



Educational Farm & Nature Preserve

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## Farm Connection

by

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Farm & Nature Guide & Board of Trustees

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### **STRATFORD HONORS BOARD CHAIR CLYDE GOSNELL**

This week marked the end of summer at Stratford Ecological Center on Liberty Road, as school started, and the six farm camp counselors busied themselves clearing up after ten weeks of camp. They fortified themselves, and others fortunate enough to be around on Tuesday morning, by preparing a hearty breakfast from food collected on the farm. The blackberry-filled pancakes were the fattest imaginable, and both the apple and blackberry topped desserts could have won a prize at the fair!

The camp counselors and the four summer agriculture interns have proved to be an incredibly positive example of their generation. They seamlessly fit in with the staff, volunteers, participants, and visitors, showing respect and a willingness to do whatever keeps the wheels turning at Stratford. The agriculture interns guided the Delaware ALFA group during their successful volunteer work session, and likewise helped and guided the many corporate teams that love to come out to work and team build.

Ag. intern Olivia Pflaumer will be a Junior at OSU this fall, studying to become an Ag. Teacher specifically involved in the High School Future Farmers of America program. With a family background in homesteading, including bee keeping, she has been invited three times to compete at the FFA Nationals as a result of her research on bees in the supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program in Agri-science. This year she was one of only four FFA members in the country to be nominated for their highest award, the American Star Award in Agri-science. Judging takes place at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Convention in late October in Indianapolis and whatever the outcome she is a winner in our eyes.

Our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Enchanted Evening fund raiser took place for the third time at the Columbus Zoo's African Event Center on August 8. The occasional downpour did not affect lingering on the deck to observe the giraffes congregating below us. It was a pleasure to have Dorothy Pelanda, Ohio Director of Agriculture, as one of our guests. The theme was "magic," an extension of our camper's favorite activity at farm camp where they sit alone in the woods and create their own magic spot. Above the Light Photography captured the campers on video, and Junior Counselors Jonah Dean and Carmen Pape shared their love of their long-time camp experiences.

The Enchanted Evening Honoree was Board Chairman Clyde Gosnell. Clyde can be likened to the energizer bunny and has lived a full, productive life in Ohio. Jeff Dickinson, Stratford's Executive Director and Farmer, had no hesitation in sharing some of the ways he has reached out in his military service, his social and volunteer services, and his building designs as an architect in Columbus. For

those who know Clyde, Jeff aptly described him as a “renaissance man” in the greatest sense of the word.

In recognition of all Clyde has done for Stratford, and the whole of the planet, a Fund has been created in his honor called “The Clyde Gosnell Environmental Education Fund.” The first project will be the Clyde Gosnell Boardwalk, which will improve accessibility to the vernal pool for visitors and protect the fragile surrounding environment. Donations can be made by supporting a range of vernal pool dwellers, from a fairy shrimp, (\$50) to a wood duck, (\$1,00.)

On the farm in field 3 the corn stalk bales have been utilized as mulch, and pie pumpkins and winter squash plants planted into it. The normally wet area between fields 2 & 3 has dried out and cultivated and planted with sunflowers and buckwheat. The oat hay will be harvested in the coming weeks, followed by the timothy/clover.

The animals are grazing the west side of the N. Pasture, where the mowed-down thistles have only grown back 10% thanks to competition from the thick growth of the newly established Festulolium grass. After grazing the field will be clipped again and hopefully the thistles will surprise us and be gone!

The orchard chickens have started to scrap more between themselves, a sure sign of lack of protein in their diet. Farmer Jeff has continued the spelt seed v. spelt hay experiment in their feed mix and this time included more seed to raise the protein level and less hay.

The Nubian nanny goat with the floppy ears gave birth to a son in July. She may have become frightened with other animals around her and no soothing human contact because she rejected him. Consequently, “Dumbo” has been bottle fed and taken home by the ag. interns each night in a large plastic storage container. As he is no longer willing to stay in his box, with dire consequences for the carpet and sofa, and can survive on three meals a day, he is now confined to the farm.

The family friendly annual Harvest Fair is slated for Saturday, September 28 from 10-3 pm. and details are posted on our web site. Now is a beautiful quiet time to visit, and you are welcome to stop by, check in at reception, and tour wherever your footsteps lead you.

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