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PRESS RELEASE

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More Than 20,000 Acres of Cumberland County Farmland Preserved in Perpetuity

Mechanicsburg, PA – The Cumberland County Commissioners, Agriculture Land Preservation Board and the Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture today helped celebrate the preservation of 20,027 acres of farmland during a ceremony at Paulus Farm Market in Mechanicsburg. The county ranks seventh in the state for preserving farmland.

The preservation of Cumberland County’s best working farmland benefits the agricultural community by securing the land base required to sustain agriculture operations and produce food. In today’s marketplace, large parcels of farmland are needed to create a long-term business environment for farm operations.

“Since 1989, the county has preserved 182 farms” said Vince DiFilippo, Cumberland County Board of Commissioners Chairman. “We are proud to have crossed this milestone, and we look forward to preserving more of our rich farmland in the county. Farmland preservation provides our residents with economic, scenic and environmental benefits.”

Cumberland County has 1,260 farms covering 169,654 acres. These farms produce more than \$219 million in agricultural products; \$75 million of which is milk. Farmland preservation focuses on creating a favorable long-term business environment for agriculture and provides residents with locally-sourced fresh produce, because the average distance from farm to plate is 1,500 miles.

“This is an important opportunity to recognize our long partnership with Cumberland County. We are fortunate that, three decades ago, the county’s leaders saw the importance of growth and prosperity – and knew that agriculture must remain a key component of the landscape physically and economically far into the future,” said Secretary Russell Redding, PA Department of Agriculture. “I am honored to continue that partnership today, and I trust that in our next three decades together we will continue to find ways to help agriculture prosper in Cumberland County and across our state.”

“We are so proud to be part of the farmland preservation program,” said Jim Paulus, owner of Paulus Farm Market. “Since participating in the county’s program our family has preserved 219 acres of farmland.”

Jim and his wife Amy have preserved 45 acres of their farm; while Jim's parents Creedin and JoAnne Paulus, preserved 174 acres on two parcels which produce much of the products for the farm market.

In 2019, Cumberland County selected 1,255 additional acres of farmland which is scheduled for preservation in 2020. Farms enrolled in the farmland preservation program are managed by private landowners using sound soil and water conservation practices that protect soil from erosion and also protect local surface waters from contamination. Open farmlands are important for the recharge of ground water in our communities and provide habitat for local wildlife populations.

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Editor's Note:

Agricultural Land Preservation Board: The board was established in 1989 and is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program. The purpose of the ACE Program is to protect viable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements that prevent the development or improvements of land for any purpose other than agricultural production.

Cumberland County is the fastest growing county in the Commonwealth and offers the perfect mix of small town, suburban and rural living. Established in 1750, Cumberland County consistently maintains one of the lowest tax and unemployment rates in the state, while providing exceptional services for its more than 250,000 residents. More information on Cumberland County can be found at www.ccpa.net.