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Wolf Administration Encourages Pennsylvanians to Purchase Local This Holiday Season

Dillsburg, PA – Today, Governor Tom Wolf and First Lady Frances Wolf were joined by Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and his wife, Nina Redding, to shop for a PA Preferred Christmas tree at McCurdy's Christmas Tree Farm in Dillsburg.

“Pennsylvania is home to more than 1,400 Christmas tree farms,” said Gov. Tom Wolf. “Visiting one of these farms is not only a great family tradition, but an opportunity to support your neighbors and Pennsylvania’s economy.”

Nationally, Pennsylvania ranks third in the nation for number of Christmas tree farms, with nearly one million cut trees produced annually on 31,000 acres of land. In addition to looking and smelling beautiful, real Christmas trees are a renewable, recyclable resource that are good for the environment. Purchasing local trees supports family owned farms and businesses, preserves farmland, and protects the environment.

“Christmas is a season of giving, buying a local tree is the perfect way to give back to Pennsylvania’s hard-working farm families,” said Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “Plan a day on the farm, create memories, and bring home a real, PA Preferred tree to anchor your holidays.”

PA Preferred is the state’s branding program for locally grown and processed products; it also serves as a marketing opportunity for agriculture producers throughout the state. Earlier this year, Governor Tom Wolf signed the first-ever Pennsylvania Farm Bill which provided an increase in funding to the PA Preferred program by \$1 million. This funding is to provide improved benefits to the program’s farmer members and improve consumer awareness around the statewide branding program. By visiting www.papreferred.com, Pennsylvanians can plan a visit to a member tree farm or nursery to choose a Pennsylvania-grown tree.

While on the farm, Secretary Redding provided the following tips for choosing a perfect Christmas tree:

- Be sure to measure your space before you leave home. Don’t forget to leave space for your tree stand and topper.
- Check the color – look for a tree with consistent green color throughout. Yellow or brown needles indicate health issues and will shed needles faster.
- Bend the branches – a fresh tree should give without breaking.

- Give it a shake – an unhealthy tree will drop a large pile of needles, while a healthy one will only lose a few.
- Check for pests – part of purchasing a real tree is acknowledging that it's been a home to wildlife. Check for everything from birds' nests to praying mantis egg sacks and spotted lanternfly egg masses.
- Once you're home, remember to keep the stand constantly full of water. Fresh trees will take in the most water in the first few days.

To find more ways to support Pennsylvania agriculture and buy local, visit papreferred.com. To learn more about the Department of Agriculture's commitment to a thriving, sustainable agriculture and food industry, and the [PA Farm Bill](#), visit agriculture.pa.gov or follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Note: Photos and video from this event will be available at www.pacast.com.

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