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# Farming future leaders in Bow River

**Bow River Chapter** of the National FFA Organization a benefit for local **youth** 

by Mike Armstrong

The Bow River Chapter of the National FFA Organization has been a proram which gets students active in their school according to Jolyn Borah, the president of the chapter which is based at Hanna, Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow (HEM) Junior/ High School."The FFA is by far the largest club in our school," Borah said. "We know HEM is very sport dynamic, and we know that, but when we get the kids involved in FFA, I have seen so many grow. Their leadership abilities are truly amazing."Borah has been with the FFA since she was in 7th grade, the youngest one can become a member."You can start young and get involved in leadership almost right from the beginning," Borah said. "We encourage our new members to get involved in the Career Development Events (CDE) right from the get go. It gives them a chance to see what FFA is all about and gives them the shot to find their own niche in the club."FFA functions within the three-circle model of agricultural education as a student leadership organization that complements a student's classroom/ laboratory instruction and supervised agricultural experience program. FFA members can compete in CDE that cover job skills in everything from communications to mechanics. Some events allow students to compete as individuals, while others allow them to compete in teams. These competitions can happen at a local or district level, state level, and on the national level." I know for me it has been a lot of LDE (Leadership Development Events)," Borah said. "That has been my niche. I have competed parliamentary procedure and employment skills. It has helped me grow

as person so much over the

of people. I have been an officer since I was in 8th grade and now I am a senior, and I the great thing about FFA, you can work and build yourself up and it is entirely based on your own personal effort."Students education teachers that have general. to cooperate with parents, employers, and other adults who assist individuals the development and achievement of educational and career goals. This person for the Bow River Chapter is Alyssa Lewark. She is also the agriculture teacher for HEM.

Lewark came to HEM two years ago. She graduated from University of Wyoming and went to Nebraska for her first job. A couple years passed and she was hired by HEM

."I grew up in Colorado and love the mountain west," Lewark said. "When I was told about the job, I jumped at the chance to come back to Wyoming.'

The chapter currently has but it so much more." 22 students.

Borah and Lewark both agree with the different leadership changes over the past few years, it has been challenging to keep the chapter in the upper echelons of ranking.

"A few years ago, we had Elizabeth Ellis as our president and she got us to a three star rating state and national. Those are big shoes to fill in the best of times and recently we have gone through advisors," Borah said

Lewark is the fourth since she joined. Lewark said getting a three star ranking nationally is difficult.

"You have to have activities from all 15 areas of the FFA and then the chapter has to focus on nine and be detailed in reports," Lewark said. "Three star is the highest ranking and it means you are in the top six chapters of the state. There are 54 chapters now."

To be ranked a three star nationally, is huge according

years and I am much more the chapters and all the states, comfortable speaking in front that means you are in the top 10 percent of the country," Borah said. "It really is big shoes to fill and with us having have worked myself up. That is different advisors, it has been difficult. The past few years have been rebuilding for us."

Borah and Lewark both said Covid also took its toll are supervised by agricultural on the chapter and the FFA in

> "We could not have meetings, conferences, just like sports was effected," Borah said. "There were real challenges to keep the program going when so many rules prevented getting together in person which is absolutely necessary

Both Borah and Lewark said the FFA is much more than learning only about agriculture.

"That is a misconception about the FFA," Borah said. "It is not only about rancher kids who have livestock and grow gardens. There is business and marketing principles taught in addition to leadership skills. You can learn about machinery and science that certainly relate to agriculture.

Both said the FFA develops members' potential and helps them discover their talent through hands-on experiences, which give members the tools to achieve real-world success. Members are future chemists, veterinarians, government officials, entrepreneurs, bankers, international business leaders, teachers and professionals in many career fields.

For this reason, the name of the organization was updated in 1988 after a vote of national convention delegates to reflect the growing diversity and new opportunities in the industry of agriculture.

The goal of the FFA is to help the next generation rise up to meet challenges of a changing world by helping its members to develop their own special talents. According the FFA, members live by the motto, "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve."

FFA programs are funded to Borah. "That means out of all through sponsorships and

levels. National dues for each member are \$7 per year.

Borah gave a guick history lesson on how long the FFA has been in existence and hit some of the highlights over the years. It started with The Smithtrades and industry, and homemaking," and provided federal funds for this purpose. The act is the basis both for the promotion of vocational education, and for its isolation from the rest of the curriculum in most school settings.

The Smith-Hughes Act was just the beginning.

In 1925, Future Farmers of Virginia, a group for boys in agricutlure classes, was formed. This group would seve as the model for the Future Farms of Ameica.

Two years later, the New Farmers of Virginia—a precurser of the New Farmers of America—was formed in 1927 for African-American agriculture students.

The New Farmers of America would eventually merge with the FFA in 1965, boosting the latter's membership by more than 50,000. Four years later, the organization opened up membership to girls and, in 1970, the FFA had its first two female delegates to the

national convention. In 1973, National FFA Secretary Fred McClure became the first African-American elected to a national FFA office. Nine years later, Jan Eberly became the first woman National FFA President. Then, in 1984, Corey Flournoy was the first African-American to be elected National FFA President and was the first urban student leader. In 2017, Breanna Holbert became the first African-American woman elected National FFA President.

By the year 2020, student membership had hit an all-time high of 760,113 across 8,739 chapters.

Borah and Lewark are both

communities.

about," Borah said. "We try to get out in the community like a sign.' Lewark said Covid

regulations did stifle a lot what they could do, but all members who were a part of the FFA wanted to help make their communities stronger. They said this was a common goal of all chapters in Carbon County.

There are four chapter in the county. Bow River, Saratoga, Encampment and Little Snake River Valley.

Borah said although there is competition between the chapters when showing at the Carbon County Fair or at leadership event, there is real camaraderie between all that belong to the FFA.

Borah said there is tremendous support from the community in helping them achieve goals of attending conventions. The members must pay their own way and accommodations and fundraising is non-stop.

"It is hard, but we work hard and the many in our community see this and help," Borah said. "The best is when we go to the elementary schools and expose the kids to the FFA and

what it can offer." To be in FFA, a student must be enrolled in agriculture at high school. The FFA is represented at several different levels across the nation and the FFA administration may change from state to state. The basic levels are the national level, serving all of the United States of America, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Then there is the state level, serving an individual state association and the chapter level, serving a school or set of schools in an area.

There can be three types proud of what the FFA has of chapters at the secondary

individual donations at the accomplished with students level. They are middle for local, state and national and future leader over the middle school, junior for years. They both feel the ninth grade and senior which rich history is what helps can be either tenth through drive the chapter to help their twelfth or ninth through twelfth depending on the school. "What our chapter is good Other levels include districts, sub districts, sections, regions, areas, and federations.FFA Hughes National Vocational as much as possible whether was created to serve high Education Act of 1917, it is helping with a food truck school students and has which promoted vocational or helping with project a town moved into middle schools education in "agriculture, or organization might require where membership may begin as early as age 12, allowing members to become active earlier and stay active longer.

> Each chapter is chartered as part of the state association and national organization. Collegiate chapters exist as well. Most states hold FFA conventions at least once annually, where members gather to compete, be recognized for awards, attend leadership workshops, debate organizational issues in a delegate process, and exposed to leadership events.

"There are so many options in the FFA and it really helps as you figure out your life," Borah said. "You dip your feet in the water to see what you like and I think that is important as you get older and face the reality that decisions about your life have to be made."

"The biggest motto of the FFA is 'growing tomorrow's leaders'," Lewark said. "There is so much opportunity to prepare the student for going out into the world once they graduate."

Borah said another positive aspect of the FFA is how many people a student is exposed to by going to contests, conventions and helping around the community."It is one of the biggest dynamics the FFA offers," Borah said. "I played sports competitively and I didn't really talk to the players on the other team, but in competitions at the FFA, all we do is talk and exchange knowledge. We are there to grow and everyone knows it. Friendships are often built during these events with people you never met before. The FFA may be based on Ag, but the lessons learned, stay with you all your life, no matter what you end up doing."



# 2022 HATS OFF TO AG



# Seven clucks to chickens

Don't count your eggs before planning your urban chicken flock

## by Micky Jones

Having visions of fresh eggs every morning? It may be time to look into chickens. Eggs from free ranging hens are tastier and more nutritious. Research shows they're not only higher in omega-3s, beta-carotene, and vitamins A, D, and E, but they're lower in cholesterol and saturated fat. Backyard eggs have a dark orange yolk full of nutrients. Most people say they taste better, too. Keeping backyard chickens is a great starting point for most families embracing sustainability. So in seven steps or Clucks let's talk about chickens.

## First the legals.

Before planning your shed and purchasing chickens, check local ordinances to see if you're allowed to raise chickens in your neighborhood. Some communities allow a household to have a few hens but not a rooster; otherwise, a small flock quickly grows.

### Saratoga

According to the Saratoga Municipal Code, found under Title 18 zoning, Chapter 18.42 District regulations, there are multiple regulations be worth a call to the local regarding chickens and fowl. Living in a residential district it is possible to have chickens, though there are strict rules that allow it to be possible. Title 18 zoning, Chapter 18.42 District regulations states;

"Aperson may keep livestock and barnyard animals in residential districts provided the following requirements are met. "Livestock and barnyard animals" shall be defined as domesticated fowl and animals kept for

farm purposes, being limited to marketable animals i.e., chickens, ducks, geese, pigs, rabbits, and sheep.

animals are kept for and only chores. for 4-H and FFA purposes.

fencing.

commission. In addition, This is the gross part of docile breed that won't make Chapter 18.69, Special Use waste often. Requirements.

The conditional use permit shall only be valid for one year. Conditional use permits submitted by March 1st of your setup simple, but they

of red tape around chickens the hens themselves. Don't in Saratoga. The best course forget the chicken coop! of action may be to speak directly with town hall about your personal chicken or space. Confinement can breeds that are well-suited to "livestock" plans.

## **Encampment**

has no specific ordinances or more square feet outside regarding chickens or fowl. the coop, per bird. Good A permanent structure may chicken coops also have a require a building permit long list of requirements. a concrete foundation for months when planning your your chicken coop it might coop as well! town hall.

## Hanna

Only 6 chickens are permitted personal needs. and no roosters. There are other rules about the size and position of the chicken coop

# **Check your Schedule**

Livestock and barnyard sure you are ready for daily

## **Budget for your** new hobby

Coops and chickens aren't for this purpose are to be very expensive if you keep each year. (Ord. 793, 2010; require consistent care and

What does a Coop need?

The top requirement is cause anxiety for your local conditions. feathery friends. Plan 3 square feet of floor space The town of Encampment inside the coop, and eight

## Get Building!

One easy way is to repurpose an existing Ordinance #349 was structure, like your old of Hanna has a few simple or use a kit. There are many for a permit at the town hall. something to best suit your years to come.

# Chicken selection

Possibly the most exciting that are particular to each part of starting and owning

resist those tiny chicks all over the county once spring Any animal involves care starts up. There are as many and time every day. Be chicken breeds as there are types of owners! Breeds vary in size, egg-laying Maintain food and water rate, temperament, cold-Livestock and barnyard levels. Chickens need hardiness, noise production, animals may be kept from continuous access to feed activity level and more. April 1st to September 1st and fresh water, as well as Your choice might rely on with adequate shelter and nutritious treats such as whether your chickens will be vegetable scraps. Collect outside a lot in the country or A conditional use permit eggs at least once a day. confined to a smaller space. is applied for and approved Refresh bedding and "muck A first timer with limited space by the Saratoga planning out" areas below the roost. should consider a smaller, said permit shall be subject being a chicken owner, but much noise. Barred Plymouth to the requirements of it's essential to remove their Rocks, Buff Orpingtons, and Rhode Island Reds are common beginner-friendly breeds that lay eggs regularly and should be available from most local sources. Chickens are social creatures and keep each other warm, so you should keep at least three Ord. 726, 2004; Ord. 707, cost every month. Make hens at a time. There's no 2002; Ord. 399 § 1(328-46), sure starting a chicken coop need to buy a rooster, as will fit into your lifestyle. The hens lay infertile eggs without One might say there is a lot cost of food and bedding, and them. Also the legality of having a rooster inside city limits. Who would want to be "that" neighbor?

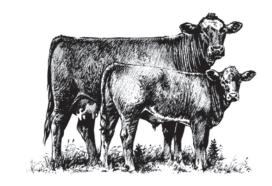
Local sources should have

### Finally the finishing touches.

Choosing a cheerful paint color or one to complement your home is a great place to start. A simple homey though. If you are planning Don't forget about the winter coop doesn't have to be homely. You could also have fun with it depending on your preference and style. Eccenterect chicken coops have been taking Pinterest by storm. It could be a chance to let your creativity shine. Or approved by the Hanna gardening shed or doghouse. possibly take a step back and town council in July 2014. If this isn't an option, don't put the kids to work, with a Keeping chickens in the Town worry! You can build custom bucket of paint. It might turn out a little wonky but will be a rules. Starting with applying options so you can find cherished memory for many

> No matter how you decide to go about chicken ownership it has many rewards. From fresh eggs to fun this homesteading project





The Carbon County Fair Board Salutes

Agriculture in Carbon County!

We look forward to seeing you at the Fair July 31 through August 6, 2022!











# 2022 HATS OFF TO AG



# Raising 'lama glamas' in Elk Mountain

Priest siblings working together to raise llamas in northern Carbon County

## by Mike Armstrong

Hanna, Elk Mountain, Medicine Bow (HEM) High School sophomore Mackenzie and freshman brother Cody Priest are raising a herd of animals for their Bow River Chapter FFA project not often seen in Carbon County and for that matter, the state of Wyoming.

Llamas

Her parents, Steve and Courtney own most of the eight "lama glamas", but Mackenzie does own Peak, the alpha of the herd. All the other males are geldings. Peak is the only stud.

"He is also a real drama queen," Mackenzie said. "He definitely is used to getting his way. He runs the show."

Cody laughed and agreed.

Brother and sister agree that all the animals have definite personalities. They said on the opposite spectrum of Peak; Boulder, a large brown male who the family bought in September is incredibly chilled.

The Priests keep the males and females apart although only Peak can get a female pregnant. That doesn't mean the geldings don't have visions of still being able to reproduce.

"The boys are always ready and the females don't really have a particular season the way some animals do," Mackenzie said. "Right now two of the three females are pregnant. We bought them that way and gestation takes about a year. We should see the babies come sometime in the summer. When the baby is delivered it will probably weight about 30 pounds."

Mackenzie wanted a llama for years and her parents decided to take her to a llama farm in northern Wyoming to see if the attachment was for real or imagined.

It was for real.

"We used to read the 'Llama, Llama' books when we were little and I knew I really liked them," Mackenzie said. "So when we went up and saw them up in Cody, I talked my dad into getting some. Then I saved up my money and bought Peak. He just turned two in October, so he is going on three."

Llamas can live up to 30 years, meaning Peak will probably be in Mackenzie's life for years to come.

Llamas are said to date back 40 million years to the central plains of North America, though they became extinct there during the Ice Age. The onnly surviving generations of Llamas are the ones that migrated to South America and became prominent in the Andean Mountains.

Their domestication began

about three to five thousand animals that are most closely years (making them one of the related to camels. oldest domesticated animals in the world). The Inca Indians they are unhappy. used llamas as beasts of clothing, food, and fuel.

back into North America. Today there currently just about 350 States and Canada.

and social creatures, which with, other livestock such as sheep. Their unique adapted feet give them a sure footing fit for diverse terrain types. Their feet are two-toed with a broad, leathery pad on the bottom.

Eventually, the idea is to have the animals pack on hiking and hunting expeditions. Llamas have excellent eyesight and can spot wildlife and will stare directly at game in the bush.

are more sure footed on rocky cold given their heritage.

raising the animals for their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SEA) component each other via clucking, ogling, in their FFA program.

steers for their SEA project or highly-pitched alarm calls lambs," Mackenzie said. "We when startled by impending have a website that we use to put in all our bookkeeping and it will count all your records to help you earn your state FFA degree and that is what I am doing."

started in 7th grade.

Their mother said the kids actually had been exposed to agriculture since they were born because Steve, who is agriculture in Ohio.

FFA banquets in highchairs," since they were born."

Mackenzie said a problem of recent times has been the effect of Covid on the FFA on a daily basis and that means meetings and conventions.

"We haven't had a normal Cody said. "We are not the convention for three years," Mackenzie said. "This is the first one for a lot of the younger students in Bow River Chapter."

Both Cody and Mackenzie they record taking care of the work together to put in the animals. records in the data base. She said the animals need care, of hay once a week during the

sufficient. "There are things we have to eat double the amount of the be aware of," Mackenzie said. "We have to watch their canine teeth and make sure they don't fight with each other."

The Priests have a shoot the traits. llamas can be strapped into to do such operations as filing teeth, brushing and any chore that requires the llama not to move. The Priests have a lot of equipment to take care of these

Llamas spit like camels when

Llamas have scent glands burden, and as a source of on the low outside of their rear legs and between their In the late 1800s and early toes which are metatarsal 1900s, llamas were imported scent glands. These glands are their body alarm system and temperature regulatory thousand llamas in the United mechanism. Another gland found on the inner surface of Llamas are agile but calm their rear leg is the tarsal gland. This gland is what llamas use interact in herds but can bond to identify individuals within the herd.

The hair texture of a llama's coat varies. Most with coarser guard hairs on their outer layer and soft wool in their undercoat. A llama's thick coat helps them This is why the Priests withstand extreme cold, windy, have started raising them. snowing or rainy weathers, in other words, almost any weather Wyoming throws at them. The short hair on several areas of their body, on the other hand, helps to disperse heat when in warmer weather. Their A horse can't do that. Llamas coats are not really suitable for making clothing out of terrain and do very well in the according to the Priests. The average llama heights range Mackenzie and Cody are from 5'.5" to 6'. Weights range from about 280-450lbs.

Llamas communicate with hums, as well as ear and "Some kids have show tail movements. They have danger and will group together if threatened.

> Llamas are used as guard animals in some instances.

Mackenzie and Cody must have a business model for their Both Cody and Mackenzie SEA and besides eventually using them as pack animals, Mackenzie is training Peak to wear hats for photo ops with paying customers.

"The FFA not only makes you the principal at HEM, taught create a business plan with your animals, but also how to "They went to their first manage the money you make," Mackenzie said. "Recording Courtney said. "The FFA has what you do is important. I have really been a part of their life a box of receipts I have to stay on top of."

> Cody agreed with his sister. "We write down what we do writing a description in detail,"

first siblings to raise livestock together." Both said the FFA has made them very detail oriented as

The three females eat a bale but in a lot of ways are self- summer and two bales during the winter. The five males

females. Mackenzie and Cody were well prepared in their get too long because they play knowledge of llamas but they have been surprised by a few

> Their smallest male has little animal complex and is tries to be tough and aggressive to a degree, whereas the largest male is the most laid back.

"They are not really dominant



Mackenzie Priest feeds the Ilama Boulder, which joined the herd in September 2021.

with their size, it is more about llamas down once a week. The their attitude," Mackenzie said. "I found that interesting."

The siblings also noticed the llamas show jealousy, treats. Llamas love squares of wheat.

The Priests don't worry about predators around the Elk only working with the llamas Mountain area but they have make sure they are wormed. Ticks are another concern.

"Ticks can get on them like any animal," Cody said. "But if they get ticks, there is a chance they get what is called 'tick paralysis'. That means they literally can become paralyzed from a tick bite. You have to be very careful about that. Basically you put on the same spray you put on horses or ticks don't' get in on their back, but they will be trouble on their legs and backend where they don't have as much hair. So that is where you have to

inside to keep the mosquitos ranch, or something like that," and flies at bay.

"They don't seem to get especially when it comes to bothered by much," Mackenzie especially when looking at your said. "They hang out in the cold."

> Cody has enjoyed not in the FFA. He has liked learning components of the Environmental Natural Resources (ENR) which is because they digest everything. anything to do with nature.

"I have learned how to identify different cuts of meat, judged different animal carcasses to where what meat processing plants would take, and what cuts can be gotten," Cody said. "Livestock I have learned how to judge cows, pigs and livestock. For the most part sheep. I have done meats for two years, livestock for one and this is my first year for ENR."

Although Mackenzie and Cody are working with livestock, they said it was a working with these animals. It misconception that was mostly In the summer they spray the all that one did in the FFA.

"Many people think you have ears also get an ointment put to work with cows or live on a Mackenzie said. "But there is so much the FFA has to offer future there are employment skills the CDE (Career and Leadership Development Events) really help with. There is also a lot of opportunities for scholarships."

Llamas make great fertilizer

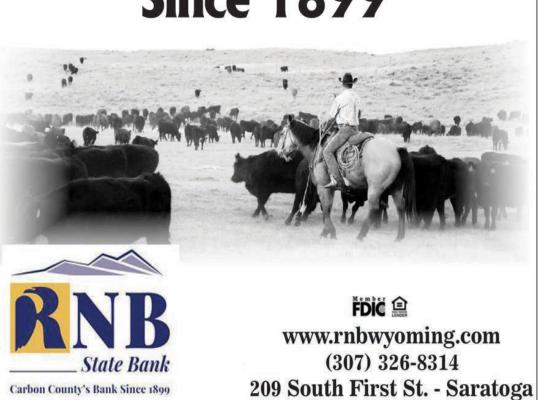
"Every little seed is digested," Mackenzie said. "They also always stick to one area. They don't just go anywhere. They have their bathroom area."

Could there be another business opportunity?

Cody and Mackenzie are not quite ready to go that route yet, but both said they are happy to have the llamas as their SEA project in the FFA.

"I love animals to begin with," Mackenzie said. "And I love really is educational and the best part, fun."











# 2022 HATS OFF TO AG



# Hype about homesteading

Even if you don't have acres of land, homesteading can be easily done in rural-urban areas

## by Micky Jones

What is all the hype about homesteading, one might ask what even is it?

Homesteading typically involves growing and preserving food crops, cooking meals from scratch, raising animals, making homemade medicines, personal care products, perhaps even clothing, and an overall goal to "live off the land".

Homesteaders may also barter and trade for the things they cannot produce themselves. Homesteaders come in many forms and styles these days. Some homesteaders have acres of land to play with (and maintain), while urban homesteaders are challenged and creative in smaller spaces. While owning or renting self sustainable projects are taking over.

There are some hard-core, very traditional homesteaders that attempt to live a fully selfsufficient, zero-waste, off-grid

this lifestyle and enjoy it as its own. a light-hearted escape from their usual 9-5 "real life". All awesome and acceptable! hand. Even a small effort can make a big difference.

you may already be doing homemade seasonings, some homestead projects vegetable (or bone) broth, and without even realizing it. other useful staples. Making Some examples of homestead projects or new goals are;

Create a veggie/herb garden. bin, compost tumbler (or all of Elderberry Syrup, or personal the above).

Create a pollinator bed, area, or even a meadow full of flowers. These are essential to keep in mind. Many local to bees and other pollinating shops sell homemade soaps heroes.

Learn how to ferment, can, to come by. By learning to making something useful. store essentials you can cut down waste and trips to the One way to help extend the grocery store.

sheep, rabbits, pigs, cows, structures. Winter comes back or other "farm animals". See fast after a short summer in bread? It might be time to learn "Seven Clucks to Chickens"

status life. Then there are for chicken tips. Keeping in your hobby homesteaders, mind proper animal care and who are simply drawn to maintenance can be a job of

Create a root cellar or large pantry. Food storage and living versions of homesteading are in a food desert come hand in

kombucha, homemade Homesteading is so simple sourdough, apple cider vinegar, these yourself can easily stock your pantry.

Learn how to make natural Start a compost area, worm medicine like Fire Cider and care products like calendula oil, soap, lotions. Personal and self care are always something and lotions as well.

Learn how to sew, knit, dehydrate and/or pickle your crochet, or use natural dyes. harvests. Living in a food What better way to spend desert, fresh produce is hard the long winter evenings than

Build or install a greenhouse. short growing season is with Adopt chickens, goats, greenhouses and other similar The Valley.

Set up a rainwater collection system system. Fresh water is essential to almost everything collecting rainwater can help water veggies and help hydrate animals.

Learn how to make compost tea. It is rumored to add Learn how to make additional microbes for the soil, Increase nutrients and even decrease the risk of diseases. Talk about liquid gold in the gardening world.

> Start a farm stand. A fun way to get involved in the community.

> Sell homemade goods locally or online. Many local residents have found a way to make income while providing top quality goods to The Valley

> Host workshops, classes, or homestays to share your knowledge and skills with others.

> Where to begin? Well, your priorities are personal. This journey to start a homestead is all about what you want to do, and when you want to do it There are no rules! As always all versions of homesteading are awesome and acceptable. Do you know someone who sells eggs or bakes their own some of their secrets!

# The PVCC is proud to be involved in this agricultural community!





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