

Are You Interested In Passing Your Farm onto Future Generations?

This program is completely voluntary. While selling your conservation easement is one option, at anytime you can also donate your development rights to the County and insure that your farm will remain protected and in production well beyond your years. For information please see the contact information on the back of this brochure.



Preserving farmland assures that there will be a next generation of farmers.



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Agricultural Land Preservation Program of Cambria County

***Our Purpose: Is to protect
viable agricultural lands by
acquiring agricultural conservation
easements which prevent
the development or improvement
of the land for any purpose
other than agricultural
production***



Easement Purchase Program:

According to the American Farmland Trust, the U.S. is losing **two acres** of farmland **every minute**.

Reasons why farmland should be preserved:

- Cambria County's #1 industry is Agriculture
- Cambria County is generally the largest producer of potatoes and oats in Pennsylvania
- Provides wildlife habitat, recharges groundwater, and slows stormwater runoff
- Ensures that high quality farmland will remain intact for future generations
- Buying locally produced food is economical and environmentally friendly
- Keeps property taxes low-for every dollar a farm family pays only 33 cents worth of government services are used
- Adds to aesthetic appeal and increases scenic visitors

The Farmland Preservation Program was established in order to preserve the integrity of Pennsylvania Agriculture and combat the loss of high quality farmland to development and the loss of the agricultural economy and way of life. The Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Program began in 1988 under an amendment to the Agricultural Area Security Law.

The first easement was purchased to preserve a Pennsylvania farm in December 1989. As of 2011 over 450,000 acres have been preserved in Pennsylvania on over 4,100 farms. Farmland Preservation is an **Easement Purchase Program** in which the County and State government purchase the easement (development rights) from the owners of quality farmland.

In Cambria County approximately 1,774 acres have been preserved on 13 farms. Easement purchase prices have ranged between \$800 to \$1300 per acre.

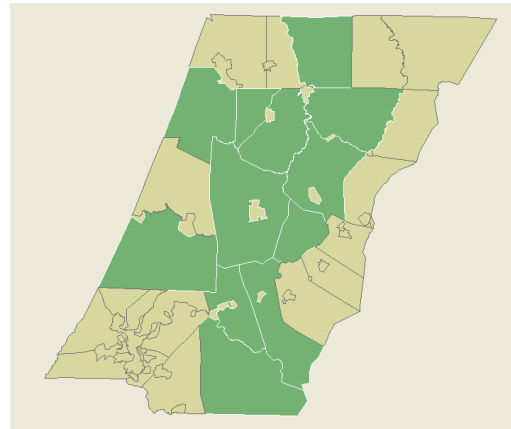
Agricultural Security Areas:

In order to preserve a farm it must be enrolled in the Agricultural Security Area program. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm. Currently 65 of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania have Agricultural Security Areas in place. Participating farmers are entitled to special consideration from local and state government agencies: e.g. local ordinances affecting farming activities and nuisance complaints, review of farmland condemnation by state and local agencies, review of state funded development projects.

Ag Security Areas are:

- Initiated by a petition of farm landowners
- Petition submitted by certified mail
- Minimum area of 250 total acres (500 acres to be eligible for Farmland Preservation)
- May include non-adjacent farmland parcels
- Township or borough level program
- Have a seven year lifetime, then reviewed
- Parcels may be added during seven year period
- Participation by landowners is voluntary

Townships with established Ag. Security Areas are denoted in dark green below



How to get involved:

The Cambria County Agricultural Land Preservation Program Board of Directors call for applications on a yearly basis (depending on the amount of allocation funds available to preserve a farm that year). Notices for applications are placed in local papers and information is always available at the Conservation District Office (see contact info on back panel of brochure). Farm owners complete the application provided and the District computes a ranking score. Generally, due to the limit of funding only the top-ranking farm is selected for easement purchase.

The following are minimum criteria to qualify:

- Must be enrolled in an Agricultural Security Area.
- Contiguous acreage of at least 35 acres in size or at least 10 acres that are contiguous to a property that already has a perpetual conservation easement in place
- 50% of soils must fall into soils capability classes I-IV
- The farmland tract must contain 50% harvested cropland, hayland, or pasture.
- Mineral rights must be made known. i.e.: owning mineral rights, deep mining only rights, or a quitclaim release for surface mining rights are necessary to qualify.

Ranking system is based on:

- Soil Type
- Developmental potential
- Clustering potential
- Farmland potential

