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Wolf Administration Opens Final PA Farm Bill Grant Program During PA Farm Show Public Officials Day, Highlights Innovators in Agriculture

Harrisburg, PA – Addressing nearly 800 public officials at the Pennsylvania Farm Show today, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding announced the opening of the last grant program made possible by the 2019 PA Farm Bill. The \$1 million Farm Vitality Grant Program aims to enhance the long-term health and vitality of Pennsylvania’s family farms.

“Just as farmers are at the heart of Pennsylvania and its heritage, the heart of the PA Farm Bill is the Ag Business Development Center and it’s \$1 million Farm Vitality Grant Program,” said Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “We need PA farm families to have sound business plans, because their success is Pennsylvania’s success.”

The opening of the \$1 million Farm Vitality Grant Program marks the final grant program under Governor Tom Wolf’s \$23.1 million investment in Pennsylvania agriculture through the state’s first-ever PA Farm Bill.

The program will help fund professional services for those planning for the future of a farm. It aims to enhance the long-term health and vitality of Pennsylvania’s farms through sound business planning, efficient transitions of farm ownership, strategic farm expansion, diversification of agricultural production, and financial and technical expertise.

“Those with us today have the opportunity to make a difference in their communities and awaken the entrepreneurial spirit of farmers,” added Redding. “The Pennsylvania Farm Bill is both a strategic investment in the industry and a resource for local government.”

Public Officials Day is an annual event that recognizes the partnership between industry stakeholders and state and local government officials. At today’s event, the department invited inspiring innovators from across Pennsylvania agriculture to share stories of how they seized opportunity and made it a reality. Presenters included Jason Frye, Pleasant Lane Farm, Westmoreland County; Rob Carouselli, Principal, Fox Chase Elementary, Philadelphia County; Leah Lizarondo, CEO and Co-Founder, 412 Food Rescue, Allegheny County; and Dave Conklin, Founder, Wilds Sonshine Factory, McKean County.

For more information about the PA Farm Bill, and investments to support Pennsylvania agriculture, visit agriculture.pa.gov/pafarmbill.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to our capital city every year for a mid-winter celebration of Pennsylvania agriculture. It is the largest indoor agricultural exposition in the nation, featuring nearly 12,000 competitive exhibits, including more than 5,200 animal competitions, plus 300 commercial exhibits and hundreds of educational, entertaining events. Visitors get a peek into the industry that employs nearly half a million people and contributes \$135.7 billion to Pennsylvania’s economy every year.

The 2020 show runs January 4-11 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, except Sunday, January 5, when it runs 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday, January 11, when it opens at 8 a.m. and closes at 5 p.m. Admission is free, and parking is \$15.

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

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