



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro's Remarks at the 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show Public Officials Luncheon

Harrisburg, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** delivered remarks at the **2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show's Public Officials Luncheon**, highlighting his Administration's continued commitment to Pennsylvania's agriculture industry and the farmers, producers, and ag communities who power the Commonwealth's economy. The Governor was joined by **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** and addressed state and local officials, agriculture leaders, and stakeholders from across the Commonwealth.

Following the luncheon, Governor Shapiro and Secretary Redding toured the Farm Show to visit with exhibitors, farmers, and agriculture businesses and highlight the innovation, products, and traditions that make Pennsylvania a national agriculture leader.

See below for Governor Shapiro's remarks to the 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show Public Officials Luncheon on January 14:

Good morning!

It is wonderful to be with you.

Emma, thank you for that introduction.

I just want to begin by warning you — I've had three cups of coffee and then Grandma Fay and I just downed like four milkshakes back there, so I've got some sugar in me today.

I just want to say to Emma, thank you for — not just your kind words — thank you for welcoming me to your family farm in Lebanon County earlier this year, as we celebrated a tremendous milestone, and that is that we are now number one in the nation when it comes to farmland preservation.

That's awesome.

And you know, Emma, I take it very seriously when folks invite me to their farm. I know it is a point of pride to be able to show off what you do and I know it is a point of pride to be able to rightly brag about the extraordinary work happening at Talview.

So, I just want you to know that it means a lot that you and your family had me there and I have taken the lessons I learned there with me as I've traveled all across this Commonwealth — including to many other farms — I brag about you, I brag about Talview, and I brag about your folks and the multiple generations that have made that farm absolutely terrific.

You know, I'm proud of what you're doing there and I'm proud of what all our farmers are doing.

And I recognize that farming — notwithstanding its rich history — is not just a critically important part of our heritage — it's also key to our future success here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Everyone who is here today — and out in the hall where I plan to spend a whole lot of time later — I want you to know that you are true partners in my Administration, led by the great Secretary Russell Redding of the Department of Agriculture.

I've said it before and it bears repeating — Secretary Redding is the finest Agriculture Secretary in the entire nation and we are blessed to have him in our Administration and working for all of you here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

His leadership and the work he and his team do every single day makes our ag industry stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous. And we are grateful for you, Mr. Secretary.

I'm honored to serve as the 48th Governor of this great Commonwealth and to address you for the fourth year in a row.

You know, when I came here the week before my inauguration in 2023, I made a commitment to put agriculture at the center of my Administration's work to grow our economy and create more opportunity, especially in our rural communities.

We've done that.

And as a result, we're investing in our farmers and our ag industry again.

We're highlighting and supporting the incredible strength of ag — whether we're speaking on farmland or we're speaking in an urban core with skyscrapers.

We're addressing the unique challenges our farmers face.

And we're growing and expanding this sector faster than ever before, in our Commonwealth's history.

That's real progress — and we're doing it by being purposeful in supporting our farmers and our ag industry.

And we're doing it by bringing people together to get stuff done for our farmers. I don't care if you're a Republican, Democrat, Independent, we all have to work together to support our farmers.

I want to thank all the folks in this room who have been our partners in this work, partners to me, to the Secretary, and to others —

First, I want to just highlight a member of my Administration who's here today — General Pippy. General Pippy is here with our farmer veterans — we want to thank you for your service and thank all of our veterans for your service. Thank you, General.

I want to acknowledge some of the leaders in the Pennsylvania Legislature — the leaders of our Ag Committees in the Senate and in the House.

I want to thank Senators Vogel and Schwank and Representatives Pashinski and Moul — who are here today. We all work together in a bipartisan manner to lift up ag, and I'm grateful to each and every one of you for being here.

By the way, Chairman Pashinski has more pins on than an FFA member. You're looking good there, Mr. Chairman.

I want to also thank our university leaders.

I think what is so unique about our state is the way in which our universities work together with our ag interests, work together with those who support ag in the government and in the private sector. And, so I want to thank our leaders at Penn State,

Penn Vet, our private sector businesses, and many others who all come together to lift up ag in our Commonwealth...

And most especially, I want to thank our farmers and ag producers all across this Commonwealth, who we've worked with to build on Pennsylvania's legacy of ag leadership and open up a new chapter for our future.

Putting ag at the center of the conversation on economic development has made all the difference in our collective success over the last three years.

Our state economy is strong. In fact, Moody's just reported that Pennsylvania has the only growing state economy in the northeastern part of the United States.

A huge reason for that is our growing and sustained ag sector.

But it doesn't take an economist to tell me that our ag sector is strong – I've seen it in person as I've spent countless hours visiting your farms and listening to your stories.

At the Kulp family farm in Blair County, they started construction on a new milking barn way ahead of schedule. Why? Because we processed all the permits they needed in record time.

At hardwood producers like Metzler Forest Products, hemp growers like Cedar Meadow Farms, and potato growers like Sterman Masser, they were able to adopt new technology to increase production and expand into new markets because of the Ag Innovation grants they received from our Administration.

Colton and Zack Troyer – brothers and 4th generation potato farmers – have taken their family's legacy farm to the next level by starting their own organic brand, Folkland Foods, because we invested, in part, in their vision for their future.

And, we proudly created the PA Preferred Organics label —

I think it's on the Secretary's vest. By the way, there will be a prize, a free milkshake to anyone who guesses the total number of vests that Secretary Redding has – and I know the answer. And there is a bonus milkshake if you can figure out how he organizes them in his closet.

And we're proud of the PA Preferred Organics label that Folkland Foods proudly displays on their products to let customers know that they source their top quality potatoes from right here in Pennsylvania.

You know, we work together to do all of this work for you – all the families who take on a hard day's work to provide for their fellow Pennsylvanians, and want to pass this legacy on to their children and grandchildren.

I believe each and every one of you deserves a government that works just as hard for you, as you work on your land.

Pennsylvania, as you all know, is home to over 48,000 farms – and an especially high number of those farms are small-to-midsized family farms. I think that's a huge point of pride for us and a huge point of opportunity for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania!

Nearly 600,000 of our fellow Pennsylvanians work in agriculture, and ag contributes \$132.5 billion to our state's economy each year.

To ignore that isn't just disrespectful to our farmers – it does not make sense economically.

That's why we've embraced agriculture and put it at the center of our economic development strategy.

We've made meaningful investments to help our farmers get ahead and at the same time, address some of the biggest challenges you face, monetary and non-monetary.

Together, we've fully funded the PA Farm Bill and its initiatives for three straight years.

I've noted this before, but I think it bears repeating. For a while, I was the only Governor in the entire country with a divided legislature — Senate led by Republicans, House led by Democrats.

Why do I share that with you? Because for any bill to reach my desk and be signed into law, it requires Republican votes and Democratic votes, and it requires a whole lot of common sense.

It is common sense to invest in agriculture here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and we're going to continue to bring people together to do just that.

In addition to fully funding our PA Farm Bill, we've invested in the ties between our farmers and our food banks, providing nearly \$100 million for food security and to support our neighbors who are hungry Pennsylvanians.

Listen, you all produce enough food to feed every Pennsylvanian. It is morally unacceptable that there are people out there who are hungry in this Commonwealth.

You, the farmers, are doing your part. Our food banks are doing their part. And now government is stepping up to do our part to connect the dots between the two.

In addition to that, we funded ACAP – the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program – with over \$82 million in state dollars to help farmers take care of their resources, improve water quality, and adopt sustainable practices.

And I want to thank those farmers who are along the Chesapeake Bay area. We have moved up dramatically in our grade with the Chesapeake Bay Commission. I now serve as the Chairman of that multistate organization and I brag about our farmers every opportunity I get, because you've stepped up and done extraordinary work to protect the Bay and protect our ecosystem. And I want to thank all of you for that work.

We've also doubled down on our commitment to helping our poultry farmers whose flocks were wiped out due to Hi-Path Avian Influenza — we talked about that the first year I was here, before I was sworn in as your governor — delivering tens of millions of dollars for our state's Recovery Fund.

And I want to be clear, we're not done yet.

Secretary Redding's team is working with Penn State and we are just weeks away from opening up our new western vet lab at their Beaver Campus and I'm excited for them to do that important work to expand our state's testing capacity and mitigate future disease outbreaks.

And listen, you know this, that's something folks talked about in the Capitol for years and years and years. We came together and we got it done. I'm looking forward to being there with Secretary Redding as we cut that ribbon.

I'm also particularly proud of our work to create the nation's first ever Ag Innovation Fund — and initially seeding it with \$10 million — and that fund has grown over time.

88 different projects across Pennsylvania, so far, have been funded with that Ag Innovation Fund.

As I set out as Governor, I showed up on our farms and I listened. And one of the things that became very clear was our farmers said, 'we need capital and we need access to technology and we don't know how to do that.'

So, we thought outside the box and created this fund — the first one in the nation — and we have a lot of wonderful projects that have happened as a result of this Ag Innovation Fund.

On my watch, we've already driven out over \$20 million for ag innovation — and you can bet I'll be proposing to fund that again in this next budget next month.

Because we can't let up now when it comes to investing in agriculture. What we are doing is working for our farmers and our ag sector. It is growing and I believe you all have limitless possibilities if we continue to work with you in partnership.

I want to talk a little bit about that partnership that we've created and the investments we've made.

We're investing in the next generation of ag workers – and ensuring this tradition continues to get passed down to future generations – by investing in 11 new apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships across this Commonwealth to help train more young farmers, from dairy herd management to urban agriculture.

We're putting this in our schools so our young people in our high schools can create pathways to success and opportunity for their futures that run right through Pennsylvania farmland.

And look – despite real challenges, I think we're well positioned for the future.

And you know how I know that? Because of folks like Emma, and the fact that we have more farmers under the age of 35 than any state in the entire country.

We should be proud of that. That's a point of pride and a point of opportunity for our shared future.

They represent the next generation of Pennsylvanians who will further our legacy in agriculture and further grow our state's economy.

And every time I'm with one of the young folks from FFA — or those like Chairman Pashinski posing as an FFA member with all their pins — I just want you to know I leave their presence just feeling hopeful, just feeling optimistic, feeling bullish on our future.

So, I want to thank our farmers for the great work they do everyday.

We've also opened new markets for our farmers with the launch of the Organic Center of Excellence and the PA Preferred Organics label I spoke about before. There's new growth, new markets, new opportunity for farmers because of that effort.

And because of that work, Pennsylvania continues to be one of the top states for organic sales, with more than 1 billion dollars of organic sales this year.

And by the way, we're #1 in the country when it comes to organic poultry and organic mushrooms.

And we're finally now, as a state, keeping up with the pace set by our ag sector and we are now moving at the speed of farming.

We've worked hard to streamline the permitting process and create an open line of communication for our farmers so we are a help to them as they look to expand, not a hindrance, as we historically were.

Thanks to that work, agencies like the Department of Environmental Protection, under the great leadership of Secretary Shirley, are moving more quickly, slashing wait times and eliminating backlogs that existed for years.

I want you to know that we do not have a backlog at DEP anymore. For years, they had hundreds if not thousands of permits on backlog — we have none.

I'll also note that about two and a half years ago, we instituted a money back guarantee system on our permits. We tell you it's gonna take 30 days and we don't hit that 30-day deadline, we will give you money back.

Our Commonwealth has put out 40 million permits during that time, and we've only had to issue five refunds – and not a single one has come from DEP. That's an extraordinary accomplishment by DEP and I thank them for their great work.

We went from being bottom five in the country — I think 48th — when it came to permitting time to now being a national model for other states. Other states are now coming to Pennsylvania wondering, how did we fix our permitting process? And we're becoming a model for others.

Just ask the Kulps.

But I'm mindful that for all the progress and the investments we've made on my watch, there are also very real challenges that our farmers face – you've talked to me about these as we sat at your kitchen tables or walked your farms.

I know that a lack of rural broadband – we're still waiting on the feds to approve the process to drive those dollars out — creates a challenge.

I know that rural health care remains a serious threat to the vitality of your communities and we're working on driving dollars out and a new plan to address that.

I realize that those volatile markets, exacerbated by the tariffs, are making it harder for farmers to access new markets and be able to pay for basic things they need, like feed and other necessities.

And I recognize that there's a growing shortage of farmworkers, in the here and now, ready to work on our mid-sized and family farms.

I know these are just a few of the things that keep farmers up at night.

And I don't want to dwell on the negatives because we've got so many positives, so much to celebrate, so many great opportunities for the future.

What I want you to know is that we are your partners in seeing through these challenges and taking advantage of these opportunities.

The Pennsylvania state government remains your partner in helping make progress in our ag sector and in our farms all across the Commonwealth.

And I want you to know you have a Governor who believes in what you do, who respects the hell out of what you do everyday, and you've got a Governor who's got your back. You have in the past and you will in the future.

I'm committed to fighting for you and supporting you in the great times and in the moments of challenge.

I want Pennsylvania to be number one in the country when it comes to ag – and we are making progress toward that goal.

And I'm going to continue to work with this great body — with each and every person here in this room and all the different industries and places you represent — to focus on commonsense, bipartisan solutions to support our farmers and our ag industry.

When you succeed, Pennsylvania succeeds, and all Pennsylvanians are better off.

We all know that this year marks the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding — and if you didn't know that, the butter sculpture will tell you that.

This is a nation that was fueled from the beginning by great Pennsylvania farmers and Pennsylvania innovators.

It's important we gather here today to celebrate this great nation, the greatest country on the face of the Earth, to celebrate the people that make it so wonderful, and to take a moment to appreciate the role and the legacy that our farmers played in our nation's founding and in our nation's success over the last quarter century.

Our history – and our future, the next 250 years – runs right through Pennsylvania's farmlands, and I'm proud to be your partner in progress.

Thank you. God bless you all. Enjoy the farm show.

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