



Beef Bytes
December 4, 2012

Dear Friends,

This week's edition features invitations for upcoming events. Please join us for the annual Versant Holiday party set for December 18th. See the invitation below.

Also, Farm Show is fast approaching. The PA Department of Agriculture's PA Preferred reception will be January 3, 2013. Details can be found at the following [link](#).

Have a good week and remember to send us your entries for the Versant big buck contest! Winners announced next week.

Sincerely,
MeeCee

The graphic is a rectangular invitation for a 'Versant Holiday Open House'. It features a background of several cookies shaped like Christmas trees. One central cookie is decorated with green icing, white icing stripes, and red icing dots. The text 'VERSANT HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE' is in the top left. The event details are in the bottom right, including the date 'TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18', time '2PM—4PM', address '116 PINE STREET 5TH FLOOR HARRISBURG, PA', and contact information for Debbie Chappell. The Versant Strategies logo is in the bottom left corner.

VERSANT HOLIDAY
OPEN HOUSE

Come celebrate with us!
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18
2PM—4PM
116 PINE STREET
5TH FLOOR
HARRISBURG, PA
DEBBIE CHAPPELL 717.635.2320
DCHAPPELL@VERSANTSTRATEGIES.NET

Versant Strategies
VISION • VERSATILITY • VICTORY

Articles of Interest

CBE News

[Beef Industry Meeting](#)

The Center for Beef Excellence has rescheduled the beef industry council meeting for December 10 at the Livestock Evaluation Center in State College. The meeting is open to producers and industry representatives and will feature speakers covering topics such as livestock traceability, insurance and risk management programs.

Pennsylvania News:

[Conservation Tax Credits](#)

Producers can take advantage of a state program to provide tax credits to help cover costs of projects that are designed to protect Pennsylvania water resources. Projects can include no till cropping, manure management and heavy use livestock areas.

National News:

[Water Policy](#)

The growth of population levels in US cities means that water use may become an issue in the future. Agriculture is a huge user of water and most urban water supplies come from farmland. It is essential for producers to become engaged now in shaping water policies to ensure availability of water resources for the future.

[Ethanol Calculations](#)

Although the renewable fuels standards mandate was upheld, many agricultural groups question the logic behind the decision. The argument that using corn for ethanol has little impact on the cost of food production seems especially weak, and if this is a false assumption then the policy decisions are not best for agriculture or the general public.

[Fiscal Cliff Debate](#)

Leaders in Washington, DC continue to struggle to come up with a fair and effective tax and financial strategy for the coming years. Republicans and Democrats are deadlocked over ideological issues such as tax levels and entitlement programs, even as decisions need to be made before the end of the year to avert political and market upheaval.

Global News:

[World Hunger Levels](#)

Despite increased agricultural efficiencies global hunger levels remain fairly consistent. There is a debate over how to best feed the growing population, but it appears that any successful strategy will need to both take advantage of new technologies for food production and protect the ability of farmers in developing nations to become sufficient food producers in their own right.

[Cattle Import Trends](#)

With record low levels of beef cattle in the US, more and more cattle are being imported from Mexico to cover the needs of US feeders. Canada is also a source of some feeder calves but they are facing a similar crisis in terms of herd levels so they are not expected to be a growing part of the solution to the US cattle supply.

Cattle Management Articles:

[Grazing Weeds](#)

Cattle often avoid weeds but there is nutritional value to be gained if a producer will train animals to eat them. Usually once the animal accepts the weeds they are willing to continue to graze them in the future.

[Responding to Drought](#)

Producers should be even more careful than usual in managing cattle during and after a drought to minimize the effects on productivity. Providing supplemental minerals is a step that is often overlooked and it is also important to maintain soil quality for future forage growth and cull animals wisely when downsizing.

[Grazing Wheat](#)

Researchers have found that rotating cattle through wheat pastures can be an effective way to provide protein over the winter months. Cattle can graze the wheat for a day and then spend a few days on normal grass pastures. It is important that the daily pastures are meeting energy needs for the animals, but the protein from the wheat can be utilized for several days.

[Hay Thieves](#)

With high hay prices following the summer's drought many areas have seen an increase in thefts of hay. This leaves producers in a difficult position when trying to keep animals fed and prepare for the winter months.

[Cattle Bacteria](#)

Iowa State University researchers are looking at the role of bacteria in cattle performance. They hypothesize that there may be a connection between ideal bacterial populations and the genetics of the animals to maximize performance.

- 11-30-2012 [Inside PDA for November 30, 2012](#)
(Press Release)
- 11-27-2012 [PDA: Tax Credits Still Available to Farmers to Protect Pennsylvania's Watersheds](#)
(Press Release)
- 11-27-2012 [Pennsylvania's CHEMSWEEP to Provide Safe Pesticide Disposal in 21 Counties...](#)
(Press Release)
- 12-03-2012 [Giant removes from sale recalled Veggie Patch meatless burgers](#)
Giant Food Stores removed Veggie Patch meatless burgers from sale Friday following a recall. The product being recalled is Veggie Patch Ultimate Meatless Burger with the UPC 61012900211, 9 ounces and a sell-by date of Jan. 12, 2013. The product was recalled by Veggie Patch for a possible listeria... - [York Daily Record](#)
- 12-03-2012 [Weather nearly ideal for this year's corn crop in region](#)
This year's corn harvest was a good one in northwest Pennsylvania, with the region faring better than some of the larger corn-producing states in the Midwest. Jeff Fowler, the Penn State Cooperative Extension director in Venango and three other counties, said this area had a very good corn crop harvest and... - [Oil City Derrick](#)

Legislative Activity

No legislative activity

Capitol Review

Governor Corbett stepped into a news lull two weeks ago in an appearance at the PA Press Club when he acknowledged that he indeed will lead the charge on a transportation funding plan once the new session of the General Assembly begins. So far, not much in the way of details. [He said transportation funding and state pension costs head his to-do list for the New Year](#). And last week, in a session with Capitol reporters, he also said his hard line on taxes has cast him as the stern dad who ["makes you come home at 11 o'clock at night and eat your vegetables."](#)

There are all kinds of transportation things going on all of a sudden. In Washington, [Pennsylvania Congressman Bill Shuster was handed the keys to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee](#). His stern dad, Bud, chaired that same committee from 1995 to 2001.

As for Bill, he was quick to note that when it comes to fixing the transportation funding mess at the federal level, he is not willing to take anything off the table. [And yes, that would include the federal gasoline tax](#), which hasn't been raised since shortly after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock and which, like Brussels sprouts, may not be much of a crowd-pleaser but is chocked full of vitamins and other nutrients.

Also in our nation's capital, [President Obama and House Speaker John Boehner were busy being obstinate about the impending fiscal cliff](#). Boehner announced there had been "no substantive progress" on that front. The double-whammy of tax hikes and spending cuts, which some say could bludgeon the economy back into recession, still looms on Jan. 1.

All of this talk about actually addressing real problems has sent Washington lobbyist Grover Norquist scrambling for cover. Having lost a growing number of his Taxpayer Protection Pledge minions to retirement, defeat and public policy epiphany, [his ubiquitous Americans for Tax Reform could be on the ropes](#).

Fiscal cliff, you say? Not for a resident of Arizona and another from Missouri, who picked the winning numbers in this week's Powerball lottery. [They will split the largest jackpot in history, which was just a skosh under \\$580 million](#). Just think, if these two lucky souls could manage to win a \$580 million pot five more times, they would have enough between them to close Pennsylvania's transportation funding gap for a whole year.

Speaking of lotteries and windfalls, a [British firm says it can generate a kazillion more dollars for Pennsylvania's own lottery if it is allowed to run the operation](#). Not so fast, said the executive director of [AFSCME Council 13, which represents lottery employees, why fix something that ain't broke?](#)

[The Pennsylvania Task Force on Child Protection issued a 400-page report this week saying that the state needs to do a better job protecting kids](#). Children's advocates embraced the report, which among many other recommendations called for significantly expanding the list of those who are required to report child abuse, as well as a stricter definition of "reporting."

The 2014 governor's race began in earnest this week as former Environmental Protection Secretary/Public Utility Commissioner [John Hanger announced his intention to seek the Democratic nomination](#). Millionaire Tom Knox, who ran for mayor of Philadelphia in 2007; York businessman Tom Wolf, who served as revenue secretary under Governor Rendell; and, Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski, all have expressed interest as well. [Hanger,](#)

[demonstrating that he may have too much of a sense of humor to run for Governor, told reporters that unlike President Obama, he \(Hanger\) WAS born in Kenya.](#)

And [Harrisburg's financial recovery team announced that it appears the city will have enough cash to last the year after all.](#) This was good news for anyone on the city payroll, and bad news for vendors, whose payments will have to wait in order to accommodate the former.

In Other News

- 12-02-2012 [**Small Employers Weigh Impact of Providing Health Insurance**](#)
Like many franchisees, Robert U. Mayfield, who owns five Dairy Queens in and around Austin, Tex., is always eager to expand and — no surprise — has had his eyes on opening a sixth DQ. But he said concerns about the new federal health care law had persuaded him to hold off.... - [New York Times](#)
- 12-02-2012 [**Pennsylvania lawmakers' automatic pay increase takes effect today**](#)
Legislators begin to reap a reward that comes automatically with holding their office today, but for many of the ones representing the midstate, it won't wind up in their pocket. The higher salary comes as a result of a 1995 law — one that predates two-thirds of the current crop of legislators — that grants... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 11-30-2012 [**PDA: Dog Licenses for 2013 Now Available at County Treasurer Offices**](#)
(Press Release)
- 11-30-2012 [**Corbett considering lifting cap on fuel tax to fix roads**](#)
HARRISBURG -- As he prepares a funding plan for repairs to Pennsylvania's roads and bridges, Gov. Tom Corbett gave a pre-emptive defense of a recommendation -- lifting a cap on a tax paid by fuel distributors -- that he acknowledged would be seen by some as violating his pledge against... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- 11-30-2012 [**Is this the planet we want to leave behind?**](#)
You might not have noticed that another round of U.N. climate talks is under way, this time in Doha, Qatar. You also might not have noticed that we're barreling toward a "world . . . of unprecedented heat waves, severe drought, and major floods in many regions." Here in Washington,... - [NY TIMES](#)
- 11-30-2012 [**State grants promoting use of natural gas in vehicles**](#)
As of Dec. 1, the state will begin accepting applications for grants geared at increasing the demand for vehicles that replace gasoline with natural gas. The state Department of Environmental Protection announced Thursday it will make \$20 million available over the next three years to help in the initial... - [Johnstown Tribune-Democrat](#)
- 11-30-2012 [**Ethanol-blended gasoline grade may damage car engines, AAA says**](#)
A new ethanol-blended gasoline may damage car engines and confuse customers, the American Automobile Association said. A survey by the biggest U.S. driving organization showed that the new E15 standard of blend, approved by the Environmental Protection Agency in June,... - [MACLL](#)
- 11-28-2012 [**Aging population aggravates Pennsylvania's budget problems**](#)
HARRISBURG -- A report on Pennsylvania finances points to budgetary pressures -- including pensions, health care, education and an aging population -- that have been highlighted by officials from the Corbett administration and Independent Fiscal Office.

Like other states, Pennsylvania faces underfunded pensions, high health... - [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)

- 11-28-2012 **[Hunger in Plain Sight](#)**
There are hungry people out there, actually; they're just largely invisible to the rest of us, or they look so much like us that it's hard to tell. The Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program, better known as SNAP and even better known as food stamps, currently has around 46... - [New York Times](#)
- 11-27-2012 **[State pension report gets cool reception](#)**
A Corbett administration report on Pennsylvania's \$41 billion unfunded public pension bill warns of higher taxes, program cuts, lower business growth and steeper borrowing costs but falls short of offering specific solutions, experts said. The report from Budget Secretary Charles Zogby hints of solutions Gov. Tom... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 11-27-2012 **[Carbon fee would go a long way to address climate change](#)**
By Jon Clark □ □ T□he 2012 debates were the first time since 1984 that climate change was not mentioned in presidential and vice-presidential debates. Just after the debates, Hurricane Sandy made its way up our coast, leaving a trail of destruction in its path. Residents along the New Jersey and New York... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 11-27-2012 **[Looking to Cities, in Search of Global Warming's Silver Lining](#)**
Heat, carbon dioxide and air pollution are already having significant effects on trees, plants and crops, and for most plant scientists, the debate over climate change ended long before the arrival of extreme weather like Hurricane Sandy. Now, some of those scientists have moved beyond... - [New York Times](#)