

# Agriculture

## Agricultural preservation

**T**he Association believes that the agricultural resources of Pennsylvania's communities are essential to our economic vitality and quality of life. Agricultural enterprises use and conserve renewable natural resources and open space, and their continued presence maintains Pennsylvania's rural culture, lifestyles, and traditional economy.

The Association believes that the preservation of agriculture and prime agricultural land is a wise investment in the future of the commonwealth. Economic opportunity, environmental protection, community infrastructure, and quality of life are among the most compelling reasons to preserve farms and farmland. Agricultural preservation is an investment in community infrastructure.

## Agricultural operations

The Association recognizes the vital role agriculture plays in the economic and social vitality of the commonwealth. We also recognize that global competition, technology, increased regulation, and declining profits are changing the nature of farming and agriculture. Advanced farms can often provide traditional farms with an additional and predictable source of income and reduction of risk and also serve as a farmland preservation tool.

The industry must recognize its relationship to local government and the communities in which they operate. Current methods of raising livestock and poultry frequently concentrate animals inside buildings or feedlots. As production agriculture continues to evolve toward fewer farms with more animals on

fewer acres and as citizens continue to move to rural areas, the potential for conflict will increase.

The agriculture industry, local officials, and citizens must be willing to enter into a dialogue over concerns raised by agricultural operations, and all agricultural producers need to know and understand their obligations under regulatory programs.

In Pennsylvania, state and federal law and regulation govern many aspects of an agricultural operation. However, the authority for determining land use in Pennsylvania resides at the municipal level. Because land use decisions are made at the local level in Pennsylvania, the siting of a livestock operation in a community is frequently a major local concern. The Association recognizes that agricultural activities are an appropriate land use.

PSATS recommends that township officials be included in the discussion of any legislation the General Assembly may consider on the siting and operation of agricultural activities.

## Concentrated animal feeding operations

The Association recognizes that concentrated animal feeding operations are a legitimate farming activity. However, to protect the health and safety of the community and the integrity of the environment, these operations must meet the requirements of all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Also, PSATS supports the authority of local government to adopt reasonable siting regulations for these operations. ❖

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PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

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