

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Strategic Plan for Agriculture

Pennsylvania
Department of Agriculture

2026

Our Commitment to Pennsylvania Agriculture

Fellow Pennsylvanians,

Since the Commonwealth's beginning, agriculture has been foundational to Pennsylvania's prosperity – shaping our communities, our economy, and our identity as the Keystone State. From William Penn's vision of opportunity and self-determination to today's global marketplace, food and agriculture have been central to building the Commonwealth's legacy as a national and global leader.

But this industry is not just our heritage – it is one of our most powerful economic engines and greatest competitive advantages. Agriculture drives more than $153.2 billion in annual output, supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, and anchors Pennsylvania's economy in every corner of the Commonwealth. It powers our food supply, drives sustainability and stewardship, fuels our leading sectors, and creates meaningful jobs across rural, suburban, and urban communities alike.

That's why this Pennsylvania 10-Year Strategic Plan for Agriculture builds directly upon the Commonwealth's Economic Development Strategy, aligning agriculture with the very sectors driving Pennsylvania's competitiveness and growth. **Our vision is clear: agriculture can and will drive prosperity, power our economy, fuel innovation, and lead solutions all while bringing families around the dinner table each and every day.**

This plan sets a bold course to ensure Pennsylvania agriculture remains profitable and globally competitive. It calls for action, putting farms and the next generation at the center, strengthening support systems for farmers and agribusinesses, investing in technology, renewable energy, and value-added manufacturing, and building a stronger, more resilient food supply chain. Together, these efforts will create new opportunities for operations at every size and scale, grow family-sustaining jobs, and attract investment across Pennsylvania and beyond.

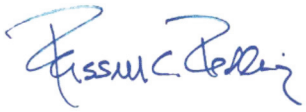
Pennsylvania has always been a state of builders, makers, and doers – people who compete to win. Agriculture embodies that spirit. It's time to build on our strengths, seize new opportunities, and get stuff done for the people who feed, power, and grow our Commonwealth.

Together, we can ensure that Pennsylvania remains the Keystone of American agriculture, where innovation, resilience, and opportunity drive lasting prosperity.

Sincerely,



Governor Josh Shapiro



Secretary Russell Redding

Acknowledgments

The Pennsylvania 10-Year Strategic Plan for Agriculture is the product of a collaborative effort. The Commonwealth extends sincere appreciation to the farmers, agribusinesses, industry leaders, and partners who contributed their ideas, expertise, and time to this work.

This plan was shaped through the dedication of our consulting partner, Fourth Economy, the leadership of industry workgroups, and the insights gathered through regional listening sessions hosted in partnership with House and Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee leaders.

Collective input was key to ensuring this plan reflects the realities and aspirations of Pennsylvania's diverse agricultural community – from farm to table, from idea to global market. Together, their voices have helped chart a bold, achievable path to grow, strengthen, and sustain the industry that feeds and powers our Commonwealth.

Consulting Partner

FOURTH ECONOMY

Core Team Members

- **Chris Davis** | Acting Deputy Secretary | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Ashley Fehr** | Communications Director | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Lydia Franks** | Governor's Science and Technology Fellow | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Katie McLaughlin** | Agriculture Coordinator | Governor's Office of Transformation & Opportunity
- **Lisa Riggs** | Senior Managing Director | Team Pennsylvania
- **Stephanie Shirk** | Agriculture Business Development Center Director | PA Dept. of Agriculture

Working Group Members

- **Jared Grissinger** | PA Dept. of Community & Economic Development
- **Sara Gligora** | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Gary Smith** | Chester Co. Economic Development
- **Rachel Sattazahn** | Horizon Farm Credit
- **Dale Hershey** | Univest
- **Caleb Wright** | Versant Strategies
- **Jennifer Marsh** | Bedford Economic Alliance
- **Bette Slayton** | Bedford Economic Alliance
- **Josh Housekeeper** | Ephrata First National Bank
- **Suzanna Windon** | Penn State University
- **Gretta Tritch Roman** | Penn State University
- **Yizou Liu** | Penn State University
- **Jayne Sebright** | Center for Dairy Excellence
- **Lisa Graybeal** | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Doug Wolfgang** | State Conservation Commission
- **Kristina Watson** | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Michelle Kirk** | Center for Beef Excellence
- **Heidi Secord** | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Kelly Kundratic** | Team Pennsylvania
- **Kim Fies** | Berks Co. Dept. of Agriculture
- **Denele Hughson** | Grow Pittsburgh
- **Tommy Nagle** | PA Farm Bureau
- **Bryan Bender** | Bender Farms
- **Claudia Schmidt** | Penn State University
- **Mike Roth** | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Kevin Dowling** | Robotics Factory
- **Jon Geyer** | Hardwoods Development Council
- **Francisco Yandun** | Carnegie Mellon University
- **Chuck Turner** | Turner Dairies
- **Ben Rice** | Rice Fruit Farm
- **Mark Lowery** | New Holland North America
- **Daniel Dotterer** | Dotterer Farms
- **Jennifer Reed-Harry** | Center for Poultry & Livestock Excellence
- **Jim Ladlee** | Penn State University
- **Jamie Green** | PA Dept. of Agriculture
- **Beth Ezar** | Robotics Factory

Legislative Partners

- **Senator Elder A. Vogel Jr.**, Chair, Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee
- **Senator Judith L. Schwank**, Minority Chair, Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee
- **Representative Eddie Day Pashinski**, Chair, House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee
- **Representative Dan Moul**, Republican Chair, House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee

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Why Now

Pennsylvania's food and agriculture industry stands at a pivotal moment. The Shapiro administration's statewide economic development strategy recognizes agriculture as one of Pennsylvania's core competitive sectors, for the first time in the state's history, placing farms, food, forestry, and agribusiness at the center of our economic growth agenda. This marks a powerful moment of continuity and progress, affirming agriculture's enduring importance to Pennsylvania's past while elevating its role as a driving force for future prosperity.

This momentum builds on years of strategic analysis and collaboration. Team Pennsylvania's 2018 Agriculture Economic Impact Analysis first quantified agriculture's economic influence, solidifying its vital role to industry leaders and decision-makers. Team Pennsylvania's subsequent work and 2025 Agriculture Economic Analysis have offered a data-driven picture of Pennsylvania agriculture's current strengths, vulnerabilities, and emerging opportunities. Together, these studies underscore how agriculture connects to every major driver of our economy.

Pennsylvania's 10-Year Strategic Plan for Agriculture builds on that foundation while providing the focus and direction needed to strengthen farms and agribusinesses, expand markets, empower the next generation, and drive innovation alongside Pennsylvania's co-driving sectors: energy, manufacturing, life sciences, and technology. It positions agriculture not only to adapt to change, but to collaboratively lead it.

It also builds on the priorities of Governor Shapiro. Since 2023, the Shapiro Administration has invested more than $268 million in Pennsylvania agriculture through economic development grants, low-interest loans, leveraged private investments, and expanded technical assistance. It has sustained the legacy of the Pennsylvania Farm Bill and established new programs, like the first-in-the-nation Agriculture Innovation Grant program, while adding resources to safeguard the industry, like the fourth animal diagnostic laboratory at Penn State Beaver serving western Pennsylvania.

Governor Shapiro's commitment to strengthening agriculture is part of a broader effort to make Pennsylvania a more competitive place to do business across every sector of the economy. Through the Commonwealth's 10-Year Economic Development Strategy, the Shapiro Administration is advancing a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to growth, aligning permitting, workforce development, site readiness, and business support to help businesses – across all sectors, sizes, and scales – start, grow, and invest in Pennsylvania. Initiatives like the PA SITES program are preparing shovel-ready locations for major investment. At the same time, the Administration is modernizing permitting processes to provide greater predictability and speed. These efforts are strengthening Pennsylvania's economic competitiveness and ensuring that industries like agriculture, food processing, and agribusiness have the infrastructure, regulatory environment, and strategic support needed to thrive.

These efforts also signal something larger: the time has come for Pennsylvania agriculture's first comprehensive strategic plan. As one of the Commonwealth's most enduring legacy industries and a powerful economic driver, agriculture has long benefited from strong partnerships, investments, and forward-thinking leadership. Yet despite its impact and importance, Pennsylvania has never had a unified, strategic plan to strengthen the industry's growth and competitiveness. At a time when global markets are evolving and states are competing to attract investment, talent, and innovation, we need a plan. If Pennsylvania intends to compete to win, now is the moment to act, and the Shapiro Administration is committed to leading.

As Pennsylvania looks toward the decade ahead, this plan provides the roadmap to turn momentum into lasting progress. It reflects a shared commitment to strengthen our farms, food businesses, and rural communities while positioning agriculture to lead in innovation, economic growth, and stewardship.

Just as Pennsylvania's agricultural legacy helped shape our Commonwealth's past, this strategy will help ensure it continues to shape our future.

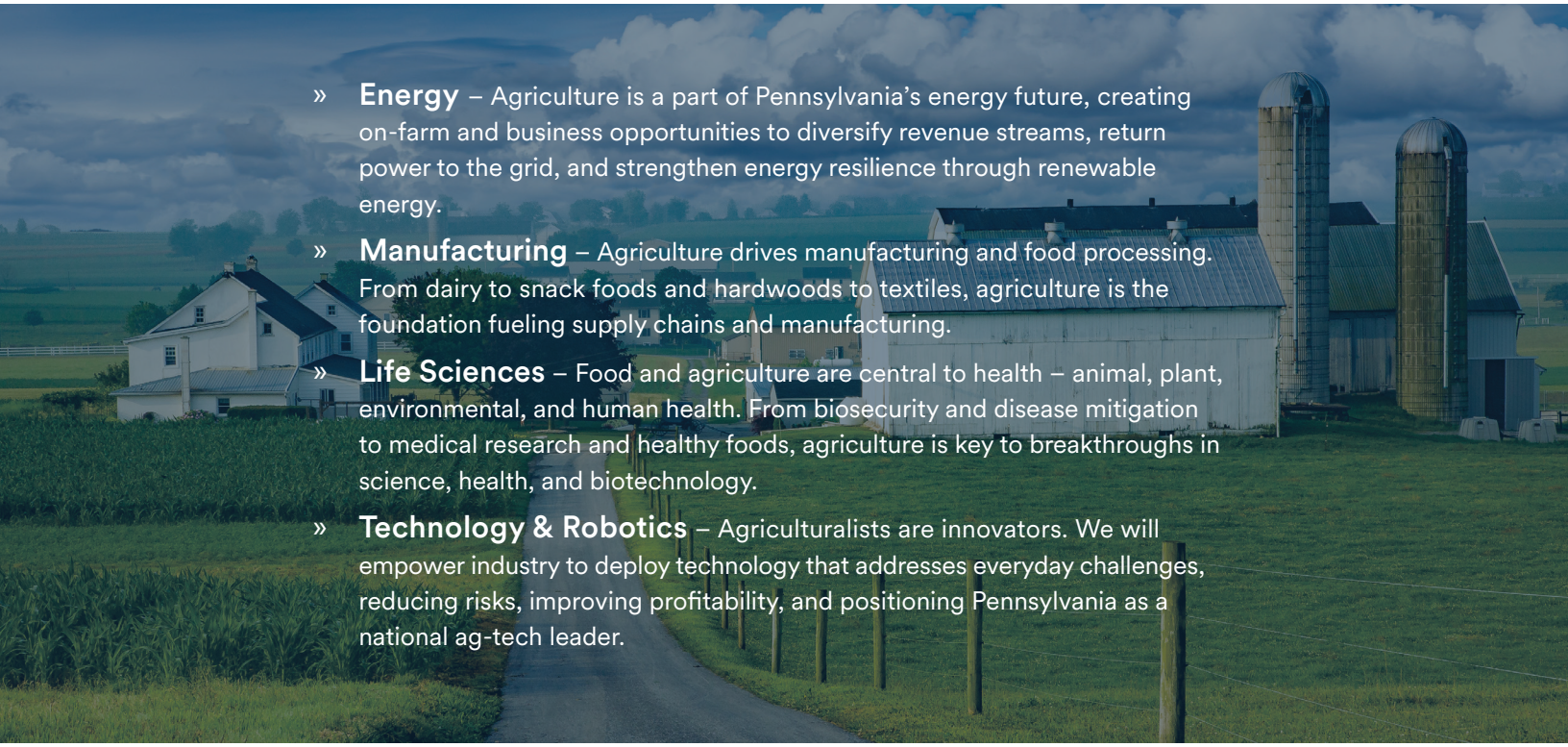
Our Vision

Agriculture has been the heart of Pennsylvania's prosperity - feeding families, sustaining communities, creating livelihoods, and anchoring the Commonwealth's economy. William Penn's vision of freedom, equality, and opportunity took root in Pennsylvania's soil, where generations of Pennsylvanians transformed hard work and ingenuity into farms, businesses, and communities that continue to shape our Commonwealth.

Now, it is time to lead the legacy forward.

Pennsylvania agriculture enters the next decade with an opportunity unlike any before it. Rapid advances in technology, changing consumer demands, new markets, and a global economy are reshaping how food, fiber, energy, and natural resources are produced and valued. Pennsylvania has the assets to lead that transformation - and the responsibility to seize it. We will honor the land and traditions that brought us here while embracing the technologies, markets, talent, and bold ideas that will define where we go next.

As a catalyst for progress and a leader in legacy, agriculture can advance alongside the other core pillars of the state's economic development strategy:



- **Energy** – Agriculture is a part of Pennsylvania's energy future, creating on-farm and business opportunities to diversify revenue streams, return power to the grid, and strengthen energy resilience through renewable energy.
- **Manufacturing** – Agriculture drives manufacturing and food processing. From dairy to snack foods and hardwoods to textiles, agriculture is the foundation fueling supply chains and manufacturing.
- **Life Sciences** – Food and agriculture are central to health – animal, plant, environmental, and human health. From biosecurity and disease mitigation to medical research and healthy foods, agriculture is key to breakthroughs in science, health, and biotechnology.
- **Technology & Robotics** – Agriculturalists are innovators. We will empower industry to deploy technology that addresses everyday challenges, reducing risks, improving profitability, and positioning Pennsylvania as a national ag-tech leader.

The goal is bigger than sustaining what we have. It is to create what comes next. By pairing Pennsylvania's agricultural strengths with bold ideas, strategic investment, and a relentless focus on opportunity, we can grow businesses, create jobs, strengthen communities, expand exports, and establish Pennsylvania as a destination for the next generation of agricultural innovation.

We have a proud agricultural past. Now, we have the opportunity to cultivate an even stronger future.

By 2036 we envision Pennsylvania's food and agriculture industry will be:

- **An economic powerhouse,** sustaining existing enterprises, generating new businesses, and linking agriculture directly to Pennsylvania's leading sectors – energy, manufacturing, life sciences, and technology.
- **Innovative and forward-looking,** leading the nation in biotechnology, science, ag robotics, and renewable energy, creating tools to strengthen profitability and efficiency.
- **Rooted in stewardship,** building on Pennsylvania's legacy of preserving farmland, soils, and waterways while ensuring productivity for future generations.
- **Profitable and resilient,** with diverse, thriving farms and businesses that adapt to change, strengthen supply chains, and drive regional prosperity.
- **Globally and locally engaged,** exporting Pennsylvania products to markets around the world while also growing consumer demand here at home.
- **A competitive employer,** creating meaningful career pathways to sustain competitive jobs, ensuring agriculture remains a sector where individuals and families can build their futures.
- **Grounded in community,** leading in local economic development while strengthening food security and access, ensuring agriculture remains central to community prosperity.

Like those before us, today's farmers and industry leaders carry the power of choice – to grow, innovate, and lead. This plan transforms that power into progress, driving profitability, resilience, and leadership across Pennsylvania's farms, businesses, and communities while connecting our agricultural legacy to limitless opportunity – feeding the nation, inspiring innovation, growing the next generation, and building prosperity for all.

Developing the Plan

The Strategic Plan was built through the collective expertise and collaboration of the Commonwealth's agriculture community. Farmers, agribusiness leaders, educators, lenders, industry stakeholders, and government partners came together to shape this roadmap, ensuring it reflects the challenges, opportunities, and ambitions of Pennsylvania agriculture.

Industry-led workgroups were at the heart of this effort. Stakeholder insights and on-the-ground experience identified practical strategies and grounded this plan in the realities of agriculture and food production across the Commonwealth.

Supporting this process was Fourth Economy, a Pittsburgh-based national firm specializing in strategic economic development. Additionally, House and Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee leaders partnered to host external listening sessions. Four regional sessions brought together more than 200 participants from 40+ counties. An online survey created additional opportunity for remote feedback.

This collaborative process created a plan that reflects the shared vision, experience, and determination of Pennsylvania's agriculture community – uniting data, dialogue, and expertise into a roadmap for growth, innovation, and resilience.

This plan defines food and agriculture using the framework of the 2025 Pennsylvania Agriculture Economic Analysis, which identifies 89 industries reflecting the scope of food and agriculture. Each industry is categorized using six-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes and grouped into eight clusters. Given industry feedback, this plan recognizes a ninth cluster, which includes agriculture related services such as custom harvesting, veterinary services, farm machinery and equipment services, etc.

Together, these clusters and related sectors illustrate that agriculture in Pennsylvania is not a single industry, but a network of interconnected systems that fuel economic activity.

How to Read This Plan

This plan is organized around five strategic priorities, each providing a framework to understand opportunities, identify strategies, and inspire collective action.

Within each priority, readers will find:

Signals of Opportunity: Key data, industry trends, and stakeholder insights that highlight challenges, emerging needs, and opportunities for growth and competitiveness.

Strategies: Forward-looking approaches identified through industry collaboration to address challenges, build on existing strengths, and guide investment, partnerships, and action over the next decade.

Recommendations in Action: A closer look at select recommendations, illustrating how strategic ideas could translate into coordinated efforts, targeted investments, and meaningful progress.

Success Stories: Real-world examples of programs, partnerships, and industry leadership already making an impact in Pennsylvania and beyond, demonstrating what is possible and offering models to build upon.

These elements connect the why, what, and how of the plan, providing a shared foundation for industry, government, and partners to identify where they can contribute and turn opportunity into action.



Throughout this process, we also asked a fundamental question:

What will ensure Pennsylvania's food and agriculture industry remains competitive, profitable, and sustainable for the next ten years and beyond?

To answer this question, the plan development process was centered on four areas of focus:

1. Access to Capital – How can Pennsylvania strengthen financial, human, and social capital to empower farmers, agribusinesses, and communities?
2. **Efficiency and Profitability** – What practices, technologies, market connections, and planning efforts will help producers grow and sustain a competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic environment?
3. **Modernization and Innovation** – How can we position Pennsylvania agriculture to lead in technology adoption, infrastructure development, and research to solve challenges, mitigate risks, and increase returns on investment across the industry?
4. **Public Engagement** – How can we build public awareness to strengthen the connection between consumers their food, and the importance of Pennsylvania agriculture? Importantly, why does choosing Pennsylvania matter?

Together, these focus areas informed every conversation, dataset, and recommendation, helping to ensure this plan responds to today's realities while anticipating tomorrow's opportunities.

Putting this Plan into Action

This is an industry plan built to serve and empower everyone who contributes to Pennsylvania's food and agriculture ecosystem. From farmers and agribusinesses to universities and researchers, policymakers, community partners, and consumers, it reflects the collective network that sustains and drives the Commonwealth's agriculture industry forward.

This plan is also a living, evolving roadmap. It reflects where we are today and where we aspire to go, but it will continue to grow and adapt as new opportunities and challenges emerge.

We hope that as you read this plan, you see yourself – your farm, your business, your market, your community – reflected in its goals and energized by its opportunities. The Commonwealth served as the convener of this plan, but it is the industry itself who will bring this plan to life. Its success depends on your leadership, creativity, and collaboration.

If you see opportunity, **act on it.**
If you see potential to address a challenge or champion a recommendation, **reach out.**
If you see a way to strengthen your community through partnership, **lead it.**

This plan belongs to all of us, and together, we can make its vision real. Pennsylvania agriculture has always thrived through ingenuity, collaboration, and shared purpose. That same spirit will carry us forward as we turn this plan from strategy into action, building a stronger, more competitive, and more connected agriculture industry for the next decade and beyond.

Achieving Our Vision

The story of Pennsylvania agriculture is one of strength, purpose, and adaptability. The insights shared in this plan reveal both the challenges and powerful opportunities ahead. They point to one clear truth: the Commonwealth's future competitiveness depends on our ability to collaborate, act, and lead with purpose.

Driving this purpose are consistent themes that emerged through feedback and analysis, creating five strategic priorities to drive this plan forward. These priorities reflect where the industry is today, and where it can grow. They are also interconnected; progress in one priority strengthens the others. Together, they create a framework for how Pennsylvania can grow a profitable, resilient, and inclusive food and agriculture system over the next decade and beyond.

Strategic Priorities



Support Careers in Food and Agriculture

Build the next generation of agricultural talent by aligning education, innovation, and workplace supports that make agriculture a career of choice.

Champion Industry Modernization and Resilience

Strengthen competitiveness through innovation, technology, and infrastructure that improve efficiency, profitability, and adaptability to change.

Increase Market Access

Expand Pennsylvania's reach and recognition by connecting producers and consumers, building regional supply chains, and elevating the Pennsylvania agriculture brand.

Promote Land Access and Responsible Planning

Ensure land remains productive, protected, and within reach for the next generation through creative access, stewardship, and strategic land use planning.

Optimize Customer Service and Resource Accessibility

Make Pennsylvania's agricultural support network accessible, more coordinated and customer-focused, ensuring every farmer, producer, and business can access resources for success.

Each priority represents both a vision and a call to action. The pages that follow translate these priorities into strategies, partnerships, and opportunities designed to strengthen Pennsylvania's food and agriculture system. Together, they create a roadmap for industry, government, institutions, and communities to turn opportunity into impact, ensuring agriculture remains a cornerstone of Pennsylvania's economy for generations to come.

Strategic Recommendations



Support Careers in Food and Agriculture

Pennsylvania's agricultural workforce is entering a transformative decade. We have more farmers under the age of 35 than any state in the nation – and as experienced producers retire and new generations step forward, the next ten years will bring significant generational shifts alongside new opportunities to reimagine the industry's workforce, particularly through new technologies.

We believe Pennsylvania's food and agriculture industry can lead the nation in cultivating a competitive and opportunity-rich workforce – that's why the Shapiro Administration has worked to inspire the next generation of farmers by creating five new and growing six existing apprenticeships in ag-related careers, promoting ag literacy in our classrooms, and investing in PA Farm Bill grants that support farm transitions and growing the next generation of industry workers. Building from these efforts to create more opportunities for Pennsylvanians interested in food and agriculture means empowering individuals to see agriculture not just as a job, but as a lifelong, purpose-driven career. It also means working with employers to address everyday challenges – from healthcare and childcare to flexible career pathways – so agriculture is both rewarding and competitive.

Thinking holistically about education, training, and employment, we can create pathways where passion meets potential, helping every Pennsylvanian – from students to seasoned workers – find opportunity. Together, we can grow a workforce that reflects the strength of our industry, drives innovation, and sustains the Commonwealth's agricultural legacy for generations to come.

Signals of Opportunity

- **Generational Transition:** PA leads the nation in farmers under the age of 35, yet +50% of PA agricultural producers are over 55, and ~31% are over 65, signaling the need for succession planning, transitions, and mentorship.
- **Labor Demand:** Food and agriculture employ nearly 600,000 Pennsylvanians, but ongoing labor shortages highlight opportunities for automation, targeted recruitment, and career pathway development.
- **Women in Ag:** Women make up 35% of Pennsylvania's agricultural producers – more than 31,000 women are actively involved in farming across the Commonwealth and at the forefront of food system development, conservation, and innovation.
- **Barriers to Ownership:** Land and capital costs are barriers to entry. Financing tools, local planning, and transition models can help new and beginning farmers take root.
- **Wages & Quality of Work:** Food and agriculture wages and healthcare benefits often trail competing sectors. Competitive compensation models can help attract and retain skilled workers.
- **Education Alignment**: 176 institutions and 287 food and ag workforce and education programs exist; ag-related programs can feel disjointed, calling for a championing entity.
- **Regional Strengths:** Distinct needs across regions call for regional workforce initiatives and localized strategies.
- **Growing the Next Generation**: Gen Z and Gen Alpha prioritize purpose-driven work, well-being, and technology adoption. These priorities align with today – and tomorrow's – food and agriculture industry. We must continue to reach, and inspire, the next generation.

Industry Perspectives

"We have hundreds of workforce training programs, but not enough people entering agriculture."

"We need to create real pathways – for both hiring and advancement – so people can see a future for themselves in this industry."

"Upskilling for tech-enabled agriculture is critical for future success."

Strategies to Support Careers in Food and Agriculture

1.1 Facilitate & Champion Workforce Development Continuity

By working more intentionally with the Department of Labor and Industry, we believe we can expand on the progress made in the Shapiro Administration to strengthen the food and agriculture pipeline further by connecting schools, workforce boards, and employers to meet industry needs.

1.2 Align Workforce Development Programs with Industry Growth and Regional Dynamics

Expanding regional collaborations with local farms and agribusinesses and educational institutions will help develop targeted training programs that better support the workforce needs of local economies and identify solutions to close the gaps in the food and agriculture talent pipeline.

1.3 Support Career Attraction, Retention & Transition

We want to help more Pennsylvanians see a future in agriculture and as a place of meaningful employment. Through our work with the Department of Education and the Commission on Agricultural Education, we will promote diverse career pathways, expand options for more CTE and career training courses in food and agriculture careers, and build relationships with local technical schools that reach nontraditional students like military veterans and career changers, we can reach new talent to build the industry's workforce. At the same time, we will do more to support farm transitions from retiring farmers to new and beginning farmers while championing business planning services to support succession and continuity.

1.4 Explore Opportunities to Support Wages & Benefits for Industry Workers

We plan to work with industry leaders to explore innovative best practices to strengthen wages, benefits, and overall job satisfaction. The future of agriculture relies on how we succeed in attracting new workers, strengthening career retention and quality of life for industry workers, and inspiring diverse communities and new generations to pursue careers in food and agriculture – and we can help do that by assisting farms and businesses of all sizes and scales be more competitive in wages and benefit structures.

1.5 Foster Food & Agriculture Business Entrepreneurship

Through the Agricultural Business Development Center and public-private partnerships, we can support business planning, peer-to-peer learning, and technical assistance opportunities to lower barriers to entry and grow food and agriculture entrepreneurship. We can also ensure existing local, regional, and state entrepreneurship efforts are accessible and aligned. Importantly, this coordinates partners and resources across the food and agriculture ecosystem and drives outreach to increase awareness of these opportunities.

Success Stories

Apprenticeships

The Shapiro Administration is expanding practical, results-driven pathways, like apprenticeships, that connect students and job seekers to real opportunities. In agriculture, apprenticeships are opening doors to in-demand careers through paid, hands-on training that meets industry needs.

In Indiana County, the Conservation District is launching a first-of-its-kind Agriculture Conservation Technician Apprenticeship to train the next generation of conservation professionals. In Philadelphia, the John Bartram Association's Sankofa Farm Apprenticeship is preparing young adults for careers in urban agriculture, food systems, and entrepreneurship, with a focus on expanding opportunity and building future leaders. Together, these efforts are delivering workforce solutions that support communities, strengthen the industry, and create models that can scale across Pennsylvania.





Agriculture Education

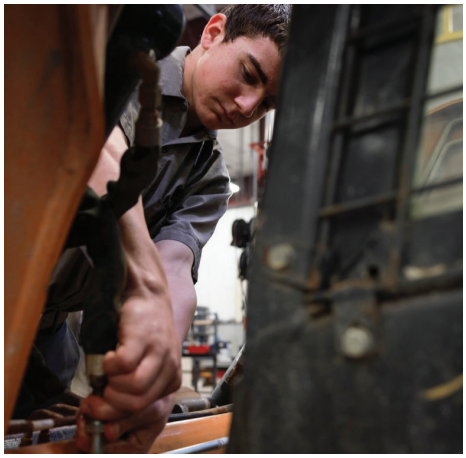
When Otto-Eldred High School in McKean County lost its industrial arts program, the community turned a challenge into an opportunity. With the support of the school's principal and school board, Otto-Eldred launched its agriculture education program and FFA Chapter in 2020 and has since become a cornerstone of the school and community.

While funding is often a hurdle to starting new agriculture education programs, Otto-Eldred became an approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, unlocking access to CTE subsidy funding to support the program's long-term stability. Today, Otto-Eldred graduates are pursuing degrees and careers in agriculture while also supporting local manufacturing and energy industries, demonstrating how agriculture education can help address workforce needs, empower students, and strengthen communities across the Commonwealth.

Workforce Development

The Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC) offers a model for regional agricultural growth. Through its AgConnect Industry Partnership, CCEDC provides business, workforce, and capital support, from transition planning and financing assistance to technical training and peer learning, helping producers plan for growth and long-term resilience.

This collaborative model bridges agriculture with workforce development, education, and business innovation. It stands as a blueprint for how regional economic organizations can align with Pennsylvania's Economic Development Strategy, reinforcing agriculture as a cornerstone of both community and statewide prosperity.



Recommendations in Action

Building a Coordinated Food & Agriculture Workforce System

Pennsylvania's food and agriculture industry depends on a strong, adaptable, and coordinated workforce. Exploring a Food and Agriculture Workforce Development initiative within the PA Department of Agriculture offers a pathway to better connect partners across industry, workforce systems, and education while creating entry points for students, career changers, and future producers.

This approach is intended to strengthen alignment across programs, improve communication between partners, and provide a more unified strategy to support workforce development statewide, all while creating a mechanism to better identify industry needs and potential solutions.

Integration between workforce development, business support, and entrepreneurship is also critical. Aligning these efforts can help individuals not only enter the industry, but grow careers, transition operations, and support new ventures.

With stronger coordination, Pennsylvania can build more reliable talent pipelines, improve retention, and better match skills with industry demand, positioning agriculture as a dynamic and competitive career path.

Developing a workforce system designed for connection and adaptability will help ensure Pennsylvania's agriculture industry remains prepared to grow, compete, and lead in the years ahead.





Champion Industry Modernization & Resilience

We envision a future where agriculture leads through innovation. Governor Shapiro recognizes that – and it's why, under his leadership, we created the first-in-the-nation Agricultural Innovation Grant program, committing $30 million into providing capital that helps businesses adopt new technologies, expand markets, and strengthen the Commonwealth's agricultural economy.

Now is also the time to put data to work for Pennsylvania's agricultural sector. Through smart technology, data systems, and artificial intelligence (AI), we can give producers the real-time tools needed to boost crop yields, keep livestock healthy, and make faster, more informed decisions for their land.

Over the next decade, modernization and innovation will define the Commonwealth's competitiveness and resilience. By making these advancements practical, profitable, and people-centered, Pennsylvania can empower farms and agribusinesses of every size to thrive, adapt, and lead. Together, we can grow an agriculture economy that is not only more efficient, but more connected and ready for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Signals of Opportunity

- **Modernization Gaps:** Modernizing water, energy, and transportation systems – rural and urban – can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and build more resilient communities.
- **Digital Access:** 81% of rural residents have broadband; just 47% have fiber. Expanded connectivity is a pathway for technology integration, e-commerce, and other services.
- **R&D:** Public research funding has slowed even as private investment grows, underscoring the importance of collaborative, applied R&D and real-world testing.
- **Cooperative Technology**: Automation, precision agriculture, and renewable energy systems often lack accessible financing or clear ROI. Opportunity exists to examine shared equipment and cooperative financing to expand accessibility.
- **Energy Security:** Food and agriculture are central to PA's energy future; continued learning and proofs of concept can make these systems profitable and scalable.
- **Labor Access:** Labor availability continues to be a top challenge for the agriculture sector. Robotics and new innovations can help address workforce shortages by supporting employees and improving efficiencies.

Industry Perspectives

"We need to modernize, but the cost and risk can be overwhelming."

"Technology must fit Pennsylvania's scale and landscape, not just be imported solutions."

"Infrastructure investments are the foundation of innovation."

Strategies to Champion Industry Modernization & Resilience

2.1 Enhance Resilience & Productivity

By promoting the adoption of equipment, technology, and data-driven tools, we can strengthen the resilience and productivity of Pennsylvania's agriculture sector. This also builds on the success of Pennsylvania's first in the nation Agricultural Innovation Grant Program. Together, we can create pilot-to-pathway opportunities that support learning and scalability, while exploring shared regional technology models and cooperatives to expand access. Prioritizing training programs will also help ensure producers and businesses are equipped to take full advantage of these innovations.

2.2 Reduce Barriers to Innovation & Technology Adoption

Reducing barriers to innovation will require coordinated efforts across partners. By exploring financial incentives, strengthening technical assistance, and addressing infrastructure challenges, we can make it easier for farms and businesses to adopt new technologies. At the same time, increasing support for security – data, cyber, and biosecurity – can help ensure these advancements are implemented safely and effectively.

2.3 Strengthen Climate Resilience through Resource Management

Building on Pennsylvania's legacy of conservation leadership, we can continue to support the adoption of best management strategies that strengthen both environmental and economic outcomes. Encouraging the adoption of precision agriculture, farm management systems, and practices that turn waste into value can help position agriculture as a leader in Pennsylvania's circular economy while generating returns on investment.

2.4 Build Energy Security

There is an opportunity to work collaboratively toward a comprehensive Agriculture-Energy Strategy for Pennsylvania. By supporting responsible renewable, agriculture-focused energy adoption, and expanding public education, we can strengthen energy resilience across the agricultural economy and rural communities.

2.5 Invest in Applied Research & Development

Through greater public investments and stronger public-private and academic partnerships, we can better align research with real-world needs. Prioritizing applied research and development will help ensure innovation is practical, scalable, and responsive to the competitive challenges facing Pennsylvania agriculture.

Success Stories

Agriculture Innovation Grant Program



Founded in 1986, Metzler Forest Products employs more than 75 workers and has expanded into biochar production, transforming low-grade wood into a high-value, sustainable product. With support from an Agricultural Innovation Grant, Metzler invested in a pyrolysis plant that allows the company to capture new market opportunities while advancing environmental stewardship, improving soil health, sequestering carbon, and supporting Pennsylvania's circular economy.

A similar example can be found at Kuhn Orchards in Adams County, where grant funding helped the family-owned operation adopt drone technology for precision fertilizer and crop protection applications. Since then, the orchard has increased processing efficiency, lowered operating costs, and minimized pesticide and fertilizer use. These investments, and many more, demonstrate how supporting agriculture innovation can support a triple bottom line – benefiting people, protecting the environment, and increasing profitability.



On-Farm Energy Generation

Reinford Farms in Juniata County exemplifies how Pennsylvania farms are pairing tradition with innovation to build an energy-resilient future. A preserved, multi-generational dairy milking 750 cows and farming 1,300 acres, the Reinford family has invested in anaerobic digestion technology to turn food waste and manure into renewable energy. Their digester generates enough power to run the farm, support the operation's food recycling enterprise, and send energy back to the grid while reducing landfill waste and strengthening the farm's profitability and environmental stewardship.

Public-Private Partnerships

In August 2023, the U.S. EPA and Hershey pledged $2 million to support dairy farmers in Pennsylvania's eastern region milk-shed via the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Land O'Lakes. The funding is part of the "Sustainable Dairy PA" initiative and is structured to accelerate on-farm conservation practices, including riparian buffers, nutrient management, and soil-health improvements, while helping participating farms meet supply-chain demands and environmental benchmarks. By creating a public-private model that aligns corporate needs, federal environmental goals, and on-farm profitability, this effort demonstrates how industry and conservation can work together to drive greater sustainability and resilience in Pennsylvania's dairy economy.



Recommendations in Action

Investing in Farms as Foundational Infrastructure

Pennsylvania's food system is only as strong as the farms that power it. Yet on-farm infrastructure often lacks accessible pathways to capital, even as investments further along the supply chain continue to grow.

Strengthening competitiveness and resilience starts at the farm level.

Pennsylvania has an opportunity to better align investment and implementation. This could include exploring targeted tools that support on-farm infrastructure and permitting to reduce upfront barriers to modernization.

At the same time, connecting innovation more directly to producers will be critical. Pennsylvania launched the Keystone Ag Tech Alliance to better link farmers with researchers, technology providers, and industry partners to accelerate the adoption of practical, scalable solutions.

Strategic investment in on-farm infrastructure can strengthen production capacity, support farm transition, improve efficiency, and reinforce the foundation for long-term market growth.

Investing in farms as critical infrastructure ensures Pennsylvania's agricultural economy remains competitive, resilient, and ready for the next decade.







Expand Market Access

Pennsylvania's agriculture markets are at a defining point of growth and opportunity. Pennsylvania commodities like apples and mushrooms and proteins like dairy and poultry products are known across the U.S. and around the world for high quality standards. We also lead the nation in mushroom and egg production, in hardwood exports, and in direct-to-consumer sales. As global trade patterns shift and consumers seek transparency, quality, and connection, Pennsylvania is positioned to lead with trust and innovation.

Building on our vision, we see a Commonwealth where producers and processors of all sizes can access diverse, competitive markets – local and global – that celebrate Pennsylvania-grown products and the people behind them. By strengthening regional supply chains and expanding market reach, we can keep more value in-state, grow resilient communities, and secure Pennsylvania's place as a market leader.

Signals of Opportunity

- **Import Dependence:** The agriculture and food sector buys $54 billion in inputs annually; $29 billion are sourced out-of-state. Capturing in-state market share can bolster our economy.
- **Export Opportunities:** Pennsylvania is well positioned to grow our agricultural, forest and food exports, with nearly $4 billion currently exported, and three ports that link us to the 95% of consumers outside the United States.
- **Sector Gaps:** Key industries rely heavily on out-of-state inputs, like agricultural fertilizers ($250+ million annually), representing opportunities for in-state production.
- **Processing Capacity:** Prioritizing regional processing and aggregation presents a chance to turn current bottlenecks into engines of local growth and food system resilience.
- **Consumer Trends:** There is rising consumer demand for local, organic, and sustainably produced foods – areas of strength for Pennsylvania agriculture.
- **Regional Reach:** 40% of the U.S. population is within a day's drive. PA's strategic location and strong logistics network create a strong competitive advantage.
- **Feeding Communities:** Pennsylvania agriculture helps ensure access to fresh, local food across communities, while the charitable food system creates important agricultural markets. SNAP directly supports nearly $1 billion annually to agriculture, including Pennsylvania farms, strengthening food access while supporting the Commonwealth's agricultural economy.

Industry Perspectives

"Every dollar we import is a missed opportunity for Pennsylvania jobs."

"We need more aggregation and cold storage – the infrastructure to connect supply with demand."

"Regional hubs and cooperatives could help level the playing field for small producers."

Strategies to Expand Market Access

3.1 Support Infrastructure Development to Grow Market Potential

Investing in regional infrastructure presents an opportunity to unlock new market potential across Pennsylvania agriculture. By prioritizing equipment, cold storage, broadband access, and working collaboratively to improve permitting processes, we can help businesses move more efficiently from production to market.

3.2 Promote Diversified Markets for PA Products

Pennsylvania has an opportunity to expand and diversify its markets by supporting value-added production, agritourism, and direct-to-consumer sales. Strengthening connections between producers and buyers, and leveraging state purchasing programs, can further support local economies and increase demand for Pennsylvania products.

3.3 Build Supply Chain Resiliency

By working together to identify supply chain gaps and target strategic investments, we can build a more resilient and adaptable food system. Strengthening in-state purchasing and supporting business development efforts will help ensure producers have reliable and consistent market access.

3.4 Recognize the Food System as Infrastructure

By recognizing the food system as infrastructure, Pennsylvania can strengthen both its economy and its communities. This approach bolsters the systems that grow, process, distribute, and provide access to food for all Pennsylvanians. Strategic investments across supply chains and charitable food systems can expand markets for producers, reduce food loss, strengthen food security, and build a more resilient Commonwealth.

3.5 Grow the “PA Brand”

A clearly defined and well-supported “PA Brand” can build confidence among consumers and buyers alike. By aligning and elevating existing promotion programs – like PA Preferred – and continuing to invest in coordinated marketing efforts, we can strengthen recognition of Pennsylvania agriculture both domestically and internationally.



Success Stories

Fresh Food Financing Initiative



The Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI) expands access to healthy, locally produced food while creating new markets for Pennsylvania farms. Administered by the PA Department of Agriculture, FFFI provides grants to farms, co-ops, markets, grocers, and direct-to-consumer businesses, particularly in USDA-designated food deserts, to support infrastructure like cold storage, mobile markets, processing upgrades, and retail improvements.

FFFI has helped co-ops like Weavers Way in Philadelphia and Erie Food Co-op modernize facilities and increase access to food from local producers. Farms are also benefiting. In Indiana County, John-Paul's Farm is using FFFI funding to install season-extending high tunnels, expanding the availability of fresh, locally grown produce in a food-insecure region.



Pennsylvania Very Small Meat Processing Grant

In Lackawanna County, MudPond Meats is strengthening the local food economy through an expansion made possible by the PA Farm Bill Small Meat Processor Grant. With a $77,500 grant, the family-run butcher shop purchased processing equipment and received technical assistance to achieve USDA inspection certification, a milestone that allows the business to sell products across state lines and increase processing capacity for local producers. With its USDA certification, MudPond Meats now supports more regional farmers, streamlines supply chains, and keeps dollars circulating within the community.

Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS)



Hopkins Farm, a produce farm in Wyoming County, is led by Veteran farmer Bill Hopkins and his family. Bill's work is proof of how the charitable food system and farmers can partner to strengthen food access. Through the PASS program, Hopkins Farm formed a direct link with the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank to reduce produce waste, generate returns on what otherwise would be lost produce, and serve community members in need.

The Shapiro Administration agrees that food is a human right and has taken bold steps from day one to support food access. Pennsylvania's agriculture sector, farm communities, and food insecure residents all benefit from PASS, redirecting millions of pounds of Pennsylvania-grown agricultural products to organizations that provide nutritious meals.

"Working with Weinberg Food Bank has easily been one of the most rewarding relationships for our farm," said Bill. "Since joining PASS, we have had a lot less food waste. It has also given us the flexibility to grow more product and a more

diverse mix of items; there is certainty that we can recuperate our costs... All in all, the PASS program is a win-win-win. It helps the farmer, it helps the food bank, and it helps neighbors in need. It's been easy to incorporate our work with Weinberg into our business plans, and it's probably one of the best programs to come around in recent years."



Resilient Food System Initiative

Through USDA's Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program, the Shapiro Administration secured an unprecedented $26 million to strengthen the food supply chain, including aggregation, processing, and distribution of locally produced food. The program is designed to help small and mid-sized farms and food businesses modernize facilities, expand market access, and increase profitability to address long-standing value chain infrastructure challenges, create jobs, and capture more value within the state's food economy. This one-time award supported 77 projects spanning 37 counties, investing in farm and regional processing through cold and dry storage, equipment upgrades, distribution and aggregation investments, and improved market connectivity.

Institutional Partnerships

In York County, the UPMC Pinnacle Foundation, in partnership with York Fresh Food Farms, is redefining how institutions can strengthen community health through agriculture. The Farm to Hospital Program established a year-round working farm on the UPMC Memorial campus, providing fresh, locally grown produce to patients, staff, and surrounding communities. The program promotes wellness education and the long-term goal of prescribing fresh fruits and vegetables tailored to patients' health needs. This initiative demonstrates the power of public-private collaboration to expand institutional markets for farmers while improving food access.



Recommendations in Action

Strengthening Supply Chain Infrastructure & Connectivity

Pennsylvania's ability to compete in local, national, and global markets depends on the strength of the systems that connect producers to buyers. Yet gaps in infrastructure, aggregation, and distribution continue to limit market access, particularly for small and mid-sized operations.

Expanding market access starts with building the capacity needed to support and sustain these markets – and grow new opportunities.

Pennsylvania has an opportunity to prioritize market access by growing value-added infrastructure.

At the same time, stronger coordination across supply chain partners will be critical to improving reliability and long-term growth. Aligning producers, processors, distributors, and institutional buyers can help create more consistent market channels, strengthen value-added opportunities, and reduce barriers to entry.

Building a more resilient supply chain also requires preparing for disruptions. Pennsylvania continues to support farmers and producers through market volatility, severe weather, and other threats. Programs such as the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Fund and Pennsylvania's Freeze Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants demonstrate the Commonwealth's commitment to helping producers recover from unexpected events while protecting the long-term stability of Pennsylvania's food supply chain.

Additionally, leveraging resources such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Reach and Resiliency Grants can further strengthen cold storage and distribution capacity within the charitable food system while enhancing and expanding programs like the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS). Together, these efforts can create more stable, value-driven outlets for producers, reduce food loss, and increase access to Pennsylvania-grown products across communities.

Strategic investments in infrastructure and connectivity can expand market opportunities, reduce supply chain gaps, and support more resilient regional food systems. And by strengthening these systems, Pennsylvania producers are better positioned to compete, grow, and meet consumer demand across the Commonwealth, and the world.



Promote Land Access & Responsible Planning

Land is the foundation of Pennsylvania agriculture. As the Commonwealth faces farmland loss, development pressure, and generational transition, we see opportunity to rethink how land is managed, shared, and preserved to serve both people and production. Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of preserved farms – and in building on our stewardship legacy, we envision a future where land dedicated to food, fiber, and forest economies is protected from development while sustaining the environment and communities that depend on it. By expanding access, strengthening planning, and empowering local leadership, Pennsylvania can ensure working lands remain productive, profitable, and protected for generations to come.

Signals of Opportunity

- **Farmland Transition:** PA lost 17% of its farms and 8% of farmland acreage (2012–2022) – 2x the national rate. We are poised to set goals to slow this rate through planning, preservation, and farm transitions.
- **High Land Values:** Rising land values and development competition can limit land access for agricultural production, underscoring the importance of developing strategic approaches to keep farmland accessible.
- **Underutilized Acres:** Idle or fragmented lands in rural and urban areas do exist, representing untapped potential for production, conservation, and diversification.iv
- **Preservation Leadership:** With 6,781 farms and 671,082 acres preserved, PA leads the nation. It is both a legacy and forward leaning opportunity.
- **Forestlands:** 16.6 million forest acres span the state. PA is poised to manage these forests sustainably, which also lends to emerging markets in biomass, biofuels, and sustainable building materials.
- **Climate Resilience:** Increasing weather variability signals opportunity for continued research in climate resilient solutions – from invasive species to seeds to technology – we have a chance to protect long-term productivity.

Industry Perspectives

"Preserving farmland isn't just about keeping land available, it's about keeping it productive and ready for the next generation."

"Access to land is one of the biggest barriers for new and beginning farmers. We need to seriously think about how we make land more financeable, so farming is an option."

"Getting drenched and then drought seems to be the new norm. I'd love to have more predictability... Even if you everything else on your side, weather is the one thing that can still get you down."

Promote Land Access & Responsible Planning

4.1 Support Business Continuity through Conservation & Preservation

Supporting long-term agricultural viability will require a shared commitment to conservation and preservation. By expanding access to development easements and other tools, strengthening landowner outreach, and identifying metrics to slow land conversion, we can help ensure farms and working lands remain productive for future generations.

4.2 Promote Land Access

Improving land access will be critical to supporting the next generation of producers. By prioritizing tools that provide direct benefits to farmers, integrating business planning with conservation efforts, and better coordinating resources for new and beginning farmers, we can create more accessible pathways into agriculture.

4.3 Optimize Regional Production Potential

By identifying underutilized acreage and aligning regional growth strategies with production capacity and market needs, we can work together to maximize agricultural output while supporting balanced regional development.

Success Stories

Farmland Preservation

The PA Farmland Preservation Program, launched in 1988, is a national model for collaborative land stewardship. By aligning state, county, and local governments with farm families, the program has protected 6,781 farms and 671,082 acres, the most of any state in the nation.





Pennsylvania Farm Vitality Grant

At Jersey Acres Farms in Schuylkill County, the Heffner family embodies the spirit of Pennsylvania's Farm Vitality Grant Program, planning for the future while preserving their legacy. With Farm Vitality Grant support, the family developed a business plan to guide the farm's generational transition for future success. A preserved farm, Jersey Acres also leveraged the PA Agricultural Innovation Grant to install robotic milkers, improving efficiency across its 230-cow dairy operation. Today, Jersey Acres not only stands as a model of innovation and resilience but also serves as an educational destination, welcoming fellow dairymen and students to learn how technology and tradition can successfully work hand in hand.

Brown Fields to Food Production



Little Leaf Farms is redefining what's possible for modern agriculture, transforming a former industrial site in Carbon County into one of the nation's most advanced controlled-environment agriculture (CEA) facilities. With support of the Shapiro Administration, the company's 40-acre high-tech greenhouse campus is a model for how smart land reuse and innovation can drive sustainable food production and economic growth.

At full capacity, Little Leaf Farms' McAdoo facility can produce roughly thirty times the leafy greens of conventional production systems while using only a fraction of the water. Its greens are also grown, harvested, and packaged through a fully hands-free system, going from greenhouse to grocery shelf within 24 hours.

Repurposing an idle industrial site into a productive hub, Little Leaf Farms shows how thoughtful planning can expand food access, create jobs, and strengthen local economies, even where land resources are limited.



Community Planning

In Cranberry Township, Butler County, The Powell Farm stands as a powerful example of how local governments and communities can work together to balance growth with heritage. For years, farmer Denton Powell stewarded his preserved 71-acre property. Following Powell's passing in 2021, the Township honored his legacy, acquiring the farm to establish a community agricultural and educational center. The site will serve as a space for residents, students, and educators to engage with local food, conservation, and the region's agricultural history.

The Powell Farm is more than preserved land, it's a living monument to community values, demonstrating how thoughtful land planning and local leadership can protect open space, celebrate agricultural heritage, and strengthen community connection for generations to come.

Recommendations in Action

Aligning Planning, Conservation, Preservation, and Land Access

Land is one of the Commonwealth's greatest environmental and economic assets. This, combined with Pennsylvania agriculture's legacy of stewardship uniquely positions the state to take a more intentional and coordinated approach to how we plan for, conserve, and invest in working lands.

Pennsylvania has an opportunity to better align local planning, conservation, and preservation efforts to ensure farmland and forestlands remain viable, productive, and within reach for the next generation.

Continued investment in farmland preservation and conservation programs is also essential to balancing land development with agricultural production and environmental stewardship. These investments also support long-term farm viability, strengthening both environmental outcomes and productivity.

Stronger coordination across planning, conservation, preservation, and land access efforts can help reduce land fragmentation, support farm transition, and create clearer pathways for new and beginning farmers – helping to ensure Pennsylvania's agricultural lands remain protected, productive, and positioned to support agriculture for generations to come.



Optimize Customer Service & Resource Availability

Pennsylvania's agriculture industry depends on a strong support system; one where state government provides the oversight, resources, partnership, and encouragement needed to ensure safety, trust, and responsible growth. While the Commonwealth does not define industry success, it plays a critical role in enabling it: administering financial programs, ensuring fair and efficient regulation, moving quickly during the permitting process to get farmers the answers they need on time, and helping producers navigate complex systems.

Building on our vision for the future, we see a government that leads through service, one that listens, adapts, and collaborates to help Pennsylvania's farms, businesses, and consumers thrive. By modernizing systems and strengthening customer service, the Commonwealth can continue to evolve to meet the needs of those it serves, driving innovation and resilience.

Signals of Opportunity

- **Numerous & Varied:** 75+ statewide programs support food and agriculture and opportunity exists to improve accessibility and reach.
- **Tracking Success:** Few programs track performance metrics. Building pathways to measure and communicate impact demonstrates value while driving continuous improvement.
- **Navigation Barriers:** Applicants face multiple systems, differing eligibility criteria, and unclear application processes. With a user-experience mindset, the Commonwealth can explore mechanisms that make engagement simpler and more rewarding for both users and administrators.
- **Coordination Gaps:** Multi-agency efforts can feel disjointed. There is opportunity to coordinate and align programs, maximizing impact and minimizing redundancy.
- **Customer Experience:** Industry experts emphasize the need for user-friendly, one-stop access to agricultural programs. Streamlining service delivery can save time and money.

Industry Perspectives

"Finding the right program takes more time than applying for it."

"Producers need one place to go, not ten different websites."

"We need a customer service mindset, not just program delivery."

Strategies to Optimize Customer Service & Resource Availability

5.1 Spearhead Continuous Improvement Mechanisms for State Programming

There is an opportunity to strengthen programming through more collaborative evaluation and continuous improvement. By developing standardized review processes and incorporating customer-focused benchmarking and reporting through a whole-of-government approach, we can ensure food and agriculture programs remain effective, transparent, and responsive to stakeholder needs.

5.2 Improve Accessibility by Prioritizing Customer Service & User Experience

Improving how stakeholders access and navigate programs will be key to increasing participation and impact. Creating a centralized entry point for agriculture funding while bolstering partnerships with on-the-ground organizations can help streamline communication and improve overall user experience for the food and agriculture community while ensuring programs and services are accessible to all Pennsylvanians.

5.3 Strengthen Connectivity & Collaboration

Stronger collaboration across public, private, and nonprofit partners will be essential to advancing shared goals. By fostering partnerships across economic development and financial institutions, supporting collaborative business development efforts, and enhancing interagency coordination, we can build a more connected and supportive agricultural ecosystem.

Success Stories

Pennsylvania Permit Accelerator

The PA Permit Accelerator is transforming how state government empowers employees to innovate and improve permitting processes. Led by Governor Shapiro's Office of Transformation and Opportunity in partnership with Penn State Harrisburg, the program provides ten weeks of professional development on customer discovery and human-centered design to tackle real-world permitting challenges. Agency teams pitch pilot projects, earning up to $20,000 in seed funding solutions that streamline permitting and enhance customer experience. It models how government can creatively deliver faster, more responsive service to the people and industries powering Pennsylvania.





Peer to Peer Education

For more than 20 years, the Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance has helped farmers build healthier soils and more resilient operations through peer-to-peer learning, field days, and practical training. Founded and led by farmers, it provides a trusted forum to share real-world experiences and learn about new technologies and conservation practices that improve profitability and environmental outcomes. Working alongside partners like Penn State Extension, conservation districts, and programs such as the Resource Enhancement & Protection (REAP) tax credit, the Alliance helps farmers bridge conservation education and practical implementation. Its success shows how trusted, farmer-led organizations can strengthen on-the-ground training, communication, and serve as a bridge between government programs and the producers who bring them to life.

Public-Private Financing Opportunities

First Citizens Community Bank has emerged as a leader in public-private partnership lending, combining traditional financing with public programs to help producers start, grow, and modernize their operations. For example, at Rosebud Farm in Union County, Daniel and Sarah Sanders worked with First Citizens to secure a Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA) loan alongside private bank financing to construct a new 60,000-bird, cage-free layer barn under contract with Pete and Gerry's Organics. Rosebud Farm, along with many other agricultural operations, has benefited from First Citizens' leadership in developing capital solutions that bridge financing gaps and demonstrate how public-private collaboration can strengthen farms and local economies.





Streamlining Permitting

The Kulp Dairy Farm, a third-generation family farm in Blair County, reached out to the Governor's Office of Transformation and Opportunity (OTO) when they became concerned about potential permitting delays for their new expansion. OTO worked closely with the farm and the Department of Environmental Protection to elevate the project's needs. As a result, the Kulp family received their permit more than four months ahead of schedule. Today, the Kulp's expansion is nearly complete, adding new barns and other infrastructure improvements that will allow the farm to add nearly 1,000 dairy cows, increasing its milking capacity while sustaining and creating local jobs.

Recommendations in Action

Creating a More Accessible and Coordinated Agricultural Support System

Improving accessibility starts with streamlining how farmers and agribusinesses connect to resources.

Pennsylvania has an opportunity to create a more user-centered system by exploring a centralized, one-stop shop for agricultural resources – a single, accessible platform that brings together funding opportunities, technical assistance, and regulatory guidance. This approach can streamline navigation, reduce administrative burden, and help producers more easily identify and access resources that meet their needs.

At the same time, strengthening coordination across agencies and partners is critical to delivering a more consistent and responsive customer experience. Aligning communication, outreach, and service delivery can help ensure resources are not only available, but accessible and actionable.

A more connected, customer-focused system – designed around user needs – can improve program utilization, reduce barriers to participation, and better support producers at every stage of their operation while ensuring Pennsylvania's agriculture support system remains efficient, responsive, and positioned to deliver greater impact over time.



Conclusion

This plan is a call to action. It invites every partner – farmers and foresters, educators and organizations, policymakers and processors, lenders and local leaders, and more – to work toward a shared purpose: ensuring Pennsylvania's food and agriculture industry remains competitive, profitable, and sustainable for the next ten years and beyond. The Department of Agriculture will continue to serve as a partner, but the power of this plan lies in its collective ownership. Its success depends on every sector seeing themselves in this work and choosing to lead and collaborate.

Together, we will help build a future where:

- **Producers and agribusinesses are empowered to chart their own success,** using technology, innovation, and planning to strengthen profitability, efficiency, and resilience.
- **The next generation of workers is inspired and equipped to lead,** where hands-on education and training connect students and new entrants to competitive careers.
- **Communities and regions are united through shared investment,** building processing, storage, and critical infrastructure that fuels vitality.
- **Farmland and forests are protected and productive,** where planning and conservation can prioritize both natural and economic assets, balancing development with production.
- **Public-private partnerships accelerate progress,** linking industry, nonprofits, institutions, and government to scale innovation, grow production, and strengthen market resilience.
- **Innovation and research empower discovery to deployment,** where our world-class institutions, farms, and businesses collaborate to solve challenges and pioneer solutions.
- **Consumers know, trust, and choose Pennsylvania products,** because the PA Brand stands for integrity and quality while driving local economies.
- **Programs are transparent and accessible, where government is an industry partner,** helping producers and processors navigate challenges and seize new opportunities.
- **Every farm, business, and community has the power of choice: the choice to innovate,** to diversify, to lead. No matter size or scale, you can drive your future forward with confidence and opportunity.

This collective vision charts a transformative future for Pennsylvania agriculture, powered by innovation, strengthened by stewardship, and sustained by generations ready to lead. This plan will guide our work and drive our promise to keep agriculture thriving, building an industry that reflects the best of who we are.

The next chapter of Pennsylvania agriculture begins with us, all of us. Let's lead it together.

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