

AG LEADERS

2018 Ag Leaders Luncheon honors Ag Leaders & Supporters of the Montgomery Agricultural Center and Fair with a special tribute to Jean Phillips

Jean Phillips was born in Germantown where she grew up on her parent's dairy and crop farm. The Phillips farm celebrated their 350th year as Maryland Farmers in 1999. Jean is a very innovative individual adopting her farming practices to the economic environment. The dairy herd was sold in the mid 1980's due to a lack of profitability. She then began to sell straw to contractors for erosion control, and in 1990 got into the sweet corn business.

Jean began planting more sweet corn to satisfy growing local demand. Jean and her youngest son Sam were involved in marketing their produce to a local restaurant. Oldest son Russell was involved with the farm for many years. Soon, Jean began selling sweet corn to Weis Markets, and in 1994 began selling to Giant, eventually devoting about 175 acres of sweet corn just for Giant. The Phillip's Farm also sold lots of tomatoes and cantaloupes to Giant as well.

In 1999 Jean constructed an on-farm market. The market served as the focal point of the operation for the next 10 years. Jean had additional farm produce stands in Gaithersburg Square Shopping Center, and in the old cider barrel on Rt. 355. At its peak Jean's operation grew more than 200 acres of fresh produce.

Jean has been an active volunteer of the farm community. She was a member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and an active member of Farm Bureau. She also served as a scoutmaster for over 20 years and even hosted the Maryland Jousting Association State tournaments.



The Ag Leaders Purpose

To provide an opportunity for leaders in the agricultural community to come together during the annual Agricultural Fair to commemorate the importance of agriculture, share ideas, concerns and successes impacting our county.

The Luncheon, held during the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair includes an educational program with important information on current legislation, agricultural land use issues, trends in agricultural production and demographic trends. The Luncheon also serves as an opportunity for interaction and exchange of information among invited guests with the intention of facilitating communication in the future.

The Luncheon is also the occasion in which a farmer or a farm family are inducted into the Montgomery County Agriculture Hall of Fame. The farmers are honored for their extraordinary contribution to the agricultural community in Montgomery County as well as the State of Maryland. The honoree is generally submitted for induction into the Maryland Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Invited guests include agricultural producers of all types in Montgomery County, elected officials from County and State government as well as the following agencies who support the agricultural communities: Agricultural Services- a division of the County Department of Economic Development; USDA Farm Service Agency; USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service; Maryland Department of Agriculture- Soil Conservation District; University of Maryland Extension.

The Ag Leaders Luncheon is sponsored by: Montgomery County Agricultural Center, Inc., the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture and the Montgomery County Extension Office.

The Montgomery County Fair officially opened in 1949. It was made possible by many volunteers, contributors, families, and government officials who, over the years continue to make the Fair a place for youth and others to gather and show results of their work, to enjoy camaraderie and to educate others about agriculture.