

PENNSYLVANIA FARMLAND PRESERVATION



Saving America's Farms and Farmland
Hershey PA
May 13, 2014

Presenters

- Doug Wolfgang, Director, Bureau of Farmland Preservation, PA Department of Agriculture
- Kerry Golden, Executive Director, PA House of Representatives, Agriculture Committee

Pennsylvania Agriculture

- \$6.8 billion cash receipts
- \$68 billion total economic impact
- One in seven jobs
- 62,000 farms and 7.75 million acres of farmland
- Leads nation in variety of ag products

PA Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program – May 2014

- 4,586 farms
- 489,409 acres
- 57 participating county programs
- \$1.2 billion investment



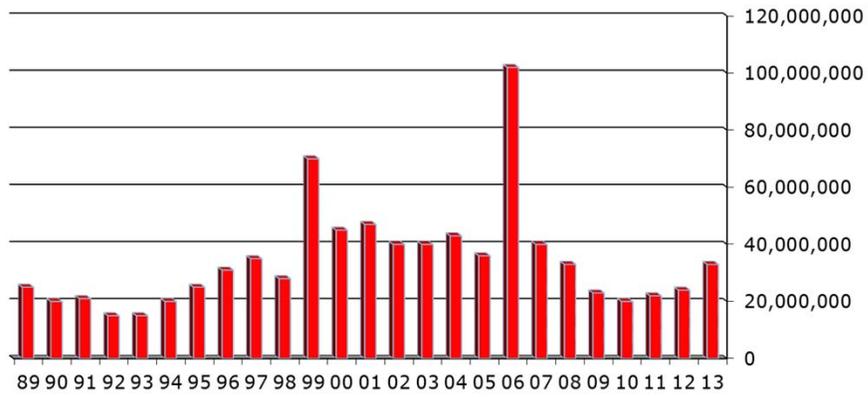
History

- **1987** voters approve a statewide referendum for the sale of \$100 million in bonds to finance the easement purchase program.
- **1988**, Act 43 was amended to create the framework for the program
- **1989** the first farm was preserved through the state program in Lancaster County
- **1993**, the easement purchase program was granted a dedicated funding source, 2% of the cigarette tax revenue, which provided approximately \$20 million annually.
 - In 2002 provisions were changed and the program now receives a flat amount of \$20,485,000 per year from cigarette tax revenue.
 - To date, cigarette taxes have contributed \$366.8 million to the program.
- **1996** Federal Farm Bill allows the federal government to allocate funds for farmland preservation.
 - To date, PA has received over \$32 million in federal reimbursements.
- **1999**, Act 15 provided \$42 million in supplemental funding.
- **1999**, Act 68 or Growing Greener 1 provided \$100 million over 5 years for the purchase of easements.
- **1999**, American Farmland Trust recognizes PA as the national leader in farmland preservation
- **2005**, the easement purchase program was granted a second dedicated funding source. 14.8% of the proceeds from the Environmental Stewardship Fund were earmarked for farmland preservation.
- **2005** voters approved a state referendum for a \$625 million environmental initiative, also known as Growing Greener II, which provided \$80 million over the next 6 years.
- **2014**, 25 years after first farm was preserved, anticipating 500,000 acre milestone
- As of **2014**, the Commonwealth has invested a total of \$833 million and counties have invested \$451 million in the program.

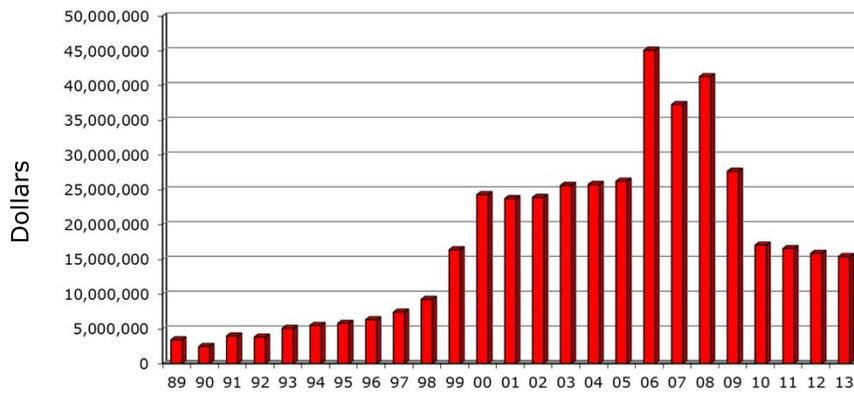
How it works

- State funds – grant and match
- Application at the county level
- Ranking of eligible applicants
- Appraisal
- Offer
- State board approval
- Settlement
- Stewardship

State appropriations

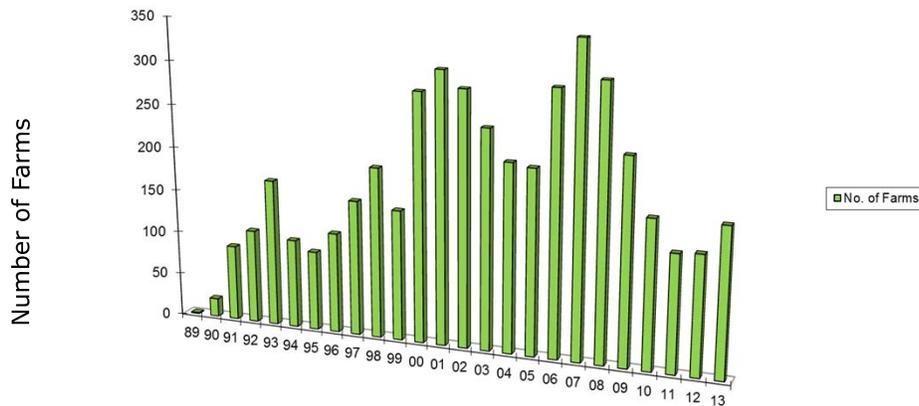


County appropriations



Calendar Years 1989-2013

Farms Preserved By Year



1989-2013

Reasons for Pennsylvania's Success

- Farmer's willingness to participate
- Popular program with widespread public approval
- Support by County Commissioners
- Support by the Legislature
- Strong partnership between all levels of government and non-profit

Return on investment

- Economy
- Food Supply
- Property Taxes
- Scenic and Environmental Benefits
- Quality of Life

Benefits to Pennsylvania farmers

- Use equity to invest in farming operation
- Offset mortgages and reduce debt
- Charitable contribution tax benefits for donated portion
- Farmland more affordable for the next generation
- Leave a legacy that exists beyond a lifetime

PA Farmland Preservation “toolbox”

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase
- Agricultural Security Area
- Clean and Green Preferential Assessment Program
- Right to Farm Law
- ACRE
- Local zoning

Future of Farmland Preservation

- Continued strong partnerships
- Maintain public support
- Seek creative ways to leverage funds
- Keep farms viable through agriculture policies at local, state and national level
- Protect a vast investment