



**Customer Focus**

*When he retired from professional baseball, Gene Garber was happy to bring his family back to the farm life he had grown up with in Pennsylvania. What he found was that life had changed. Gene didn't accept that change. He has acquired and protected 4 farms through the Lancaster Farmland Trust and purchased a 5th farm that was already preserved through the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board, of which he is now chairman.*

*Gene's 405 acres are part of a 14,047 acre block of prime farmland that is preserved in the adjoining townships of Donegal, East Donegal, and Canoy.*

*Growing corn and soybeans, Gene has worked with the NRCS to develop a conservation plan for his farms. He has reinstalled contour strips where the previous farmer had removed them for convenience. Grassed waterways have reduced erosion from the fields and provide turn areas for his equipment. A crop rotation schedule allows the soil time to rejuvenate.*

*"I wanted to make sure there was something there for the future," Garber said when asked why he adopted conservation practices. "And I wanted to make sure the good soil in this area continued to be available for farming," he added.*

## Farmland Protection Program Pennsylvania Summary

**Overview** The USDA Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS provides up to 50% of the easement cost to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. Proposals were accepted in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

**Accomplishments** Pennsylvania leads the nation with conservation easements on 1,640 farms for 198,811 acres of preserved land. Since the FPP was established in 1996, FPP has assisted Pennsylvania's state and local programs protect 71 farms, with a total of 13,256 acres, using \$3,908,800 in Federal funds. In FY 2001, \$638,800 will go to Pennsylvania landowners to protect up to 1,983 acres on approximately 14 different parcels of land. Applications for funding were received in each of the four years that funds were available, with a cumulative backlog request total of \$15,908,572. Proposals are selected through a competitive process to protect the most strategic farms that will help accomplish FPP and local land use goals. The easements also protect entire working farms, woodlands, wetlands, important natural areas, and cultural resources.

**Outlook** While NRCS has only provided \$4 million of the \$406.7 million used to buy easements for farmland preservation in Pennsylvania, NRCS does provide conservation planning assistance to landowners participating in all preservation programs. Much work remains to be done. Pennsylvania currently has a waiting list of 1,500 farms over 150,000 acres. Preserving this land alone would require \$300 million for easements and an estimated 37,500 hours of conservation planning assistance for the future of agriculture and open space for our communities. Because of the increasing

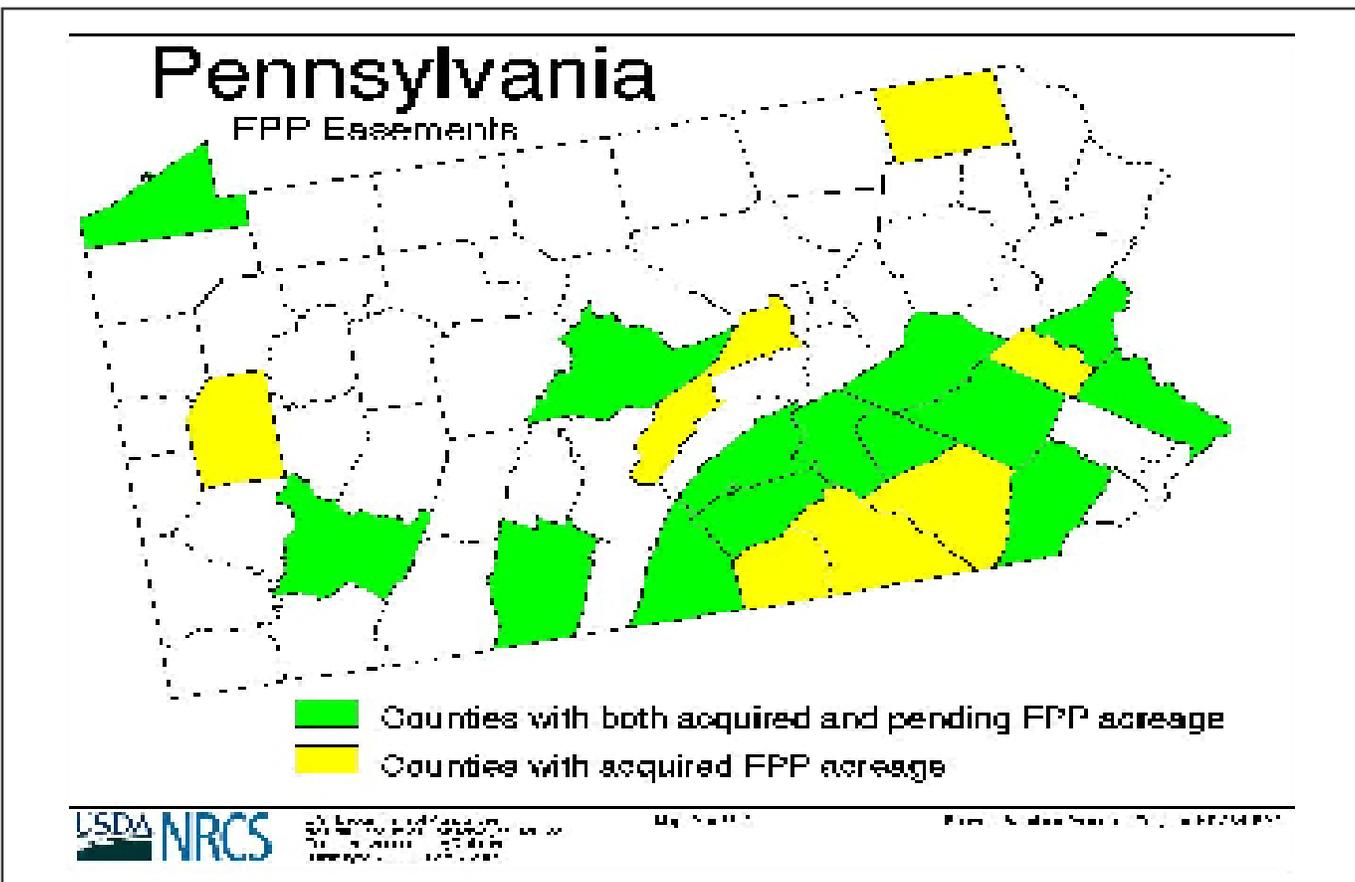
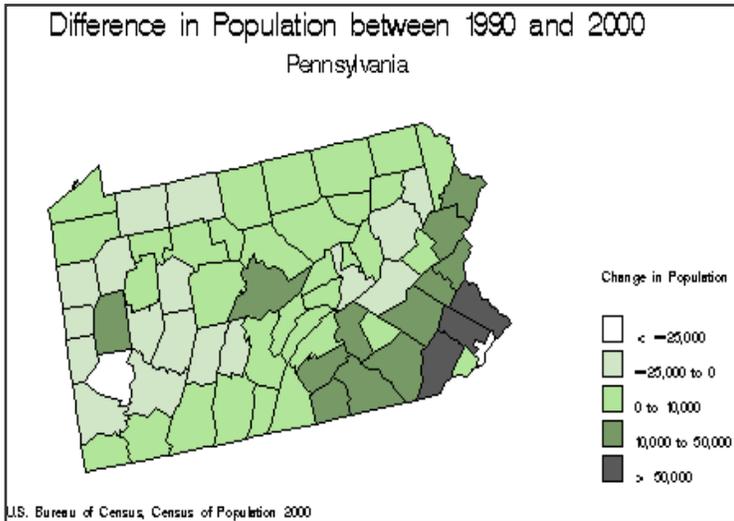
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*Pennsylvania Farmland  
Photo by: Bob Nichols, NRCS,  
2000*

**Farmland Protection Program  
Pennsylvania Easements (As of December 2001)**

County	Acres	Easement Cost		Federal Payment	
		Total (\$)	Average (\$/acre)	\$	%
Adams	390	\$ 579,086	\$ 1,485	\$ 100,000	17%
Bedford	586	\$ 408,000	\$ 696	\$ 84,000	21%
Berks	623	\$ 1,618,600	\$ 2,598	\$ 320,300	20%
Bucks	665	\$ 5,740,060	\$ 8,632	\$ 257,000	4%
Butler	134	\$ 180,000	\$ 1,343	\$ 48,000	27%
Centre	235	\$ 492,314	\$ 2,095	\$ 83,000	17%
Chester	1,248	\$ 4,268,665	\$ 3,420	\$ 691,072	16%
Cumberland	525	\$ 1,074,887	\$ 2,047	\$ 92,000	9%
Dauphin	343	\$ 434,830	\$ 1,268	\$ 106,100	24%
Erie	855	\$ 1,630,001	\$ 1,906	\$ 235,000	14%
Franklin	885	\$ 1,103,483	\$ 1,247	\$ 153,000	14%
Lancaster	619	\$ 1,293,787	\$ 2,091	\$ 377,947	29%
Lebanon	553	\$ 926,805	\$ 1,676	\$ 179,700	19%
Lehigh	151	\$ 453,284	\$ 3,002	\$ 123,000	27%
Mifflin	174	\$ 95,650	\$ 550	\$ 23,912	25%
Northampton	773	\$ 2,173,984	\$ 2,812	\$ 261,084	12%
Perry	543	\$ 432,220	\$ 796	\$ 99,700	23%
Schuylkill	388	\$ 388,366	\$ 1,001	\$ 85,625	22%
Susquehanna	457	\$ 273,936	\$ 599	\$ 68,484	25%
Union	212	\$ 213,891	\$ 1,009	\$ 61,776	29%
Westmoreland	580	\$ 1,405,385	\$ 2,423	\$ 98,200	7%
York	2,671	\$ 3,605,149	\$ 1,350	\$ 360,000	10%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,610</b>	<b>\$28,792,383</b>	<b>\$ 2,116</b>	<b>\$3,908,900</b>	<b>14%</b>



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