



# NEWS

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## **Another Farm Permanently Preserved in Montgomery County**

**Norristown, PA (September 28, 2016)** – Montgomery County has added another farm to its growing list of permanently preserved farm properties, now totaling 158 farms. The farm was preserved under the Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Program. Montgomery County is one of 58 counties participating in this voluntary state program.

This newest preserved farm belongs to Sheldon Derstine, whose family has owned the 28-acre Lower Salford property for nearly 60 years. The Derstine farm is a crop farm with corn, wheat, and hay and is surrounded by several other preserved farms. The preservation of this farm helps to implement the land use vision plan in Montgomery County's award-winning comprehensive plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*.

"We are happy to add this family farm to our expanding list of preserved farms in Montgomery County," said Jody L. Holton, AICP, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. "Preserving farms in our County supports our local farming businesses and ensures prime agricultural land will not be developed."

The Montgomery County Agricultural Land Preservation Program began in 1990. In the past 26 years, just over 9,250 farmland acres have been preserved in the county. The preservation program purchases agricultural easements from productive farms in Montgomery County. When the easement is sold, the owner keeps the land, but no longer has the right to develop the property for non-farm uses. The land must remain farmed in perpetuity. The farmer may sell the land, but the new owner must continue to farm the land as well.

Preserving farmland continues to be a priority statewide. Last month, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture celebrated preserving its 5,000<sup>th</sup> farm and continues to fund Montgomery County's preservation

program, which the County administers.

Farming has not only played a significant role in Montgomery County's history, it is also integral to the county's sustainable future. The preservation of farmland and farming is important for the economy, environment, and local food availability in Montgomery County. This beneficial work could not be done without the support of the State and the many townships in the county that help to promote farms and farming.

Visit [www.montcopa.org/FarmlandProgram](http://www.montcopa.org/FarmlandProgram) for more information on the County's farmland preservation program, local food initiative, and a new guide listing the 12 farmers' markets and 59 farm stands in the county. For questions, please contact Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, Assistant Section Chief of County Planning with the Montgomery County Planning Commission, at 610-278-3727 or via email at [aleavitt@montcopa.org](mailto:aleavitt@montcopa.org).