

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 2, 2015

**April Fix
PCO
814-422-0251
april@paorganic.org**

FarmFest Brings Outstanding Speakers, Education
Agriculture, Homesteading, and Soil Health

Centre Hall, PA: For four years Pennsylvania Organic FarmFest has been bringing innovative speakers to the stage for free educational workshops for farmers, gardeners, and landowners. August 7 and 8th saw a record crowd of 4700 at FarmFest, and among the offerings were educational sessions to teach, inspire, and motivate.

“FarmFest has become an integral part of central Pennsylvania, bringing farmers, organizations, and families together to celebrate organic agriculture and learn new ideas,” says Lee Rinehart, PCO’s Director of Education. “This year’s event was no exception, with an outstanding lineup of topics and presenters.”

Sponsored by Spring Creek Homesteading, Saturday’s sessions saw demonstrations on *Food Preservation Without Canning* with Penn State’s Joshua Lambert, *Home Mushroom Production* with Garrett Morrison, *Permaculture as an Approach to Homestead-Level Food Production* with Jacki Bonomo, and a special talk on *Organic Meat Processing* with Jay Young of Spring Mill’s Rising Spring Meats, a PCO-certified organic meat processor. Spring Creek Homesteading has partnered with PCO to put on educational workshops at FarmFest since it’s inception in 2012.

Our Special Presentation on Saturday by Penn State’s Eva Pendleton highlighted *Preparing Pastured Poultry Farms for High Path Avian Influenza*, where she provided information on HPAI and its implications for small flocks and the consumption of poultry products.

Gary Zimmer returned to FarmFest this year with his unique flair for advancing sustainable approaches to soil and health. The inspirational founder of Midwestern BioAg, Gary engaged a wide audience on the nature of biological agriculture with an insightful discourse from his experiences as a consultant. As well, Andre Leu, President of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements gave a keynote presentation on the health benefits of organic food as well as a journey into the concepts he wrote about in his book, *The Myths of Safe Pesticides*. Andre has been published in magazines, newspapers, and journals on many areas of organic agriculture including climate change, the environment, and, organic farming.

Dr. Kris Nichols took the main stage to engage the audience with an insightful discussion on soil health. The chief scientist at Rodale Institute, Dr. Nichols is a world-renowned expert on soil microbiology including the nature and benefits of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi. Finally, Ken Roseboro, editor and publisher of *The Organic & Non-GMO Report* and *The Non-GMO Sourcebook* led a discussion on GMO labeling and issues surrounding genetically modified foods, held in association with the GMO-Free PA Annual Meeting.

FarmFest 2015 continued the tradition started in 2012 to provide high-level educational programs in organic agriculture from noted experts. Mark your calendars for August 5-6, 2016 as FarmFest returns with more innovative and inspirational speakers.

PCO is a membership-based non-profit organization that educates and certifies growers, processors, and handlers of organic crops, wild crops, livestock, and livestock products in Pennsylvania and adjoining states. PCO is a USDA-accredited organic certifying agency. To learn more about organic certification and our Transition Membership Program contact PCO at 814-422-0251.

###