



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture



Finding Land

FARMLAND FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
AWARD: 2020-49400-32715


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Extension Educators
Penn State Extension
March 30, 2021



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Acknowledgments

- Farmland for the Next Generation was created by American Farmland Trust, supported by a four-year Educational Enhancement grant from the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Award# 2015-70017-23901

-  United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture **Award# 2020-49400-32715**

- Thanks also for support from the Farm Credit Contributions program, an Educational Enhancement Team of national experts in farmland access, and the members of American Farmland Trust.

Review of Land Requirements Worksheet

- Any thoughts to share?
 - Formal Goals & Factors can help form a basic Business Plan idea for you!
 - Any other introductory thoughts or farm location ideas?





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Part 1: Identifying a Location



Finding Land Overview

- Select a target location for your land search based on your personal and business goals
- Know what you're looking for
- Find out about real estate/rental values
- Identify resources that might provide access to suitable land
- Develop a plan!



How to Choose a Target Location?

- Find out about agricultural and business conditions
- Does the state/community support agriculture?
- Consider your personal as well as business goals
 - Do you want to be near family and friends?
 - Near a city or big town or in a remote rural location?
 - Do you want to be near amenities like a university or hospital?

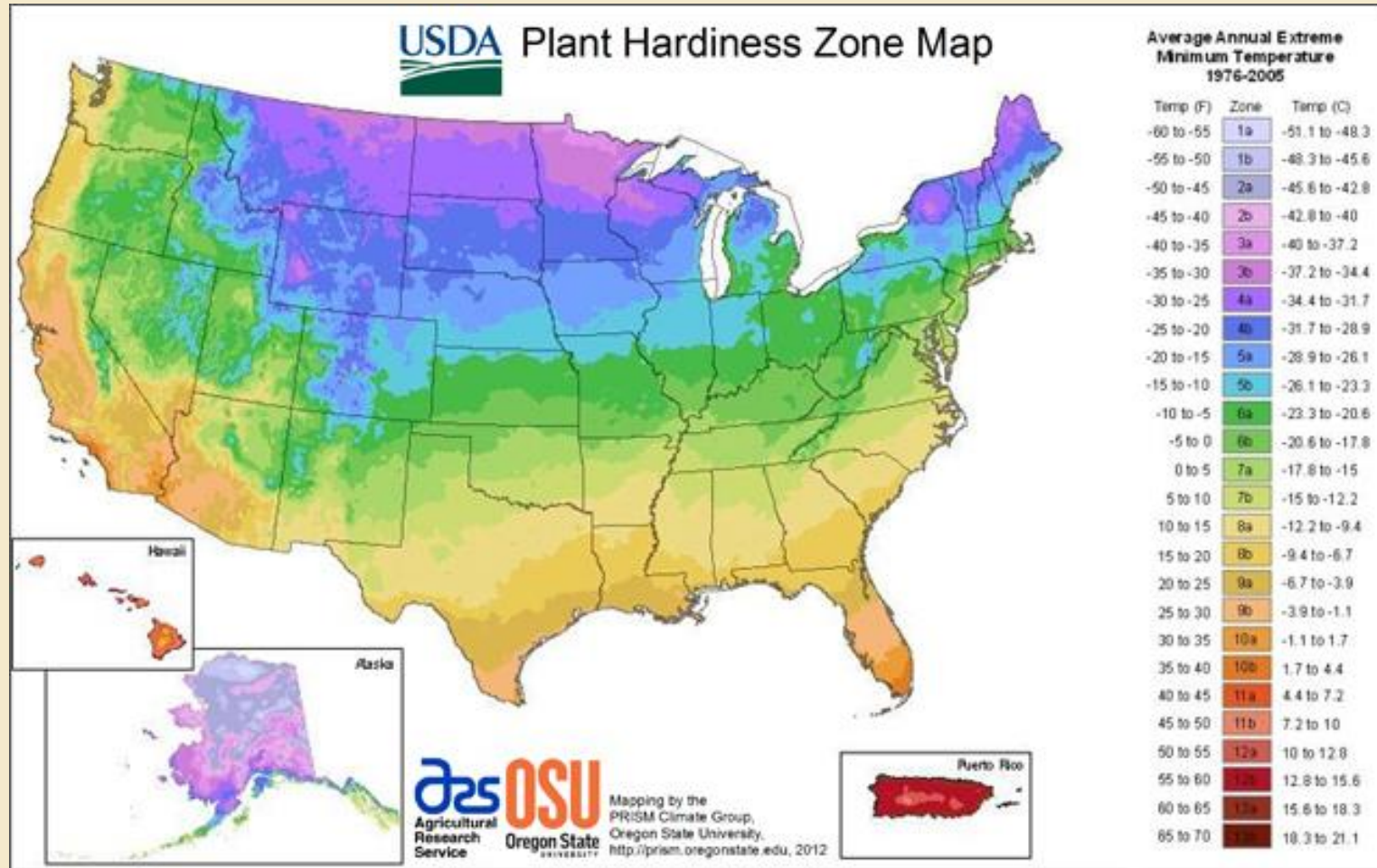


Research Ag and Market Conditions

- Climate, growing season, water availability/rights
- Types of agriculture in the area
- Land values and rental rates
- Population characteristics
- Markets/market competition
- Processing/distribution infrastructure
- Transportation patterns



Climate/Growing Conditions



What You Can Find in Census of Ag

- Number of farms
- Information on crops and livestock
- Market information, including on direct sales
- Farm economics
- Real estate value of land and buildings
- Operator demographics
- And more!





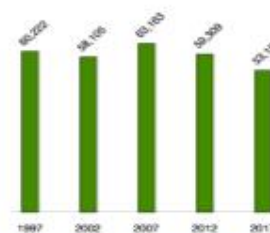
Pennsylvania



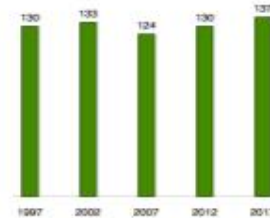
Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	53,157	-10
Land in farms (acres)	7,278,668	-6
Average size of farm (acres)	137	+5
Total	(\$)	
Market value of products sold	7,758,884,000	+5
Government payments	74,182,000	-14
Farm-related income	351,736,000	+14
Total farm production expenses	5,951,126,000	-2
Net cash farm income	2,233,676,000	+27
Per farm average	(\$)	
Market value of products sold	145,962	+17
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	6,823	+26
Farm-related income	16,562	+18
Total farm production expenses	111,954	+10
Net cash farm income	42,020	+42

Number of Farms, 1997-2017



Average Farm Size, 1997-2017 (acres)



Farms by Value of Sales

Value of Sales	Number	Percent of Total *
Less than \$2,500	16,944	32
\$2,500 to \$4,999	4,477	8
\$5,000 to \$9,999	5,579	10
\$10,000 to \$24,999	6,802	13
\$25,000 to \$49,999	4,437	8
\$50,000 to \$99,999	3,570	7
\$100,000 or more	11,348	21

Farms by Size

Size	Number	Percent of Total *
1 to 9 acres	6,481	12
10 to 49 acres	15,901	30
50 to 179 acres	19,985	38
180 to 499 acres	8,255	16
500 to 999 acres	1,790	3
1,000 + acres	745	1



Northampton County Pennsylvania



Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	459	-8
Land in farms (acres)	59,195	-10
Average size of farm (acres)	129	-2
Total (\$)		
Market value of products sold	36,058,000	-17
Government payments	1,204,000	+42
Farm-related income	2,483,000	-18
Total farm production expenses	34,204,000	-11
Net cash farm income	5,540,000	-38
Per farm average (\$)		
Market value of products sold	78,558	-10
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	15,840	+117
Farm-related income	13,641	-15
Total farm production expenses	74,519	-4
Net cash farm income	12,071	-32

(Z) Percent of state agriculture sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)

Crops	77
Livestock, poultry, and products	23

Land in Farms by Use (%) *

Cropland	87
Pastureland	3
Woodland	5
Other	4

Acres Irrigated: 273

(Z)% of land in farms

Land Use Practices (% of farms)

No till	23
Reduced till	20
Intensive till	19
Cover crop	20

Farms by Value of Sales

	Number	Percent of Total *
Less than \$2,500	143	31
\$2,500 to \$4,999	39	8
\$5,000 to \$9,999	73	16
\$10,000 to \$24,999	65	14
\$25,000 to \$49,999	33	7
\$50,000 to \$99,999	32	7
\$100,000 or more	74	16

Farms by Size

	Number	Percent of Total *
1 to 9 acres	92	20
10 to 49 acres	204	44
50 to 179 acres	99	22
180 to 499 acres	38	8
500 to 999 acres	13	3
1,000 + acres	13	3

How to See if There's Support for Ag

- Take a look at state policies:
 - Ag tax policies
 - Farmland protection programs
 - Right-to-Farm laws
- Find out if Ag is addressed at local level
 - Is it included in community plans?
 - Is local zoning “farm friendly”?
 - Does the community have a buy-local campaign?





Info For ▾

Resources ▾

Browse by State

About ▾



Found 72 results

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Adams County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

670 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325
(717) 334-6781

[Visit Website](#) | [More Info](#)

PUBLIC PROGRAM

Allegheny County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

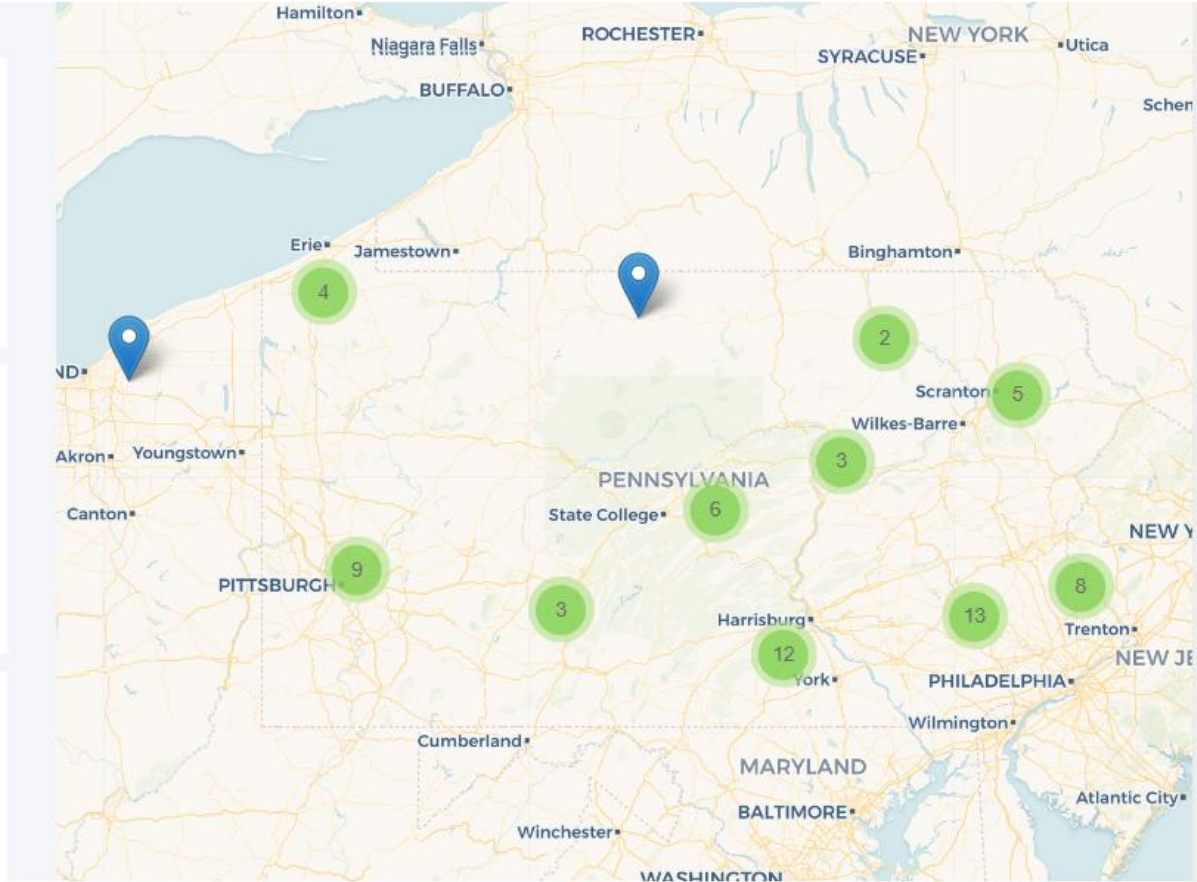
33 Terminal Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 241-7645

[Visit Website](#) | [More Info](#)

LAND TRUST

American Farmland Trust

Farmland Protection Division: 1 Short Street, Northampton, MA 01060 | Headquarters: 1150 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036



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Farmland Preservation

Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of farms and acres permanently preserved for agricultural production. The program guarantees a future food supply and contributes to a healthier economy. It also assures a way of life Pennsylvanian's cherish will continue for generations to come. The program is a partnership between all levels of government and non-profit organizations - with a common goal of saving prime farmland.

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program was developed to strengthen Pennsylvania's agricultural economy and protect prime farmland. This program enables state and county governments to purchase conservation easements from farmers. The program was approved in 1988 and the first easement was purchased in December of 1989. To date 5,329 farms have been approved for easement purchases totaling 552,702 acres.

Contact

Douglas M. Wolfgang
Bureau Director
(717) 783-3167
dowolfgang@pa.gov

Publications

[Economic Impact Report](#) (PDF)
[2019 Annual Report](#) (PDF)
[2018 Annual Report](#) (PDF)
[2018 Interactive Map](#) [↗](#)
[Information about the Agriculture,
Communities and the Rural
Environment Act \(ACRE\)](#) (PDF)
[ACRE Act 38](#)

Agricultural
Security Area
(ASA)

Century and
Bicentennial
Farm Program

Clean & Green

Easement
Purchase

Preserved
Farms Resource
Center

Beginning
Farmer Realty
Transfer Tax...



CONTACT US

2301 North Cameron
Street, Harrisburg, PA
17110 [↗](#)

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How to Find Out About Land Prices?

- Census of Ag and other NASS resources
- USDA-Farm Service Agency
- National Multiple Listing Services
- Local real estate agents
- State departments of agriculture
- Talk to people in your community!



How To Find Out About Rental Rates?

- NASS cash rent survey
- Extension regional benchmark reports for various farm or ranch enterprises
- Local real estate agents
- Classified ads
- Talk to people in the community!



Soil Survey

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Contact Us | Subscribe | Archived Soil Surveys | Soil Survey Status | Glossary | Preferences | Link | Logout | Help

Area of Interest (AOI) | Soil Map | Soil Data Explorer | Download Soils Data | Shopping Cart (Free)

Search

Area of Interest

- Import AOI

Quick Navigation

- Address
- State and County
- Soil Survey Area
- Latitude and Longitude or Current Location
- PLSS (Section, Township, Range)
- Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Defense
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Hydrologic Unit

Area of Interest Interactive Map

View Extent: Contiguous U.S. | Scale: (not to scale)

9:54 AM
2/8/2021

<https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>



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Part 2: Finding Land Strategies



How Can I Find Land to Rent or Buy?

- Word of mouth – e.g., from family and friends
- Real estate market
- Online resources, e.g., FarmLink programs
- Community networks



Types of Ag Landowners

- Owner Operators
- Operator landlords
- Non-operator landlords
 - Individuals – some of whom have farmed
 - Partnerships and trusts
 - Institutions and organizations, like land trusts
 - Federal government
 - State and local governments



Many Reasons Landowners Sell or Lease

- Financial
- Estate/succession planning
- Property maintenance
- Qualify for agricultural tax assessment
- Achieve a group/agency's mission – like supporting local food production
- Stewardship of natural resources



Tap the Real Estate Market

- Review classified ads in local papers or farm/ranch publications
- Find a real estate agent – preferably one who specializes in agricultural land
- Use web searches through Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and sites such as Realtor.com, Zillow, etc.



Use Online Resources

- Use FarmLink and other online listing, linking and match-making sites
- Use social media to communicate with potential organizations and landowners





■ PA FARM LINK ONLINE DATABASE

- One tool for farmers and aspiring farmers to utilize.
- Landowner Listings
- Entering or New Farmer Listings
- Searchable 24/7
- No fee to complete the process to be put in touch with a Landowner or Entering Farmer.
- One time fee if applying as a database member.



- Searching the **Landowner database for available farms for sale or lease.**

Step 1) Click on “FIND A FARM” at the top or middle of the home page of PA Farm Link.

PFL Online Database~www.pafarmlink.org



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Step 2.) Search listings by: Region or County

By Region

Region 1

Clarion-Crawford-Elk-Erie-Forest-Jefferson-McKean-Mercer-Venango-Warren

Region 2

Cameron-Clinton-Columbia-Lycoming-Northumberland-Montour-Potter-Schuylkill-Snyder-Tioga-Union

Region 3

Bradford-Carbon-Lackawanna-Luzerne-Monroe-Pike-Sullivan-Susquehanna-Wayne-Wyoming

Region 4

Allegheny-Armstrong-Beaver-Butler-Fayette-Greene-Indiana-Lawrence-Washington-Westmoreland

Region 5

Bedford-Blair-Cambria-Centre-Clearfield-Fulton-Huntingdon-Juniata-Mifflin-Somerset

Region 6

Adams-Cumberland-Dauphin-Franklin-Lebanon-Lancaster-Perry-York

Region 7

Berks-Bucks-Chester-Delaware-Lehigh-Montgomery-Northampton-Philadelphia

By County

[Adams](#) [Allegheny](#) [Bedford](#) [Berks](#) [Blair](#) [Bradford](#) [Bucks](#) [Butler](#) [Centre](#) [Chester](#) [Clarion](#) [Cumberland](#) [Delaware](#) [Erie](#) [Franklin](#) [Juniata](#) [Lancaster](#) [Lebanon](#) [Lehigh](#) [Luzerne](#) [Monroe](#) [Montgomery](#) [Northampton](#) [Susquehanna](#) [Washington](#) [Wayne](#) [Westmoreland](#) [York](#)



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Example of Searching by Region – Region #5

- Landowner Number
- Town of address of farm
- County
- Acreage
- Type of Farm
- Method of Farming

Name / Address	County	Acres	Type	Method
Landowner Listing 30115 - Altoona, PA 16601	Blair	2-5	Livestock Vegetable	Conventional
Landowner Listing 30109 - Julian, PA 16844	Centre	24	Livestock	
Landowner Listing 30117 - Boalsburg, PA 16827	Centre	190	Dairy	
Landowner Listing 30090 - Mifflintown, PA 17059	Juniata	450	Dairy Livestock	Conventional

Region #5

LANDOWNER LISTING 30115

Farm owner seeking adults only to lease house with 2-5 acres for vegetable production and/or small livestock production. Blair County. Available immediately.

Farm owner is looking for someone interested in starting a farm business. Equipment to work the land is available. Property is located in good location for road traffic and a garage type building is available that could be used for a farmer's market. A hoop house may also be available. There is a barn and some pasture for smaller livestock. An old vineyard is on the property and the farm owner would like to work with a tenant to replant and reestablish that aspect of the farm.

Total Acres: 2-5

House Available on Property: Yes

Conservation Plan: No

Deed Restrictions: No

Nutrient Management: No

Will Sell or Lease Equipment: Yes

Cows Available: No



Farm Type: [Livestock Vegetable](#)

County: [Blair](#)

Region: [Region 5](#)

Acres: [1 to 10](#)

Farming Method: [Conventional](#)

Looking for someone to: [Lease](#)

Current Marketing: [CSA](#) [On Farm Store/Stand](#) [Other Direct Marketing Outlets](#)



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How to reach out to a PFL Landowner.

- PA Farm Link – Privacy Policy
- What to send to PA Farm Link for the landowner to review.
 - Resume
 - Cover letter providing information on your agricultural background and experience as well as your goals for a farm operation.
- Your Information
 - PA Farm Link will send your information to the landowner to review.

If the landowner feels there is a potential match to be made, the landowner will contact you directly.

Agreements made between landowners and inquiring individuals are the responsibility of the two parties. PA Farm Link assumes no responsibility for agreements between the parties.

Entering Farmer Database

- Members – anyone looking to buy or lease land for agriculture production.
- Entering or “New” Farmers are those new to farming, those looking to relocate to PA, or those looking to expand current farm operations/practices.
- Entering Farmers can apply as an online PA Farm Link database member to have their listing searchable by landowners.



How to Apply as an Entering Farmer

- From the PA Farm Link Home page, www.pafarmlink.org, click on:

RESOURCES

For New Farmers

New Farmer Sign Up/Fill
out Registration Form



The screenshot shows the PA Farm Link website with a yellow and green background. The main navigation bar includes links for ABOUT US, DONATE, FIND A FARM, FIND A FARMER, HOME, and RESOURCES. Below the navigation bar, the 'NEW FARMER SIGN UP' section is highlighted. It features a 'Step 1 - Complete \$100.00 Registration Fee' heading, a 'Buy Now' button, and social media icons for VISA, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover. Below this, 'Step 2 - Complete Registration Form' is listed. A privacy notice at the bottom states: 'To protect your privacy, none of the personal information gathered below will be displayed in the public listing on this website.'

Entering Farmer Application

- Complete the application online.
- PA Farm Link will review..
- Once accepted, your listing will be activated and searchable online.

ENTERING FARMER 20150

We are experienced with small vegetable plots and want to grow into about 3-5 acres of organic vegetables with a small herd of grass-fed steers.

We want to manage a small farm so we can provide fresh food to the local area and be able to hire and help young local persons learn about farming. Looking to build a Net-Zero farm and getting DCED certification. Interested in buying land in the south-eastern section of Adams County.

Formulated Business Plan: Yes

County: Adams

Marketing Plan: Yes

Acres: 1 to 10



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Entering Farmer Listing

ENTERING FARMER 20064

Currently running a small cow/calf herd, grass fed, and farming hay and crop ground. Continually looking to grow our operation throughout the Chester, Montgomery, Berks, and Bucks Counties. We are always looking for land to rent and farm. We would be interested in all acreage amounts so that we can continue to grow equity and expand our farm.

Reason: Interested in all acreage amounts so that we can continue to grow equity and expand our farm.

Formulated Business Plan: Yes

Marketing Plan: Yes

Currently Has Herd: Yes

Use Land For Crop Production: Yes

Experience: 7 or more

Farm Type: [Crops](#) [Livestock](#)

County: [Berks](#) [Bucks](#) [Chester](#) [Montgomery](#)

Region: [Region 1](#) [Region 2](#) [Region 3](#) [Region 4](#) [Region 5](#) [Region 6](#) [Region 7](#)

Acres: [11 to 30](#)

Farming Method: [Conventional](#)

Current Marketing: [Indirect Sales To Cooperative/Company/Farmers](#) [Other Direct Marketing Outlets](#)



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Connecting Entering Farmers to Landowners

- Landowners search the PA Farm Link online database.
- Landowners contact PA Farm Link and share farm details.
- PA Farm Link sends information from the landowner to the PA Farm Link Entering Farmer for review.
- Database members contact the landowner directly.

*Privacy policy – PA Farm Link can not provide contact information of database members without their permission. No contact information including name, phone number, or location of farms are included in listings.

*Agreements made between a database member and an inquiring party are the responsibility of those two parties.

Database 2021 Kickoff

- Offering complimentary Database application fee (\$100 value) through April 1st.
- For participants of this program “Finding Land, Farmland for the Next Generation”, PA Farm Link will **extend the deadline** to April 5th. Email farmland@pafarmlink.org to inquire about this offer.
- Marlene, database manager, 724-202-9111.



Things to consider

- Developing a marketing and/or business plan
- Financing your agricultural business
- Approaching your search for farm land with a business attitude
- Know your strengths
- Being realistic



Build your Community Social Network

- Tap community organizations
- Connect with an incubator or community farm
- Join a farm or beginning farmer organization
- Reach out to conservation organizations
- Reach out to other producers and agricultural organizations
- Agriculture-related business owners



Reach out to Government Agencies

- Cooperative Extension
- State Department of Agriculture
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- Soil and Water Conservation District
- County or town commissions / departments that manage or plan land use



Questions for Panelists on April 8

- Start thinking of questions that you would like to ask panelists on the last night's session!!
 - Brook Duer– Penn State Ag Law Center
 - Regional Speakers (farmers, ag realtors, ag loan officers, farmland preservation directors, and more!)
- Put your questions in the Chat during any of our sessions!!!!





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Let's make a plan and
find some land!





Saving the Land that Sustains Us



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American Farmland Trust

www.farmland.org

Resources & Photo Sources

- American Farmland Trust: <https://farmland.org/>



- PA Farm Link: <https://www.pafarmlink.org/>

