

# WOMEN in Agriculture



## CAROLE DANIELS

RANDOLPH COUNTY

Carole and her husband Ed own and operate Shady Grove Botanicals in Randolph County where they have been practicing sustainable forest farming since the 1990s. Their focus is on cultivating at-risk

native medicinal herbs. Carole's impact reaches far beyond her farm. In 2018, she and Ed began teaching youth how to grow medicinal herbs using organic, sustainable practices and incorporated vegetable gardening into the curriculum. In 2021, they launched their nonprofit, Plant the Seed Project. This program has provided raised beds and high tunnels at area schools. Tireless and deeply rooted in purpose, Carole exemplifies service, stewardship, and sustainability in Appalachian agriculture.

"For anyone wanting to begin forest farming, I'll share seven pieces of advice: Do your research; grow the plants that inspire you; diversify with companion plants; don't plant everything in one area; grow organically; be patient, it's a slow process; and most importantly, only invest what you can afford to lose!"



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## JILL HAUSER

GREENBRIER COUNTY

Jill was raised on a diversified farm and eagerly took on chores and responsibilities. Active in 4-H and FFA, she was a member of West Virginia's state-winning 4-H livestock judging team. She earned her degree in Animal Science from Potomac State and WVU. She began her career at Wampler Foods, where she broke barriers as the first female

broiler service technician in the Potomac Valley. She later joined her husband Terry in operating a successful dairy, earning multiple Gold-Level honors from Dairy Farmers of America. A mother of three, Jill has remained active in 4-H, FFA, church, and her community. Today, she works as a Nutrient Management Planner for the WV Department of Agriculture. Her dedication, work ethic, and passion for agriculture continue to inspire the next generation.

"Farming isn't easy, but I wouldn't trade this way of life for anything. Always follow your heart, your dreams, work hard, and you will succeed."



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## CHERYL HOTT

MINERAL COUNTY

Cheryl has been a steadfast advocate for West Virginia agriculture for over 35 years. Raised on a cow/calf operation in Keyser, she began showing cattle in 4-H and has remained active in every aspect of farm life. In 1991, following her

father's injury, Cheryl took over full management of the family farm, later transitioning from poultry production to diversified livestock. Today, Cheryl operates Cozy Country Farm, offering direct-to-consumer meat sales and value-added products like tallow balms and soaps. She sells through farmers markets, her on-farm store, and is expanding into e-commerce with a focus on clean, high-quality proteins. An honorary FFA member, Cheryl has been active in the WV Farm Bureau Women's and Safety Committees and has raised two daughters through 4-H and FFA. She also drives a school bus, reflecting her commitment to youth and community.

"Choose what you love; that is what will get you through the ups & downs. Be a big picture thinker; it helps you plan in stages and plan how you are going to finance what you love to do!"



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## BRANDI SHULTZ

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Brandi has dedicated her life to West Virginia agriculture. Raised on her father's dairy farm, she was deeply involved in 4-H and FFA. She earned a degree in Animal and Nutritional Sciences from WVU and

began her career as a USDA inspector before transitioning into real estate, where she specialized in farmland transactions. Brandi and her husband now operate Santa's Woods, an 80-acre Christmas tree farm in Jefferson County. Since 2016, she has overseen the planting of nearly 30,000 trees, personally managing everything from mowing and shaping to organizing the farm's festive, family-oriented experience. A proud mother of two former 4-H/FFA members, both studying animal science, Brandi's commitment to agriculture spans generations. Her work embodies community, tradition, and the enduring spirit of West Virginia farming.

"Farming isn't a job; it's a passion. You have to love it to live it."



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## ALEXANDRIA "ALEX" SMITH

HARDY COUNTY

Alex has dedicated her career to advancing agriculture through education, advocacy, and hands-on experience. A graduate of WVU with degrees in Animal & Veterinary Science and a master's in Agriculture, she

has served as a WVU Extension Agent since 2009. Her work spans livestock production, forage systems, youth development, and mental health advocacy for farmers. On her 80-acre farm, Alex and her husband raise sheep and goats using intensive rotational grazing. She markets meat directly to consumers and produces goat milk lotions, soaps, and cheeses. A passionate teacher, she mentors 4-H and FFA youth in poultry, livestock and horse judging. Her work exemplifies dedication, innovation, and leadership in agriculture.

"If you have a dream, go after it. Before you know it, you will be doing what you always dreamed of."



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## MELISSA "MISSY" WHETZEL

GRANT COUNTY

Missy has dedicated over 20 years to agricultural education as the CTE Director and Agriculture Education teacher at Petersburg High School. Known for her passion, leadership, and commitment to students, Missy has

created countless opportunities for youth to thrive in agriculture, both in and out of the classroom. Her FFA program consistently excels at the regional, state, and national levels. Missy also serves as an advisor to the Tri-County Fair Board, works with the Mill Island 4-H Club, and mentors future ag educators through student teacher training. In 2015 and 2023, she was named Grant County Schools Teacher of the Year. Her tireless dedication and nurturing guidance have left a lasting impact on generations of agricultural leaders.

"You don't have to live on a farm to be involved in Agriculture. If you want to get involved, get your hands dirty, ask questions, build a network of friends, and love what you do!"



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