

Why do citizens volunteer to help?

With your time spread so thin between your family and your work, why would you contribute time to the *Future of Cumberland County Agriculture* program? Citizens and local leaders who have participated in similar programs in other states cite the following reasons they have been active in them:

It demonstrates that “we CARE about farming.” Just visiting farms demonstrates that your *community cares* about its local farms and appreciates their contributions to the area. It is surprising how many farmers feel unappreciated and have not been personally told that the community values them.

It is FUN! We guarantee you will have fun!! Everybody says, “This is fun!” after completing their first farm visit.

It is a LEARNING experience. You will *learn* about your local economy’s strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of local farms and businesses, and gain insights on how your community is likely to develop in the future. You will *learn* about new options for working with existing farms and ways you can shape your local destiny.

It brings the community TOGETHER. In many communities, citizens and local leaders are thinking about their future, but they are not working *together* to impact the future. This program brings your community together. Business persons, farmers, local government officials, education officials, and interested citizens all work *together* for the future of existing farms and the community.

It is DO-ABLE and it gets RESULTS. Citizens just like you and your neighbors have *done* this program in all sizes and types of communities.

Supporting Organizations:

Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
Cumberland County Commissioners
Cumberland County Conservation District
Cumberland County Planning Commission
Future of Cumberland County Agriculture
Committee
Penn State Cooperative Extension

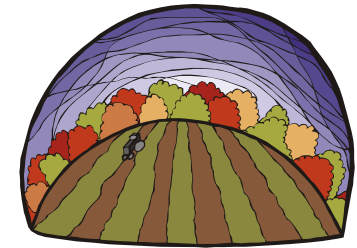
For More Information:

Duane Duncan, County Extension Director
Penn State Cooperative Extension in Cumberland County
110 Claremont Road
Carlisle, PA 17013-8802
717.240.6500

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. The Pennsylvania State University does not discriminate against any persons because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 201 Willard Building, University Park, PA 16802-2801: (814)865-4700/V, (814)863-1150/TTY.

The Future of Cumberland County Agriculture:



Task Force

*A community-based program to
address the needs and future of
farming in Cumberland County*



INTRODUCTION

The Future of Cumberland County Agriculture is a program to help the community respond to the challenges facing agriculture in Cumberland County. It helps the community identify the concerns and barriers to survival and growth facing local farms. It then develops and implements a community-based plan for sustaining farms and farming in the county, with the ultimate goal of sustaining a healthy local farm economy and creating an improved business climate in the county.

OBJECTIVES

Short-Term

- Provide community support for local farms
- Solve immediate individual farm concerns
- Increase the public's appreciation for and understanding of agriculture's role in the local community

Long-Term

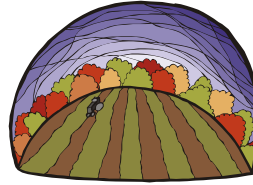
- Increase the competitiveness of agriculture
- Sustain a healthy farm economy and create an improved business climate

In the long-term, the program can make local farms more competitive by evaluating and addressing their broader needs and concerns. The program establishes an economic development plan for the local community. The process creates a broad-based community coalition to sustain long-term economic development efforts.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Farmer "Let's Talk" Sessions: Three public meetings for farmers to share and discuss the issues, challenges and opportunities they face.

Farm Visits: Local community leaders receive training on how to conduct the local farm interviews. After receiving training, Volunteer Visitors call on farms and interview the



The Future of Cumberland County Agriculture:

farmer. A proven survey tailored to Cumberland County is used for the interviews. The survey pinpoints farm needs, concerns and development plans. Individual farm data is kept confidential.

Immediate Follow-Up: A local Task Force reviews the survey results and responds to the needs and concerns expressed by farms. Support from resources within and outside the community becomes mobilized.

Strategic Planning: University faculty and other experts computerize the information from the "Let's Talk" and Farm Visits, and prepare an initial draft report for the Task Force. The report includes data analysis and suggests recommendations for improving the local business climate. The Task Force uses this report, its knowledge of the community, and a strategic planning process to develop an action plan.

Implementation: The action planning process fosters the development of local implementation teams. These teams spearhead efforts to achieve the goals in the action plans. Farms, agribusinesses, other local businesses and a variety of agencies may be drawn into the process by these teams.

MAIN PLAYERS

The Leadership Team introduces and promotes the program in the community, coordinates task force meetings, and organizes immediate followup to the survey results. The Leadership Team serves on the Task Force and also arranges for the training of the business Volunteer Visitors.

The Task Force is a broad-based group of local community leaders. The Task Force should include representatives of local Economic Development Councils, Industrial Development Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, local government, area utilities, community colleges, and other well-respected, influential community leaders.

Farm Visitation Teams consist of two persons per team. Visitation Teams will visit from two to four farms. These teams can be made up of Task Force members, educators, business people or retirees.

TASK FORCE

The Future of Cumberland County Agriculture program needs a local Task Force of twenty-five to thirty-five committed local leaders. If you decide to serve as a Task Force member, you will help set the overall policy of the program, visit two to four local farms, assist in immediate follow-up to farms when necessary, and set priorities on future Future of Cumberland County Agriculture projects.

During the early part of the program, you'll be expected to attend six to eight Task Force meetings and to visit two to four farms. This requires a total of about twenty hours (or two to five hours per month depending on how fast the program progresses).

Before going on the farm visits, you will attend a two-hour orientation session that provides an overview of how the visitation process works and includes tips on how to effectively interview farmers.

Who will serve on the Task Force?

Individuals from the following groups will serve on the Task Force:

- Business owners and leaders
- Local government officials
- Local farmers and agribusiness owners
- Education officials
- Other community leaders