban and suburban communities.

“We are grateful to be close to Lancaster City and other population centers like Leola,” Chad said. “Being close to the consumer gives us access to an available workforce and consumer base, affording us the opportunity to serve more people.”

The Fox family started farming in the 1950s with the purchase of the Fox family farm. Over the decades they have been recognized as leaders in milk quality, animal husbandry, milk production and land stewardship in Lancaster County —recognized for their conservation efforts including streambank fencing, riparian buffers and no-till cropping practices.

In 2013, the Fox family integrated the next generation into the operation. After no luck purchasing more land for expansion, the family embraced the concept of farm-to-table and purchased a used car lot neighboring the home farm where they built the first 4,600 ft² creamery.

According to Heidi Secord, FSA State Executive Director in Pennsylvania, Lancaster County has diverse agricultural roots, in both rural and urban agrarian communities within the county. Secord and

FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux both praise the Fox Meadow Farms as an outstanding example of generational, family farmers who embrace product innovation and capitalize on their close proximity to urban centers.

Since their grand opening 11 years ago, and with the help of Lancaster County FSA, the always forward-thinking Fox family transitioned sole farm ownership to sons, Chad and Corey. This intentional succession plan freed up valuable time for Bob and Ruthie and positioned their family and the farm for growth and success for generations to come.

In 2020 Fox Meadows Farm, LLC applied for an FSA direct farm ownership loan. The security from the FSA loan, provided the financial support the Fox family needed to realize their business and professional goals. FSA's loan assistance helped solidify their process, develop their infrastructure, and create new markets for their agricultural products while also providing economic opportunities for and within the local community.

Fox Meadows Farms also participates in other FSA programs including Agricultural Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage programs and the Dairy Margin Coverage program. These safety-net programs provide economic assistance when commodity markets fluctuate due to impacts of natural disasters, trade volatilities, world conflicts or other variables outside of the producer's control.

"Our family is very thankful for FSA's support and will continue to look to them as a trusted partner as we grow our business," Chad said.

In 2022, the Fox family seized an opportunity to reach more of the Lancaster County community. In July of 2022, they opened a second creamery location in Leola. Both creameries offer 25 flavors of ice cream that change seasonally and support other small businesses through their country market where they sell baked goods, snack foods, canned goods, etc. and offer a full lunch menu as well. Both locations offer a cow-to-cone interactive experience where visitors watch the ice cream being made and served up — from the farm to their cone.

For most farmers and ranchers, their operation is their life's work. This is true for the Fox family as well. The farm is a business, a family business and like all businesses, it's important to have and execute an operating plan. It's also equally important to love what you do for a living.

"We are so blessed to be able to transform the milk from our cows into a fun product like ice cream," Bob said. "It's humbling to watch how the simple goodness of ice cream can bring our community together as they celebrate and enjoy life, one cone at a time at Fox Meadows Creamery. "

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committed to increasing services to producers in urban locations throughout the U.S. Big or small, USDA works with agricultural operations of all sizes,

including small-scale urban farms, and offers various resources to help urban producers start, expand and grow their operations. For more information about USDA assistance for urban farmers, visit farmers.gov/urban and usda.gov/urban. Need assistance? Local USDA Service Centers connect producers with Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or Rural Development employees. To locate your local USDA Service Center, please visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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