



# GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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## **During Visit to Lancaster County Farm, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Redding Highlight How Proposed \$10.3 Million Agriculture Innovation Program Will Support Pennsylvania Farmers**

*The Governor's Economic Development Strategy and 2024-25 budget proposal prioritize agriculture as a key pillar of opportunity – and the Governor's \$10.3 million agriculture innovation program will support our farmers and attract new businesses.*

*The Governor's proposal will help continue Pennsylvania's national legacy as an agricultural leader and has earned broad bipartisan support in House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee.*

**Holtwood, PA** – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding** toured Cedar Meadow Farm, a regenerative farm in Lancaster County that produces hemp and mixed vegetables, to highlight how his 2024-25 budget proposal would support the innovative agriculture advancements happening across the Commonwealth and bolster the \$132 billion agriculture industry that supports over 600,000 jobs in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's agriculture industry is critical to the Commonwealth's economy – which is why the Governor's [Economic Development Strategy](#) puts agriculture front and center in the conversation and his [2024-25 budget](#) proposes **\$10.3 million** in agriculture innovation to support and attract new businesses and continue Pennsylvania's national legacy as an agricultural leader.

“I’ve visited so many multigenerational farms across Pennsylvania like Cedar Meadow Farm to see innovative examples of what our farmers have built firsthand. Farming is part of our heritage here in Pennsylvania – but it’s also part of our present and our future as a Commonwealth,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “That’s why my Economic Development Strategy leans heavily on agriculture as one of the key pillars of opportunity and is why my budget includes \$10 million in additional funding for our Ag Innovation initiative. Our farmers form the backbone of our economy here in Pennsylvania – they put food on our tables and in our stores and restaurants every day – we need to have their backs, and my Administration does.”

The Governor’s proposal, which has been introduced as [House Bill 2310](#), establishes and funds the Agriculture Innovation program to support new solutions to complex agricultural and environmental challenges and keep Pennsylvania’s agriculture industry a national leader in the coming decades. The Governor’s proposal [has earned broad bipartisan support](#) in House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee.

The Agriculture Innovation and Conservation program would enable the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) to offer grants to farmers and other agriculture businesses to implement new agriculture technologies, conservation, and renewable energy innovations – like those the Governor and Secretary Redding toured today while at Cedar Meadow Farm – expanding their potential to generate profits, enrich soil and water resources, and produce energy on the farm.

“No-till and cover crops were once considered innovative practices, but visionaries like Steve Groff have made them commonplace in Pennsylvania with their own dollars and ever-increasing backing by state and federal government,” said **Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding**. “Steve Groff has been a visionary, and a risk-taker who has not only seen his innovations pay off but has shared his knowledge with other farmers. The giant leaps in soil health he and other innovators like him have seen on his farm have ripple effects throughout our food and water supply. This is proof positive that innovation and conservation feed progress and are the reason the Shapiro Administration supports investing in the future of agriculture.”

Hemp, once a staple of Pennsylvania’s economy, has shown tremendous potential not just for industrial products from plant-based plastics, fabric, and sustainable building materials, but for soil regeneration — storing carbon and nutrients to improve both water and soil. Pennsylvania has provided more than **\$1.1 million** through the PA Farm Bill and other programs to support research, promotion, and innovation in the hemp industry. With more than **\$500,000** awarded since the beginning of the Shapiro Administration, the [PDA’s grant investments in growing a vibrant hemp industry](#) have now topped **\$1.5 million**.

Cedar Meadow Farm’s owner Steve Groff is a leading voice for regenerative agriculture methods and has been practicing no-till farming and planting cover crops for more than three decades. He was one of the first Pennsylvania farmers to grow hemp when it

became legal again under federal law. He has been a mentor to others across the nation as the new hemp industry continues to grow.

“I fully support this proposed \$10.3 million in agriculture innovation to help support and attract new agriculture businesses to continue to build the future of American agriculture right here in Pennsylvania,” said **Steve Groff, Owner of Cedar Meadow Farm**. “Thank you, Governor Shapiro, for taking the time to meet with us farmers. I can promise you that we will continue to invest in innovative agriculture that will strengthen Pennsylvania in the years to come.”

“I'm an active farmer and I serve as president of the Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance, and we are using some very new cutting-edge technology and innovation on our farm. There are lots of opportunities for innovation – and I'm grateful for the support and the grant that Governor Shapiro has made available to us farmers,” said **Jim Hershey, President of the Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance**. “Farming is not an easy occupation – there's a lot of risk involved, and the profit margins keep getting a little bit slimmer. With this innovation grant, I'm sure we'll be able to support the farmers in continuing to produce a good quality food product for our nation.”

Learn more about how the Governor's budget will continue to build the future of American agriculture right here in Pennsylvania at [shapirobudget.pa.gov](https://shapirobudget.pa.gov).

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