

For Immediate Release – County of Berks

Berks County Kicks Off Comprehensive Study on Agricultural Economic Impact and Strategic Action Plan as Part of IMAGINE Berks

Reading, PA— 01/17/2024 — The Berks County Department of Agriculture is launching an ambitious initiative to assess and enhance the economic impact of its agricultural industry as part of the County’s overarching economic development strategy, IMAGINE Berks. With over 1,800 farms contributing to a market value of more than \$554 million, agriculture plays a pivotal role in Berks County's economy. To ensure that future support of the agri-business industry is data-driven and impactful, it is important to quantify the full picture of agriculture in the county.

The Berks County Department of Agriculture has partnered with ACDS, LLC (Agriculture and Community Development Services) on this initiative that will both measure the total impact of the agricultural industry and develop a strategic action plan for the County and its partners. The project aims to engage the agricultural community – the farmers, agriculture-related business owners, community business leaders, and others – in interviews and focus groups. “The Berks County agricultural economy is not only a critical part of our history it is a key aspect of our economic future. We need a clear strategy to help us get there and this study will provide an “Ag Map” for Berks County in the 21st Century,” said Berks County Commissioner, Christian Y. Leinbach.

During the next eight months, ACDS, LLC will be reaching out to individuals, farmers, and agricultural businesses on behalf of the County for participation in the study. More information about the consulting firm may be found at their website, www.acds-llc.com. For more information about the agriculture study, contact the Berks County Department of Agriculture at DeptofAg@countyofberks.com or 610-378-1844.

About the Berks County Department of Agriculture

The Berks County Department of Agriculture is tasked with multi-faceted support and promotion of the agricultural industry of Berks County. While the department is well-known for its largest and oldest program, agricultural land preservation, in recent years it has also expanded its activities in community education and outreach, agricultural career pathway development, producer education & networking, linking value chain actors, and partnering and representation. For more information on the Department, visit their website at www.countyofberks.com/departments/agriculture.

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Media only inquiries:

Jonathan Heintzman, Public Relations Officer

Office: 610-478-6136 x6112

Cell: 610-507-0063

Email: jheintzman@countyofberks.com