



BACKGROUND



MISSION STATEMENT

Agriculture must continue as an integral and viable part of the county's economy, landscape, natural resources, and sense of community. The mission of the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board is to implement identified goals, objectives and policies for the protection and preservation of Jefferson County land best suited for farming in accordance with *West Virginia Code §8-24-72*.

Strategy:

The need to preserve land necessary for the continuation of the agricultural industry in Jefferson County is closely related to our quality of life and broad economic issues. A strategy for protecting farmland in our rural areas is vital to the future of the agricultural industry, because adverse impacts on land resources will have an adverse impact on farm productivity.

The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board may negotiate with and compensate eligible property owners to ensure the protection of farmland within the county or state. With the consent of a property owner, the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board may acquire and place on record a conservation or preservation easement. Acquired easements apply only to those properties that qualify for consideration under the terms established by an adopted farmland protection program.

See Appendix – forms 1 thru 9

The Jefferson Farmland Protection Board is now actively seeking properties for conservation easements. Ranking criteria will prioritize each property submitted to the Board. Funding will always be a limiting factor for the program. Funds will be offered to the highest ranked property first. Donations of conservation easements will also be accepted.

Once a conservation easement is placed on a property, the Board will monitor the property to ensure that it continues to conform to the intent and purpose of the easement. **In West Virginia, conservation easements are held in perpetuity.**

Protection:

Farmland protection is an important issue for all county residents. New residents to the county from urban areas view the rural areas of the county as a desirable place to live. As more and more land disappears as a result of suburban development, the open view vanishes from the county. Agricultural land, like energy, is a nonrenewable resource. The simplest way to avoid losing the landscape is to protect agriculture-related land in Jefferson County.

The Farmland Protection Program provides an essence of community identity, increasing the quality of life through an aesthetic appearance of rolling hills and preservation of our farmland² atmosphere within the county. ♦

See Endnotes²