



# **AGRICULTURE IN YOUR TOWNSHIP**

2023 Municipal Workshop – Jennifer Lauri Agricultural Conservation Technician





# AGRICULTURE IN YOUR TOWNSHIP

- State requirements for agriculture
  - Farmland Preservation
- Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs)







# **STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR AGRICULTURE**

**Manure Management Plan**

**Agriculture Erosion &  
Sedimentation Control Plan**





Section 1 - General Information. This section includes general information about the farm. **This section is always required in a manure management plan.**

Section 2 - Mechanical Manure Application Rate and Timing. This section documents manure application rates and timing for mechanical application of manure. **This section is always required in a manure management plan.**

Section 3 - Farm Map. This section provides a farm map identifying the location of fields, structures, environmentally sensitive areas and manure application setbacks. **This section is always required in a manure management plan.**

Section 4 - Recordkeeping. This section provides a description of required recordkeeping and provides forms that can be used for recordkeeping. **This section is always required in a manure management plan.**

Section 5 - Managing Manure Storage in Structures and Stockpiling/Stacking Areas. **This section is only necessary if the farm has a manure storage facility or stockpiles or stacks manure.**

Section 6 - Pasture Management. This section is **only necessary if the farm has one or more pasture fields.**

Section 7 - Animal Concentration Areas. **This section is only necessary if the farm has one or more ACAs (such as barnyards, feedlots, animal exercise areas).**

# MANURE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Required under PA Code Chapter 91.36
  - Each municipality may have their own ordinances/guidelines regarding agriculture
- Required by every agricultural operation
  - Levels of plan determined by size of operation
    - Less than 2 AEU/acre
    - CAO – Concentrated Animal Operation, CAFO – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
      - >1,000 AEUs combined
      - CAO with >300 AEUs combined
- Developed by
- Contents of the plan will include
- Chesapeake Bay Reboot Strategy
  - Watershed inspections



# AGRICULTURE EROSION & SEDIMENTATION CONTROL PLAN (AG E&S PLAN)

- Pennsylvania's Chapter 102 (Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management)
  - All farms required to develop and implement a written plan to reduce erosion
  - Required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Plan required for:

5,000 square feet

- ✓ Tillage
  - ✓ Including no-till
  - ✓ Animal Heavy Use Areas (AHUA)
  - ✓ Stream areas
- Developed by





# FARMLAND PRESERVATION

[About](#) | [Eligibility](#) | [Application](#) | [Evaluation & Ranking](#)





# ABOUT



- Luzerne County covers an area of approximately 565,300 acres or 886 square miles. About 9.4% of this land is farmland 69% is woodland. Farm and forest land give Luzerne County its scenic character and link the present to the County's agricultural past. As farmland is lost, the County loses a major asset that contributes to the region's quality of life.
- Farmers are faced with increasing competition for land. Industrial, commercial, governmental, and residential plans are presented to local officials almost daily.
- Luzerne Conservation District records show that over 3,200 acres in our County have had their land use changed to urban use since 1996, this doesn't even include single private residential lots.





- It is the purpose of the Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Program to protect and promote the continued agricultural use of valuable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements, which prevent the development or improvement of the land for any purpose other than agricultural productions and related agricultural activities.





# LUZERNE COUNTY

- First farm preserved – July 9, 2001 located in Bulter Township. The farm consisted of 76.0 acres
- To date: Thirty-eight farms, totaling 4,006.5 acres have been preserved in Luzerne County.







## ELIGIBILITY

- Farmland tract must be located in a recorded Agricultural Security Area
- Contiguous acreage of at least 50 acres in size or
  - Contiguous acreage of at least 10 acres in size and utilized for a crop unique to the area or
    - Contiguous acreage of at least 10 acres in size and contiguous to a property which has a perpetual conservation easement in place
- Contain the greater of 50% or 10 acres of harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land.
- Contain at least 50% of soils, which are available for agricultural production and are of capability classes I through IV.





# APPLICATION

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**Apply to the Luzerne County Farmland Preservation Board by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year**



**Application consists of: application form, locational maps, a soil report, a copy of the parcel's deed, and a crop/livestock report**

\$25.00 filing fee



**An approved Conservation Plan, a Woodland Management Plan, and Nutrient Management Plan, if applicable are required at or before closing**





# EVALUATION & RANKING

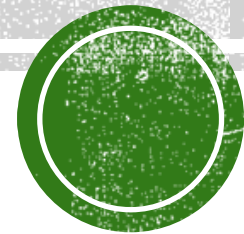
- The ranking system consists of Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA)
  - Land evaluation is based on soils data . Each soil has been assigned a relative value.
  - Site assessment consists of factors that relate to the viability of the site for present and future agricultural use. Development Potential, Farmland Potential, Clustering Potential
- To determine the total point value of a given farm, the point values for Site Assessment and Land Evaluation are added together to produce a Total Score.
- A farm's total score is then added to the waitlist with the other farms that have applied.
- Currently Luzerne County has 21 farms on the waitlist.





# AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREA

What is an ASA  
Criteria  
Enrolling a farm  
Responsibility of the Municipality





# AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREA (ASA)

## What is an ASA

- Designation of productive farmland within a municipality
- A unit of 250 or more acres of land within a municipality used for the agricultural production of crops, livestock and livestock products
- Tool for strengthening and protecting agriculture in Pennsylvania
- Voluntary program
  - Renewal every 7 years



## Benefits of an ASA

- Promote more permanent and viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm.
- Farmland Preservation Program
- Protection against ordinances that unreasonably restrict normal farming activities

Provides protection against eminent domain







## CRITERIA

- Noncontiguous farm parcels comprised of 10 acres or more in size or have an annual gross income of \$2,000.00 from agricultural production.
- The property must be viable agricultural land. Cropland, pastureland, and woodland can all be included in an ASA.
- Land proposed must have soils that are conducive to agriculture or soil is currently in active farm use and maintained in accordance with a soils erosion and sedimentation plan.
- Property must be zoned to permit agricultural uses, but does not need to be zoned to exclude other uses.





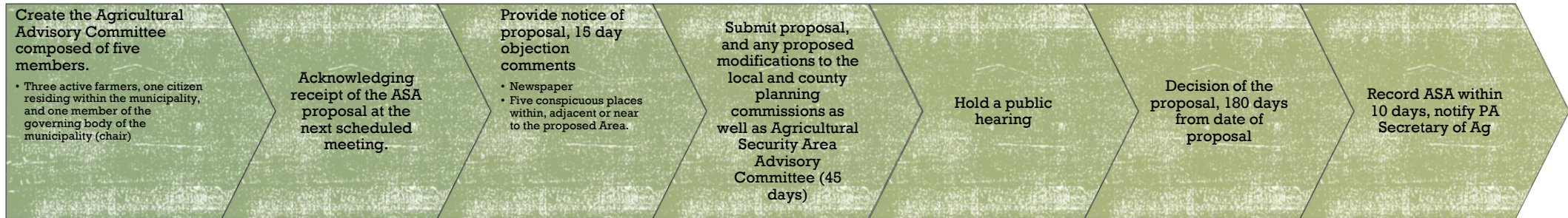
# ENROLLING A FARM TO AN EXISTING ASA

Owner of land used for ag production may submit a proposal to the governing body for the addition the land to an existing ASA.

Certified mail to the municipality







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# RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MUNICIPALITY





# REVIEW OF ASA

- **Seven year review – Occurs 7 years from the date of creation and every 7 years thereafter**
  - Notice if required 30 days prior to the commencement of the review
    - Publish in the newspaper
    - Post in 5 conspicuous places in ASA
- **Interim review – May occur at any time, if 10% or more of the land within the ASA is converted to non-agricultural uses.**
  - **Governing body shall request to ag advisory committee and planning commission that the ASA be reviewed.**
  - **30 days after receiving original request, written recommendations are received from the advisory bodies.**
  - **Public hearing, 45 days after initial request.**







- **Pennsylvania**

- 65 out of 67 counties participate
- 997 townships have established ASAs
- 4 million acres enrolled

- **Luzerne County**

- 12 townships participate
- Black Creek, Butler, Dorrance, Fairmount, Franklin, Hollenback, Huntington, Jackson, Nescopeck, Ross, Sugarloaf, Union







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