



Sentinel photos by MARY MARGARET PECHT  
Left — Jake and Paula Fisher pause outside their almost-finished farm market, located along Route 522 in Decatur Township.

Above — Paula Fisher is shown at the retail counter of the soon-to-open Fisher's Farm Market, flanked by current symbols of the project — a paint bucket showing work still being done, and a winter squash on the scale where produce will be weighed.

## Market to offer meats, bakery, too

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are looking for someone local who makes jams and jellies or who grows fresh herbs, to add to their line of merchandise.

"The store will give us a more organized structure. When we were at home with the roadside stand, people would pull in from daylight to dark," Paula said.

Jake admits to being a workaholic, and can often be found in the fields on his tractor at midnight. He also is a technician for Select Sire Power. And he gladly accepts a helping hand from friends and family when it is offered.

The couple raises their own beef, which will be slaughtered at N.S. Troutman, a USDA-inspected-for-retail facility in Snyder County. The meats will be

vacuum packed and frozen there, except for home-made specialty sausages.

"You'll be able to stop and buy a steak for supper," Jake said.

The Fishers credit Lewis-town veterinarian Grant Stufft with much guidance and expertise, as a consultant and friend throughout the process of opening the store.

Stufft's daughter, Kristen Stufft, who will graduate from Penn State in May with a degree in animal science with an emphasis on meat science, plans to work with the Fishers for a few months after graduation.

"She's going to work with us, sharing her knowledge with us, sort of like a consultant over the summer," Paula said, noting that some of that knowledge will be in mixing the meats for the specialty sausages they plan

to offer at the market.

The Fishers are targeting late April or early May for opening the market.

Foods which should be available for opening day include a variety of beef cuts, eggs, baked goods, asparagus, local honey, and possibly bedding plants and hanging baskets, to be followed soon after by cucumbers and strawberries.

They plan to keep the store open year-round, "unless we find January and February are too slow," Jake said.

He also said they will try to offer what the customer wants, adding, "We're going to let the customer tell us. If the customer wants rabbit and there's a demand for it, we'll try to find someone who grows rabbits and offer it."

Paula noted, "We're

going to let the general public dictate what direction the market will grow in."

They plan to offer an ever-expanding range of vegetables.

The Fishers are members of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association and offer their produce under the "PA Preferred" label, which simply means, "Buy local, buy fresh," Paula explained. Jake added, "It's a state program with guidelines we have to meet to participate.

Long-time 4-H'ers and 4-H leaders, they have had to drop that, they noted, because of the heavy workload with their enterprises.

"We've found our niche as a team. We enjoy working together," Paula said.

"We love what we do or we wouldn't do it."

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