WHY PROTECT FARMLAND? Agriculture has sustained Jefferson County's people and economy for more than 200 years. Our scenic and productive farmlands contribute to a diverse economy, support local businesses and employ local farmers. In 2005, concerned farmers, townspeople and public leaders founded the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board to protect and preserve the county's working farmlands through a voluntary conservation program. Landowners have responded enthusiastically to this cooperative program with applications for over 9,000 acres.

Protecting farmland keeps land available and affordable for future farmers. Now more than ever, we must protect our country's productive farmland to feed a growing and increasingly urbanized world.

WHAT IS AN EASEMENT? A Deed of Conservation Easement is a flexible legal tool that landowners can use to retain development rights permanently on all or part of their land to protect its natural, agricultural, scenic and historic values. Property owners retain full use and title to their land, subject to the easement terms. Because a deed of easement is perpetual, future landowners will also be bound by its terms. The Farmland Protection Program also helps families meet financial goals, expand their operations, reduce debt or fund retirement.

Since the 1990s, over one third of Jefferson County's fertile farmland has vanished, permanently lost to development and development.

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The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board

The Farmland Protection Board is committed to keeping Jefferson County’s rich, irreplaceable farmland available to grow food and to protect clean water, wildlife habitats and our historic countryside. Farmland protection directly benefits you, your neighbors and the many visitors who appreciate this special place we call home.

Today almost half of Jefferson County’s land is still in farms. Yet we can’t ever take it for granted. Since 2007, more than 5,000 acres of farmland has been permanently removed from agricultural use.

Steady Progress Since 2002
The Board has helped landowners protect 41 working farms with 4,200 acres of land. In September 2017 the Board completed the protection of Gap View Farm, a 318-acre cattle farm and one of the county’s few remaining pre-revolutionary farms. During FY 2018, the Board began working with landowners to process funded conservation easements on five farms totaling 972 acres. In October 2017, another five landowners with 875 acres submitted new applications.

As of June 30, 2018, the Board has invested a total of $8.65 million to protect farmland with a development value of $28.7 million. Each local dollar has been matched with $1.09 of federal money and $1.23 of private donations.

Financial Summary
July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

The Farmland Protection Program is funded locally through the county’s real estate transfer tax and by private donations. The Board receives matching funds from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA/NRCS) and the National Park Services American Battlefield Protection Program (NPS/ABPP).

The Board manages its resources carefully. Operations and personnel costs in 2018 totaled $89,768, or 10.7% of income. Easement costs totaled $25,256 or 3% of income. The Board committed a reserve of $1.84 million for pending conservation easements on 972 acres on five farms, with a pending match of $1.44 million from NRCS. The Board’s books are audited by external auditors and reviewed by the State Auditor’s Office annually. The audit passed successfully in 2017 and in all previous years. Visit www.jefferson.wvfp.org to view our audited financial statements.

The Farmland Protection Board is composed of seven volunteer county residents appointed by the County Commission. Each is a voting member, except for the Jefferson County Commissioner, who serves in an advisory capacity.

Nic Dale, Executive Director of the County Development Authority
Robert Glenn, Esq., county resident at large
Nick Kercheval, farmer, member of the Soil Conservation District
Elisabeth D. McDonald, county resident at large
David Ober, farmer at large
Russ Quinn, farmer, member of the county Farm Bureau
Jane Tabb, farmer, County Commissioner (non-voting)
Program Director: Elizabeth B. Wheeler

Your Gift Supports Farmland Protection

Give online at www.jefferson.wvfp.org, or mail YOUR GIFT TO PO. Box 731, Charles Town, WV 25414.

Leave a legacy through a bequest. A gift through your will or living trust for farmland protection will be a lasting memorial for future generations. THANK YOU!

Donations to the Farmland Protection Board, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, are tax-deductible. Tax ID No. 55-0779838

“T oday, almost half of Jefferson County’s farmland available to grow food and to protect clean water, wildlife habitats and our historic countryside. Farmland protection directly benefits you, your neighbors and the many visitors who appreciate this special place we call home. We started with a few cattle and built a new barn. Now, it’s a passion. When Sarah and I found our farm, we were excited that it was protected and near Uncle Jack’s home place. We started with a few cattle and built a new barn. Next year we’ll rent 20 acres to expand our opera- tion. Someday, we hope to buy a larger farm.”

—The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board

New Visions for a Protected Farm

Twelve farms in the Farmland Protection Program have changed hands since 2007. This year, we welcome Dan and Sarah Chittil, the new owners of a small Shepherdstown farm protected in 2007. Both are military veterans, and work for IT companies. Sarah also is completing her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at Shepherd University. Sarah grew up on a New Jersey farm. Dan worked on his Uncle Jack Quinn’s farm in the summers. Jack Quinn, a founding member of the Farmland Protection Program, protected his farm in 2007. Dan said: “At first, working for Uncle Jack was just work, but he taught me to appreciate farming. Now, it’s a passion. When Sarah and I found our farm, we were excited that it was protected and near Uncle Jack’s home place. We started with a few cattle and built a new barn. Next year we’ll rent 20 acres to expand our opera- tion. Someday, we hope to buy a larger farm.”