



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Franklin County Preserves 132 Acres of Farmland**

January 14, 2019 – Chambersburg, PA – The Franklin County Board of Commissioners preserved two more Franklin County farms through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. The first, Hissong Farmstead, located in Montgomery Township, is a 50-acre crop farm. The second farm, Rice Crest Farms, is an 82.64-acre crop and livestock operation located in Guilford Township. These farms join the 135 local farms currently in the conservation program, bringing the total amount of preserved Franklin County farmland to 17,609 acres.

“Preserving farmland is an investment in Franklin County’s future,” said Franklin County Board of Commissioners Chairman Dave Keller.

Agriculture is a major component of Franklin County’s economy, making up more than 242,600 acres of land county-wide. According to the Franklin County Area Development Corporation, Franklin County ranks second in the state for production of milk, cattle, melons, and corn for silage and third for fruit and berry production.

Last year, the Board of Commissioners allotted \$150,000 for farmland preservation which leveraged an additional \$553,052 in state funding. The 2019 county budget includes \$150,000 for the preservation program and state funding amounts will be announced next month.

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, established in 1988, helps to slow the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses by allowing state, county and local governments to purchase conservation easements, also called development rights, from owners of quality farmland.

“Land preservation is a priority—in my 23 years, the County has continued financial support for the farmland preservation program and other land preservation initiatives,” said Commissioner Bob Thomas.

Farm owners can apply locally and applications are ranked and forwarded to the state board for approval. Farms are chosen based on quality and size, stewardship and management practices, and the likelihood of conversion to non-agricultural use.

“By purchasing agricultural conservation easements, we help to ensure the continued strength of our county's agricultural industry,” stated Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski.

To learn more about Pennsylvania’s Farmland Preservation Program, visit [agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov) or contact Director of Planning Phil Tarquino at (717) 261-3855.

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For additional information on Franklin County visit [www.franklincountypa.gov](http://www.franklincountypa.gov).