

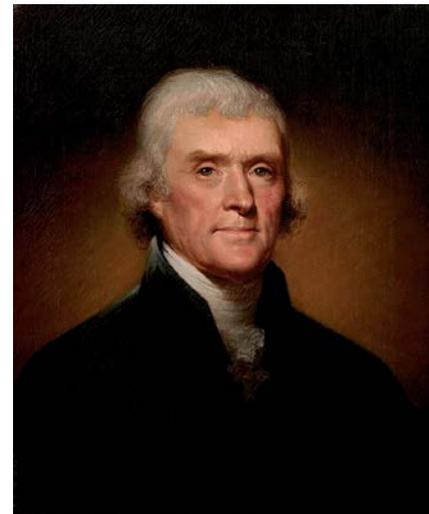
York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
Patty McCandless, Director

In March 2019, The York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board and staff welcomed Claire O'Brien as the newest employee to the agency. As Farmland Preservation Technician, Claire assists the agency qualifying and ranking agricultural conservation easement applications for farmland preservation. Claire's duties also include assisting with the GIS data management of lands identified as permanently preserved as well as lands enrolled in York County's Agricultural Security Areas. Eventually, Claire will assist with on-farm inspection visits to ensure the objectives of the agricultural conservation easement are being observed. Many of you will recall Eric Naylor, who served our clients so well from November 2013 through November 2018. Eric transferred in 2018 to the York Tax Map Office as the County GIS Tax Map Administrator but we continue to call upon Eric for his mapping brilliance in assisting with the GIS mapping information critical to our easement application evaluation.

Claire received her degree in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) from the University of Maryland, College Park. She has worked for University of Maryland Facilities Management, standardizing and updating the computer based mapping data for the university. She has also consulted for small business owners helping them with their technology needs. When not at work, she is helping on her family's farm in Northern York Co – raising laying hens and cut flowers. She also serves as Webmaster and Membership Chair for York County Buy Fresh Buy Local. Joining the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board allows her to blend her knowledge of GIS and farming to serve York County. She is currently busy running qualification and ranking on the 2019 applications, using the statistical and measurement geoprocessing tools of ArcMap.

As of May 2019, the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board permanently protected 287 farms, covering 42,846 acres. A preserved farm is "perpetually protected", or, forever more committed to the permanent use of the land for agricultural production. Minor rural enterprises may also take place but must remain secondary to the primary use of the land for agricultural purposes. Preserved farms accomplish other vital public goals beyond reducing farmland loss. Preserved lands also serve to ensure groundwater recharge occurs, as the lands remain open and available for rainfall infiltration serving to recharge our wells and reservoirs. Preserved farms typically include other lands such as woodlands, stream corridors, and other sensitive lands, that provide wildlife habitat. Preserved farms in York County are privately owned. Farm owners pay real estate taxes as every other property owner. Tax revenue paid to a municipality from farmland is significant and often helps balance a community's fiscal budget. Farmers can ensure fresh and affordable foods and fiber are available within our local communities.

Sound public policy includes a nation that can feed itself and help other nations as well. Successful land conservation efforts, such as preservation, require an educated public and local leadership to recognize the inherent value of protecting our natural resources, such as our air, water, soil, plants, and animals. Our rural economies depend on thoughtful public policy that will ensure the next generation will have the necessary natural resources that have not been exhausted by the generation before. Thomas Jefferson held an almost mystical political conviction that the republic he helped found would be sustained in the long run by cohesive communities of yeoman farmers. Jefferson was quoted, "We owed it to do, not what was to perish with ourselves, but what would remain, to be respected and preserved into other ages".



York County farm owners have submitted during in 2019, 45 applications, covering nearly 3,000 acres for farmland preservation. Funding for the 2019 Farmland Preservation Program was kicked off with the York County Board of Commissioners January 16, 2019 approval of \$ 277,320 for the 2019 Farmland Preservation Allocation. The PDA-Bureau of Farmland Preservation responded with a \$ 1.4 Million match to York's County allocation. The Board hopes to select another 600 to 650 acres of farmland for preservation in 2019.

Farmland Preservation in York County today can be accomplished through the sale of an agricultural conservation easement through the County Ag Land Preservation Board, or, through a conservation easement donation to the Farm and Natural Lands Trust. The County Ag Land Preservation Board selected 618 acres for preservation in 2018. York County's Ag Conservation Easement Purchase Program continues to rank third in the state for acres of farmland preserved. Landowners interested in preserving their farmland may contact the agency at (717) 840-7400, or visit www.YorkCountyPA.gov . Useful Links and a Preservation Map now show all preserved farms within the county. YCALPB Office Hours are 8 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. We are located in the County Annex Building at 118 Pleasant Acres Road, York, PA 17402 BUT STAY TUNED for our move in 2019 to Pleasant Valley Road, the former Graham Building.