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Fall Festival at Freedom Farms returns

The festival, which runs every weekend in October, is a popular family outing.

Anna Montesanti

VALENCIA, Pa. – For 16 years, Freedom Farms has welcomed families to its annual fall festival in Valencia, Pennsylvania. For some, the October celebration has become a family tradition.

Saturday, Oct. 24, the festival kicked off for the second-to-last weekend this year. The $10 price of admission (aside from children under 3, who get in free) includes plenty of activities – a corn maze, animal barn, sunflower field where guests can pick their own, and more. Tractor rides are offered as well, an easy way to get around with a picturesque view of the vast grounds. Visitors can also pick pumpkins, listen to live music; and shop crafts, small home goods, and food and drinks from local vendors.

The festival, which runs every Saturday and Sunday in October from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., is organized and executed by the King family. The Kings have owned and worked on the 200-acre farm across five generations, now including a farmer's market, donut shop, and Farm-to-Fork kitchen.

The King family gained local attention in 2012 following the premiere of their Great American Family (then Great American Country) network reality show, "Farm Kings." Viewers were let in on what it takes day-to-day to run the farm and the connection between the matriarch, Lisa King, her nine sons and one daughter. While the program has since ended, farm updates can still be found on Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter).

Fall festival is a longstanding family tradition for the Kings, but also for many of the annual guests.

Lydia Bujarski, who came from Swissvale with her mother and daughter, went for the first time last year and said that she definitely sees it becoming a family tradition. "It's a very kid-friendly place," Bujarski said. "There's something to do for everyone, though."

After she heard about it from a friend working for Grist House, a craft brewery who partners with Farm-to-Fork, she was excited to attend. She and her daughter Indigo, 3, especially love the food. "It's unreal," Bujarski said. "Everything is so fresh." Of all the dishes offered, she most recommended the burgers.

While the food costs extra, Bujarski said that she loves how much the price of admission covers. "The corn pit is such a good staple, and the tractor rides," Bujarski said. "It's so worth it. It's, like, the best $10 ever spent."

For Eric Howard of Saxonburg, the festival is an opportunity to make great memories with his family. This year marks Howard's fifth time attending with his sister, brother-in-law, nephew, and two nieces. Joining the group today will be his friend, her daughters, and his dog, who he said enjoys smelling everything and will definitely be sleeping well after they leave.

"My oldest nephew is 13, and we've been coming here since he first started walking," Howard said.

Besides the family time, Howard most looks forward to simply walking around with his dog. Fortunately, he picked a beautiful day for it – it was a mild, cloudless day in Valencia, which brought out hundreds of guests.

The festival continues rain or shine, but Abby Schell was particularly glad to be coming in from Plum on such a nice day. This is a family tradition for Schell, who's come the past five years with her husband, children, two sisters, brother, their partners, and her nieces and nephews.

Schell was researching pumpkin patches when she discovered this event, and was immediately attracted to all they had to offer kids and families.

"They've been growing every year, and it's really nice to see that," Schell said. "I'll for sure be coming back next year."