

Testimony of Jeffrey L. Heindel  
Hope Acres Farms, LLC - business operator  
Heindel Family Farms - real estate ownership

The Heindels' can trace their farming history in York County to the early 1700's. Horace Heindel, who recently celebrated his 89th birthday, set up the current structure for his business to pass to his children and their heirs. Jeffrey Heindel, one of ten children of Horace and Thelma Heindel, is the current operations manager of Hope Acres Farm, LLC, and the general manager of Heindel Family Farms. Horace and most of his children want to see the farms remain in agriculture for the generations to come. Though most do not work on the farm, the children want to help maintain the agriculture value of the farms. The Pa Ag Preserve program has allowed the Heindels' to begin the process of insuring that the farms will not be developed. The paid amount for the easement is far less than could be received from urban development. The sacrifice of the extra dollars is a price to be paid to honor father and ancestors, and to give future generations the opportunity to have good farm land to farm.

It is hoped that the Pa laws to be passed will give more monies to speed up the number of acres that can be preserved in the immediate future. Looking around the county is proof that good farm land is being lost at a rapid pace to urban sprawl. Senate Bill 723 and dedicating the realty transfer tax on agriculture land would provide funding, increasing the number of acres that can be immediately entered into the Pa Ag Preserve Program, saving many acres from housing subdivisions. House Bill 629 is a great idea to add to existing preserved areas good ground that is as small as 25 acres. This will keep developers from taking these smaller tracts of land for urbanization. Every 25 acres of good farm land preserved is important for the future of Pennsylvania agriculture.

Senate Bill 252 gives farmers a great incentive to place their land in preserve. Eliminating the inheritance tax will give the heirs an opportunity to farm the family inherited farm without carrying the added debt of inheritance taxes which often force the heirs to sell. In our situation, thousands of dollars have been spent to help the heirs of Horace Heindel the opportunity to farm. If we did not have non-farm business income our 2100 acres would be sold to the highest bidder, and assuredly much of it would be placed in housing development. The non-farm income is being used to help us pay the inheritance tax that will come due both at the state and federal level.

I encourage all the state senators and representatives to support these bills to keep Pennsylvania beautiful and a leader in agriculture farm preservation.