



Programs available to farmers in Berks County (updated Jan 2016)

CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program FSA, 610-478-7158, www.creppa.org/
EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentives Program NRCS, 610-372-4655, www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/
RCPP - Regional Conservation Partnership Program NRCS, 610-372-4655, www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/
REAP - Resource Enhancement and Protection Joel Semke, State Conservation Commission, 717-705-4032, or http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/StateConservationCommission/REAP/Pages/default.aspx#.VddSayVVhHw
Stroud Farm Stewardship Program (FSP) Lamonte Garber, Stroud Water Research Center, 717-576-3287, www.stroudcenter.org
Best Management Practices Grants Berks County Conservation District, 610-372-4657 Berks Nature, 610-372-4992 Ext. 112
Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program (Ag Land Preservation) Agricultural Land Preservation, 610- 378-1844, www.co.berks.pa.us/alp
Berks Nature - Conservation Easement Program Berks Nature, 610-372-4992 Ext. 112, http://www.berksnature.org/protect-your-land/
Clean and Green Berks County Assessment Office, 610-478-6262, http://www.co.berks.pa.us/dept/assessment/Pages/default.aspx
PENNVEST PA Infrastructure Investment Authority, 717-787-8137, www.pennvest.state.pa.us

For more information, contact the Berks County Conservation District:

1238 County Welfare Road, Suite 200, Leesport, PA 19533, Tel (610) 372-4657, www.berkscd.com

Overview of programs

CREP - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

CREP is a voluntary conservation program which provides an annual payment to producers and landowners who establish and maintain specific practices on their land for ten to fifteen years. Up to 100% of the cost to install the practices may also be reimbursed, along with cash incentive payments. CREP is available for eligible cropland, and for marginal pastureland along non-forested streams.

For more information, contact your local FSA office at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road in Leesport, Suite 240, 610-478-7158, www.creppa.org/.

EQIP - Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to ten years. These contracts help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns (soil, water, plant, animal, air). Cost Sharing typically covers 50% -75% of the project depending on the project itself.

For more information, contact your local NRCS office at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road in Leesport, Suite 220, 610-372-4655.

www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/.

RCPP - Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Through RCPP, NRCS and its partners help producers install and maintain conservation activities in selected project areas. RCPP operates like EQIP funding, but with some specific expectations. There are two RCPP options in Berks County: one that requires farmers to have or install forested buffers to access RCPP funds, and another that prioritizes but does not require forested buffers.

For more information, contact your local NRCS office at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road in Leesport, Suite 220, 610-372-4655.

www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/.

REAP - Resource Enhancement and Protection

REAP allows farmers and businesses to earn tax credits in exchange for "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) that will enhance farm production and protect natural resources. The program is administered by the State Conservation Commission and the tax credits are awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Eligible applicants may receive between 50% and 75% of project costs as state tax credits for up to \$150,000 per agricultural operation. The amount of tax credit available to a recipient is dependent on the type of BMP implemented.

For more information, contact your local Conservation District at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road in Leesport, Suite 200, 610-372-4657 **or contact** Joel Semke, Program Administrator at 717-705-4032, or

<http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Protect/StateConservationCommission/REAP/Pages/default.aspx#.VddSayVVhHw>.

Farm Stewardship Program (FSP) – Stroud Water Research Center

This program provides financial and technical assistance for conservation practices if landowners are also willing to install forested buffers along streams on their property. For every acre of forested buffer installed, landowners can receive \$4,000 to help pay for other conservation practices. A minimum of 35 feet of forested buffer is required. Depending on a farmer's needs, FSP can provide professional help for planning, help with applications to other programs, and funds to reduce out-of-pocket costs.

For more information, contact your local Conservation District at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road in Leesport, Suite 200, 610-372-4657 **or contact** Lamonte Garber (Stroud Center) at 717-576-3287. www.stroudcenter.org.

Best Management Practices Grants (availability changes from year to year)

Various grants are available to the Berks County Conservation District and its partners at different times of the year. These grants are usually available to certain geographic areas/watersheds and/or practices. It generally takes 1 year to receive the funding and another 3-12 months to implement practices.

For more information, contact the Conservation District at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road in Leesport, Suite 200, 610-372-4657 or **contact** Berks Nature, 25 North 11th Street, Reading, PA 19601, 610-372-4992 Ext. 112.

Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) Program (Agricultural Land Preservation)

State and County funded easements prevent the development of the land for any purpose other than agricultural production. The easements remain with the farm as the property changes ownership, thereby protecting the land in perpetuity.

For more information, contact the Berks County Agricultural Land Preservation Office at: Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road, Suite 260, Leesport, Pennsylvania, 19533, 610- 378-1844, www.co.berks.pa.us/alp.

Berks Nature - Conservation Easement Program

A conservation easement is a legal legacy agreement between a landowner and a land trust (like Berks Nature) or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows you to continue to own and use your land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. When you donate a conservation easement to Berks Nature, you restrict uses of the land pursuant to your wishes. Future owners will be bound by the easement's terms.

For more information, contact Berks Nature, 25 North 11th Street, Reading, PA 19601, 610-372-4992 Ext. 112, <http://www.berksnature.org/protect-your-land/>

Clean and Green

The Clean & Green Act of 1974 was established to preserve farmland, forest land, and open space by taxing land according to its use rather than the prevailing market value. The program is administered by the Berks County Assessment Office. The program is voluntary and generally requires that a 10 acre minimum remain in designated use (agricultural use, agricultural reserve, and forest reserve). Parcels of less than 10 acres and capable of producing \$2,000 annually from the sale of agricultural products are eligible for the agricultural use designation. Land taken out of the permitted use becomes subject to a rollback tax, imposed for up to seven years, and an interest penalty.

For more information, contact the Berks County Assessment Office at 610-478-6262, <http://www.co.berks.pa.us/dept/assessment/Pages/default.aspx>.

PENNVEST

Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority or PENNVEST is an independent authority that provides loans and grants for water, sewer and storm waste projects across Pennsylvania.

PENNVEST offers federal grants to government agencies to sponsor nonpoint source pollution projects (including farm related natural resource/water quality concerns) and low interest loans to private organizations/individuals looking to implement these types of projects. Financials of the applying organization will be evaluated to determine if a grant or loan is the most appropriate source of funding. **For more information**, contact the Authority at 717-787-8137, www.pennvest.state.pa.us.