

The Future is here for Farmland Preservation

Balanced 'smart growth' is Lancaster County's key to success without sacrificing open space

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On June 5th, the barn at The Farm at Eagle's Ridge was transformed into an educational venue dedicated to answering the question – what does the future of farmland preservation look like in Lancaster County? Lancaster Farmland Trust hosted their first ever 'Forum on the Future of Farmland Preservation' on Wednesday evening. The event was intended to connect local thought leaders with experts from their own staff, as well as the Lancaster County Planning Commission, the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board, and renowned University of Pennsylvania Professor, Tom Daniels.

"Our community is at a cross-roads with regards to growth," explains Karen Martynick, Lancaster Farmland Trust's Executive Director. "As a County, we have many decisions to make with regards to how to move forward. This event serves to help inform those decisions."

Lancaster County leads the nation in farmland preservation. The community values farmland and its agrarian roots but also embraces the diversity and growth Lancaster County has experienced in the last decade. Last October, the Planning Commission published its places2040 comprehensive plan. The plan calls for big changes to accommodate our rapidly growing population and expanding industrial boom. Additionally, Lancaster County is expected to play a significant role in improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay. To protect both our way of life in Lancaster County and our water quality, farmland plays a key role.

The Forum offered attendees the opportunity to hear from industry experts and local farmers about the state of the County and the agricultural economy. Discussions revolved around Lancaster's competitive housing market, ongoing development projects, water quality initiatives, and the impact of projected population increases. Lancaster Farmland Trust took the opportunity to conduct a live drone demonstration during the event.

"I bring my students here. I have to remind them that Paradise is in Lancaster County. They think it's somewhere in Philadelphia, but it's not. It's here. And it's protected," Professor Tom Daniels quips about the beauty of Lancaster County's rural landscape during his presentation at the Forum. Professor Daniels also provided insight into the thriving infrastructure located in the County to accommodate agribusinesses from across the region.

Lancaster Farmland Trust is planning other events this summer to connect the community to the importance of protecting farmland and creating sustainable, balanced growth. For more information on this event and other upcoming events, please visit LFT's website, lancasterfarmlandtrust.org.

About Lancaster Farmland Trust

Lancaster Farmland Trust was established in 1988 by local citizens concerned about the growing threat of development in Lancaster County. LFT works to preserve and steward the beautiful, productive farmland of Lancaster County that reflects our heritage, supports our economy, nurtures our health and enhances our quality of life.

Details at www.lancasterfarmlandtrust.org

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