

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

## OBJECTIVE

The Agricultural Preserve Board desires to preserve Lancaster County's best agricultural land in a manner which directs and accommodates growth and development.

## PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this program to protect viable agriculture land by acquiring agricultural conservation easements from landowners who voluntarily apply to the program. Agricultural conservation easements prevent the development or improvement of the land for any purpose other than agricultural production, and allow related agricultural activities. Further, it is the purpose of this program to:

- Permanently preserve, conserve and protect Lancaster County's farmland to encourage its development and improvement for the production of food and other agricultural products; as a valued natural and ecological resource which provides needed open space for clean air, clean water as well as for aesthetic purposes; and so that agricultural land may be protected and enhanced as a viable segment of Lancaster County's economy and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance.
- Encourage landowners to make a long-term commitment to agriculture by offering them financial incentives and security of land use, and by providing compensation in exchange for their relinquishment of the right to develop their private property.
- Protect farming operations from incompatible nonfarm land uses that may render farming impracticable and permanently preserve Lancaster County's farmland in areas planned for agriculture in a manner that directs and accommodates growth.
- Provide funding and incentives for agricultural conservation easements and leverage public funds through donations, bargain sales and public/private partnerships in order to increase the funds available for agricultural conservation easement purchases.
- Protect the investment of taxpayers in agricultural conservation easements through best management practices on preserved farmland and monitoring and defending legal challenges to agricultural conservation easements.
- Adapt and innovate to meet local needs and priorities, to reflect modern farming practices and to utilize the best available methods and technologies to effectively and efficiently administer Lancaster County's farmland preservation program.