



Cumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board 2019 Annual Report

Cumberland County Planning Department
310 Allen Road
Carlisle, PA 17013
717-240-5362

*Page Intentionally
Left Blank For Printing Purposes*

ABOUT US

The Cumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (Board) is comprised of seven volunteer members who serve three year terms. Appointments to the Board are made by the County Board of Commissioners. Representation includes three active farmers, one contractor/developer, one township supervisor and two at large members. The Board also has advisory members representing the Board of Commissioners, Conservation District, Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation and Penn State Cooperative Extension. The Board meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 a.m. at 310 Allen Road, Conference Room B, Carlisle, PA. Staff support for the Board is provided through the Cumberland County Planning Department.

PURPOSE

The Board is responsible for overseeing the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program (Program). The purpose of the Program is to protect viable agricultural lands by purchasing agricultural conservation easements that preserve the land for agricultural production in perpetuity.

Further, it is the purpose of this Program to:

- Encourage landowners to make a long-term commitment to agriculture by offering them financial incentives and security of land use;
- Protect normal farming operations in agricultural security areas from incompatible non-farming uses that may render farming impracticable;
- Protect farming operations from complaints of public nuisance against normal farming operations;
- Assure conservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy of this Commonwealth;
- Provide compensation to landowners in exchange for their relinquishment of the right to develop their private property; and
- Maximize agricultural easement purchase funds and protect the investment of taxpayers in agricultural conservation easements.
- Encourage financial partnerships between State, local governments and nonprofit entities in order to increase the funds available for agricultural conservation easement purchases.

BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

Board Members

Boyd Weary (F), *Chair*
Diane Stamy (F), *Vice-Chair*
Adam Dellinger (AL), *Secretary*
Michael Klinepeter (CD)
Gary Martin (T)
Denny McCullough (F)
Kate McGraw (AL)

Advisory Members

Jim Hertzler, *Board of Commissioners*
Shireen Farr, *Cumberland Area Economic
Development Corp*
Carl Goshorn, *Conservation District*
Samantha Robinson, *Penn State Cooperative
Extension*

Staff

Kirk Stoner, AICP
Stephanie Williams
Melissa Piper Nelson
BarbaraSue Hershey

(F) Farmer Member

(AL) At Large Member

(T) Township Supervisor Member

(CD) Contractor/Developer Member

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Program was developed to strengthen Pennsylvania’s agricultural economy and to protect prime farmland. The Program incorporates the use of county, state, federal and local funds to purchase agricultural conservation easements on prime agricultural land from willing landowners. The Program works by paying the farmer to place certain restrictions upon the land to maintain and permanently preserve high quality, working farmland. The land continues to be the farmer’s private property and the farmer retains all privileges of land ownership, except the ability to sell the land for non-agricultural development or to develop the land for non-agricultural purposes. Participation in the Program is completely voluntary and very competitive. In order to be eligible for the Program, the farm must contain at least 52 acres, be enrolled in an Agricultural Security Area and have an up to date conservation plan. Then, farms are ranked using a Farmland Ranking System, each property is given a numerical score, and the farms with the highest score receive funding for easement purchase.

PROGRAM FUNDING

Funding for the Program totaled over \$2.6 million in 2019. This amount is derived from a variety of sources include county, state, local and private funds and is detailed below. In 2019, \$38 million was available from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for distribution statewide. State funds are derived from cigarette tax revenues and the Environmental Stewardship Fund.

Source of Funds	
General Fund	\$500,000.00
Hornbaker IPA	\$41,827.00
Clean & Green Rollback Interest	\$96,905.00
Silver Spring Township Contribution	\$85,394.00
Private Donations	\$3,100.00
<i>Total 2019 County Certification</i>	<i>\$727,226.00</i>
State Grant	\$938,156.00
State Match	\$916,535.00
Redistributed Funds	\$47,981.00
<i>Total 2019 State Allocation</i>	<i>\$ 1,902,672.00</i>
<i>Total 2019 County & State</i>	<i>\$ 2,629,898.00</i>

2019 APPLICATION ROUND

Applications for the 2019 round of funding were received by staff between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018. Thirty-four applications, totaling 3,275 acres of farmland, were submitted for consideration. From the 34 applications, ten farms totaling 1,270 acres were selected by the Board for appraisal and easement purchase consideration.

Eight of the ten selected farms, totaling 1,160 acres, are expected to proceed to closing. Farm #2 rejected the Board's offer and Farm #3 declined to proceed with an appraisal and withdrew their application from consideration. Farms ranked #1, #2, #4 and #33 were offered 90% of the appraised easement value. Farm #33 is a joint County/Township easement with Silver Spring Township, with the township contributing 50% of the easement purchase price. The remaining farms (rank #11, 18, 24, 27 and 28) accepted a bargain sale offer of 50% of the appraised easement value. The table below summarizes the Board's 2019 offers.

Rank	Landowner	Township	Acreage Offered	Board Offer/Acre	Percent of Easement Value	Easement Purchase Price	Application Status (12/2019)
1	Ward Family Trust	West Pennsboro	155	\$3,159.00	90%	\$490,245.21	Settlement Pending
2	Fickes	West Pennsboro	100	\$3,366.00	90%	NA	Declined Offer
3	Reiff	Southampton	10	NA	NA	NA	Withdrew Application
4	Deckman Living Trust	Monroe	55	\$3,681.00	90%	\$201,129.84	Settlement Pending
11	Mackey	Lower Frankford	131	\$2,050.00	50%	\$269,255.20	Settlement Pending
18	Strohm	Southampton	121	\$2,062.50	50%	\$250,189.50	Settlement Pending
24	Deitch	South Middleton	30	\$1,782.50	50%	\$53,475.00	Settlement Pending
27	Barrick Farms LLC	Upper Frankford & Lower Mifflin	469	\$1,860.00	50%	\$872,340.00	Settlement Pending
28	Dillner	Southampton	95	\$1,925.00	50%	\$183,375.50	Settlement Pending
33	Jones **	Silver Spring	103	\$3,440.00	90%	\$354,320.00	Settlement Pending
Total Acres Selected			1270	Total Purchase Price ***		\$ 2,674,330.25	
Total Acres Pending Settlement			1160				
** The easement purchase price is to be split 50/50 between the county and the township							
*** The total purchase price exceeds total county funding due to the township contribution							

COUNTY PROGRAM STATUS

Between 1989 and 2019, 20,010 acres of farmland have been preserved countywide through 181 easements. An additional eight easements, containing 1,160 acres of farmland, are pending settlement. A total investment of \$53.9 million in federal, state, county and local funding was utilized to purchase these easements with an additional \$2.6 million pending settlement. Refer to Figure 1 for a map all final and pending easements.

Municipality	Number of Preserved Farms	Acres of Preserved Farmland
Dickinson	28	2,949
Lower Frankford	2	40
Middlesex	8	626
Monroe	25	2,232
North Middleton	3	295
North Newton	10	1,236
Penn	25	3,293
Silver Spring	4	382
South Middleton	13	1,601
South Newton	1	103
Southampton	26	2,991
Upper Allen	5	345
West Pennsboro	31	3,918
Totals	181	20,010

FARMLAND INSPECTIONS

On an annual basis, all farms preserved by the Board must be inspected to assess compliance with the terms of the deed of agricultural conservation easement. Between April 3 and June 4 the staff of the Planning Department visited all farm properties. Staff observed fields, agricultural buildings and residential units to review land usage and possible violations of easement terms. In addition to the on-site visit, a desk audit of various county records and aerial photography was completed. 90% of the farms visited were determined to be in full compliance. No major violations were discovered by staff. Of the 10% of farms requiring corrective actions, the issues to be addressed include conservation plan updates and deed corrections.

30,000 ACRES BY 2030

On October 9, 2019, the Board of Commissioners enacted Resolution 2019-30 setting forth a policy goal of preservation of 30,000 acres of working farmland by the year 2030. The resolution acknowledges the importance of the agricultural industry, strong public support for farmland preservation and the need to establish a long term budgetary policy for the Program.

20,000 ACRE CELEBRATION

On September 26, 2019, the Board and County Commissioners held a celebration at Paulus Farm Market in Mechanicsburg to honor the milestone of 20,000 acres of preserved farmland in Cumberland County. The event drew a crowd of over 100 attendees including officials from state, county and local government as well as farmers and conservationists from around the region.

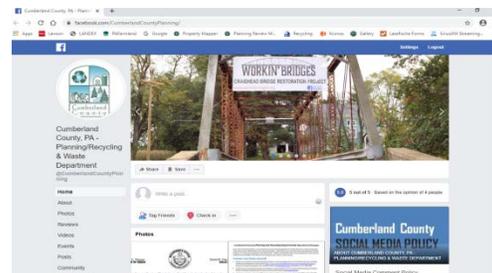


FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Cumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board website and social media accounts provide more detailed information on the activities of the Board. The images below contain live links to the webpage and Facebook account.



Cumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board Webpage



Cumberland County Planning Department Facebook Page

FIGURE 1

