

Chester County Farming FACTS

Chester County farmers continue to play a leading role in providing food, feed and employment for our county and region.

- Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania with sales of \$5.9 billion.
- Chester County has the second highest farming revenue of all counties in Pennsylvania (over \$550 million).
- Farming contributes an estimated \$3.25 billion to our local economy (farm sales, employment, taxes, service industries) – the mushroom industry alone contributes \$2.7 billion to this total.
- There are 1,735 farms in our county – 99% family owned.
- Chester County has some of the best soils for farming in the country. We must preserve this national resource to provide food – now and for the future.
- Almost 60,000 acres, representing 36% of our total farmland in Chester County, have been preserved by farmers for future generations.
- Chester County is home to world-class equestrians and a large and valuable equine industry.

Impact of Land Use

For every \$1.00 of tax revenue generated from agriculture only 2 cents to 12 cents of municipal and educational services are required.

For every \$1.00 of tax revenue from residential land use as much as \$1.33 is spent on municipal and educational services.

Farmland allows for groundwater recharge, assuring stable supplies of drinking water plus water for environmental uses and recreation. Farmland helps preserve the open space and scenic views that create the Quality of Life in Chester County.

Local Food

Our dairy farms produce enough milk for all Chester County residents and for an additional 140,000 people. Chester County mushrooms supply almost 50% of all the mushrooms consumed in the United States. Our wheat is used in many Herr's and Kelloggs' products.

Chester County's more than 33 farm stands, 21 CSAs, 11 Farmers Markets and 14 vineyards supply fresh farm products and wine to the customer.

Cost of Our Food

One farmer now feeds 155 people – up from 73 in 1970. Only 1.4% of our working population in the US produces our food and enough surpluses to generate \$22 billion in exports.

Our food costs are amongst the lowest of any country in the world as a percentage of the average income in the countries listed below.

USA	6.9%	Japan	14.2%
Canada	9.1%	China	32.9%
Germany	11.4%	India	36.4%

Our Farming is Interconnected

Recycling in Chester County farming. Nothing is wasted. Hay is used to feed horses and produce compost for mushroom production. The spent mushroom compost is spread back on the land, used for making composts, etc. Manure is also spread on fields to provide crop nutrients and enhance soil structure. Horse manure, corn cobs and other organic farm waste are also used to produce mushroom compost.

Our Farms and Farmers

- Modern farming in the US and Chester County is a highly dynamic, efficient, and specialized industry.
- The farmer's first priority is the proper care and stewardship of his animals and land – without these, there is no way to sustain his farm and income.

In Chester County, as in our nation, there is a strong connection between economically healthy farms and a nutritious, reasonably-priced and sustainable food supply, stewardship of the nation's land and water and our country's overall economic health.

Thanks to the following sponsors:

CHESTER DELAWARE COUNTY FARM BUREAU

