



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, February 3, 2025

Contact:

Governor's Press Office: ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Announces Recipients of the Nation's First Agricultural Innovation Grant to Continue Pennsylvania's Legacy as a National Leader in Agriculture

Governor Shapiro's bipartisan Agricultural Innovation Grant Program invests in 88 cutting-edge solutions and technologies in 45 counties that will shape the future of Pennsylvania agriculture.

The program received an overwhelming response, with the Department of Agriculture receiving more than \$68 million in funding requests.

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Josh Shapiro announced recipients of **\$10 million** in grants through the nation's first **Agricultural Innovation Grant Program**. This funding will help Pennsylvania agricultural businesses adopt innovative technologies and practices to enhance conservation and implement clean energy solutions — boosting profits, protecting soil and water resources, and generating more clean, renewable energy.

“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. If we want to compete and succeed as a Commonwealth, then we have to invest in them,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “We are announcing investments in game-changing projects that are fueling the future of farming in Pennsylvania — and giving farmers and ag producers the tools they need to get ahead. The future of our economic success and opportunity runs through our farmlands, and we are going to continue to invest in agricultural innovation in my Administration.”

“As our farmers face increasing demands to feed a growing population while continuing their legacy of environmental stewardship, this fund will help power our farm and food businesses to meet those challenges,” said **Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding**. “These investments ensure that Pennsylvania’s agricultural industry can continue to thrive and innovate for years to come.”

Governor Shapiro announced 88 awardees from 45 counties, representing 31 Pennsylvania-produced commodities and 40 areas of innovation. Grants will reimburse expenses for project planning and implementation, as well as larger-scale projects with a regional impact. These projects include technologies that improve efficiency, generate energy while reducing nutrient waste, and support crops that store carbon or replace non-renewable resources.

Today, **Secretary Redding** visited one of the grant recipients — **Brubaker Farms in Mount Joy, Lancaster**, which received **\$400,000 for an anaerobic digester** project that will produce renewable energy from manure.

The **Agricultural Innovation Grant Program** was proposed as part of **Governor Shapiro’s** 2024-2025 budget and championed by **Representative Paul Takac**, prime sponsor of the corresponding legislation, which passed with broad bipartisan support.

The program received an overwhelming response, with the **Department of Agriculture** receiving more than \$68 million in funding requests. The grants will help to accelerate the adoption of innovative practices that will benefit not only farmers but the long-term sustainability and productivity of the entire region.

“As the pace of agricultural research and innovation continues to accelerate at world-class universities like Penn State, it is vitally important that we help Pennsylvania’s farmers and companies take full advantage of these advances,” said **Representative Paul Takac**. “These Agricultural Innovation Fund matching grants are a great example of public-private partnerships and will help fund projects to make Pennsylvania farms more efficient, profitable, and sustainable, while also benefitting the environment and climate. I am confident this program will continue to grow in the years ahead as the benefits and return-on-investment from these inaugural awards become more evident.”

“Innovation is critical if agriculture is going to continue to be Commonwealth’s leading industry. The Governor has recognized the importance of food security by including

agriculture as one of the five pillars of his economic development strategy, and we thank the Shapiro Administration for creating this program,” said **Chris Hoffman, President, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau**. “With the increasing environmental responsibilities farmers are shouldering in a still-tight ag economy, we need to think outside the box to help farmers meet those challenges in a sustainable fashion while providing additional revenue streams that sustain their operations. The Ag Innovation grants supplement programs like ACAP, which are also helping farmers use technology to protect and improve the quality of our local waterways — projects that benefit every Pennsylvanian.”

Agriculture is critical to Pennsylvania’s economy, with more than 53,000 farms supporting over 600,000 jobs and contributing \$132.5 billion annually. **Governor Shapiro’s Economic Development Strategy** places agriculture at the forefront, recognizing that a thriving agricultural industry is key to powering the Commonwealth’s economic growth. Since taking office in 2022, the Governor has prioritized additional funding to support new businesses and reinforce Pennsylvania’s national reputation as a leader in agriculture.

The **Agricultural Innovation Grant Program** is a key element of **Governor Shapiro's Economic Development Strategy**, which positions agriculture alongside life sciences, manufacturing, robotics, technology, and energy as vital drivers of Pennsylvania’s long-term economic success.

The **Shapiro Administration** has continued to recognize Pennsylvania’s agriculture industry is key to the Commonwealth’s economic development and has prioritized investments in agriculture, including:

- Creating the first statewide [Economic Development Strategy](#) in nearly two decades with agriculture at the forefront.
- Investing \$1 million to create a new, one of the first-of-its kind Organic Center for Excellence to empower and support organic farmers and businesses and signed legislation creating a PA Preferred Organic™ brand for locally grown organic agricultural products.
- Securing \$13.8 million in PA Farm Bill investments each year since taking office, providing critical funds for rebuilding the workforce, and expanding processing infrastructure and marketing opportunities for the industry.

The \$10 million Agricultural Innovation Grants are investments in cutting-edge solutions and technologies that will shape the future of agriculture.

Recipients of the grants, listed by county, and amount received, are as follows:

Adams County

- Adams County Nursery – \$30,000 for development and installation of an advanced harvesting system for fruit crops.
- Bonnie Brae Fruit Farms – \$40,000 for installation of state-of-the-art spray technology, including Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) remote sensing components.
- Erik Larson- \$150,000 to upgrade sorting technology for improved fruit processing.
- Gettysburg Energy & Nutrient Recovery Facility – \$40,000 for converting poultry waste into renewable energy.
- Kime's Cider Mill – \$80,000 for installation of advanced refrigeration technology.
- Kuhn Orchards – \$19,000 for use of drone technology in precision chemical and fertilizer application.
- Rice Fruit Company – \$130,000 to implement a robotic bin-tipper system
- Robby V Sebright – \$40,000 for advanced ventilation systems for optimal dairy farm conditions.

Allegheny County

- Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania – \$40,000 for a horticultural project focused on native plant sustainability and processing.
- Bidwell Training Center – \$500,000 for the development of an urban agriculture farm and market.
- Ecotone Renewables – \$130,000 for advancing agriculture innovation through sustainable energy practices.

Armstrong County

- Bounty Beneath Mushrooms – \$130,000 for expanding mushroom farming and Controlled Environment Agriculture technology.

Beaver County

- Lake Forest Gardens – \$24,600 for automating tree-grading and sizing.
- Tiny Seed Farm – \$75,000 for the development of an integrated, sustainable farm-to-sale innovation plan.
- Aaron Sturges – \$18,775 to install pasteurizer and filter systems for improved cider production quality.

Bedford County

- Ridgetop Orchards – \$58,964 for wind machines to provide freeze protection for fruit crops.

Berks County

- PA Hemp Industry Council – \$50,000 for planning a Biobased Industrial Campus.
- Rodale Institute – \$150,225 to enhance soil health and reduce ecological footprints through biodigesters.
- Zahncroft Dairy – \$20,000 for consultation services to improve animal health.

Blair County

- Karen Wilson – \$13,000 for development of automated systems in high tunnels and greenhouses.
- UGI Energy Services – \$350,226 for a community digester project.

Butler County

- Four Seasons Farm – \$100,000 for installation of robotic milkers.

Cambria County

- Chris Smith – C&C Smith Lumber Co. –\$100,000 for implementing a scan and crosscut system.
- James Hite – \$200,000 to upgrade equipment to improve crop spraying and planting efficiency.
- Weakland Family Farms- \$200,000 to upgrade sprayer equipment to enhance crop protection and efficiency.

Cameron County

- Emporium Hardwoods Operating Company – \$130,000 for implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based trim optimization technology.

Carbon County

- Little Leaf PA – \$155,018 for hydroponic substrate upcycling technology.

Centre County

- Mark Bair – \$130,000 for a bio-diesel project.
- Shanthanu Krishna Kumar – \$19,000 for drone-based scanning and spraying.

Chester County

- Duane Hershey – \$99,000 to install a new milk handling systems to improve efficiency and animal welfare on dairy farms.
- Julia Bull and Hickory Grove Gardens – \$17,000 for soil steaming and remediation.

- Thomas D. Parsons – \$31,000 for implementing electronic sow feeding technology.
- Walmoore Ag-Grid – \$130,000 for the development of an anaerobic digester.

Clearfield County

- Forcey Lumber Co. – \$75,000 for updating equipment for improved hardwood processing.

Columbia County

- OHF Orchards, LLC – \$116,689 to implement innovative solutions for orchard management and fruit production.

Cumberland County

- Central Valley Farms – \$382,550 for the development of an anaerobic digester.
- Hanover Foods – \$100,000 for modernization of its wastewater treatment plant.
- Swift Aeroseed – \$52,000 to accelerate cover crop deployment using Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAR).

Dauphin County

- Jeffrey Nissley – \$7,000 to conduct a feasibility study for a dairy digester project.
- LocalDutch USA – \$40,000 for the planning of an indoor urban farming facility.
- The Center for Dairy Excellence – \$250,000 for a Dairy Innovation Grant Program.
- Blyler Fruit Farm – \$72,750 to install a new belt press for improved fruit processing efficiency.

Delaware County

- Center of Excellence for Indoor Agriculture – \$25,000 to plan an energy-efficient indoor farm.

Erie County

- Integrated Agricultural Systems – \$80,000 to enhance food access through urban farming projects.
- Fairview Evergreen Nurseries – \$18,000 for an autonomous inventory project.
- K Vineyards – \$100,000 for advanced harvesting technology.
- Minority Community Investment Coalition – \$130,000 to develop innovative urban agriculture projects to boost local food production and community engagement.

Fayette County

- Diamond Farms –\$17,000 for an efficient self-propelled mixer

Franklin County

- Wade Benedict – Waxstead Dairy – \$7,000 for planning an advanced composting project.
- Indiana County Conservation District – \$10,000 for planning initiatives to enhance local food systems and agricultural capacity.

Jefferson County

- Manno Farms – \$36,000 for enhancing land management and invasive species control.

Juniata County

- Reinford Farms – \$130,000 for updating motor systems in anaerobic digesters.

Lackawanna County

- Bastlab Processing – \$400,000 to build a hemp processing facility.

Lancaster County

- Brubaker Farms – \$400,000 for an anaerobic digester.
- Cedar Meadow Farm – \$63,000 to develop a hemp and flax planter.
- Dutchland – \$75,000 for poultry flock management technology.
- Sporting Valley Turf Farms – \$189,725 for an automated harvester system.
- Weaver Environmental Consulting – \$41,000 for manure management innovation.
- Central Manor Dairy LLC – \$69,702 for a systems to compost dairy manure, recycling it as bedding, and incorporating it into slurry.

Lehigh County

- The Seed Farm – \$14,000 for a rinse conveyor system.

Lycoming County

- Wheeland Lumber Company – \$100,000 to implement AI-based grading technology.

McKean County

- Bradford Forest – \$130,000 for modernizing kilns for wood product manufacturing.

Mercer County

- Powell Grain Farms – \$198,990 for a wet grain-bin system.

Mifflin County

- Metzler Forest Products – \$550,000 for regional impact, advancing carbon products from forestlands.

Montgomery County

- Passionate About Microgreens – \$200,000 to expand freeze-dried microgreens production to provide quality nutrition and sustainable food options.
- The Best Route – \$2,500 to expand a mobile market to increase access to locally grown food.

Northampton County

- Harvest Home Farms – \$16,000 for planning a vermicomposting facility.
- NDS Design – \$300,000 for revitalizing U.S. wood manufacturing.
- Harvest Home Farms – \$39,000 for the implementation of composting systems to recycle farm waste and improve soil health for beef production.

Northumberland County

- K. Schlegel Fruit Farm, LLC – \$16,396 for innovative approaches to fruit farming for better productivity and sustainability.

Philadelphia County

- AgriGates – \$31,000 for advancing precision livestock agri-tech.

Schuylkill County

- Jersey Acres Farms – \$100,000 for implementing automatic milking robots.
- Keystone Potato Products – \$100,000 for robotics systems to fill retail bins of bagged potatoes.
- Serman Masser – \$200,000 deploying new methods for potato farming and processing on the East Coast.

Snyder County

- Kreamer Feed – \$400,000 for transitioning their organic feed mill.
- Susquehanna Valley Drone Services – \$44,000 for drone technology expansion.
- Bingaman & Son Lumber Inc. – \$122,689 to expand kiln drying technology to improve lumber drying efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

Tioga County

- Painterland Farms – \$475,075 for regenerative farming and manure management.
- Woodland Biomass Innovations – \$50,000 for site planning of a biomass-to-fuel facility.

Union County

- A.M. Logging – \$500,000 to advance hardwood processing.

Warren County

- Tamarack Farms Piedmontese – \$18,000 for virtual fencing technology.

Washington County

- Eric Parker – \$19,000 to implementing smart agricultural solutions for improved farm management and sustainability.

Wayne County

- Twin Brook Farms – \$13,786 for sheep management innovations.

Westmoreland County

- Food21 of Pennsylvania – SWPA Dairy HUB – \$30,000 for site planning of a dairy processing hub.
- Jack Smail – \$6,825 for developing shock-absorbing dampeners for hay-making machinery.
- Christopher Neil Palmer – \$8,265 for implementing a regenerative farming approach by combining strip tillage and grazing.

Wyoming County

- Joel Field – \$16,250 to deploy automated systems for strawberry mulching to increase production efficiency.

York County

- Stephen Wilkerson – \$10,000 for multispectral crop analysis with AI.

Learn more about the [Agricultural Innovation Grant Program](#), including eligibility criteria and more, at agriculture.pa.gov.

Learn more about **Governor Shapiro's Economic Development Strategy** at pa.gov/getsitdone and learn about the **Shapiro Administration's** investments in a [thriving future for Pennsylvania agriculture](https://pa.gov/governor) at pa.gov/governor.

#