

# Farmland Preservation Program

## Eight-Year Preservation

### How It Works

Farmland owners agree to voluntarily restrict nonagricultural development for a period of eight years in exchange for certain benefits. There are two types of eight-year programs: municipally approved programs, which require a formal agreement among the landowner, county and municipality, and non-municipally approved programs, which require an agreement between only the landowner and county.

### Application

Landowners apply to their county agriculture development board.

### Criteria

Land must be located in an Agricultural Development Area, be eligible for Farmland Assessment and meet local and/or county program criteria.

### Benefits

Landowners enrolled in both municipally and non-municipally approved programs receive no direct compensation for participating but are eligible to apply to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) for grants that fund up to 50 percent of the costs of approved soil and water conservation projects. Additionally, those in municipally approved programs enjoy greater protections from nuisance complaints, emergency fuel and water rationing, zoning changes and eminent domain actions.

### Special Considerations

An eight-year agreement is recorded with the county clerk in the same manner as a deed. Land may be withdrawn prior to expiration of the eight-year period only in cases of death or incapacitating illness of the owner or other serious hardship or bankruptcy. Withdrawal from the program must be approved by the county agriculture development board and, for municipally approved programs, by the municipality.

An owner who wants to sell the farm while enrolled in an eight-year program must provide the SADC with an executed contract of sale for the property. The SADC then has the first right and option to match the conditions of that contract and purchase the property itself.

### For More Information

Landowners should contact their county agriculture development board, or the State Agriculture Development Committee at (609) 984-2504.