

AGRICULTURAL SECURITY AREAS (ASAs)

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural Security Areas (ASAs), established under Pennsylvania's Agricultural Area Security Law (Act 43) in 1981, are a key tool for strengthening the agricultural economy and protecting farmland. ASAs designate areas where farming is the primary land use and provide protections that support the long-term viability of agricultural operations.

ASAs are voluntary, locally designated areas created through collaboration between municipalities and landowners. They reinforce the "Right-to-Farm" by recognizing agriculture as a priority land use. They are not regulatory.

This tool helps municipalities:

- Protect normal agricultural operations from nuisance complaints (e.g., noise, odor, dust)
- Reduce conflicts between agricultural and residential land uses
- Provide additional review before farmland is condemned for public projects
- Create a pathway to farmland preservation programs, such as the Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Program
- Strengthen local agricultural economies and preserve rural character



Barn located on an agricultural easement



Bails of hay

APPLICABILITY

Municipalities can:

- Identify and prioritize core agricultural areas with contiguous, viable farmland
- Engage farmers and landowners to build participation and awareness
- Use ASAs to proactively address potential land use conflicts in growing communities
- Coordinate ASAs with farmland preservation, conservation easements, and open space networks
- Leverage ASAs as an entry point for broader agricultural and cultural landscape planning

Without ASAs, municipalities may face increased land use conflicts between farmers and non-farming neighbors, loss of viable farmland to development pressure, limited access to farmland preservation programs, and greater vulnerability of farms to nuisance complaints and condemnation.



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CONSERVANCY

IMPLEMENTATION

Municipalities can establish and maintain ASAs through the following steps:

1. Create an Agricultural Security Area:

- Requires a minimum of 250 acres of collectively enrolled farmland; Individual farms must be at least 10 acres and in active agricultural use
- Established by municipal ordinance following a landowner petition
- Encourages participation through outreach and coordination with the farming community

2. Provide Ongoing Review and Administration

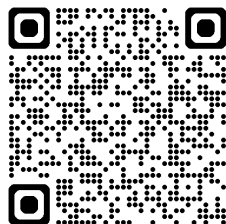
- Municipalities must review ASAs every 7 years
- Evaluate continued eligibility, acreage, and participation
- Update boundaries as needed to reflect current agricultural conditions

3. Coordinate with Local Planning Tools

- Align ASAs with agricultural zoning districts
- Integrate ASAs into comprehensive plans and open space planning efforts
- Use ASAs to support long-term farmland preservation goals



*For more information,
scan the QR code
to find additional
resources related to land
preservation..*



Agricultural easement in Honey Brook Township

SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDIES

A large majority of municipalities in Chester County utilize the ASA program which has led to one of the most successful farmland preservation programs in the state. Some municipalities that participate include:

Chester County, PA

- Honey Brook Township
- Pennsbury Township
- London Britain Township
- West Marlborough
- Willistown Township
- Charlestown Township

In neighboring Lancaster County, strong participation in ASAs has also helped sustain a nationally recognized agricultural economy and preserve prime farmland. As of 2017, 65 of PA's 67 counties participated in the ASA program.

1 Hoffman's Mill Road
P.O. Box 141
Chadds Ford, PA 19317

610.388.2700
conservancy@brandywine.org
www.brandywine.org/conservancy