

grown & grazed

volume 5

a letter from the farm manager

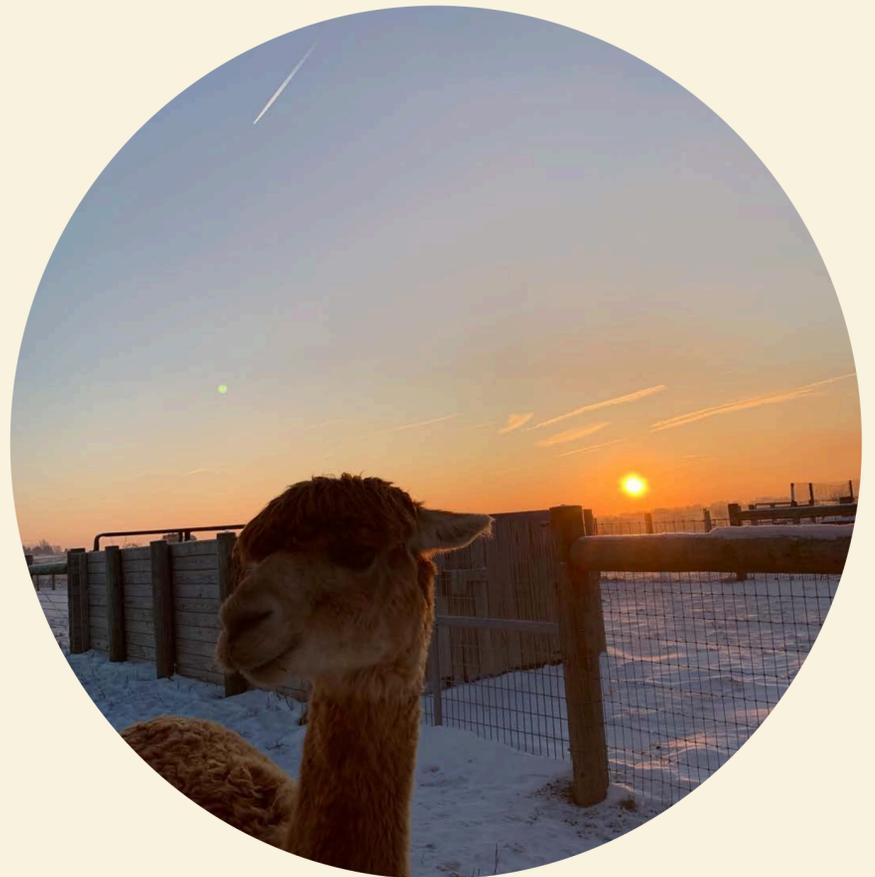
Throughout the past year there have been great strides taken in improving our current programs at the farm, while also implementing new programs and events that we hope to carry forward in the coming years.

As the past year has come to an end, a lot of individuals have begun to plan for the next year; seeing what they can do bigger and better. However, there is one integral action that needs to be taken before the planning commences: reflection. We can take a moment to reflect on the seasons and see what helped us grow, or what maybe inhibited our growth. This reflection not only helps us to recognize what we've done, but can only encourage us to keep moving forward.

Many folks think that once the crops die off, the days become shorter, and the weather becomes cooler that farmers cease their work, when it is quite the contrary. Although we are able to take a breath, our planning has only started to begin, and these next few months are key to the success for the coming year.

I encourage you all to reflect on each season you went through this past year and recognize what encouraged or inhibited your growth. With this knowledge, quietly begin your planning for the coming year and create even more intentionality moving forward.

Cheers to another year of Hoffer Farm.



seasonal updates

We are currently growing hot peppers, cherry tomatoes, lettuce, basil, dill, and parsley in our hydroponics!

contact

Questions, comments, concerns or suggestions may be directed to Olivia! To submit questions for our question corner you can email them to oclair@pvcommunities.org, call in at 717-664-6267 or place a note in Olivia's mailbox.

hydroponics

Although the growing season has slowed down outside, it surely has not within our hydroponics!

Each week, our harvest has been plentiful, specifically our cherry tomatoes. We have been patiently awaiting their growth and ripening, and we have begun to harvest them on a weekly basis. Each week we harvest about 2 pounds of cherry tomatoes and deliver them to H&H where they are used and we put them for sale in the TSN mailroom. Our peppers are continuing to grow and ripen, however we must remain a little more patient until we can harvest those fruits.

Not only were our herbs used at H&H in their dishes, but they were also dried and used in the farm workshops that took place in this past quarter. Basil, parsley, and dill found themselves to be fan favorites amongst the residents!

The lettuce has continued to be distributed throughout the Manheim community and throughout our 2025 growing season we have surpassed donating 200 pounds of lettuce to the Manheim Food Pantry. We're eager to continue our growth and impact into the new year!

Hydroponics meets every Thursday from 9:30 am-12:00 pm.



animals

Over the past three months, the animals have sensed the cold coming in, thickened their coats and enjoyed the last of the grass in their pastures. Our goats were apart of the campus Halloween parade, with One Life students walking them and showing them off, putting a smile on the residents' faces.

In the first week of November, we brought in a ram from another farm to breed our six ewes here at our farm. He remained on the farm for a month and was picked up at the beginning of December. The ram got along with our ewes quite well and based on his positive interactions, we are hopeful to welcome lambs in the spring!

This year at the annual craft bazaar we sold wool products that were made from our alpacas here at Hoffer Farm. These products included wool pellets, wool roving, and skeins of yarn. Residents and community members were excited to purchase our items, especially knowing they were from our alpacas. We encouraged visitors to go and visit the farm after their time at the bazaar and interact with the animals, especially the alpacas.



featured activity

At the beginning of November, Personal Care residents took part in creating enrichment treats for the chickens. Pumpkins were carefully dissected and filled with scratch grain for the chickens, so as they pecked at the pumpkin, they got a treat. Residents also took chunks of pumpkin and strung them on string to make an edible pecking garland for the chickens to enjoy. Pumpkins are great nutritional support for chickens, so this activity was both seasonal and beneficial! It's safe to say that both the residents and the chickens had fun with this activity and what came from it.



gather & grow workshops

In the past three months, residents who took part in our farm workshops learned how to use herbs and greens in a variety of ways. This included making their own tea blends, herbal sachets, and herbal balms in October's herbal remedies workshop. They also had the opportunity to make their own herb salts and seasoning blends in November's workshop as well as their own wreaths and swags for the holiday season in December's workshop.



herbal remedies



herb salts



winter greenery

partnership spotlight

All of the popcorn that was harvested at the end of September has been curing in the barn at Manheim Central. The cobs were shelled, the kernels were bagged, and the bags were labeled! Students from Manheim Central's FFA will present a demonstration and information about the popcorn and the process at the PA Farm Show in January. Stay tuned for communications about the upcoming popcorn sale!

The students weren't only involved in the establishment and tending of the popcorn program, but also involved in our animal program. Ag students from the Beef, Sheep, and Swine class came out to our farm at the end of October to assist with seasonal animal care. Students were involved in learning and then administered vaccinations to our sheep, as well as trimming their hooves. They also assisted with our breeding program - ensuring that our ewes were cycling properly - setting us up for a successful lambing season come spring!



get involved!

“gather & grow” workshops

These interactive workshops will touch on different topics in agriculture and include a take home project.

Our workshops are held on the third Thursday of each month in the Activity Center. So far, residents have experienced the spectrum of growing, from seeding crops to harvesting to preserving them. We plan on continuing to educate and make agriculture accessible!

Please register on WellZesta if interested.

“tails & tales” farm social hour

Farm social hours are on a seasonal pause due to the colder weather and non-conductive conditions for walking the animals.

However, we are eager to continuing our weekly socials and program in the spring!

If you are interested in walking the animals or being a part of the related communications for this year, please reach out to Olivia.

sustainability spotlight

Whenever we have our alpacas shorn, their wool is different grades, depending on where it is from on their bodies. Rather than throw the lower grades of wool out, we have the fiber mill press it into wool pellets and make wool roving out of it. The pellets can be used in gardens and roving can be used in crafting, so that nothing goes to waste.

animal spotlight

The breed of sheep that we have out on our farm are Hampshire sheep. This breed is known for its curious and friendly personality, which makes them perfect additions to our farm! Due to their personalities, they are excellent to work with, giving us plenty of opportunities to get residents, community members, and students involved in our animal program.



community impact

“I started volunteering at the hydroponics ‘farm’ almost two years ago. I have enjoyed learning about the technical side of the process and I especially enjoy the camaraderie among the other volunteers at our weekly harvests.”

-Jack Fitz

question column

Q: So, the frames of the high tunnels are put up...what's next?

A: We are currently developing water and electric lines that will be integrated into the high tunnels. In the spring, we will work to cover the high tunnels with plastic and then begin production in the following months.

Q: what farm workshop had the highest attendance this year?

A: The butter making workshop that we held in June for National Dairy Month had the highest engagement level! We are eager to continue workshops into the new year and get even more folks involved.

rooted reflection

What growth - big or small - are you most proud of from this past year?

quarterly stats

(October-December)

There has been 18.9 pounds of basil harvested.

There have been 1,887 eggs collected.

There have been 500 heads of lettuce harvested.



farm funnies

why did the farmer bury all his money?

To make his soil rich!

why did the cow cross the road?

To prove he wasn't a chicken!

word search

- PUMPKIN
- OAKLEAF
- CHICKEN
- EVERGREEN
- SEASON
- ROCKWOOL
- AGRIBUSINESS
- HYDROPONIC
- WINTER
- HAYBALE

H	R	S	E	A	S	O	N	B	N	O	W	R	W
A	F	F	K	P	P	X	C	H	I	C	K	E	N
Y	Q	J	C	H	Y	D	R	O	P	O	N	I	C
B	A	G	R	I	B	U	S	I	N	E	S	S	P
A	Q	B	O	Z	G	P	O	W	I	N	T	E	R
L	M	W	F	Z	D	L	D	D	O	T	L	R	V
E	G	T	K	D	K	Q	W	Z	A	K	H	K	B
B	W	A	G	Z	K	X	S	Q	K	B	B	A	J
E	V	E	R	G	R	E	E	N	L	S	P	Q	A
W	F	Z	Y	M	B	Y	D	O	E	A	F	E	M
E	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	X	A	L	A	E	G
Q	J	R	O	X	Y	Z	E	F	F	H	D	B	K
D	J	U	R	O	N	R	O	C	K	W	O	O	L
R	Q	J	E	L	E	H	V	A	I	H	U	T	G

