

The Value of Pennsylvania Agriculture

Agriculture is Pennsylvania's #1 industry and annually contributes 4.5 billion to PA's economy. Advances in modern agriculture enable farmers across our country to provide safe and nutritious food at affordable prices. PA agricultural production includes livestock and grain production. It also includes mushroom production, forestry, aquaculture, fruits, vegetables, bees and honey, maple syrup and more. Producers of all these commodities follow detailed rules and regulations in an effort to protect the environment and water quality.

Pennsylvania's Right to Farm Act

The Pennsylvania Right to Farm Act protects our valuable agricultural industry. The Act protects many farm practices that may lead to conflict with neighbors. These normal practices include, but are not limited to:

- odor from livestock and poultry
- odor from land application of manure
- agricultural vehicle traffic
- mushroom production

For more information on the Right to Farm Act and other rules protecting agriculture, visit www.dsl.psu.edu/centers/.

Things to Keep in Mind Before Moving

Living in the country involves new sights, sounds and odors, and may not include services or conveniences found in more urban areas.

- **Manure/Pesticides/Chemical Fertilizers-** These are typically applied on farm fields in controlled rates to maximize crop yields.
- **Odor-** Odors can be generated from animal housing facilities, manure storages and land applications of manure.
- **Dust/Flies-** Dust arises from fields and farm lanes. Flies may be present.
- **Slow moving vehicles-** Farm equipment is large and cannot drive fast. We all must share the roads, even during "rush" hour.
- **Modern Buildings-** Animals are often raised in modern, metal barns that protect animals from predators and airborne disease, and provide efficient ways to feed and care for the animals.
- **Private Wells-** In rural areas, you may have a private well on your property for drinking water. Be careful not to contaminate it.
- **Septic System-** Rural housing may not include public sewer. Many landowners have private septic systems and drainfields which require periodic maintenance.
- **Noise-** Each year, farmers have a narrow window in which to plant and harvest. Agricultural production can take place 24 hours/day.
- **Local Government Structure-** In PA, land use and zoning are determined in a local township or borough, run by elected officials. Smaller municipalities may not have full-time police coverage or office staffing.

Animal Manure-- A Valuable Resource

Animal manure is a valuable organic fertilizer resource to Pennsylvania farmers, not a waste product. Application of manure to cropland is an integral aspect of agricultural production. Odors resulting from manure application are an acceptable and normal agricultural practice.



What Can Rural Neighbors Do to Keep Agriculture Viable

- *Communicate* with your neighboring farmer. If you have a special event planned, coordinate with the farmer to see if he/she can refrain from manure application at that time.
- *Refrain from unwarranted complaints* to local, state and federal governments about normal and acceptable agricultural practices.
- *Refrain from filing lawsuits* aimed at curtailing farming practices.
- In order to avoid damaging crops and/or disrupting farming operations, *always receive permission* from farmers before entering their property.
- *Never use a farmer's fields as a dumping ground* for grass clippings, leaves, household chemicals, containers, old tools, etc.
- *Do not ride ATVs or dirtbikes* on farmers' fields. Even if the field looks empty, most farmers have crops growing year-round.
- *Always ask permission before entering livestock barns.* Most facilities are "biosecure". Without following proper protocol, your presence could threaten the health of the animals.

If you are thinking
about moving to
the country,



you might want to
consider this...

The PA Agricultural Ombudsman Program offers statewide liaison services to communities for conflict management on issues affecting agriculture, land use, environment and planning.

Please contact:

Lancaster Co. Conservation District
1383 Arcadia Road Rm. 200
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-299-5361, ext. 5

or

Blair Co. Conservation District
1407 Blair Street
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
814-696-0877, ext. 5

Does congested traffic, noise and the hassles at your current residence make



you want to move?
Does the thought of clean fresh air and country stillness make you dream about owning a

home next to farmland? Do you envision moving to the country to be surrounded by natural scenery and panoramic views?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you should reflect on the realities of living in the country.

