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Secretary of Agriculture to Travel Pennsylvania, Tour Urban Gardens Building Resilient Communities

Lancaster, PA – This week, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding will travel the commonwealth to visit 11 urban farms and ag operations in the cities of Reading, Lancaster, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. At these and many more urban agriculture sites across the commonwealth, Pennsylvanians are coming together to tackle both local and global challenges like climate change, food insecurity, and poor health associated with a lack of access to nutritious foods.

“Food production in our urban spaces – from rooftops or vacant lots, to vertical or indoor farming – plays a critical role in advancing food and nutritional security, while also working to effectively dismantle the hold of systemic discrimination that has created cases of the ‘haves and have-nots’ for low-income communities whose residents are predominantly Black and people of color,” said Redding. “This week, we’ll meet the people who have recognized need in their communities and leapt into action to grow food and opportunities, to nourish people and neighborhoods, and cultivate resilience for the future.”

Over the past two years, the Wolf Administration has invested \$1 million in urban agriculture through the Pennsylvania Farm Bill’s Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Program. That \$1 million investment has leveraged an additional \$1 million in local investments through matching dollars. In total, 70 projects have been funded in 16 counties across the state. ([2019-20 funded](#), [2020-21 funded](#))

“Lack of access to food, especially nutritious food, is much more than an inconvenience: it is detrimental to the health and well-being of families, and to entire communities,” said First Lady Frances Wolf. “Urban agriculture and infrastructure projects - like the ones we are highlighting during Urban Ag Week – are crucial in attacking the root of this very issue. They are thoughtful in addressing food access and insecurity, and they can ensure a healthier future for generations to come.”

This week’s tours are during Pennsylvania’s fourth annual Urban Agriculture Week. The designation of Urban Agriculture Week in PA [began in 2018](#) in recognition of the invaluable contributions of urban agriculture to their communities, one year before Governor Tom Wolf signed into law the Pennsylvania Farm Bill which created the [Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program](#) which invests \$500,000 annually into projects that address urban food insecurity and increase access to fresh, nutritious foods for communities affected by apartheid.

Joining Redding at various stops along the way will be First Lady Wolf, members of the legislature including House and Senate Agriculture Committee members, and leaders and commissioners from the Governor’s Commissions for Women, Latino Affairs, LGBTQ Affairs, African American Affairs, and Asian Pacific American Affairs.

"We often think of large farms in rural areas when we are talking about agriculture, but through the creativity and ingenuity of Pennsylvania farmers, our cities are becoming productive and profitable locations for high quality fruits, vegetables and value-added food products," said state Senator Judy Schwank, Democratic chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. "Urban Ag has huge potential in the commonwealth, and I believe it can help mitigate food insecurity and have a positive impact on climate by reducing the distance food travels to reach our tables. It's exciting to see our cities becoming virtual garden spots and I hope we continue to help them grow."

Tour dates and locations include:

- Monday, July 19: Goggle Works in Reading along with Treasures of Hope Foundation and DECA City Farms in Lancaster
- Tuesday, July 20: Garden Dreams, Hilltop Urban Farm, Freeman Family Farm, and Sankofa Village Community Garden in Pittsburgh
- Thursday, July 22: Pinwheel Group, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, Philadelphia Orchard Project, and the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition's Growing Home Gardens in Philadelphia

"No matter who you are or where you live, if there's food on your table thank a farmer," said state Representative Eddie Day Pashinski, Democratic chair of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. "Pennsylvania Urban Ag Week is a time to highlight the diverse growers and producers providing quality locally grown food in our urban areas. It's also a chance to emphasize how the Historic Pa Farm Bill and Pa Department of Agriculture have awarded \$1 million to support our urban farmers in just the past two years – including our very own Earth Conservancy's Community Garden in Ashley, PA."

To learn more about the Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Program that's growing and nourishing Pennsylvania's cities, visit agriculture.pa.gov/pafarmbill.

Note: Photo and video of the tours will be available at PACast.com.

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