

2019 Virginia Agritourism Conference

Agritourism in Virginia's New Economy

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 & Thursday, April 4, 2019
The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center

2019 Featured Tours

Tour 1 Bedford County: Virginia is for Orchard and Wine Lovers

- **Layman Family Farm** <http://www.laymanfamilyfarms.com/>

Layman Family Farms is located in the beautiful **Blue Ridge Mountains**, surrounded by rolling hills of both forests and cultivated lands. The 87 acre farm in Blue Ridge, Virginia, is owned and operated by Eric and Sharon Layman and their family.

Eric established his **corn maze in the state of Virginia in 2004**, after seeing one earlier that year in Utah. Each year, the farm grows larger, and thousands of people come to visit and see what we might think of next. The farm offers a 10 acre corn maze, 15 acre courtyard, 5 acres parking, 40 acre pumpkin patch, giant jumping pillow, hay rides, cow train, corn cannon, pumpkin blaster, animal alley, and children play area with a corn crib box, rubber duck races, horse swings, giant tube slide and tires.

On the farm, Eric grows vegetables including tomatoes, cantaloupe, squash, zucchini, sweet corn, peppers, watermelons, beans and other vegetables. Most of the vegetables are sold wholesale to area supermarkets and upscale resorts, but we do offer our vegetables for sale in our Country Store as well as at the Salem Farmers Market in Salem, VA.

As farmers, Eric and Sharon realize how much people love and appreciate an opportunity to experience a "the country life". This agritourism site presents many opportunities to learn from hands on experiences about agriculture, helping bridge the gap between city and country life.

- **Johnson's Orchard & Peaks of Otter** <https://www.peaksofotterwinery.com/johnsons-orchard> or the <https://www.peaksofotterwinery.com/>

Johnson's Orchards is a family owned and operated farm located in the foothills of the [Blue Ridge Mountains](#) and at the foot of the [Peaks of Otter](#) near the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#) and the [National D-Day Memorial](#).

The Peaks of Otter has been an existing community of people for more than 80 centuries. Cherokee Indians, European pioneers, their descendants, travelers, and tourists have used the area to hunt, camp, and to live on and farm the land. Near the end of the nineteenth century, at the site of the present Peaks of Otter Lodge, was the thriving community of Mons. The history of the Johnson family is intertwined with the history of the Mons community and the Peaks of Otter and was tied to the development of the hotel and to the area's tourism industry.

In 1998, Danny Johnson, son of Elmo and Freddie, grafted and donated 11 heirloom apple trees to be planted at the Johnson Farm. Danny married Nancy Nestor Johnson in 1960 and they have two sons. In 1971, Danny and Nancy purchased the family farm where they had lived and worked since 1960 and continue to operate it along with their son, Shannon and his wife Donna, who live on the farm and their grandsons, Josh and Jordan; and the encouragement of their son, Dan (Chip) who lives in Seattle.

Tour 2 Roanoke/Franklin: Virginia is for Local Lovers

- **Homestead Creamery** <https://www.homesteadcreameryinc.com/>

With dreams of preserving the family farm for future generations, two dairy farmers combined efforts to open Homestead Creamery in 2001 with the goal of marketing their dairy products directly to consumers. Today, Homestead Creamery is made up of a network of small, locally owned dairy farms run by families who believe in the value of an honest day's work. Each family is dedicated to the quality of life for the cows and the quality of products for our customers.

Four of these families are the Montgomery, Bowers, Bowman, and Jamison.

- Ensuring the dairy farm will survive for future generations is a big goal for the Montgomery family. Donnie Montgomery farmed with his dad and knew he wanted the same opportunity for his children. He co-founded Homestead Creamery to help make that a possibility. His two sons, Jamie and Brandon are now the 4th generations to farm the family's land and Brandon's son Grayson hopes to be the 5th!
- The Bowers have farmed in Glade Hill for 3 generations. While in his mid-twenties, David Bower co-founded Homestead Creamery and became president of the company. He long dreamed of bottling milk that his cows produced as a way to help ensure the farm's profitability. Dave's sons are looking forward to carrying on the tradition as the 4th generation.
- Before the school bus stops at Anthony Bowman's house, his children run to help feed the baby calves. The Bowmans have been farming for 2 generations as a family business.
- Running a family dairy is not an individual endeavor. Seth Jamison farms with his wife Ruth and their children along with part-time help from Seth's parents. They are dedicated to good stewardship of their cows and land and hope to continue for generations to come!

Homestead Creamery features farm tours, ice cream events, farm stores, direct marketing, and retail sales in numerous locations.

- **Braeloch Farms** <https://www.facebook.com/braeloch/>

Local businessman and agritourism advocate Al Hammond and his wife Nancy recreated the family farm in Roanoke and Bedford counties. Located just outside of Roanoke, Braeloch on Glenburn Farms is a perfect spot for a rustic, chic wedding. The beautiful outdoor space offers uninterrupted views of the surrounding countryside and the indoor space is filled with gleaming wood, expansive windows, and lovely lighting. With Boxtree serving as the main lodge featuring a separate kitchen, patio, gardens, decks and gazebo; Braeloch is the key facility overlooking lake, valley and mountains for both small and very large groups and activities.

- **Ikenberry Orchards** <http://www.ikenberryorchards.com/>

Ikenberry Orchards is a 5th generation family-owned and operated farm and orchard that provides the people of Daleville and the surrounding communities with apples, peaches, and vegetables for nearly 100 years.

With a sterling reputation for our top-quality produce, Ikenberry offers a great variety of seasonal vegetables as well as apples and peaches that we've grown in our orchards. Located just 15 miles away from Roanoke, Ikenberry Orchards is worth the short drive.

Tour 3 Botetourt: Virginia is for Festival Lovers

- **Amethyst Acres** <http://amethystacres.com/>

Amethyst Acres Equine Center, Inc. opened in October of 2000 and is owner operated by a husband and wife team with over 30 years' experience in the horse industry, and a tremendous love and respect for horses. Mark and Deb are dedicated to providing a flexible, professional, customer oriented environment, focused on helping clients achieve their breeding or training goals, or just having fun with their horse.

They are also dedicated breeders of Straight Egyptian Arabians and the facility is an Affiliate Farm for [Arabians Ltd.](#) of Waco, Texas. Amethyst Acres Equine Center's 12 stall barn includes two 12' x 16' foaling stalls, a breeding lab and raised breeding shed area with phantom and breeding stocks, an office and tack room and two wash racks. There are also three 4-stall barns, a 10-stall barn, and a 2-stall isolation barn, providing a total of 36 stalls.

Located in Botetourt, Amethyst Acres is just 30 minutes south of The Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia, and in sight of the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway.

- **Twin River Outfitters** <https://canoeverginia.net/>

Twin River Outfitters is the oldest and most experienced outfitter on the Upper James River and has been safely running paddle trips since 1978. Twin River Outfitters has the largest fleet of river tubes, kayaks, and canoes and offers canoeing, single day or multi-day canoe camping trips, and paddling experiences that range from floating on the lazy river to thrilling whitewater rafting. It is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains about 20 miles north of Roanoke.

Many of the natural resources Twin River Outfitters rely on for its business go hand in hand with agriculture. Twin River partners with local farmers for river access points allowing for drop off and pick up points between public access locations. Twin River also partners with local farms that border the James River to provide primitive camping and other recreational sites along water ways on land that would otherwise not be income producing. In addition, Twin River Outfitters has partnered with local NRCS, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Virginia Cooperative Extension to offer "Farm and Float Tours" that highlight conservation practices implemented by the farmers and how those practices protect the natural resources.

- **Jeter Farm** <http://www.jeterfarm.com/>

Beginning in the 1850s, Jeter Farm is proud to be in the 5th generation of growing produce, hay, grains, and cattle near Roanoke, VA. We are passionate about agriculture and sharing about life on the farm!

Ned Jeter's love of farming is matched only by his love of family. Farming alongside his dad, Ned learned important lessons including diversifying the farm enough to weather bad years. A lesson he has been proud to pass along to his two sons. Rene, Ned's wife, is relatively new to farm life and has invested herself in cleaning and packing squash, working cattle, and helping with the country store. His sons, Ned II and Darrell, have farming in their blood take great pride in the high quality products produced on the farm and sold in restaurants, grocery stores, and colleges in the Roanoke Valley. Of course, Rose, Ned II's wife, helps with the Fall Festival, the farm's website, social media pages, birthday parties, and special events. Lacey, Darrell's wife, builds and paints displays, helps with the events, and takes photos for social media.