

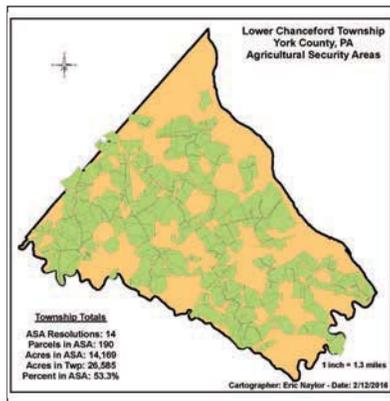
The York County Ag Preservation Program

Patty McCandless, Program Director
118 Pleasant Acres Road, Suite F
York PA 17402

717-840-7400 / Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm



York County landowners continue to amaze York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (YCALPB) and staff with requests to preserve the family farm. The YCALP Office held a public information meeting on November 19, 2015. The meeting was well attended by interested farm owners seeking land preservation information. Eligibility requirements, easement restrictions, and the selection process of lands for preservation were discussed. Conservation agency partners provided current conservation planning rules and regulation information as well as the benefits of implementing a conservation plan on the farm operation. The YCALPB's appraiser, Agrarian Associates, was also on hand to discuss the method used when valuing the conservation easement for purchase by County and State Government. Following the November 2015 public meeting, 33 easement applications on 3,144 acres, were received for the 2016 application round. The YCALPB removed application deadlines so additional applications may be submitted throughout the year. Qualifying applications will be selected and appraised as 2016 funding permits. The York County Board of Commissioners recently approved the allocation of \$ 221,309 for 2016 county funding for easement purchases. The County awaits the State Match to be released following a February 18, 2016 PA Ag Land Preservation Review Board Meeting.



With the passage of Act 149, the Farmland Preservation Act, amending the Ag Security Area Law, County governments are permitted to preserve farmland through the purchase of agricultural conservation easements (ACE). ACE's provide the right to say no to development through a permanent deed restriction on the farm deed. Zoning may not change the use of preserved lands, as ACE is a perpetual deed covenant. Since York County's ACE Purchase Program approval on August 15, 1990, the county has protected 273 farms covering 40,987 acres, placing York 3rd of 57 counties preserving lands in PA. The ACE program has created permanent farming neighborhoods across the County devoted entirely to commercial agricultural production. Farmers in these regions have confidence their farm operations may operate with little to no conflicting uses next door and their farm capital improvements are safe investments.

The YCALP Office additionally conducts annual reviews of lands voluntarily enrolled by landowners into Municipal Ag Security Areas, under the provisions of the Agricultural Area Security Act of 1981 (Act 43). The benefits include; the protection from municipal nuisance ordinance which may unreasonably restrict normal farming practices; protection from eminent domain or condemnation relating to state funded projects; disqualification from siting low level radioactive waste facilities; and finally ASA enrollment is a requirement for easement purchase by the county or state. Since 1990, the YCALP Office has compiled extensive records of municipal Ag Security Area lands. A recent comprehensive review of ASA's, resulted in the compilation of 329 Agricultural Security Area Resolutions. Since Hellam Township's November 1987 ASA Resolution, 40 York County municipalities have created and today maintain lands enrolled in ASA's. YCALP staff and municipal officials have conducted reviews of over 64% of the parcel data to ensure accuracy. Reviews include 2,800 of the total 4,400 parcels currently enrolled in ASA's in the County. The YCALPB and staff would like to extend appreciation to the municipalities who have assisted with this on-going cooperative effort. How we use our land affects all of us. Land uses influence population distribution, where people live, work, play, shop, and go to school. So naturally real estate taxes, school taxes, and the cost of public services will follow the human footprint across the landscape. Careful and thoughtful land use planning is critical to the best use of our limited lands and is key to communities remaining livable, enjoyable, and affordable for all York residents. As we plan for the places where we live, work and play, we must not overlook planning for the lands which feed us.

Landowners interested in preserving their farmland may contact the agency at (717) 840-7400 or www.YorkCountyPA.gov. Useful Links and a Preservation Map now show all preserved farms within the county. See if any preserved farms are near you. Funding for land preservation efforts comes from sources such as; Clean & Green penalties, York General Fund, Marcellus Shale funds, Growing Greener funds, and state and federal sources. York County Ag Land Preservation 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.