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Wolf Administration Launches Tour Highlighting How Food Fuels Pennsylvania, Powers Jobs, Innovation and Economy

Peach Glen, PA – Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Department of Community and Economic Development Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko today highlighted Pennsylvania’s agriculture and food manufacturing industry at Knouse Foods, kicking off the *Food that Fuels Pennsylvania* tour, a plan to spotlight the commonwealth’s agriculture and food manufacturing industry and its workforce.

“Food fuels Pennsylvania. And food is powered by innovative farmers and food processors who have been and always will be essential,” said Secretary Redding. “From jobs, to the economy, and our families at home, food fuels us all. It is a commonality that brings everyone to the table all thanks to farmers and food manufacturers who feed the commonwealth and the world.”

Pennsylvania agriculture is a \$132.5 billion industry that supports nearly 53,000 farms and more than 593,000 jobs each year. Food manufacturing is one of the largest sectors of the commonwealth’s agriculture industry, supporting 140,000 jobs and contributing \$22.4 billion to the state’s economy annually.

Since taking office in 2015, Governor Tom Wolf has prioritized the success of Pennsylvania agriculture. In his first three years in office, Wolf invested more than \$50 million in grants, loans, and tax credits to help farmers expand their operations, upgrade their equipment, install conservation practices, and preserve their farms. Then in 2018, Wolf commissioned the first all-inclusive [economic impact report for Pennsylvania agriculture](#), through Team Pennsylvania, which he used to write a [six-point plan](#) for Pennsylvania agriculture that led to the proposal and funding of the first-ever [Pennsylvania Farm Bill](#) in 2019. The historic package of legislation has since invested \$37.2 million into Pennsylvania agriculture, with a commitment to [invest another \\$13.6 million](#) by June 2022.

In addition to his historic Pennsylvania Farm Bill, Wolf increased investments in farmland preservation. Since 2015, he’s dedicated more than \$253 million to the state’s nation-leading farmland preservation program, an increase of 132 percent over the previous administration’s investment. This \$253 million combined with investments from counties has preserved nearly 100,000 acres over the course of the Wolf Administration.

“Pennsylvania is renowned for both its agriculture and food manufacturing industries and the Wolf Administration has remained committed to supporting the growth of these sectors—recognizing the major contributions they offer to the commonwealth,” said DCED Deputy Secretary Kilko. “These are businesses providing meals and snacks we share with our families

and loved ones, and their success is critical to their ability to continue to provide communities with trusted products and bring new jobs and opportunities to regions throughout the state.”

Those who work in agriculture and food manufacturing are feeding the commonwealth and the world. These industries are fueling STEM careers, creating opportunities in food science, engineering, business and skilled technical jobs. To ensure agriculture’s prosperity for food to remain available, accessible and affordable, a new generation of agricultural workers is needed.

Pennsylvania faces an agricultural workforce shortage, that at one point estimated a deficit of 75,000 workers as farmers retire and new technology-based positions become available. In recognition of workforce needs and agriculture’s importance to the economy, the Wolf Administration partnered with Team Pennsylvania to once again analyze economic trends and workforce needs. The [2021 Economic Impact of Agriculture in Pennsylvania](#) report defines the commonwealth’s unique agricultural landscape, quantified economics and workforce impacts.

“Team Pennsylvania is proud of our partnership with the PA Department of Agriculture and the Wolf Administration to advance state-level agricultural economic and workforce development initiatives,” said Team Pennsylvania Director of Agriculture Policy Programs Kelly Kundratic. “Our role in elevating the economic and workforce contributions of Pennsylvania’s essential food and farm businesses to state, regional and local decision-makers has come into even sharper focus as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and revealed a clear case for addressing our food systems’ economic and workforce needs regionally with state support. We look forward to the continued partnership in advancing this mission.”

Knouse Foods is a Grower-Owned Fruit Cooperative comprised of more than 100 family farms. The cooperative started more than 100 years ago as farmers expanding their apple orchards needed a market to sell their fruit. Knouse Foods is now one of the largest processors and innovators of apple products in North America, selling products under the brands Musselman’s and Lucky Leaf. Farm families fuel Knouse Foods’ high-quality products that are enjoyed by consumers across the commonwealth and the nation.

Pennsylvania has laid a strong base of policy for the future of the agricultural industry through the PA Farm Bill and other innovative policy and economic development strategies. For more information on the Wolf Administration’s work to strengthen the resilience of Pennsylvania agriculture visit agriculture.pa.gov.

Note: Photo and video of the event available at PACast.com.

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