



Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

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Shapiro Administration Invests \$290,000 to Open New Markets for Farmers and Increase Sales and Exports of Pennsylvania Agricultural Products

Pennsylvania Ag Secretary tours family-owned cidery to announce investments that support Pennsylvania agricultural products and organizations like the PA Cider Guild – from innovation and planning to production and promotion.

*Last week, the Shapiro Administration unveiled **Pennsylvania's first-ever, 10-year Strategic Plan for Agriculture**. Through this plan, the Shapiro Administration is working to support farmers and ag producers and ensure one of the Commonwealth's largest industries remains profitable and globally competitive.*

Gardners, PA – Today, the **Shapiro Administration** announced an investment of \$291,447 in [Agriculture Promotion Grants](#) to support projects aimed at increasing domestic sales and exports of Pennsylvania agricultural products. **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** made the announcement at [Big Hill Ciderworks](#), a farmer-owned cidery and taproom in Adams County, and highlighted how a \$13,022 grant they received in 2026 has helped them build brand awareness and promote the cider industry in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania touts more than 35 cideries representing all corners of the Commonwealth, and the hard cider industry brings 146 jobs and \$33.6 million of total economic impact.

"Pennsylvania agriculture is built on the hard work and ingenuity of our farmers and the organizations that help connect consumers with their products," **Sec. Redding** said. "These grants help agricultural organizations reach new markets, strengthen their brands, and create more opportunities for Pennsylvania-grown products here at home and around the world. We're investing in the partnerships that help our farm businesses grow and keep our agricultural economy strong."

Sec. Redding also announced that the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** is now accepting applications for the next round of the program. Eligible Pennsylvania nonprofit agricultural product and marketing organizations are encouraged [to apply](#) for the latest round funded at \$393,363 in the 2026-27 state budget now through December 15, 2026. The grants reimburse nonprofits up to 50% of costs for projects educating consumers, promoting specific agriculture sectors, growing the consumers base for Pennsylvania products, or promoting regional agriculture-based tourism.

Big Hill Ciderworks is a member of the [Pennsylvania Cider Guild](#), which received a grant to support their work bringing together cidemakers, cideries, apple growers and related businesses to grow the Commonwealth's cider industry. Through education, outreach and legislative advocacy, the guild promotes Pennsylvania-grown cider, expands market opportunities and supports quality standards across the industry.

"This grant will help the **Pennsylvania Cider Guild** tell the story of our state's cider industry and connect more consumers with Pennsylvania-grown apples and the talented producers behind every bottle," said **Ben Wenk**, of Adams County-based **Ploughman Farm Cider** and former president of the PA Cider Guild. "By strengthening our brand and expanding outreach, we can grow demand for Pennsylvania cider and support cideries and apple growers across the Commonwealth."

Founded in 2013, Big Hill Ciderworks operates two farms near Gettysburg, producing more than 40 apple varieties across approximately 40 acres. The cidery manages every step of production, from growing and pressing apples to fermenting, packaging and distributing its products. Using traditional techniques, including slow fermentation and barrel aging, Big Hill crafts distinctive ciders that reflect the character of its orchards and the region.

"Pennsylvania's cider industry is rooted in our state's rich agricultural heritage and the hard work of our apple growers and cidemakers," said **Troy Lehman**, co-owner of Big Hill Ciderworks. "Programs like these help more people discover Pennsylvania cider, support local farms, and create new opportunities for producers like us to grow our businesses and reach new customers."

Agriculture Promotion Grant recipients, amounts, and funded projects announced today include:

Farm to Table Buy Local – \$75,000

Promote Western Pennsylvania farms and community gardens to consumer and wholesale buyers through advertising, events, email, and social media.

PA Coop Potato Growers – \$59,500

For a two-year initiative to promote Pennsylvania-grown potatoes under the **PA Preferred®** brand through consumer outreach, expanded trade show and farmers market participation and a new homeschool agricultural education program.

PA Friends of Ag Foundation – \$47,000

Expand agricultural literacy through four educational programs that provide students, educators, and communities with hands-on learning experiences and exposure to Pennsylvania agriculture and related careers.

PA Beef Council – \$49,990

Continued expansion of the [PA Beef to Schools](#) program.

The PA Ag Discovery Center – \$25,000

Support a strategic marketing campaign to strengthen digital outreach and drive the capital campaign needed to build the facility and ensure long-term success.

Northern Tier Hardwood Association – \$18,250

Develop a hands-on forest industry simulator training program to introduce students to forestry careers and prepare new workers for the industry.

PA Cider Guild – \$13,022

Build brand awareness and promote Pennsylvania cider through a new brand identity, consumer events, and year-round digital and print marketing.

Greenforge – \$3,685

Connect veteran and newer farmers with experienced direct marketers to help address challenges with market development, promotion, and pricing.

Interested applicants can find detailed guidelines and how to apply for the [Agricultural Promotion Matching Grant Program](#) at agriculture.pa.gov, or in the Oct. 17, 2026 edition of the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#).

Pennsylvania's Agriculture Sector is the Backbone of the Commonwealth

With more than 48,800 farms contributing over \$153.2 billion a year to the economy and supporting nearly 600,000 jobs in Pennsylvania, agriculture is foundational to the Commonwealth's heritage and future. **Governor Shapiro** has prioritized strengthening both agriculture and food security — helping farmers, families, and communities thrive — and last week unveiled Pennsylvania's **first-ever, 10-year Strategic Plan for Agriculture**. The ten-year plan outlines the necessary steps to address four critical industry needs including access to capital, efficiency and profitability, modernization and innovation, and public engagement. Through this plan, the Shapiro Administration is working to support farmers and ag producers and build a stronger, more competitive, and more connected agriculture industry.

The [2026-2027 bipartisan budget](#) Governor Shapiro signed earlier this year continues this work by:

- Maintaining \$10 million for the [Agricultural Innovation Grant Program](#) to continue driving innovation in Pennsylvania agriculture.
- Continuing \$13.8 million to fully fund the [Pennsylvania Farm Bill](#) to support business planning, infrastructure, and workforce development.
- Increasing the cap for capital development projects, which includes agricultural projects, in the [Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority](#) (PIDA) program from \$200,000 to potentially up to \$2 million.
- Directing funding to the [Agricultural Business Development Center](#) and the Centers of [Plant](#), [Beef](#), [Poultry & Livestock](#), and [Dairy Excellence](#) to support

farmers and producers with resources and services that enhance the long-term vitality of Pennsylvania farms.

- Sustaining funding for the nation's leading [farmland preservation program](#), protecting 6,781 farms and 671,082 acres in 58 counties from future development.

The Shapiro Administration highlighted \$165 million in investments to strengthen Pennsylvania's animal diagnostic laboratory network, including expansions at Penn State's Animal Diagnostic Laboratory ([\\$65 million](#)), a new PennVet laboratory ([\\$94 million](#)), and the Keystone Animal Diagnostic Center at Penn State Beaver ([\\$6 million](#)).

With these investments the **Shapiro Administration** is planning to maintain this momentum for future farm families and the Pennsylvania ag industry.

Read the full Strategic Plan for Agriculture [here](#) and learn more about Governor Shapiro's support for Pennsylvania farmers and leading agriculture industry [here](#).

Learn more about the **Shapiro Administration's efforts** to support Pennsylvania's workers and businesses and spur the economy, to build a stronger, more competitive economy for all Pennsylvanians.

Read more about the [2026-27 budget](#), and investments in Pennsylvania's powerhouse agriculture industry at governor.pa.gov.

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