

The importance of the Lebanon County

Farmland Preservation Program

DID YOU KNOW?

Agriculture is the number one industry in Lebanon County owing to the very productive, fertile soil which is an irreplaceable natural resource.

The farmland preservation program pays agricultural landowners to place a **perpetual easement** on their land to prevent development or any use of the land other than agriculture. This forever easement assures land is available for local food production, encourages soil and water conservation, stifles demand for public services, keeps taxes lower, and retains open space, aesthetics, and quality of life for all residents.

The Lebanon County Conservation District (LCCD), in partnership with the Lebanon County Agricultural Land Preservation Board and funding provided by the Lebanon County Commissioners, administers the Farmland Preservation Program for Lebanon County. To date, **20,000 acres of farmland** have been **preserved**, encompassing nearly 20% of agricultural land in Lebanon County.

However, very **significant changes** are now affecting our county. The most recent census confirmed that Lebanon County is the 2nd fastest growing county in Pennsylvania, having increased by 12,000 residents since 2010. This 9.1% population increase has drastically accelerated the demand for new housing and the resultant loss of farmland. Nearly 1,000 new homes are in various stages of construction in Lebanon County with new warehouse and commercial developments also consuming large tracts of precious farmland. In the last five years, **farmland loss** has averaged over **1,000 acres per year**.

Currently, **31 farms encompassing 2,800 acres** are on the farmland preservation waiting list with some farmers waiting over 10 years to be preserved. An additional **\$7 million** is needed to preserve these farms. If adequate funding was available, the preservation process for the 31 farms could begin immediately. With today's high fuel and fertilizer costs, a considerable number of farms could be in jeopardy of selling to developers. Farmland preservation is an opportunity to financially assist farmers during tough times while maintaining agricultural land use.

Currently, farmland preservation funding is allocated through the state, county, and municipal budgets.

For every **\$1 raised** by the county and municipalities, approximately **\$1.30 is matched** by the state, making our local contributions an extremely valuable and profitable investment.

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IN SUMMARY

- **Agriculture** is the **#1 industry** in Lebanon County.
- Lebanon County is now the **2nd fastest** growing county in Pennsylvania.
- Preserving prime farmland **benefits all Lebanon County residents.**
- **Local contributions** significantly increase the amount of farmland that can be preserved.
- Agricultural land **keeps your taxes lower**; new housing raises them.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Scan the **QR code** to **donate**:



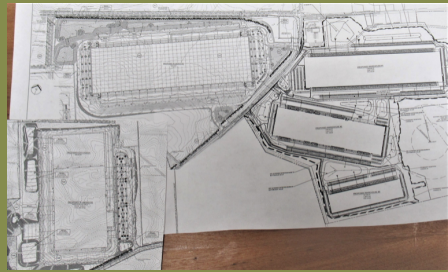
To learn more about the program, visit
www.lccd.org/agricultural-land-preservation

or contact:

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362 acres of prime farmland preserved forever in West Cornwall Twp



366 acres of prime farmland lost to 5 warehouses west of Annville