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## **Gov. Wolf Celebrates Unwavering Commitment to Pennsylvania Agriculture, PA Farm Bill Investments Surpass \$76 Million**

**State College, PA** – Governor Tom Wolf and Agriculture Secretary Redding today were surrounded by recipients of a diversity of PA Farm Bill grant program funding to highlight the Wolf Administration’s unwavering support for Pennsylvania’s \$132.5 billion agriculture industry. The PA Farm Bill celebration was held at the 150-year old Hess Farm in State College.

“Agriculture is the backbone of Pennsylvania’s economy. When farmers succeed, we all succeed,” said Gov. Wolf. “I created the Pennsylvania Farm Bill to support the future success of agriculture in the commonwealth, to remove barriers to entry for first generation agriculturalists, to grow infrastructure for improved food security, to support the sustainability of our farms, and invest in opportunities for the next generation of agricultural leaders.

“I’m proud of how the PA Farm Bill has touched the lives of so many Pennsylvanians and supported a new, necessary diversity in agriculture. May it continue to grow and prosper, because of these seeds we’ve planted today,” added Gov. Wolf.

In July 2019, Gov. Wolf signed the historic PA Farm Bill, a first-of-its kind program in the nation, to support the long-term prosperity of Pennsylvania agriculture. Acknowledging that agriculture is vital to supporting everyday life and Pennsylvania’s economy, Gov. Wolf has prioritized support for the industry since he first took office. In January 2018, the Wolf Administration released the [first-ever economic impact report](#) for Pennsylvania agriculture. Gov. Wolf used the information released in that report to write a [six-point plan](#) for Pennsylvania agriculture that led to the proposal and funding of the [PA Farm Bill](#). In 2021, a [new economic impact report](#) was released that revealed a \$132.5 billion economic impact and an industry that supports more than 590,000 jobs paying nearly \$33 billion in wages annually.

“As we celebrate the anniversary of the PA Farm Bill, we are reminded of how we arrive to this point,” said Sec. Redding. “Together, Gov. Wolf and the General Assembly recognized the value of investing strategically in the long-term prosperity of Pennsylvania agriculture. This legislation has since supported more than \$76 million in investments to grow the commonwealth’s agriculture, food, and fiber industries.

“Over the last four years, I’ve had the opportunity to travel the commonwealth and meet the faces of those impacted by the PA Farm Bill. It is both urban and rural; it is multigenerational farm families and youth learning how to grow fresh foods and give back to their communities; it’s first-generation farmers and urban agriculturalists addressing food access and equity, and so much more. The PA Farm Bill embodies the spirit of Pennsylvania agriculture, and its legacy and impact will benefit the industry for generations to come.”

Since its inception, the PA Farm Bill has invested nearly \$76 million in [hundreds of programs and farmers](#) across the commonwealth.

The Hess Farm, which holds farmstead status with the National Historic Register, is owned by Jeff and Cindy Harding who look to pass their beef farm onto their five children with support from a \$7,500 PA Farm Bill [Farm Vitality Grant](#).

The PA Farm Bill provides diverse support for Pennsylvania agriculture in six categories:

- Resources for agricultural business development and succession planning
- Building a stronger agriculture workforce
- Removing regulatory burdens and strengthening on-farm sustainability
- Increasing processing capabilities and capacity
- Creating new market opportunities and investing in organic agriculture
- Preparing Pennsylvania agriculture for quick response to disasters

At its heart, the PA Farm Bill works to support a strong future workforce for agriculture. At one point, it was estimated that Pennsylvania agriculture would face a worker deficit of 75,000 as individuals retire and new, technology-based positions become available. Programs like [Ag & Youth](#), [Farm to School](#), [Beginning Farmer Tax Credits](#), and [Farm Vitality](#) were designed to address this workforce shortage and secure a stronger future for the industry. In fall 2020, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistic Service released data noting that with 12,598 producers under age 35, Pennsylvania now has the highest percentage of young producers in the nation.

“The PA Farm Bill is a win for Pennsylvania agriculture,” said Pennsylvania FFA National Officer Candidate Jessica Herr. “It provides a seat at the table for both the generational farmer with a deep heritage in the industry and the beginner farmer who has a passion for sustainable agriculture. Both perspectives are wildly valuable – and that is something worth celebrating today.”

Throughout the Wolf Administration, Pennsylvania has laid a strong base of policy and investments to support agricultural prosperity for years to come.

For more on the Wolf Administration’s work to strengthen Pennsylvania agriculture visit [agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov).

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