



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Tuesday, May 19, 2026**

**Contact:** Shannon Powers, [shpowers@pa.gov](mailto:shpowers@pa.gov), 717.603.2056

## **Shapiro Administration and Feeding Pennsylvania Celebrate a Decade-Long Partnership with Farmers to Fight Food Insecurity in Our Communities through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System**

**Morgantown, PA** – Today, **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** and **Feeding Pennsylvania** celebrated a decade-long partnership supplying families in need with fresh, high-quality food, and giving Pennsylvania farmers a reliable market for their surplus crops through the [Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System \(PASS\)](#).

Since 2016, the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** has worked through PASS to increase food security and reduce food waste, providing **\$31.9 million** to Feeding Pennsylvania's network of food banks to buy **38.3 million pounds** of nutritious surplus food from Pennsylvania farmers. PASS dollars cover harvesting, processing, transportation, and packaging costs for top quality items that otherwise go to waste. In the last decade, the PASS partnership has united Pennsylvania's farmers, food banks, and state government in serving more than **31.7 million meals to 7.9 million households** in need across Pennsylvania.

“Pennsylvania farmers are great at what they do. We need our farmers to stay in business. And we need to feed the 1.7 million Pennsylvanians who struggle with hunger,” **Secretary Redding** said. “For 10 years, PASS has been a highly effective tool for bridging that gap between abundance and need — by multiplying the work our farmers and food banks do every day to help feed our neighbors. PASS is just one more way the **Shapiro Administration** is creating opportunities for Pennsylvania families and the farmers who feed them to thrive.”

**Governor Josh Shapiro** has steadily increased funding for food security since he was elected, including securing an **\$11 million increase in 2025-26**. His proposed budget for 2026-27 calls for sustaining that increase, including:

- **\$3 million** for the State Food Purchase Program and **\$1 million for PASS**,
- **\$2 million** for a new State Food Bucks program to supplement SNAP, and
- **\$5 million** in new funding to Pennsylvania food banks.

[Weaver's Orchard](#) in Morgantown hosted today's celebration. The family business founded in 1932 has been a 10-year PASS partner, providing their surplus fruit crops to

[Helping Harvest Fresh Food Bank](#). Funded by PASS dollars, Weaver's fruit ends up on the tables of area families in need.

"Weaver's Orchard is privileged to be located in a great fruit-growing area of Berks County and we are thankful we can contribute to the nutritional needs of the community through the Helping Harvest Food Bank system," said **Ed Weaver, president of Weaver's Orchard**. "The PASS program has provided a valuable resource by funding the harvest, container, and transportation costs for the surplus produce we have at times throughout the year. It is rewarding to us as a family to know that we can bless others with some of our produce each season."

"Ten years of the PASS program means ten years of Pennsylvania farmers and food banks working together to make sure fresh, nutritious food reaches the people who need it most. **Helping Harvest Fresh Food Bank President and Feeding Pennsylvania Board Chair Jay Worrall** said. "For Helping Harvest, this program has been transformative, not just in the volume of food that has come through our doors, but because of the quality of that food. Our neighbors facing food insecurity deserve the same wholesome, locally grown produce that ends up on dinner tables throughout the Commonwealth, and PASS makes that possible. We're proud to celebrate this milestone and the farmers, distributors, and partners who have made this program what it is."

"We need to continue supporting PASS at the state level," said **Pennsylvania State Senator Judy Schwank**, "because supporting farmers and feeding our neighbors makes Pennsylvania a better place for all of us to live."

According to [Feeding Pennsylvania](#) — a nonprofit leader working through agricultural partnerships, food provision, advocacy, and nutrition education to fight hunger — one in eight Pennsylvanians struggle with hunger.

"PASS has become one of Pennsylvania's most effective examples of how agriculture and hunger relief can work hand in hand," said **Feeding Pennsylvania CEO Julie Bancroft**. "Over the past ten years, the program has helped support farmers, strengthen local economies, and provide fresh local produce, protein, and dairy to Pennsylvanians experiencing food insecurity. As the need for food assistance remains high, continued investment in programs like PASS will be critical to ensuring both our agricultural communities and our neighbors can thrive."

Find Feeding Pennsylvania's [10-year fact sheet on the impact of PASS](#) here.

**Standing Up for Pennsylvania Farmers, Families and Food Security**

**Governor Shapiro and his Administration** have consistently stood up for farmers and families, taking decisive actions to protect Pennsylvania's food system and agricultural economy, and investing its future.

In 2025, when the USDA abruptly canceled Pennsylvania's **Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) agreement, cutting \$13 million in federal funding** for foodbanks to purchase fresh food from local farmers, the Governor [filed a lawsuit](#). The case is still pending.

In addition to [taking swift emergency actions](#) in response to federal funding cuts, Governor Shapiro has steadily increased funding for food assistance programs that feed low-income families and increase markets for local farmers. In his first two years in office, the Governor increased funding for the [State Food Purchase Program \(SFPP\)](#) by **\$2 million**, bringing total two-year funding to **\$26.6 million**. Through SFPP, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture provides cash grants to counties to buy and distribute food to low-income families. The program is among a full menu of food assistance programs administered by the department.

### **Helping Farmers Expand, Innovate, and Thrive**

Pennsylvania agriculture supports **over 48,800 farms, nearly 600,000 jobs, and contributes \$132.5 billion annually** to the Commonwealth's economy. Since taking office in 2023, **Governor Shapiro** has demonstrated that he understands that Pennsylvania's economic success depends on our rural communities and farms.

**Governor Shapiro's 2026-'27 budget** proposal furthers long-term agricultural growth and resilience by:

- Increasing the nation's only **Ag Innovation Program** to **\$19 million** to help build the future of American agriculture right here in Pennsylvania
- Fully funding the **Pennsylvania Farm Bill** to support business planning, infrastructure, and workforce development
- Funding a new state-of-the-art animal health laboratory in Western Pennsylvania
- Reviving the **Fresh Food Financing Initiative** to expand access to local food and support small businesses

Pennsylvania's Ag Innovation Grant Program is the first initiative in the nation to support innovation in the ag industry. **The first \$10 million round of Agricultural Innovation Grants** is at work funding [88 innovative projects in 45 counties](#) helping farmers adopt new technologies, expand production, protect soil and water resources, improve efficiency, and generate clean, renewable energy.

Governor Shapiro secured **\$6 million for the [Fresh Food Financing Initiative](#)** and through the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture program, invested [\\$3.4 million into strengthening local markets for fresh, locally sourced food](#) across 23 counties.

Agriculture is one of the cornerstones of **Governor Shapiro's Economic Development Strategy** — Pennsylvania's first in two decades — and the **Shapiro Administration** is committed to investing in its continued growth.

Read more about investments to keep Pennsylvania agriculture competitive and thriving [in Governor Shapiro's 2026-'27 budget proposal](#) and continued support for Pennsylvania farmers at [pa.gov/governor](http://pa.gov/governor).

###