



Mountain Telephone

**BROADBAND:**  
HELPING YOU FARM



JULY/AUGUST 2020

# CONNECTION



## COWGIRL UP

Raising prize cattle  
in Elliott County

## SPECIAL BREED

Family takes sustainable  
farm to new heights

## GROWING THE FUTURE

Broadband revolutionizes agriculture



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Taking the rural broadband story to the Senate

In mid-May, I appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to discuss the status of broadband during this time of crisis that has so many Americans working, learning and socializing from home.

I have never been more proud of the broadband providers we represent, watching them move quickly and think outside the box to get the job done for their customers.

It was a privilege to share with senators that NTCA’s community-based broadband providers were well prepared to keep Americans connected during a crisis — thanks to their community commitment, their entrepreneurial spirit and the support of Congress, the FCC and RUS.

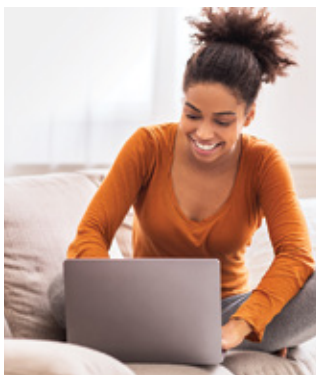
NTCA members have led the charge in building future-proof broadband networks for years and are doing all they can to keep everyone’s internet lights on. But I reminded the committee that to do that, these providers need to keep their own lights on as well.

First, I reminded senators how important it will be to pass the “Keeping Critical Connections Act” to create a temporary emergency fund to keep Americans connected during the pandemic.


Moving forward, Congress should adopt a “Forever Connected” perspective when it comes to promoting broadband. No American should get second-class broadband service, or worse yet, no service at all.

I appreciated the opportunity to share with senators the story of NTCA members, the Smart Rural Communities they are helping to build, and what support they need to write the next chapter. 📧

# AMERICA'S RURAL BROADBAND PROVIDERS



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# The six-second commute

## Work from home policies boost productivity

Story by KALEIGH COX



According to a 2017 Gallup poll, 43% of employed Americans have spent at least some time working remotely. U.S. census data released in 2018 revealed that 5.2% of American workers are based entirely at home. Many employers, however, are reluctant to get on board with remote work. They worry that distractions at home and a lack of oversight could decrease productivity. But are those worries unfounded? One Stanford professor decided to find out.

In 2015, Nicholas Bloom conducted research as a Chinese travel agency tested a new work-from-home policy with half of its call center employees. Bloom found that productivity actually increased by an average of 13% thanks to fewer interruptions, shorter breaks and fewer sick days. With just a six-second commute to their laptop, employees were also less likely to start work late or leave early.

Little bits of time saved here and there added up to a big difference. Each employee completed roughly one extra shift's worth of work. And they were happier, too. Employee attrition, formerly a big problem at the company, decreased by an astounding 50%. The company in Bloom's study cut back on its office space in an expensive city and saved \$2,000 per employee.

Working from home is great for employers and employees alike, but there are challenges to keep in mind. At the end of the study,

over half of the work-from-home employees decided they wouldn't want to work from home 100% of the time, citing isolation as a challenge. Fortunately, there are several ways remote companies can help employees overcome isolation and reap the benefits of working from home:

- ▶ **Use technology to stay connected.** Video meetings allow for face-to-face time and are more engaging than audio-only conference calls. Platforms like Slack encourage steady communication, even between meetings.
- ▶ **Consider flexible policies.** Working from home doesn't have to be all or nothing. Some companies opt for a mix of in-office and at-home days or start new employees in the office for smoother onboarding. The key is to consider the unique needs of the team and experiment with creative options as needed.
- ▶ **Encourage team bonding.** A sense of community can combat feelings of isolation and encourage team cohesion. Non-work-related, group bonding activities — whether virtual or in person — can help teams feel connected and united even as they work from home.

Working from home can save companies time and money, improve employee satisfaction and improve retention rates — as long as they find ways to keep employees connected and engaged from wherever they call home. 📧

### Stay focused with the Pomodoro Technique

Named after the creator's tomato-shaped kitchen timer, the Pomodoro Technique is a simple time-management strategy widely used by work-from-home employees who need help staying focused. Here's how it works:

- » Select a task to focus on.
- » Set your timer for 25 minutes and work until you hear the "ding."
- » Take a short five-minute break to stretch or grab a coffee.
- » Repeat three more times, then take a longer break of 15-30 minutes.

Even large tasks feel manageable when you only have to focus for 25 minutes at a time. Set a kitchen timer, use your phone's timer or download a Pomodoro app to try this "time-tested" technique for yourself.

# Thank you to our farmers

There are many ways this year's pandemic is going to change the way America thinks about things. One of those ways, I hope, is that we remember those who keep our society running.



**SHAYNE ISON**  
General Manager

Last issue, I outlined how broadband has provided an essential service during the pandemic for the millions of people who've had to adjust to working or attending school online. But in this issue, we're focusing on something even more essential: the farmers and other agricultural producers who put food on our tables, lumber in our houses and clothes on our backs.

A steady supply of food and other agricultural products at the store is something many of us frequently took for granted. But the spiking demand and supply chain disruptions this year have made me appreciate when there is chicken in the meat case, fresh vegetables in the produce department and stocked shelves on the paper products aisle.

I think our nation's farmers — including those right here in Kentucky — have become some of the most underappreciated but absolutely critical people in this country.

So in light of that, I want to take this space to say thank you.


Thanks to the dairy workers for getting up early for milking. Thanks to the row crop farmers for long days of plowing, planting and harvesting. Thank you to all the fruit growers and pickers in the orchards. A sincere thank you to those raising and butchering our beef, poultry and pork. Thank you to all of those growing and cutting timber. Thank you to all of the beekeepers tending to their hives, the hay farmers storing their bales, the egg farmers in their chicken houses and the grape growers in their vineyards. Thank you to all of the extension agents who help share knowledge between all of those groups.

Whether they're producing beef or beans, canola, pumpkins or peanuts, our agricultural producers deserve our appreciation.

Every growing season they risk their financial future, and they must pray for the right weather and good yields. But they're also adapting to changing demands and industry trends.

For anyone who hasn't been out on a farm lately, you might be surprised how much our local farmers are beginning to embrace technology. Many are now ordering seeds and parts online, keeping up with commodity prices and finding new markets to sell their products.

In this issue, we're happy to highlight the hard work farmers put in to keep America moving and the growing role technology plays in helping their operations run smoothly. It's important to remember that many of the founders of our cooperative were farmers who realized the need for telephone technology, just as they appreciate the need for broadband today.

I'm thankful for all of the members of our local agriculture community and proud to still be their technology partner. 

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2020. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



## Mountain Telephone

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to providing communications technology to the people of Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe and a section of Bath counties. The company covers 1,048 square miles and supplies service to nearly 11,500 members.

### Send address corrections to:

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative  
P.O. Box 399 • 425 Main St.  
West Liberty, KY 41472  
Telephone: 606-743-3121

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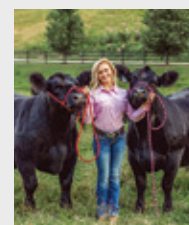
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### On the Cover:



Megan Pennington shows off her prize steer, Hot Rod, and prize heifer, April. See story Page 9.

# The *speed* you need

Your internet connection from Mountain Telephone is fast, strong and reliable. However, if you don't have enough speed for your family's needs, you may find yourself frustrated by buffering delays, spotty video calls and lagging games.

Read on to discover the recommended speeds for typical work, play and rest activities online. Just remember — if your household uses multiple devices at once, you'll need to add up the activity happening on every device to determine the total bandwidth you'll need.



## Work

Working from home doesn't mean working in isolation. If you collaborate with clients or co-workers on group video calls, you'll need about 8 Mbps of download speed and 500 Kbps of upload speed for a smooth experience.

If you leave for work, you may want a smart security system to protect your home throughout the day. A video doorbell or high-resolution security camera operates best when you have 2 to 2.5 Mbps download and upload speed available for each camera.



## Play

Without adequate bandwidth, online gaming quickly becomes an exercise in frustration. While some gaming platforms list a minimum recommended speed of around 3 Mbps of download speed and 1 Mbps of upload speed, this is truly a minimum recommendation.

Many gamers prefer speeds of 15-25 Mbps to ensure minimum lag and seamless gaming experiences.



## Rest

Whether you prefer Disney+, Netflix, Apple+ or some other streaming video platform, the guidelines are roughly the same. In most cases, 3 to 4 Mbps is recommended for standard-definition video, 5 Mbps for high-definition video and 25 Mbps for Ultra-HD (4K) video. These recommendations are always per device, so if you're streaming on multiple screens throughout the house, don't forget to add them all up for best results.

Once you identify the speed you need, make sure you have Mountain's best internet package to fit your family's lifestyle as you work, play and rest online.

★ LET ★  
*freedom*  
RING! ★

Mountain Telephone offices will be closed Friday, July 3 in observance of Independence Day. We wish you a happy and safe Fourth of July!

★

## SUPER FAST, SUPER SIMPLE

Get all the speed without all the extras! Mountain Telephone offers new, broadband-only plans to simplify your life.  
Call 606-743-3121 today to learn more.

UPLOAD/DOWNLOAD SPEED	NEW! BROADBAND ONLY	BUNDLED WITH PHONE
100/100 Mbps	\$89.95	\$79.95
250/250 Mbps	\$109.95	\$99.95
500/500 Mbps	\$129.95	\$119.95
1 GIG/1 GIG	\$149.95	\$139.95



# SWEET & SIMPLE

Gerbera daisies are a colorful burst of sunshine


They start out so colorful and add such a happy touch to your outdoor setting, but with the heat of summer, gerbera daisies begin to lose their appeal. Their healthy, green leaves brown as the heat rises.

But all is not lost — your daisies can come back to life with a little love and flower power on your part.

Gerbera daisies are a popular flower for both the home and garden. You can cut them and make a stunning, multicolored bouquet. They put on quite a show with their rainbow of colors, which is one of the most distinctive qualities of gerberas. They range from beautiful reds, cheery yellows, bright pinks and vivid whites to perfect purples, soft peach and more. And while you may see blue and green gerberas, those are most likely victims of artificial coloring.

“They really are a customer favorite,” says Cole Webster, general manager of The Barn Nursery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. “They’re bright, fun and an iconic bloom. When I think of summer and warm weather, I think of gerbera daisies.”

With proper care, though, these blooms can last well past spring and through the heat of summer — and possibly through the cold of winter.






**HERE ARE SOME TIPS WEBSTER OFFERS TO ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL:**

- \* Gerbera daisies should be watered every couple of days. It's easy to tell if they're desperate for a drink. The leaves sag, and the blooms wilt. "I like telling people to water them whenever you think about it," Webster says.
- \* The best time to water is in the morning. But if you forget, water in the afternoon. Don't wait until the next day. If you're thirsty, you don't tell yourself you'll wait until tomorrow to get something to drink.
- \* Fertilize every three weeks. For container plants, Webster recommends a product like Scotts Super Bloom or some other plant food that has a high phosphorus level to help promote big blooms. If you plant your daisies in the ground, a slow-release fertilizer is your best bet.
- \* Gerberas are sun-loving plants, but sun is too much of a good thing when temperatures climb to 90 degrees and higher. This is the time of year you should limit

their sunning to mornings, moving them into the shade in the heat of the afternoon.

- \* Gerbera daisies can come back next year if you winterize them. In the South, particularly those areas where mild winters prevail, mulch the daisies well, and they'll reappear next spring. In areas that suffer through freezing winter temperatures, bring the daisies inside and place them in a bright window or greenhouse, watering and fertilizing as needed. Note, however, gerberas are more likely to come back and rebloom if they are planted outdoors. They can last for two to three years.
- \* Use gerberas in an arrangement for a stunning, colorful showpiece. Their stems are hollow, allowing a wire to be inserted into them if needed for stability.
- \* If you plan ahead, you can start gerberas from seed, but it will take about six months for them to reach maturity. Plant seeds around Thanksgiving for spring blooms. 🌱



*A few things you might not know about gerbera daisies*

Not only are gerbera daisies among the most popular flowers, but they also have an interesting history. They enjoy longevity, have medicinal uses and are made up of a surprisingly complex structure.

- \* Dutchman Jan Frederic Gronovius wished to honor a German botanist and physician, Traugott Gerber, when naming the genus Gerbera in the 1700s.
- \* Gerberas can last in a water-filled vase for two weeks, making them among the longest-lasting cut flowers.
- \* The plant is also believed by many to have health benefits, pulling carbon dioxide and other toxins found in the air and discharging oxygen. Some people even place gerberas by their bedsides.
- \* The structure of the gerbera is complex. At first, the flower seems to be a single flower head with many small petals. However, the gerbera flower actually consists of a huge cluster of hundreds of tinier flowers.
- \* Scientific researchers have examined the daisies as they study the formation of flowers. And the flower is resistant to fungal diseases.
- \* Similar to sunflowers, gerbera daisies track the sun. The flower turns as the light moves from east to west.
- \* About 40 documented species of gerberas exist.

Source: flowerweb.com





# BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2019

## ASSETS

Current Assets.....	\$ 5,623,960
<b>Other Assets</b>	
Investments in Affiliated Companies ..... (including Cellular)	43,961,385
Miscellaneous Physical Property.....	2,865,122
Other Investments.....	30,107,243
Total Current/Other Assets.....	82,557,710
Telecommunications Plant.....	133,427,237
Less Accumulated Depreciation.....	(83,655,011)
Net Telecommunications Plant.....	49,772,226
<b>TOTAL ASSETS.....</b>	<b>\$ 132,329,936</b>

## LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES

Current Liabilities.....	\$ 4,657,283
Long-Term Debt to U.S. Government.....	5,772,056
Long-Term Liability.....	(4,364,538)
Members' Equities:	
Membership.....	130,360
Patronage Capital.....	124,810,800
Retired Capital Credit Gain.....	1,323,975
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES.....</b>	<b>\$ 132,329,936</b>



# Champion farmer

Local girl raises show cattle while continuing a family tradition



Megan Pennington, an Elliott County High School student, raises prize cattle on her family's farm. She is seen here with a steer named Hot Rod and her Australian shepherd pup, Diesel.

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography contributed by Lela Adkins Photography & Design and William LeMaster

At school, Megan Pennington lives the life of the average American teenager. She hangs out with friends, goes to cheerleading practice and does her schoolwork. But when she gets home, the 15-year-old sophomore at Elliott County High School transforms into a cattle farmer.

"I guess what people don't see is all the time I put into my work," says Megan, who has been raising show cattle through her 4-H club since she was about 8 years old. "I'm with the animals every day, washing them, feeding them and earning their trust. There's no secret or trick to it. It's just time and work."



Megan has won dozens of awards for the cattle she's raised.

## COW TALES

The hard work pays off, too. Over the past seven years, Megan has won dozens of awards for her cattle. In March, she took home the Reserve Grand Champion award for one of her young heifers at the Kentucky Farm Bureau Beef Expo in Louisville. "I was pretty proud of that, because she won second place over all the Maine-Anjou entries there," Megan says of the heifer.

In addition to her show cattle, Megan has also taken on a herd of market animals on her family's farm. Taking care of seven cows, seven calves and a bull in addition to her show animals sometimes makes her feel older than her friends. "I've learned a lot about taking responsibility for my actions," she says. "If you don't feed the calf, it's not going to eat. That's on you. You're putting a life in your hands, so you've got to do the best possible thing for them."



Megan is able to keep an eye on her calves through an app on her phone.

Sometimes, the work taxes her emotionally, too. Last fall, she lost a show steer when it got stuck between a gate and some bedding and ended up on its back. Two or three weeks later, a calf slid under a fence shortly after birth, and it died. "It broke all our hearts," she says.

## KEEPING WATCH

Preventing tragedies like these encouraged Megan's parents to purchase their daughter security service from Mountain Telephone for Christmas. Now, Megan and her parents are able to monitor the animals 24 hours a day through an app on their phones. It allows them to act quickly if an animal gets into a life-threatening situation. "I found out one of the cows was calving by looking at the app," Megan says. "It was twins! If it weren't for that, we wouldn't have known."

The system gives Megan peace of mind, too. "I'm responsible for these animals, and they depend on me," she says. "I love raising them and being part of the agriculture business. I know it's important to do the best I can."

## Eyes on the prize

Mountain Telephone can help keep your family and property safe with its state-of-the-art security/surveillance system packages for home and business. For more information, call 606-743-3121, or visit [www.mrtc.com](http://www.mrtc.com).



# Technology in the growing field

Innovations in automation help farmers work more efficiently

Story by LAZ DENES

**N**ever has technology been more important to the agriculture industry than it is today. As farmers and ranchers face challenges such as diminishing sustainable farmland, rising costs of supplies and equipment, workforce shortages, and ever-changing consumer preferences, they must find ways to produce more without breaking the bank.

Fortunately, technology enables farmers to shave hours, days and even weeks off some of the most time-consuming tasks to make their operations more efficient than ever.

Corey Poss, an agronomist with the Rutherford Farmers Cooperative in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, oversees an operation that offers satellite and drone technology to help map, monitor and analyze crop fields. Another solution is a forecasting tool that can predict the yield of a particular crop to within 10% — before seeds are even planted.

“Crop ground is getting swallowed up every day, and we’ve got more people to feed, so we have to apply technology everywhere we can to be as efficient

as possible and not waste time and money,” says Poss, who is in his sixth year with the Rutherford co-op after graduating with an agribusiness degree from Tennessee Tech University.

“A lot of our larger growers are participating with us free of charge,” he says. “The technology originated in the Midwest — the Corn Belt. I don’t ever have to step in the field. We can get a much more accurate look from above. We can identify problems with water, nutrient deficiency and disease on a wide scale, and we can advise the farmer so he can apply his fertilizer accordingly. With our satellite and drone technology, we can cover as much as 1,000 acres a day.”





Andy Hacker serves as operations manager for Bonanza Bean in Morris, Minnesota.



Bonanza Bean, which processes millions of pounds of product, relies on broadband to aid in sales and marketing.

### PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

Poss and his crew of four agronomists use the fast fiber optic network at their Woodbury and Smithville locations to process analytics that farmers then load into their automated equipment to enable a precise distribution of fertilizer, pesticides and nutrients on every square inch of a growing field.

It's a practice called "writing prescriptions," something with which Texas farmer Spence Pennington has become all too familiar. Five years ago, he returned to his family farm in Raymondville after serving as an Air Force aircraft maintenance officer. He and his family grow cotton, grain sorghum, corn, sugarcane and sesame seed. They also raise Brangus cattle in Willacy, Cameron and Hidalgo counties in the Rio Grande Valley. Pennington appreciates the ability to pinpoint the varying requirements of his family's farmland through technology.

"I have 10 to 12 systems — my tractors and all my equipment — and I can link them all together to make them all sync, thanks to the broadband at my house," he says. "I can run my agriculture systems, security systems, monitor my equipment. I can literally see the water temp in the radiator of one of my tractors, all from home. When I'm at home, I'm still connected to my farm."

Pennington and his wife, Emily, an Iowa native he met while on active duty in Ramstein, Germany, also rely on broadband technology to help them stay

on top of their continuing duties as Air Force reservists. Pennington is a lieutenant colonel and commander of the 433rd Maintenance Squadron at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. His wife, a nurse practitioner at a local regional hospital, still serves as an Air Force major. Stationed at Scott Air Force Base near St. Louis, she is the chief nurse of the 932nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

"We live multiple lives, and we have to cover a lot of ground," Pennington says. "After working 12 to 13 hours a day on the farm, I come home and have to take care of business as commander of my unit. I'm responsible for 250 people remotely, and I'm logging into a very encrypted system.

"Having fast internet has literally changed our lives, and we've gotten so much family time back," he says. "No more headaches, and everything is so much quicker. We've been married just over three years, and we have two kids now, so we can really appreciate being able to take care of our military duties that much more quickly and efficiently."

### MAKING THE GRADE

Reliable broadband service also is a valuable tool for the Bonanza Bean farming operation headquartered in Morris, Minnesota. The company processes black beans and three varieties of kidney beans and sells to national and international companies from its state-of-the-art facilities in Minnesota and Arizona.



Drone technology allows Corey Poss, of the Rutherford Farmers Cooperative, to monitor fields.

The company touts its magnetic dirt separator, which uses magnets to remove dirt with high concentrations of iron from the beans. It also sells a state-of-the-art, infrared-camera technology for sorting that can differentiate a black bean from a dirtball.

"That machine has really changed our industry," says Andy Hacker, Bonanza Bean operations manager. "The needle machine picks out anything that has a sprout or a skin defect or anything that we can catch with a needle. At Bonanza Bean, we never let anything leave our facility that doesn't make USDA Grade No. 1. With our cleaning facility, we're able to accomplish that."

About 60 million pounds of beans roll through its processing plants each year, with particular emphasis on international sales. Broadband service allows its sales staff to monitor up-to-the-minute market data and communicate with its vast array of customers. ☑



# SUSTAINABLE LIVING

## WRIGLEY FAMILY CREATES A HEALTHY LIFE AT THE HOMESTEAD

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography contributed by JESSICA YANIS

**B**efore Jessica and Ben Yanis moved from Delaware to the hills of Southeast Kentucky, they felt stifled in their city life full of noise and traffic. “We lived on the I-95 corridor, and you’d sit in your car for over an hour to get somewhere that should only be 20 minutes away,” Jessica Yanis says. “You always wound up rushing no matter what you were doing.”

But that routine changed about four years ago when the couple found a 211-acre property near Wrigley filled with hills, hollers, trees and water. It was a place where the Yanis family of four could have their very own homestead — something they’d been dreaming of for a few years. They wanted a place to raise chickens, pigs, goats and sheep.

“We wanted to work towards sustainability so that we were less dependent on grocery stores that sold food from far away,” says Jessica Yanis, who helps run 15 Star Farm with her husband, a software architect. “We started out thinking what we would produce would be for us and friends, but then it grew.”

Now, they raise and sell meat from their pigs and lambs, wool from their sheep, and eggs from their 100 chickens. They also have taken in rescued llamas, alpacas and even a couple of old horses, giving them a peaceful place to live out their remaining years. “It’s a slower, more relaxed pace here,” she says. “You wake up in the morning to roosters crowing and the nicker of a horse instead of blaring horns and squeaky wheels. It’s a wonderful background noise here.”



Jessica Yanis, right, and her daughter hug one of the many animals on 15 Star Farm.

### MOVING UP AND OUT

Originally from Pennsylvania, the couple spent several years in Delaware where Ben Yanis’ job took them. Eventually, they started a photography business, which grew into one of the largest studios in the state at the time. But as the business grew, so did their frustration with the closed-in city life they were living.

“We started getting into prepping,” Jessica Yanis says, referencing an activity that gives people independence from modern-day societal structures. For example, a prepper might store food and water for a natural disaster or buy a generator in case the electricity goes out.





The farm is big enough to offer older llamas a place to live their final years in peace.



The Yanis family raises kunekune pigs, a heritage breed from New Zealand, known for their outstanding flavor.

“We weren’t into the doomsday kind of prepping, but we wanted to make sure we were able to feed our family in case something went wrong,” she says. “We didn’t want to be too dependent on grocery stores and things like that.” It also became a fun pastime and a healthy way to live.

In Delaware, they had gotten permission to tap maple trees on community property, which allowed them to make their own syrup. But deed restrictions surrounding their own small piece of land were tight. “We wanted a place where we were able to put up a fence without asking,” she says. “For example, if you had a garden in our neighborhood, you were required to plant a hedgerow around it so the neighbors couldn’t see it.”

After they had ruled out some properties in Maine, a Kentucky friend suggested they look here. Yanis says she fell in love with the Morgan County plot at first sight. “It was just beautiful,” she says. “There were all these green, rolling hills, but there was also fencing and flat land. There were all these trees. I also loved that it was all tucked away down in a holler. I never knew that these little valleys were called hollers until then.”

### HERITAGE BREEDS

A few things that make 15 Star Farm stand out are the animals raised there, including the heritage-breed pigs and sheep. “A heritage pig is a pig that’s from the past,” Yanis says. “It hasn’t been

changed or manipulated with genetics to make it into something it’s not. We raise kunekune pigs. They’re smaller than those gigantic commercial pigs, and they eat grass. They’re strict vegetarians, and they don’t go after any other critters like chickens.” The meat from the pigs tastes good, too.

Most customers are local, but the farm also has at least one returning client from Pennsylvania. “We’ve got them hooked,” Yanis says, describing a client base that came about largely from word-of-mouth recommendations and her private Facebook page. “We keep up with everybody through social media. I haven’t even started a Facebook page for the farm yet.



But we do want to eventually have a website for the farm that can list our animals’ genetics and let people reserve orders.”

In addition to the kunekune pigs, the family raises Nigerian dwarf/Nubian-cross goats and Icelandic sheep. The sheep are from an ancient breed that maintains a double coat of fur and can be used for milk, wool and food. The lambs from the breed produce a finer taste and texture that’s considered gourmet, and the wool is in high demand.

“The reason we went to heritage breeds is that they’re hardier,” Yanis says. “This area has a problem with internal parasites, but we don’t have to load these animals up with dewormers and antibiotics. They can graze without us worrying too much. They’re just overall healthier.”

**15 STAR FRESH**

Interested in finding out more about the Yanis family's wool, eggs and fresh meats? Their eggs are available at Pennington Farm Meats & More in Morehead. The best way to contact the Yanis family is by using the message function on Jessica Yanis' Facebook page, which is under her nickname, "Jessawick Yanis."

# Chillingly delicious

## No one can resist ice cream

There was a time when ice cream came in just a few flavors — primarily chocolate, vanilla and strawberry. But step inside It's All So Yummy Cafe in Knoxville and you'll find that the quintessential summer treat we all know and love has gone rogue. Watermelon Chip, Roasted Golden Beet and the popcorn-flavored Movie Night certainly don't sound like ice cream flavors, but they're among the many Kim and Wade Wilcox have created since buying the cafe eight years ago.

The menu features sandwiches, salads and other foods typical of most cafes. However, with the purchase of the eatery came an ice cream machine, and the couple decided to use it. But there was a learning curve.

After they had been making ice cream for several years on a smaller scale than they do now, Wade Wilcox decided to learn more — so he went back to school. He didn't enroll in just one of many online courses, though. He took part in Penn State's prestigious ice cream course, an intense, weeklong program that draws people from around the world, teaching them all about the manufacturing of commercially sold ice cream. "It gave me a more rounded, in-depth knowledge of the chemistry that goes into making ice cream," he says. "And it gave me a good chance to make contact with other people in the industry and share ideas."

The Wilcoxes, originally from Iowa, have lived in Knoxville for 23 years. They started out selling about 30 flavors of ice cream. Now, that number has risen to well over 50, but not every flavor is available every day.

"Many of them are seasonal that we only do at certain times of the year," Kim Wilcox says, adding that making these

types available once in a while "keeps people wanting them more." For example, during Girl Scout Cookies season, they'll make ice cream with the treats right after the cookies are delivered. When it's gone, it's gone.

Popular year-round varieties are Death by Godiva Chocolate and Butterfinger. "My personal favorite?" she says. "I don't know that I have one. My favorites change all the time, but I do like all of our coffee-based ice creams."

Ice cream sold at It's All So Yummy Cafe goes by the name Hilton Head Ice Cream, and there's a story behind it. Years ago, the man who first opened the cafe went to Hilton Head and fell in love with the ice cream at the shop Hilton Head Ice Cream. He liked it so much, he convinced the owner to let him open a store in Knoxville. "Part of the deal was that he needed to call it Hilton Head Ice Cream, and that's how Knoxville has always known it," Wilcox says. "We use the same process that the original Hilton Head Ice Cream shop uses."

Now an expert in the field of frozen delights, she offers one important tip for those less skilled in the making of ice cream: "Don't be afraid to experiment with flavors. Ice cream should be fun."



Kim Wilcox and her husband, Wade, created the It's All So Yummy Cafe in Knoxville, Tennessee.



FOOD EDITOR  
**ANNE P. BRALY**  
IS A NATIVE OF  
CHATTANOOGA,  
TENNESSEE.

## LET'S GO TO THE FAIR

# Sundae

Cotton candy (available in many stores — or at the fair!)  
Vanilla ice cream  
M&M's  
Chocolate syrup  
Sugar wafer cookie  
Rainbow sprinkles  
Whipped cream  
Maraschino cherry with stem

Make a bowl out of the cotton candy. Put the ice cream in the bowl. Working quickly, add M&M's, chocolate syrup and sugar wafer cookie. Top with whipped cream, sprinkles and a cherry on top. Serve immediately. Makes one sundae.

## PUMPKIN WHOOPIE PIE ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 cups pure pumpkin puree
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla

*Suggested ice cream flavors: pumpkin, French vanilla, butter pecan, cinnamon or dark chocolate.*

Heat oven to 350 F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger and cloves. Set aside. In another bowl, whisk the brown sugar and oil until well combined. Add the pumpkin puree and whisk to combine. Add eggs and vanilla until well mixed. Add the flour mixture 1/2 cup at a time, and stir until combined. In 1/3-cup scoops, put the cookie dough

on the baking sheets. They will spread a little, so leave some space between them. Bake for 11-13 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Remove from the oven and let cool before removing from the pan. Once cooled, wrap them individually and freeze.

When ready to serve, take one cookie and place a big scoop of your favorite ice cream on it. Then, top with another cookie and enjoy.

## SALTED SESAME CARAMEL

*A mouthwatering topping for most any ice cream.*

- 1 cup sugar
- Pinch of cream of tartar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1/4 cup tahini

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Bring sugar, cream of tartar and water to a boil in a medium pan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil until the sugar begins to caramelize in spots. Stir with a heat-proof spatula and cook until the color of honey, 5-7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium low and cook, stirring occasionally, until caramel is a deep amber color, about 5 minutes.

Remove caramel from heat and whisk in the tahini and butter. Then add cream, sesame seeds and salt.

Cool before serving. This sauce may be made ahead of time and refrigerated. 📌





**Mountain Telephone**

P.O. Box 399 • 425 Main St.  
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Mountain Telephone finds it necessary to postpone indefinitely the annual meeting. Given state and federal guidelines for large congregations and distancing restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it would not be possible to keep our membership safe.

We anticipate holding our county-by-county customer appreciation day, which will be coordinated pursuant to the state and federal guidelines in order to protect our members and staff.

**Stay safe and God bless.**



**Mountain Telephone**