



The importance of agriculture to our state and country cannot be overstated.
The survival of independent, diverse family farmers affects food security, economic independence, social stability, rural community development, resource conservation, and the health and welfare of our citizens.

Pennsylvania Farmers Union advocates for initiatives and legislation that benefits family farms and farmers. Areas of concern include economic incentives and issues, market access, rural development/quality of life, food policy, water quality, and/or other environmental issues.

PFU's 2020 Policy Priorities:

1. Maintain and increase support for the PA Farm Bill

The Pennsylvania Governor's Office and the General Assembly were progressive to promote and initiate the only State Farm Bill in this country. [We thank and encourage the Ag Committee in maintaining the support of these initiatives, programs and funding: and the key points articulated in the PA Farm Bill.](#)

2. Create more processing capabilities - Dairy & Animal Production

Pennsylvania dairy farmers are in critical condition and, if still in business, on-life support. [It is vital that legislators continue their work with farmers and farmer organizations to keep assisting dairy farmers to:](#)

- a) Advocate for market reforms ensuring equitable prices in a fair market.
-Asking Senate to support HB 1224 and HB 1223.
- b) Manifest actions outlined in the PA Farm Bill Dairy Investment Program.
- c) Establish State Organic Transition assistance funding.
- d) Advocate for and support the animal agriculture industry by expanding processing capacity, technical assistance, and providing resources for food safety compliance.

3. Support Health Care for Rural Communities - Telemedicine

Access to healthcare in 2020 for rural communities can be improved through Telemedicine.

- a) Advocate for healthcare reforms that benefit family farms.
- Asking House to support SB 857.

PO Box 863, Stroudsburg, PA 18360

www.pafarmersunion.org

717-576-0794



4. Reduce liability for farmers that engage in Agritourism

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture encourages farmers to diversify into enterprises that include engagement of the public at on-farm activities. The potential economic benefits of agritourism are significant. [We encourage legislators to support all policy initiatives that reduce liability, legal and tax disincentives for farmers to engage in agritourism.](#)

- a) Schedule a vote by the full House to accept HB 1348 the agritourism limited liability bill.
- b) Prioritize HB 1037. This Bill makes it easier for farms to have weddings in barns by exempting them from the Uniform Construction Code.

5. Create equitable access for small family farms to emerging agricultural markets

New markets will emerge over time and it is important that independent family farmers have a shot at these markets. Back door deals with large, corporate entities need to be guarded against in the interest of providing a fair playing field for all.

a) **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program:** This was made possible by the PA Farm Bill and recognizes hemp, hops, hardwood, honey/rye/barley/wheat for distilling, brewing and malting. This program will boost economic opportunities throughout the State and create job development in rural communities.

6. Promote and Bolster Ag Business Development and Succession Planning

a) Maintain support for the **Beginning Farm Tax Credit:** Appreciation to the General Assembly for passing this legislation that gives an income tax credit to landowners who sell or rent land or other agricultural assets to beginning farmers. **We recommend** (in collaboration with PA Young Farmers Coalition and Farmer Veteran Coalition) amending and improving the program to include a scaled or tiered tax credit provision which would provide a greater tax incentive to land or asset owners who provide longer leases and greater certainty to young and beginning farmers.

b) Prioritize and strengthen the **Ag Conservation Easement Purchase Program (ACEPP)** funds for working farm easements - this includes affordability and farmer ownership provisions and allocates funding to retroactively place these provisions on existing easements.