



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 21, 2022

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Uniontown, PA – The annual application period for the Fayette County Agricultural Land Preservation Board is now open.

Founded in 1996, the Agricultural Land Preservation Program’s goals include sustaining farmland and preserving the best soils in Fayette County. Program funding is generated through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture’s Clean and Green Program, tobacco taxes, county contributions and more.

Fayette County Chief Community Development Specialist Art Cappella said agriculture is the leading industry in both Pennsylvania and Fayette County.

“Preserving farmland makes sense, and it is a wise investment for Fayette’s future food production and green space preservation,” Cappella said. “An agricultural easement conserves farmland. Specifically, it affords a landowner with an opportunity to permanently conserve agricultural production of the land. Moreover, it is a method by which we can maintain the traditions and culture of the farming industry, as well as enhance Fayette’s community appearance by establishing a common balance between economic development and the agriculture industry.”

Some program requirements include:

- A minimum of 50 acres of farmland.
- Location in an agricultural security area. (These areas may include non-adjacent farmland parcels of at least 10 acres. Applicants must contact their local governments to place farmland into an agricultural security area.)
- Completion of an appraisal and soil testing following application submission.

Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of farms and acres permanently preserved for agricultural production. To date 5,329 farms have been approved for easement purchases totaling 552,702 acres.

Cappella said 24 Fayette County farms are currently part of the local program, with a total of 2,784 acres preserved as of 2021. More than \$3.2 million have been invested in the project.

Each Fayette County preserved farm will receive a 4-foot by 4-foot aluminum sign to display on their property, a recent addition to the ever-growing program.

All applications are valid for two years. The 2022 application period closes March 1.

“An important philosophy to strive to maintain is one that minimizes urban sprawl and puts investment where you have infrastructure, so you do not have to go out and build new sewer systems, cut down trees and chew up farms,” Cappella said. “Agricultural land preservation helps control that sprawl, but a

misconception is that it prevents development. It doesn't. What it does do is allow for smart development and growth."

Interested landowners may apply by contacting the Fayette County Office of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, 724-430-1210, located on the fourth floor of the Fayette County Courthouse, 61 E. Main St., Uniontown, PA 15401.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

For more information, contact Kristi Rooker Kassimer, Public Relations Specialist, at 412-691-0262, kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info or Kaylie Moore, Community Relations Coordinator, at 724-430-1200 Ext. 1611, kmoore@fayettepa.org.