



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Shapiro Administration Highlights Agriculture’s Importance in New Economic Development Strategy During Tour of Reykjavik Creamery in Cumberland County**

*The ten-year strategy guides our path forward to strong economic growth, jobs, and innovation.*

*The Commonwealth will use the new comprehensive strategy to reach its full economic potential and ensure every Pennsylvanian has the opportunity to thrive by focusing on five key sectors: Agriculture, Energy, Life Sciences, Manufacturing, and Robotics and Technology.*

**Newville, PA** – Today, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) **Secretary Rick Siger** and Department of Agriculture **Secretary Russell Redding** visited high-tech food manufacturer [Reykjavik Creamery](#) in Newville to highlight the important role of agriculture in the new [Pennsylvania Economic Development Strategy](#) — the first plan of its kind to guide the Commonwealth in almost 20 years.

Governor Josh Shapiro and Secretary Siger [unveiled](#) the strategy this week at OraSure Technologies in the Lehigh Valley. The Governor and his Administration have been working aggressively to make Pennsylvania a leader in innovation and economic development.

The new economic development strategy will capitalize on the Commonwealth’s strengths and reignite our economy by focusing on the Agriculture, Energy, Life Sciences, Manufacturing, and Robotics and Technology sectors. Pennsylvania is a national leader in agricultural products including dairy, fruit, livestock, poultry, forest products, and more.

“Agriculture has been, and will continue to be, a crucial component of Pennsylvania’s economy,” **said Secretary Siger**. “As we implement this new plan, we will ensure the Commonwealth continues as a national leader in agriculture, and make sure the industry continues to thrive well into the future. This strategy will lead to real economic growth for Pennsylvania businesses and more opportunity for our workers.”

As one of Pennsylvania’s legacy industries, agriculture’s economic impact is prevalent across the state:

- **Livestock and poultry production and processing** in South Central, Lehigh Valley, and Southeast regions.
- **Dairy production** in the Northwest, South Central, and Northern Tier regions.
- **Animal food manufacturing** across the state, with hubs in the Central, Lehigh Valley, Northern Tier, Northwest, and South Central regions.

- **Snack food, beverage, and confectionery product manufacturing** with hubs in South Central, Central, Northeast, and Lehigh Valley regions.
- **Forest product manufacturing** in the Northern Tier, Northwest, and North Central regions.
- **Mushroom manufacturing** in South Central and the Southeast regions

Agriculture contributes \$132.5 billion annually to Pennsylvania's economy. The Commonwealth ranks first nationally in organic poultry production, first in organic mushroom production, third in overall organic sales, and is the fourth largest producer of food products.

"Governor Shapiro's new strategy recognizes that agriculture drives our economy," **Secretary Redding said**. "More importantly, it recognizes that no sector thrives on its own. We won't go far if we aren't all going forward together. Innovation and growth in agriculture not only depend on innovation and growth in energy, life sciences, manufacturing, and technology — agriculture drives innovation in each of those sectors. Investing in that synergy will feed our success together over Pennsylvania's next decade."

Secretaries Siger and Redding toured Reykjavik Creamery, a high-tech food manufacturing facility that specializes in premium cultured artisan dairy products. The company's 30,000-square-foot facility creates specialized dairy products, including strained yogurt called skyr — otherwise known as Icelandic style yogurt.

"As the CEO of Reykjavik Creamery, I am delighted to commend Governor Shapiro for his insightful recognition of the crucial economic role played by agriculture and dairy processing in Pennsylvania," **said Gunnar Birgisson, CEO, Reykjavik Creamery**. "As a relatively new dairy processing facility specializing in contract manufacturing, we are experiencing encouraging growth prospects in the state. Consequently, we wholeheartedly embrace the Governor's initiative and are committed to actively participating in the creation of opportunities. Our focus includes the development and production of new and innovative high-protein dairy products in collaboration with our clients. We are prepared to make the necessary investments to ensure sustained long-term support for this growth. We look forward to contributing to Pennsylvania's thriving agricultural and dairy landscape under Governor Shapiro's forward-thinking leadership."

Also participating in today's event were the [Painterland Sisters](#), Hayley and Stephanie Painter, fourth-generation dairy farmers from Tioga County who produce Painterland Sisters organic skyr yogurt, and Daniyar Chukin, CEO of [Norr Organic](#), a New York-based company which produces probiotic skyr yogurt. Both companies' products are manufactured at Reykjavik Creamery.

"Agriculture is the backbone of our communities nationwide, and Pennsylvania farmers and producers are a key force in fueling our future," **said Hayley Painter, Co-Founder, Painterland Sisters**. "I am proud to be a fourth-generation Pennsylvania dairy farmer, as well as the co-founder of one of the fastest-growing yogurt brands in our country based right here in PA. Our mission at Painterland Sisters is to connect consumers with the source of their food, the American Farmer. Empowering Pennsylvania agriculture both boosts our economy and creates transformative opportunities in both rural communities and cities alike. This plan encourages synergistic relationships amongst our entire commonwealth."

Ryan Unger, President and CEO of the Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC was also on-hand today to show support for the new economic strategy.

"We applaud Governor Shapiro's leadership and support of economic development with the announcement of the Pennsylvania Economic Development Strategy," **said Unger**. "With the resources outlined in the plan, along with the engagement and support of our private sector and economic development partners, we are excited about Pennsylvania's economic future. Our region and commonwealth's abundance of assets are ready to be catalyzed. We are excited to work with Governor Shapiro, Secretary Siger, and their team to get it done."

The Shapiro Administration's new economic development strategy embraces AgTech, bringing modern tech into the field and helping Pennsylvania's agriculture sector grow with global demand. AgTech will help farmers continue to innovate to optimize yields, reduce environmental impacts through precision agriculture, and reduce energy consumption. Embracing AgTech will help ensure food security and economic stability for the Commonwealth, while also signifying a commitment to sustainability, offering a path to a more resilient and efficient agricultural future.

As part of this commitment to AgTech and innovation, Governor Shapiro will be calling for a \$10 million investment for the Agricultural Innovation Program in his 2024-25 budget address.

Pennsylvania has a strong foundation for the new economic development strategy, including: our proximity to major U.S. markets and relative low cost of doing business; the more than 23 Fortune 500 companies and over 1 million small businesses in the Commonwealth; 190,000 skilled graduates produced by our colleges and universities every year; a diverse, talented workforce, and much more.

The Shapiro Administration's ten-year economic development strategy centers upon five goals:

- **Invest in our economic growth to compete** and prioritize economic development investments that result in real opportunities for our businesses, communities, and residents.
- **Continue to make government work at the speed of business**, and ensure all companies find an attractive business environment where they can innovate and thrive.
- **Open doors of opportunity for all Pennsylvanians** and enable every Pennsylvanian to secure a family-sustaining job and have a meaningful career.
- **Innovate to win**, because innovators become entrepreneurs and new discoveries enable our people and companies to succeed.
- **Build vibrant and resilient regions**, where every community flourishes and provides for the needs of all residents and businesses.

The comprehensive strategy was developed with extensive input from partners in local government, the private sector, the economic development community, labor, higher education, and the nonprofit sector.

The full Economic Development Strategy is available at [PAGetsItDone.com](https://PAGetsItDone.com).

**Note:** Video and photos of today's event are available at [pacast.com](https://pacast.com).

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