

Farmland Approved For Preservation Program

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—Agricultural Secretary Charles C. Brosius announced the approval of easement purchases for 22 farms encompassing 2,553 acres of prime farmland.

"When finalized, this round of purchases will go a long way in our efforts to preserve valuable farmlands from development," said Brosius. The purchases were approved by the Pennsylvania Agricultural Land Preservation Board, which is chaired by the agriculture department secretary.

"Protecting our farmlands is important," Brosius said. "Through this program, quality farmlands are guaranteed for future generations to use."

Initiated in 1989, the Farmland Protection Program allows the state and counties to purchase development rights—referred to as easements—to guarantee that farms will remain as agricultural land.

Individual landowners initially apply to county agricultural land preservation boards. If approved for purchase, the county boards may request state funding participation. Counties may participate jointly with the state in easement purchases or may purchase easements outright themselves.

With today's easement purchases, 530 farms in 30 counties will have joined the program or had easement purchases approved, protecting 66,519 acres of farmland. As of January 1, easement purchases have been approved for 5,778 acres on 46 farms in 18 counties.

Following are the properties approved, listed by county, owner,

township, acreage and purchase cost:

• Adams—Clyde L. Mummert, Mt. Pleasant Township, 33 acres, \$77,118

• Berks—Elmer H. and Lena K. Eyrich, Oley Township, 162 acres, \$324,900

• Berks—Joel C. Habegger Farm #1, Bethel Township, 149 acres, \$270,100

• Berks—Joel C. Habegger Farm #2, Bethel Township, 151 acres, \$243,750

• Berks—Reiner W. and Marilyn J. Miller, North Heidelberg Township, 72 acres, \$125,702

• Berks—Philip W. and Coreen Luckenbill, Upper Tulpehocken Township, 119 acres, \$202,555

• Berks—Charles H. Schaeffer, Oley Township, 77 acres, \$155,060

• Berks—Wayne H. and Linda J. Wanner, Richmond Township, 45 acres, \$90,000

• Chester—Timothy K. and Ruth L. Kauffman, West Fallowfield Township, 123 acres, \$405,966

• Lackawanna—Willard C., Karen F., and Andrew Keating, Jefferson Township, 19 acres, \$34,970

• Lehigh—Raymond C. Christman, Heidelberg Township, 111 acres, \$204,774

• Lehigh—David P. and Pamela A. Kerschner, Heidelberg Township, 49 acres, \$86,693

• Lehigh—Arlan W. and Barbara D. Mantz, North Whitehall Township, 191 acres, \$514,491

• Mercer—Michael and Andrea Rabold, Coolspring Township, 199 acres, \$119,310

• Montgomery—Kenneth P.

and Patricia A. Schultz, Upper Hanover Township, 82 acres, \$296,571

• Northampton—Brian and Eva Fulmer, Mark and Joann Fulmer, and Kenneth and Betty Barlieb, Plainfield Township, 152 acres, \$315,164

• Schuylkill—Robert P., Opal

R., and James F. Brosius, Eldred Township, 90 acres, \$90,350

• Schuylkill—Larry R. and Lori A. Heim, Eldred Township, 105 acres, \$104,760

• Schuylkill—James L. and Rachel P. Hepler, Eldred Township, 207 acres, \$207,250

• Schuylkill—Timothy D. and

Joyce R. Masser, Eldred Township, 141 acres, \$141,330

• Schuylkill—Kenneth, Virginia, Henry, and Brett Stehr, Eldred Township, 137 acres, \$137,200

• Union—Carl C. and Ruth R. Cotner, Gregg Township, 142 acres, \$127,431.

Fertilize The Whole Rotation

NORCROSS, Ga.—Successful farming comes from producing consistently high yields year in and year out. This is not an easy task, considering all the uncontrollable factors that affect plant growth. Seemingly each year brings a new set of problems. One year it's drought, the next year it may be a prolonged wet, cold spring...or a heat wave during pollination.

One thing we know for sure, there is plenty of risk in farming from uncontrollable factors. We don't need to add to that risk by neglecting those production factors that we can control...such as fertilizer.

Fertilizer is essential for the production of consistently high yielding and high quality crops. The value of building up soil fertility with phosphorus and potassium fertilizers has been demonstrated innumerable times over the years. And certainly most farmers recognize the value of both nutrients. A balanced nutrient management program that adequately meets crop needs not only produces more yield, but also produces crops that are better able to withstand insect and disease

attack, utilize water more efficiently, and ripen more evenly at harvest.

This is true for all crops...not just the high cash value ones. But it is easy to forget and skimp on fertilization for some crops in rotation. It may appear that not fertilizing these low cash return crops is helping cash flow. And it may be...but only in the short term. Trouble is, this leads us to a "rob Peter to pay Paul" situation. By not fertilizing, or by not applying adequate amounts of nutrients, the fertility level of the soil will be drawn down by the hungry crops. Then when a high cash value crop is planted, the soil has previously been depleted and growth will be less than optimum. "Paul," the low cash value crop, has robbed from "Peter," the high cash value crop.

It may not be necessary to fertilize every crop every year, but the fertilizer program must satisfy the demands of the rotation or loss of soil fertility and productivity is inevitable. In a corn-soybean rotation, for example, soybeans benefit from fertilizer applied to the corn crop. But nutrients removed in the harvested crops plus that

which may become unavailable by natural processes must be replaced to sustain profitable production.

Cotton growers in California have learned this lesson the hard way. When cotton is rotated with alfalfa, tremendous amounts of potassium are removed from the soil. Each 8-ton per acre crop of alfalfa removes the equivalent of nearly 500 pounds of potash. Although cotton is very sensitive to low available soil potassium, and both yield and quality of the lint seriously suffer when the potassium supply is insufficient, the lint itself does not remove much potassium from the field. Each bale of lint cotton removes about 20 pounds of potash. For decades growers have been under-fertilizing the cotton-alfalfa rotation. They focused on the nutrient needs of cotton, essentially ignoring the large amounts of potassium being removed by alfalfa. Now, many cotton fields are chronically short of potassium and it will take years to build them back up to where potassium is no longer a limiting factor. In the meanwhile, yields and quality of cotton are suffering...and so are profits!

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