

## The York County Ag Preservation Program

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The ability to adapt and change is a quality long admired in Americans. And so change has also come to the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board with regard to land preservation options. **With the change in our economy, decreases in preservation funding levels, and changes in landowner requests, the birth of yet another option is born for York County landowner's looking for preservation options.**

**During the Summer of 2012, the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, began the work to develop a program which would allow interested landowners the ability to donate a conservation easement, to the County of York.** This new option developed when a family wishing to preserve their farm discovered their land did not qualify for the traditional County –State Easement Purchase Program, under the provisions of Act 43, Agricultural Area Security Law of 1981. The easement purchase program, authorized by the York County Board of Commissioner's in 1990, has preserved 246 farms, covering 38,400 acres since program establishment.

These lands must meet strict State eligibility requirements and are selected by a ranking system. Unfortunately every year certain farms which do not qualify, remain unpreserved. Donation has always been an option for these landowners through the Farm and Natural Lands Trust. The York County Ag Land Preservation Board has partnered with the Trust in preserving entire farms through a blend of easement purchase with easement donation. **Today, landowners may now make that donation directly to the County of York through the new easement donation language developed by the York County Ag Land Preservation Board.**

For preservation minded landowners, willing to donate an easement, the donation option may meet their needs. **Landowners seeking to donate an easement, must offer farms which are consistent with their townships municipal land use plans.**

### For example:

- Be located outside of an Established Growth Area,
- Be zoned for agriculture or conservation
- Be enrolled in the local Ag Security Area, and be 10 acres in size or greater.
- The tracts must be enrolled in the Clean & Green Program and also have a soil and water conservation plan. The tract may include croplands, haylands, grazing lands, stream and wetland areas, or woodlands, or any combination of these land uses.

**Through either a sale or donation of the agricultural conservation easement right, owners can be assured their lands will survive for generations** to farm, or simply preserve for environmental or societal purposes.

**For more information** about the York County Land Preservation Programs, please contact the York County Ag Land Preservation Board at (717) 840-7400, or, please visit our website a [www.yorkcountypa.gov](http://www.yorkcountypa.gov). - Patty McCandless, Director