



**Blue Dog Farms**  
2482 Smith Mill Road  
New Freedom, PA  
York County  
(717) 814-2744  
Bluedogfarms.net

**Industries:** Farming

**Founded:** 2018

**SBDC Assistance:**  
Business Planning,  
Marketing,  
Research.

**“Jen is a terrific  
partner and a trusted  
confidante.”**

**- Giana Van Nice**

**Shippensburg University SBDC**  
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## A Partnership that Connects People to Their Food

Blue Dog Farms is a true partnership that has brought together DanVan Nices’s life-long passion for farming with the business skills of his wife Giana to provide food that connects people living in South Central Pennsylvania and Northern Maryland with the land and the farm that grows their food. Giana and Dan have raised grass fed and finished beef and pasture-raised chickens, turkeys and now pigs for sale on their farm since 2015. Giana is a proud veteran of the US Navy and has previously worked outside the farm in a variety of business industry roles but faced some unexpected challenges in 2020. “Being laid off, during the COVID -19 pandemic from my job, it was difficult to make ends meet,” said Giana. The business has adapted to the trials 2020 brought and continued to grow, as people looked for different and better options for their food.



Attending the PA Veteran Farming Project’s annual meeting, Giana was introduced to the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) in PA and all the services provided to small business owners. Dan and Giana began working with Jen Horning, Business Consultant, with the Shippensburg University SBDC in March of 2020. “Jen jumped right into our agricultural world without a moment of hesitation. She keeps us honest by asking tough questions, and pointing out things we are too close to see,” said Giana. The Shippensburg University SBDC offered Giana and Dan assistance with business planning, marketing and research. Dan said, “Jen Horning is a wealth of information and our trusted confidante. She is always willing to review our business and marketing plans, or assist us with any business function.”



Blue Dog Farms utilizes sustainable farming techniques that use other wildlife to control the weeds in pastures and the manure produced by their livestock instead of using pesticides and other chemicals that may harm the animals and land. “We envision a world where people know the farmers who grow their food and understand the value of locally grown, sustainable and responsibly grown meats,” said Dan. Being good stewards of the land is important to the husband and wife partners as well as connecting people with their food. “Nowadays, most Americans are at least 3 generations removed from agriculture,” Giana added, “It is a true need for people to be more aware of where their food comes from.”



In fact, 2021 has marked a significant milestone for Blue Dog Farms as they offered their first agri-education and agritourism event, “Meet the Piglets.” Blue Dog Farms plans to offer additional opportunities to connect people with the farm that include Calf Cuddling, Llama Visits and Family Time with the Goats .