— 'Passing On The Farm' — Workshop In Chambersburg

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — How can you help the next generation enter farming careers and eventually take over the family farm? That question is central to both Pennsylvanoia agriculture and your farm's future. If you would like to see your farm remain in agricultural production, it is never too early to consider your options on how to pass on your farm business to the next generation.

Pennsylvania Farm Link is hosting a daylong workshop at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Chambersburg on December 15, to help you with farm succession planning. Individuals who want to learn ways to successfully transfer their farm to family members, or those wanting to locate interested beginning farmers are urged to attend. Beginning farmers or people, who are new to farming, are also urged to attend to discuss beginning farmer issues and ways to gradually develop a farm business.

According to Farm Link Director Marion Bowlan, "45 percent of Pennsylvania's farm operators are age 55 or older. There are two times as many operators over the age of 65 as under the age of 35. In the next 10 years, nearly one-quarter of the state's 44,800 farms, will change hands. How we address this problem will affect agriculture in Pennsylvania for generations to come."

Working to assist in the successful transfer of family farms and to help retain agricultural lands in production, Pennsylvania Farm Link sponsors regional faram succession workshops for beginning and retiring farmers. Scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., this workshop will address the following issues: business planning, farm loan resources, legal aspects of a transfer, marketing ideas, start-up strategies, bringing the next generation into the farm business, record keeping, farm transfer strategies, and farmland preservation programs. Participating agencies and individuals include Pennsylvania Farm Link, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Farm Credit, Farm Service Agency, Franklin County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, American Express Financial Advisors, an attorney, and a panel of local farmers.

Pre-registration for this free workshop is required by calling Farm Link at 717-558-7726 by December 11. Participants are required to eat lunch at the Lighthouse Restaurant. Lunches are generally under \$10. The Lighthouse is located on Route 11 north of Chambersburg and south of the Route 997 intersection. Pennsylvania Farm Link is a non-profit organization governed by a board of directors representing diverse agricultural interests.

