

Agricultural Security Areas (ASA):

Are a tool for strengthening and protecting agriculture in Pennsylvania. Participating farmers in a ASA are entitled to special consideration from local and state government agencies, thus encouraging the continuing use of the land for productive agricultural purposes.

Being in an ASA has many benefits:

1. The municipality is prevented from enacting ordinances that "unreasonably restrict farm structures or farm practices" (Section 911 of Act 43 of 1981). The municipality encourages the agricultural area by not enacting laws or ordinances, which would restrict farm structures, or farm practices unless the laws or ordinances bear a direct relationship to the public health or safety.
2. Limitations are placed on the use of land condemnation procedures - eminent domain by Commonwealth and local agencies. Before land enrolled in an ASA can be taken by eminent domain, the condemning government must go before the Agricultural Land Condemnation Approval Board (ALCAB), which determines whether the land is needed by the government or whether there is a "viable alternative" to the taking of agricultural land.
3. Only land in an ASA can be considered for the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement. Applicants are also awarded higher scores when their abutting landowners are enrolled in the ASA.
4. A local law or ordinance defining or prohibiting a public nuisance shall exclude from the definition of the nuisance agricultural activity or operation conducted using normal farming operations within the ASA if the agricultural activity or operation does not bear a direct relationship to the public health and safety.
5. Commonwealth agencies with programs that might negatively affect farmers shall conduct their programs in a manner that will encourage the continuance of viable agriculture in the areas.

Listed above are the many ways and ASA protects open space. The ASA shields the farming activities conducted on the land from nuisance ordinances and eminent domain while allowing municipalities to relax codes for some types of building and it is also a necessary step for landowners wishing to sell their development rights to the County's Agricultural Preservation Board.

For information as to how you can enroll your property into you municipal ASA, please call John Goodall, the Brandywine Conservancy's Farmland Preservation specialist at 610-383-9515