

# Appendices: Regional Interview Summary, Illinois Highlights, Emerging Opportunities, and State Case Studies

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## **Appendices: Regional Interview Summary, Illinois Highlights, Emerging Opportunities, and State Case Studies**

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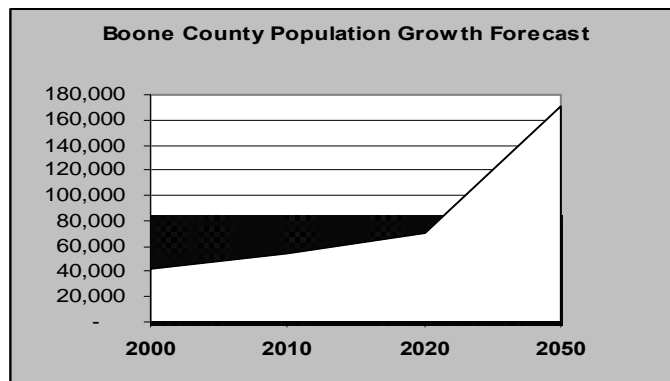
# Appendices: Regional Interview Summary, Illinois Highlights, Emerging Opportunities, and State Case Studies

## Boone County's Vision for Agricultural Preservation

Boone County has a rich history of agriculture but the county is at the boundary of two growing metropolitan regions, the Rockford Metropolitan area to the west and the Chicago Metropolitan area to the east. Furthermore, by bordering McHenry County (east), the State of Wisconsin (north), and DeKalb County (south), Boone County has to face the trend in population growth and the direction of growth further away from urban fringes. In the Boone County Comprehensive Plan, Boone County identified that the "current balance between quality of life and cost of living exists as a historical remnant under long-term threat." By quality of life, they were referring to the County's strong rural character, smaller towns and villages, and of course agricultural land (Boone County Comprehensive Plan).

Agriculture still remains very important to Boone County; not only does farming land total **81.5%** of the County (2002 Agriculture Census), but majority of that land is considered as **prime farmland**. In 2006, within the county, 11.6 million bushels of corn and 2.4 million bushels of soybean were produced (Illinois Dept of Agriculture 2007; Northern Illinois Market Facts 2007). However, even with the wealth of agriculture, Boone County still faces challenges. Of the 283 sq miles within Boone County, there were once 638 farms in 1982, now that number has declined to 476 farms as reported in 2002 (CMAP). Boone was ranked the 33<sup>rd</sup> most populated county in Illinois in the 2000 U.S. Census, with a total population of 41,786; **Chart 1** shows the Boone County population forecast. Boone County's well connected transportation system, which includes Interstate 90, US Highway 20, and State Highways 76 and 173, is also a big attraction. Additionally freight rail service is provided by the C&NW on tracks crossing the County from the east to west passing through Garden Prairie and the City of Belvidere (Boone County Comprehensive Plan).

**CHART 1**



2000 Figures (Census 2000); Other projections provided in the 1999 Boone County Plan

Therefore, Boone County sees itself as a potential magnet for residential development and is proactively seeking to preserve prime farmland. Below are highlights from the 1999 County Land Use Plan.

### **Agriculture Preservation: The Ordinance**

The Boone County Land Use Plan specifically states that "approximately 75% of the existing rural/agricultural land in the County would be preserved under a strong commitment to agricultural preservation" (Boone County Comprehensive Plan, adopted 1999). In addition to their County Plan,

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Boone County took another measure, and created an ordinance that adopted and implemented the *Boone County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Program*. This ordinance, passed by the County Board on April 12, 2006, gives the County the following authority:

- Purchase real estate for the preservation of forests, prairies, and other natural areas pursuant to 55 ILCS 5/5-1005
- Assist in promoting responsible managed growth patterns through intergovernmental planning agreements in conjunction with the Boone County Comprehensive Plan, the Boone County Conservation District Master Plan and the Boone County Greenways Plan
- The Land Trust Commission shall recommend selection criteria and may recommend the acquisition of interests in specific parcels of real property to be acquired by the County of Boone of agricultural protection purposes.

### **Boone County Comprehensive Plan: Agricultural Preservation**

**Goal: Protect the economic viability of agriculture in the County by preserving agricultural land in key areas.**

#### **Policies**

- 1) Areas of prime agricultural land not designated by this Plan for development should not be developed;
- 2) In areas designated for the future development served by the public sanitary sewer and public water systems, use a holding zone strategy which allows only agricultural or very low density residential development. Such areas would not be rezoned until public sanitary sewer and public water utilities become available; or shall be developed on private well and septic in a manner that enables the future extension of public water and sewer service;
- 3) Continue using the LESA system to effectively control land use change in the County;
- 4) Continue implementation of various right-to-farm regulations and educational programs;
- 5) Adopt programs and procedures designed to provide permanent protection of prime farmland and rural character areas throughout the Agricultural Preservation Areas of northern, eastern, and southern Boone County. Consideration should be given to approaches designed to acquire development rights or agricultural conservation easements in these areas.

*Source: Boone County Comprehensive Plan, adopted 1999*

**The Boone County Commission** consists of seven voting members consisting of 1) a member of the Boone County Board, 2) a representative of the Boone County Farm Bureau, 3) a representative of the Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District, 4) a member of the Boone County Planning Commission, 5) a representative of the Boone County Conservation District, 6) a representative of the Pomona Grange (description) and 7) one resident of Boone County.

### **The Future**

The Boone County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Program met for the first time in June 2007. *The following information was shared by a member of the Boone County Board during spring 2008.*

#### *Opportunities*

- A) Boone County is currently working on their first donation of development rights and on a new zoning district – the Agricultural Easement District.
- B) The Inter-Agency agreement with the State’s Attorney office created a shorter and streamlined process that will allow transactions to move forward without needing to defend an easement.
- C) There has been discussion about a general fund for monetary donations for farmland.

#### *Challenges*

- A) One major challenge has been the length of the process. The estimated timeframe for completing an easement transaction is about 1 year; there is a desire to make this shorter over time.

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B) There is currently no funding for Purchase of Development Rights and therefore the County is pursuing donations, but there haven't been donations yet.

Overall, Boone County is proactively seeking agricultural preservation and is evaluating continued growth and its likely impact on the County. Many farmers and citizens are in consensus about what they want Boone County to look like in the future. The next decade will be a true testament of how well the County can balance their goals for agriculture preservation with the impending element of growth.

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### Agricultural Preservation in Kane County

Kane County has been experiencing significant population growth and development like many other Northeastern counties. It was ranked the 5<sup>th</sup> largest populated county in Illinois, with slightly over 400,000 residents (Census 2000), most recently estimated at half million residents (ACS, Census Estimate 2006). This development and growth has contributed to some of the loss of farmland over the past few decades; between 1950 and 2002 the County lost over 100,000 acres of farmland (Kane County 2030 Land Use Management Plan). Since the 1970s, the Kane County Board has actively developed policies aimed at maintaining its agricultural heritage. The most notable plans that have promoted preservation are the Historic Preservation Plan of 1989, the 2020 Land Resource Management Plan, and the 2030 Land Resource Management Plan. Each of these land use plans established policies directed at preserving farmland and agribusiness in the region.

In the Kane County 2030 Land Resource Management Plan, agriculture was described as, *“an integral part of Kane County’s economy, landscape, and natural resource base”*.

#### **Three of Kane County’s agricultural land use objectives are:**

- 1) To encourage the effective use of agricultural land in achieving national and local energy and soil conservation goals,
- 2) To discourage projects that will have a detrimental impact on the preservation of agricultural lands and the use of public funds for such projects and
- 3) To expand the purchase of agricultural conservation easements wherever possible.

Source: Kane County 2030 Land Use Management Plan

#### **Funding Preservation: The Riverboat Casino Program**

Kane County is well-known both state-wide and nationwide for its agricultural preservation program, the Farmland Protection Program. The program is the first of its kind in Illinois and is serving as a model to other counties facing similar growth pressures. The ordinance has two mechanisms to protect land – buying the land outright or purchasing the owners development rights.



Funding for this program comes from an agreement between Kane County and the Elgin Riverboat Resort (Grand Victoria Foundation) formed in 1997 and authorized by Resolution #97-100. The Riverboat Committee, mostly board members, evaluates applications from farmers who are looking to sell development rights or land. The review process is used to ensure the proposed property meets required criteria including productivity of the farm, proximity to other farmland, and land use designation (McHenry Board Notes, 9/2007). Additional funding comes from the Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). FRPP is a matching program and requires participating entities to meet at least 25% of the land’s appraised fair market value or 50% of the purchase price of the easement and to meet several criteria similar to the Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission’s requirements (NRCS, Farm Bill 2002). In a Kane County press release (7/13/2007), it was revealed that “the Federal Farmland and Ranchlands Program provided nearly \$9.3 million in funding for the county initiative.”

Policies are the backbone for sustainability and Kane County has sought legislation that would provide more funding for preservation initiatives. The Illinois House Bill 3086, which is pending, would expand funding for the program by granting Kane County the ability to levy a tax to use for

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farmland preservation. As of May 15, 2008, the bill passed the House and is currently in the Illinois Senate (Illinois General Assembly Legislation).

### Kane County's Achievements

As of September 2007, Kane County has placed over 4,200 acres of farmland into protection representing an investment of over \$25.1 million -approximately \$15.9 million in casino funds and \$9.2 million in FRPP funds (McHenry Board Notes, 9/2007). Farmers owning over 1,500 additional acres are currently on a waiting list as additional funding is obtained for the program (McHenry Board Notes, 9/2007). Overall, the program's success can be largely attributed to the large number of farmers that have volunteered their land to Kane County, making preservation fully possible. Kane County has received awards for their efforts from the Trust for Public Lands and the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association (Illinois APA). Although the funding stream for agricultural preservation is not guaranteed forever, Kane County is making the most use of their funding now.

#### **More Facts about the Farmland Protection Program in Kane County**

- *Payments to Farmers*-The average payment made to farmers per acre for development rights starts at \$5000 per acre (2001) and has gone up as high as \$8900 based on appraised value at the time of requested funding.
- *Saving Farms in High Risk Development Areas*- The strategy is to save land that can be saved. The Farmland Protection Commission chooses areas outside of municipal planning areas, some areas of long time family farms (clusters of farms) that are not in the development path now, but risky for later development.
- *Application Process*- There is no point system but each application receives a qualitative assessment score that includes LESA score and evaluation of soils.

Source: Kane County Department of Development (Planning), Janice Hill, Director of Planning

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- Board Meeting Notes at McHenry County Board Agricultural Easement and Farmland Protection Commission, September 19,2007, Presentation by Kane County Staff, Janice Hill <http://www.co.mchenry.il.us/common/CountyBrd/MtgDocs/200709/20070919magrfarm.pdf>
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### The Illinois Conservation Climate Initiative: Carbon Credit Program

Climate Change is part of the national agenda. One aspect of climate change research focuses on the damage that could be potentially done if there are significant and sustained changes in weather patterns and increased frequency of natural disasters. Although there are many suspected causes of climate change, scientists have identified *greenhouse gas emissions* in the ozone as a leading contributing factor.

*The Illinois Conservation and Climate Initiative (ICCI) is the first U.S. state-sponsored program that has created a market that allows farmers, landowners, and private and public organizations to trade, buy, and sell carbon credits; there is no federal regulation of this market. The program objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing the carbon footprint of Illinois, which in return is projected to positively affect the environment. The way this objective can be achieved is to allow farmers and landowners to earn greenhouse gas emissions credits when they use conservation tillage, plant grasses and trees, or capture methane with manure digesters on their land. The benefits from these practices are quantified, created as credits, and then sold on the market. (Source: <http://illinoisclimate.org/overview.php>)*

#### The Partners

- ***Delta Institute*** is a Chicago-based environmental non-profit that created the model for the ICCI. It is the primary partner that manages the contracts with landowners and farmers, maintains the program database, and assists in program promotions to farmers and landowners. Since this program started in 2003, Delta Institute has replicated this initiative in Michigan and holds contracts in Washington. **Delta currently manages approximately 997 total contracts, as of April 2008.**
- The ***Illinois Environmental Protection Agency*** gave the start-up grant to Delta Institute for outreach and education of this program. The State of Illinois still participates in the program but plays an advisory role on a committee, which has a panel of experts and land conservation organization representatives.
- The ***Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts*** are the local organizations that are face to face with farmers and landowners within the numerous Illinois counties. Their role is to educate and market the program to farmers and landowners. Some districts also assist farmers with their applications for enrollment. Additionally, once farmers are enrolled and active members of the program, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts can be paid for verification services by Delta Institute to make sure that farmers and landowners are complying with the CCX program guidelines and regulations.
- Finally, the ***Chicago Climate Exchange*** is the operating trading platform, also known as a “cap and trade” market, for the ICCI. Essentially, CCX is the world’s first and the United States’ only active voluntary, legally binding integrated trading system to reduce emissions of all major greenhouse gases (GHGs), with offset projects. The commodity traded at CCX is the CFI (Carbon Financial Instrument) contract, each of which represents 100 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. CFI contracts are comprised of Exchange Allowances and Exchange Offsets. *The Joyce Foundation was the grant sponsor for the creation of this organization.*

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### Program Operations

Delta Institute holds enrollment periods twice a year, usually before and after harvest season. The program currently has contracts in five year increments that last through the year 2013. The program operates in two realms: in the field and in the market, CCX. In the field, farmers and landowners are responsible for following guidelines and making sure to practice the proper farming techniques in order to offset greenhouse gases and earn credits. In the market, the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), greenhouse gas benefits from conservation practices are calculated, credited, and sold. These credits are sold on the market and the funds from the sale are paid to the producer after subtracting a \$0.20/ton trading fee from CCX and an 8% aggregation fee from Delta Institute. If applicable, verification fees are also deducted from the sale.

Credits are sold to CCX members which include large companies, and public or private institutions, as well as municipalities. As a member, there is some level of commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions before the end of the contract, but for more immediacy they can lessen their emissions through the purchase of credits. The graph below shows prices and volume over a period of 3 years and the fluctuation driven by various factors including changing attitudes toward being more “green”, environmental policies.

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Source & Graph Diagram: Chicago Climate Exchange, Market Summary Report, January 2005- April 2008, <http://www.chicagoclimatex.com/market/data/summary.jsf>

### Who Benefits?

It seems that everyone could potentially benefit from this model of carbon offsets. The farming community receives a financial incentive to operate good practices for the environment, and organizations in effect become more “green”. In essence, this program is environmentally beneficial and promotes social responsibility.

#### Program Achievements (as of February 1, 2008)

- **Over 400 members** are enrolled in the ICCI program with a 540 million metric ton reduction commitment.
- **747 Contracts** among Illinois Counties
- During the period of 2005-06, \$119,838 credits were netted for soil practices.
- Note: Payments to farmers vary by size of farm, # of acres committed to the ICCI.
- **Acres Enrolled include: Forest (68,196.68), Tillage (138,784.39), Grass (38,393.27)**

(Source: Delta P2E2 Center, April 2008)

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### **Opportunity for the Northeast Region**

Many Illinois counties are experiencing challenges when considering agricultural preservation, especially in northeastern of Illinois. Of the 747 current contracts managed by Delta Institute under the ICCI, only 3 are within the Northeastern Region (7 counties). This program holds potential for agricultural preservation in the region to become part of a greater initiative to improve the environment, improve soil practices and promote preservation as an important goal for the future.

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### Organic Farming: A Regional Example

The **Prairie Crossing Organic Farm** is within the community of **Prairie Crossing**, a nationally recognized Conservation Community. This organic farm is located in Lake County.

#### Background on Prairie Crossing Organic Farms

There was commitment and priority to set aside land for farmland in the Prairie Crossing community, a community that is a conservation development. However, once the developer set aside the land and organization was formed, the big question was: how do we create a sustainable business? The farm needed to generate profit reliably over time. The two key components of the organic farm are:

- 1) Providing high quality fresh produce for the community to purchase.
- 2) Develop a business model that made produce purchases at the farm a desired option, yet allowed the business to expand beyond the immediate community.

There are 3 principal enterprises at Prairie Crossing farm: 1) private family farm, 2) a business incubator, and 3) an educational farm. The Prairie Crossing Farm's land is owned by a not-for-profit, which is a legally separate entity from Prairie Holdings Corporation, the developer of Prairie Crossing. The non-profit leases the land to these enterprises with long term leases, which provides the security to invest in the business, backing for equipment purchases, loans etc.



The principal farming business is Sandhill Organics at Prairie Crossing. This farm is family owned and hires 8 seasonal workers, 6 FT equivalent, and pays significantly above minimum wage. The total amount of land leased by Sandhill Organics is 40 acres, but only an estimated 50% of the land is cultivated today.

The incubator program is a farm business management training program. This program works with farmers on building their business models and allows farmers to test their models over a course of 5 years, using up to 5 acres of land. The goal is for part-time farmers to evolve into full time farmers. So far 2 enterprises have been operating approximately 3 years: Redtail Farms, Dia Dia Organics. Both enterprises are profitable businesses that will expand onto larger areas.

#### Farming Success

One main goal of the organic farm is to reach out to the community of Prairie Crossing. However, majority of revenue from sales are from surrounding communities. The approximate revenue scale is \$15,000 per acre. The marketing channels for the organic farming enterprises are farmer's markets, and community support agriculture (CSA) groups, which require a membership and sell weekly produce to members based on harvest. Sandhill Organics delivers to an estimated 350 members per week. The largest organic farm similar to Prairie Crossing in the region is Angelic Organics near Rockford with 1400 deliveries to members every week in Chicago.

#### Partnerships

Prairie Crossing works with local food banks and various community groups who serve as resources for lower income families. Some of these organizations include Growing Home Organization (Urban Farms), Angelic Organics Learning Center, Growing Power (Chicago and Milwaukee), and Chicago Botanic Garden.

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### **The Organic Food Market: Emerging Opportunities for Farmers**

The year 2000 was significant for the organic food market because for the first time more organic food was purchased in conventional supermarkets than any other outlet for food (Economic Research Service/USDA). This event directly influenced the USDA to set national standards for organic food in 2002, which created labels for consumer recognition of organic products. (Garmon, Huang, and Lin 2007)

According to the Organic Trade Association (OTA), organic food sales in the United States totaled \$13.8 billion in 2005, making up 2.5% of the retail food market. Dimitri and Green (2002) estimated that between 1997 and 2001, U.S. farmers and ranchers nearly doubled the acreage of certified organic land, totaling 2.3 million acres (Garmon, Huang, and Lin 2007).

#### **Organic Retailers in the Midwest**

Whole Foods Market is a national supermarket chain that is an “organic” supermarket and a Fortune 500 company, with \$4.5 billion in sales (Sustain, Family FarmEd). There are currently fifteen Whole Foods Market locations within the State of Illinois. However, Whole Foods Market is not alone; another major supplier of organic food in the Midwest is Goodness Greeness, headquartered in Chicago’s Englewood neighborhood, noted as the second largest US organic produce supplier (fruit and vegetables). Goodness Greeness, operating since 1991, is a family business and supplies food for over 1,000 stores, including supermarkets and independent retailers. As quoted by CEO Robert Scaman, “The demand for organic food in the food service niche is exploding.” (Sustain, Family FarmEd) Goodness Greeness has experienced an increase in local procurement by 500% since 2003. (Sustain, Family FarmEd) There are several other retailers that sell organic products in Illinois including Treasure Island, Trader Joe’s, Peapod, Wild Oats, Fox and Obel, and Stanley’s, and other smaller independent produce markets. (Sustain, Family FarmEd)

Research has shown that major retail outlets in Illinois purchase much of their organic produce from farms outside of the region (Sustain, Family FarmEd); one main reason being because local regional supply is not meeting demand.

#### **Growing Opportunity for Organic Farmers in Illinois**

In 2007, the Governor’s office created the Illinois Food, Farm and Jobs Act which established the Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force. This task force is charged with the duty of developing a plan containing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting a State local and organic food system, keeping in mind the development of job opportunities. (IL Dept of Ag) Additionally, the Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council was formed in 2002 which is oriented toward improving access of nutritional and affordable food grown with environmentally sound practices.



Sales of organic foods in the U.S. are estimated to rise to \$23.8 billion by 2010 (NBJ, 2004, Garmon, Huang, Lin). The organic food market around the State has a lot of potential. Organic production has the benefits of premium prices that customers are willing to pay because of their value of certain attributes which is attractive to farmers despite higher costs for producing organic goods. (Garmon, Huang, and Lin 2007) In Illinois only 20% of organic producers are estimated to grow organic vegetables, with only 10% selling certified organic beef, poultry. Most organic products are sold

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directly to consumers, and not sold through retail or wholesale channels. (Sustain, FamilyFarmEd)  
Demand is expected to continue throughout the region especially with a national focus and awareness on healthy living as well as a growing desire to eat locally. Organic farming may indeed be a way for the agricultural economy and preservation to be revived.

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### The Ohio Department of Agriculture takes Action to Protect Farmland

#### Quick Facts

- Ohio has 88 counties
- Ohio has 77,797 Farms (2002)
- The top 2 crops produced are soybeans and corn
- Total Sales/Gross Market Value from all farms was \$4.26 Billion (2002 National Agricultural Statistics/U.S Census)

The challenge that the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is facing could be considered overwhelming: Ohio was ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> state in the nation for the highest amount of farmland loss during 1992 and 1997 ([American Farmland Trust](#)). Ohio lost 219,000 acres of farmland converted to developed uses ([Farmland Information Center](#)). In response to the loss of farmland, the state legislature decided to take action and create the Office of Farmland Preservation within ODA.



The Office of Farmland Preservation was created in 1997 concurrently with the initiation of a pilot farmland preservation fund. The office works to preserve and protect Ohio's viable farmland for future agricultural use and to educate and partner with the public, governments, and communities.

In 2000, Ohio voters approved the Clean Ohio Fund, a bond issue for \$400 million dollars and used for four purposes: 1) brownfield redevelopment, 2) improvement of trails, 3) farmland preservation and 4) green space conservation. *In total, \$25 million dollars were designated for farmland preservation* and with this funding the ODA administers the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP), one of the three programs that the office manages. In addition to the AEPP, the Office of Farmland Preservation administers the Agricultural Easement Donation Program (AEDP) and provides technical assistance to local governments for the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program.

#### Program Management

In 1999, Ohio received its first easement donation and soon after in 2001, the state officially passed legislation approving the *AEDP*. This program requires that the easement be at least 40 contiguous acres, zoned as an agricultural use. The low minimum on acres is more inclusive of smaller farms. Also, the State of Ohio requires enrollment in a Current Agriculture Use Value Program ([CAUV](#)) and farmland must be part of an Agricultural District. The donation program requires local government notification and does not include fees for the landowner. As of the end of 2007, the state held 35 donated easements for a total of almost 4,400 acres.

The *AEPP* is different because development rights for land are purchased by the State and not donated. It also involves an application process for easement protection. Two requirements of the program are that a local sponsor must apply on the landowner's behalf and the landowner and/or the local sponsor must donate at least 25 percent of the easement's value. The state will *not* directly accept an application from the landowner. This process was created in an effort to initiate create a dialogue between farmers and local authorities, a communication which is critical to local land use management. Although the state administers the programs, their intention is to have local authorities think about and plan for the impact of preservation or development. Easement programs are

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permanent in that once the development rights are surrendered by the landowner, the state owns the rights, no matter if the land is transferred to another owner. The State's Attorney's Office in Ohio legally supports the permanence of these rights, which enforces ownership and regulation. From 2002 until 2007, 23,615 acres were preserved through easement purchases (including pending offers).

The third and final program is *Ohio's ASA program*, which is the only non-permanent program because these areas are reassessed every ten years for preservation. ASAs are completely voluntary; however the area must consist of at least 500 acres of contiguous agricultural land from one or more landowners. ASAs protect against non-farm development, help to keep farming viable, and are locally controlled. Another benefit of an ASA is its ability to act as a local tax benefit. If renovations, additions, rehabilitations, or any other improvements are done on a farmstead, the landowner may apply to the County Board of Commissioners for some tax relief. Being included also increases the amount of points earned on an AEPP application. 18 ASAs in Ohio have preserved over 13,800 acres, as of April 2008.

### **AEPP Program Operations**

Applicants can earn up to 150 points on the two-tiered application, based on several factors. Section one of the application focuses on development pressure, soils, proximity to protected properties, local development and preservation initiatives, and farm conservation plans. Section two includes narrative questions regarding the farm and its unique appeal to the program. The Ohio Farmland Advisory Board scores the narrative section and makes recommendations to the Director of the ODA on which applications to accept into the program. From 2002 when the program was enacted until the end of 2007, the AEPP received 1,603 applicants (of which approximately 35 percent were duplicates from a previous year): 117 applicants have received funding.

The Office of Farmland Preservation divided the counties within Ohio into four quadrants, based on where the applications are received, to more equally distribute funding throughout the state. In addition, restrictions have been set on how much the department will compensate for easements:

- no more than \$2,000 per acre is used to compensate farmers,
- no more than a total of \$500,000 is allocated per farm, and
- no more than \$500,000 is awarded per county, each year.

These restrictions do not prevent certain farms or counties from receiving an award more than once, since the goal of the program is to protect the prime and most at-risk soil. The steady flow of applications has demonstrated that the AEPP program remains in high demand and farming citizens are interested in continuing to farm or ensuring that the land is protected.

### **Program Outlook**

While ODA has maximized federal matching grants to extend their preservation capabilities through the Federal Ranch Lands and Protection Program, at the end of fiscal year 2008, the Clean Ohio Fund's contribution to agricultural preservation will be depleted. The state legislature is expected to put a Clean Ohio bond renewal on the upcoming November ballot. Ohio's next biggest challenge is to fulfill the need for land use management planning at the state level. The Office of Farmland Preservation is also contemplating redesigning the program to push some of the administration down to a more local level in order to ensure that the program considers the diverse needs among counties.

**Data Source on Programs:** Ohio Office of Farmland Preservation/ Ohio Department of Agriculture

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### Pennsylvania's Legacy of Agricultural Preservation

#### Quick Facts

- 56 counties
  - Top 2 agricultural products: Dairy products and Poultry & Eggs
  - State Revenue from production agriculture and agribusinesses: \$4 billion annually
  - State of Pennsylvania allocated \$102 Million in 2006 for farmland preservation
  - 2,834 farms preserved for a total of 323,366 acres in 53 counties
- (Source: PA Department of Agriculture, Data and Statistics)

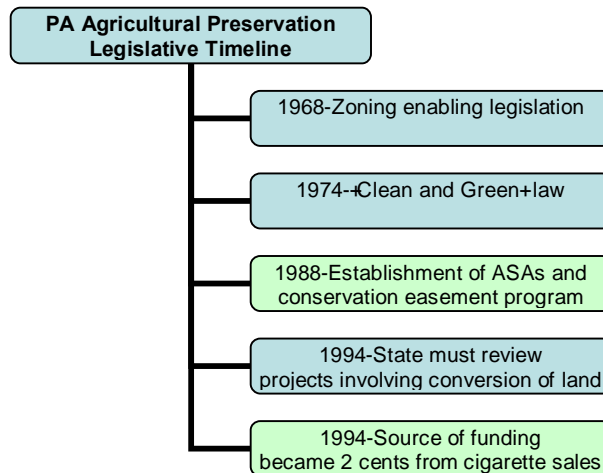
The State of Pennsylvania is a total of 44,816 sq miles (Census 2000) and its population is estimated at 12,440,621 (Census 2006), *an estimated 277.59 person per mile density*. Yet Pennsylvania has had the most successful Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program in the country. Although many of the counties have remained suburban and rural, there is something else that gives an edge to Pennsylvania's success. The State of Pennsylvania has had a lengthy history of being a proponent in the fight to preserve agricultural land. The State has taken measures in a number of different ways since 1968, when its state zoning legislation was amended. The legislation states that: *"Zoning ordinances may permit, prohibit, regulate, restrict and determine: (5) Protection and preservation of natural resources and agricultural land and activities"* (Daniels, State University of New York at Albany). Soon after, a line of other amendments were made.

In 1974, the "Clean and Green" law allowed farmland parcels of a 10 acre minimum to be assessed on a use-value basis. This program is implemented by county assessors' offices and makes preserving open space and agricultural lands more affordable for property owners (PA Department of Agriculture).

In 1988, the state clearly defined "agricultural security areas" and formed the conservation easement purchase program in association with the counties. The ASA program is used to shield farmland from developing areas. Areas are created by townships in conjunction with separate landowners who volunteer to include their land in an ASA. Each area must be at least 250 acres in total and provides farmers against nuisance suits and other special consideration (PA Department of Agriculture).

In 1994, legislation passed that required the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to "review proposed projects of all state agencies that might involve the conversion of farmland to other uses." (Daniels, State University of New York at Albany)

Furthermore, in 1994, *the State of Pennsylvania made a major decision and changed the source of funding for the conservation easement purchase program from the sale of bonds to a two cent tax on cigarettes, a*



## Appendices: Regional Interview Summary, Illinois Highlights, Emerging Opportunities, and State Case Studies

*significant source of revenue for many states.* This decision further proved the state's commitment to funding agricultural preservation.

The State of Pennsylvania has spent approximately **\$708,000,000** on the purchase of conservation easements since the program began in 1988. (PA Department of Agriculture, Data and Statistics)

### **PACE Program**

The state-wide purchase of conservation easements is a major program for agricultural preservation in Pennsylvania. The conservation easement purchase program allows the state, county, and local governments to purchase development rights from owners who volunteer to sell them. At total of 59,000 farm families continue to be the stewards of over 7.7 million acres of farmland (PA Dept of Agriculture).

The Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation, part of the Department of Agriculture administers the state's program to buy conservation easements as well as any other legislative programs and policies meant to preserve agricultural land. The farms selected for easement purchases must meet a standard based on quality of farmland, stewardship, and likelihood of conversion.

**Although the State runs the program, the collaboration with the counties is critical.** The Bureau supplies the Counties directly with funding, which designates more authority at the County level to make decisions so funding is allocated based on local needs. The Counties are responsible for appointing members of a land preservation committee, which directly works with a state board member on funding, monitoring, and approvals of the program. Administration of the program is therefore shared between the State and the Counties. (PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation)



### **Local Level Preservation Highlight: Lancaster County**

The level of State involvement has provided guidance to many of the counties who wish to continue farming and rural activities. Lancaster County is the recipient with the largest appropriation of state funding supporting PACE with a total of \$9 million (2006 State Allocation, PA Dept of Agriculture). Additionally, it is a county that has faced some pressure of development, but has still committed to agricultural preservation.

Under the 1993 Growth Management Plan, Lancaster County along with cooperating municipalities began forming Urban and Village Growth Areas (UGA and VGA respectively). Urban growth boundaries help to contain development, making it more economical, easier to service, and healthier for the environment. From 1993 to 2003, Lancaster County drew up a total of 13 UGAs and 26 VGAs in 31 different townships and from 1994-2002, "76 percent of all new dwellings were built inside [Designated] Growth Areas" ( Lancaster County Board, PA).

Lancaster has provided a toolbox for agricultural preservation knowing that development will consistently be an issue. As of 2004, a 60 member task force was assigned to update the Growth Management Plan which will project growth all the way until 2030 (Lancaster County, PA ). The update will incorporate Smart Growth techniques to promote sustainable development with agricultural preservation in mind.