Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation

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Presenter

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Pennsylvania Agriculture

- $7.4 billion cash receipts
- $74 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
Land Use Trends in Pennsylvania

• Between 1992 and 2005, urban land in Pennsylvania increased 131.4 percent, from approximately 1.2 million acres in 1992 to almost 2.8 million in 2005.*
• Pennsylvania’s population grew by 3.4 percent between 2000 and 2010.*
• Pennsylvania ranks 6th in the nation in loss of prime farmland soil.**

*Governor’s Center for Local Government Services
**American Farmland Trust
PA Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program

- 4,802 farms
- 508,478 acres
- 57 participating county programs
- 23 active land trust organizations
- $1.3 billion investment
How it works

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

• Applicant ranking system awards points for historically significant features
• Partnering with PHMC to provide information to farm owners at the application stage – identify historical resources
• Outreach to existing eased farm owners
• Century and Bicentennial Farm Program – PA Department of Agriculture and PHMC display and event