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Agriculture Secretary Tours New AI Lab at Penn Vet to See How Shapiro Administration Agricultural Innovation Grants are Helping Veterinarians and Farmers ‘Get Stuff Done’

The brand new DAT-AI-LAB is a first-of-its-kind laboratory dedicated to monitoring animal welfare using artificial intelligence to accelerate collection and analysis of animal behavior data to precisely target treatments and increase farm profitability.

In its first year, the Agricultural Innovation Grant Program received an overwhelming response with more than \$68 million in funding requests for an available \$10 million in grants — and a second \$10 million round of grants funded in the Governor’s 2025-26 bipartisan budget has already drawn more than 317 additional applications requesting a total of \$73 million.

Harrisburg, PA – Today, **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** toured the new **DAT-AI-LAB** at the **University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine (Penn Vet) New Bolton Center**. The first-of-its-kind laboratory dedicated to monitoring animal behavior using artificial intelligence, officially opened today with \$31,000 in grant support from the nation’s first [Agricultural Innovation Grant Program](#), and a \$90,000 grant from [Pennsylvania’s Center for Poultry and Livestock Excellence](#).

The new, state-of-the-art lab, a collaboration among Penn Vet researchers and Pennsylvania-based **AgriGates**, will accelerate collection and analysis of animal behavior data to help veterinarians and farmers precisely target treatments, improving animal health and increasing farm profitability.

“The technology in this new, state-of-the-art lab at the New Bolton Center is already serving as a powerful tool to monitor animal health and speed up intervention when speed counts most to protect livestock and a farmer’s operation, and we hope more farmers will benefit from it,” said **Sec. Redding**. “Helping farmers work more efficiently and effectively to compete and grow their businesses is the reason the **Shapiro Administration** launched Ag Innovation Grants. This investment is working across Pennsylvania improving lives and helping agricultural businesses get stuff done.”

One of [88 projects funded in the first \\$10 million round of Ag Innovation Grants](#), the state-of-the-art [DAT-AI-LAB](#) will provide a physical location to house data infrastructure and foster collaboration among Penn Vet researchers and [AgriGates](#) analysts. The lab

enhances capabilities of the New Bolton Center, one of four labs in the **Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System**, [expanded earlier this year with a \\$6 million investment from the Commonwealth](#).

The DAT-AI-LAB lab provides solutions to specific challenges veterinarians and farmers face in the early detection of livestock health conditions that may require measures like quarantine, dietary adjustment, or medical treatment — ultimately resulting in healthier animals, and preventing more expensive interventions and costly downtime and losses.

“The DAT-AI-LAB represents a major step forward for Pennsylvania agriculture and veterinary innovation,” **AgriGates Co-Founder and CEO Daniel Foy** said. “By bringing together animal science, artificial intelligence, engineering and real-world farm systems, we are building tools that help farmers and veterinarians detect health and welfare challenges earlier, improve decision-making, and strengthen the long-term resilience of livestock agriculture. We are proud to help position Pennsylvania as a national leader in livestock AI and behavioral intelligence.”

“Animal agriculture, at more than 70% of farm-gate cash receipts in the Commonwealth, equates to opportunity for AI to optimize on-farm decisions concerning machinery, workforce, precision inputs, and for the animals, their husbandry, health, and wellbeing,” **University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine Dean Andrew Hoffman** said.”

In its first year, the **Agricultural Innovation Grant Program** received an overwhelming response with more than \$68 million in funding requests for an available \$10 million in grants. Eighty-eight projects funded in the first round include technologies that are working across the state to improve on-farm and processing efficiency, generate renewable energy while reducing nutrient waste, and support crops and practices that store carbon or replace non-renewable resources.

A **second \$10 million round of grants** funded in the Governor’s 2025-26 bipartisan budget has drawn more than 317 applications requesting a total of \$73 million. Applications are under review now.

Due to this overwhelming response and success, the Governor’s 2026-27 proposed budget includes a **\$9 million increase** for the **Agricultural Innovation Grant Program, including \$7 million in base grant funding and \$2 million for a county biodigester pilot project**.

Since taking office in 2022, **Governor Josh Shapiro** has demonstrated that he understands that Pennsylvania’s economic success depends on our rural communities and farms. Pennsylvania agriculture supports **over 48,800 farms, nearly 600,000 jobs, and contributes \$132.5 billion annually** to the Commonwealth’s economy.

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.

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