

# ***Attachment 3: Tools for Enhancing Viability***

## **1. Introduction**

Land use policies in other municipalities suggest that a wide range of planning tools can be considered by Strathcona County. Some tools may require provincial leadership and input; some can be done by Strathcona alone; and some tools can be offered by Strathcona to help other organizations and individuals.

The literature and practice in other areas suggest a wide range of techniques for encouraging viable agriculture. Strathcona already uses many of these, at least to a certain degree, but a strategy for maintaining a viable future for agriculture in Strathcona should consider the additional strategies described in this section

This section introduces the range of tools that are used or are contemplated in other North American jurisdictions.

## **2. Freeze lands for agriculture**

Permanent boundaries around agricultural areas, such as the BC Agriculture Land Reserve (some would call it a land 'freeze.') are typically only implemented by provincial or state authorities. Alberta, when it designated RDAs in the early 1970s, did a similar thing for transportation corridors.

The same objectives could be done in Alberta through strict adherence to a zoning scheme, but this is subject to obvious political pressures at the municipal level. It is easier to change a municipal bylaw than a provincial statute or regulation.

This usually requires other trade-offs such as right to farm legislation or tax breaks. It also requires a regulatory scheme to implement it.

It permanently preserves land for agriculture, but doesn't necessarily ensure its viability. It may add certainty. It may have other advantages in reducing sprawl, etc. It might reduce the propensity to speculate on eventual land conversion and be opposed by those who have already bought in anticipation of gains. Agricultural owners who view the land as their 'retirement fund' may oppose it.

- **BC Agricultural Land Reserve:** *"Up to the 1970's nearly 6000 hectares of prime agricultural land were lost each year to urban and other uses. The Provincial government responded to the serious erosion of our agricultural land base by introducing BC's Land Commission Act on April 18, 1973. A Commission, appointed by the Provincial Government, established a special land use zone to protect BC's dwindling supply of agricultural land. This zone was called the 'Agricultural Land Reserve.' Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled. Despite boundary changes over the decades, it remains approximately the same size."*
- **Oregon:** *"As a general rule, EFU (exclusive farm use) zoning was applied to all lands within the Natural Resources (formerly Soil) Conservation Service's soil capability Classes I through IV in Western Oregon and Classes I through VI in Eastern Oregon and any additional lands needed for farming. Lands with agricultural soils that were excluded from EFU zoning were those inside urban growth boundaries or that were already developed or made unusable because of nearby development."*

## **3. Draw a long term growth area boundary**

Several US states require that urban growth boundaries be defined in the context of overall *smart* growth. One area has purchased lands in order to create an old style 'greenbelt.'

- Tennessee: *"Pub. Chap. 1101 (1998) requires counties to adopt and to adhere to growth plans that include urban growth boundaries for each municipality, planned growth areas, and rural areas. Funding provided by the State for economic development and infrastructure projects is limited to counties with approved growth plans after July 1, 2001."*
- Oregon: *"the land use plan enacted in 1973 (and subsequent amendments) contains mandatory provisions for cities to designate urban growth boundaries."*
- Pennsylvania: *"The Preserve Board pursues a policy that is unique in the United States: a strategic effort to purchase development rights on farms fairly close to development to help create urban growth boundaries' and 'village growth boundaries' which will limit sprawl out onto productive farmland. In turn, these growth boundaries will help to encourage more compact development which is cheaper and easier to service... The first growth boundary was formed in 1993. Since then, a total of 20 boundaries have been formed and no boundary, once adopted, has been removed."*
- Santa Clara, CA: *"Re-affirm the existing 20 year boundary in Gilroy's General Plan as the City's long term urban growth boundary east of Highway 101."*

#### 4. Major project review

Several jurisdictions require that projects, particularly at the state or provincial level, must take into account the loss of farmland. BC, in fact, requires all provincial projects to comply with the Agriculture Land Reserve Requirements.

- Pennsylvania: *"In 1994, Governor Robert Casey signed Executive Order 3 which called for the state department of agriculture to review projects of all state agencies that might involve the conversion of farmland to other uses."*
- American Farmland Trust: *"Some executive orders direct state agencies to withhold funding from projects that would result in farmland conversion... By restricting the use of state funds for projects that would result in the loss of agricultural land, executive orders can also influence the actions of local government."*

#### 5. Adopt supportive community planning policies

Sometimes growth management requirements of US states (especially Washington and Oregon) require municipalities to address issues in a way that might foster community planning that is supportive of agriculture. For example, high value resource lands may have limitations on development. Alberta land use policies are not rigorous in this regard.

Strathcona has an MDP that designates much of its best land for agriculture. Strathcona has certain limitations on the parcelization of agricultural land.

Farm-friendly community planning should ensure that there is land for the support services and processing that it requires.

- Wisconsin Roundtable: *"Fact: Cities will grow, and it's either up or out. Urban development does not conflict with farming. Sprawl does."*

- California's Central Valley: *"Tulare County, for example, encourages new development in the foothills, where Class IV or poorer soils are prevalent. As an economic development measure, Yolo and other counties also favour moderate development in their small, unincorporated population centres that have some public sewer and water capacity to handle more residents... While the general plans of all seven counties pay homage to the preservation of farmland, it is offset by other goals- pursuing growth for its economic benefits, providing options for residents of unincorporated areas, and emphasizing landowners' property rights in relation to development opportunities."*

## 6. Acquisition of agricultural conservation easements (buying development rights)

Programs have been developed in the US for state and local governments to purchase agricultural conservation easements. It is usually based on the difference between the value as agricultural land and for development. Funds may come from bonds, various taxes, check off contributions, credit card affinity plans, and in the US from federal programs, etc.

Donations can be made to qualified public or non-profit organizations to accept interest in property that is less than fee simple for the purposes of land preservation. Grantors usually retain other property rights (use for agriculture, control access) except for development. This is common in the US. Often tax benefits are given to the grantor.

This mechanism is used in Strathcona for protecting environmentally sensitive lands as a trade-off for subdivision approval. It could also be used for agriculture lands.

Precluding development would reduce the land value, while allowing some equity to be captured by the farmer, fostering intergenerational transfer and continued farming.

- Colorado: *"In 1992, 58% of Colorado voters approved the Great Outdoors Colorado Amendment redirecting a portion of lottery revenue to protect open space...including farmland."*
- Massachusetts: *"Eight years later, Massachusetts lawmakers approved the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program, under which the state buys the development rights to farmland from the owner, restricting the land to agricultural use. Local contributions must pay 10 per cent of the cost of purchasing development rights."*
- New Jersey: *"In an effort to protect farmland, New Jersey voters passed a \$50 million bond issue in 1981... and have protected a total of nearly 43,000 acres of New Jersey farmland."*
- Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust: *"Depending on your situation, there are several ways to donate land to OSALT and still have the value of the land go to your children. OSALT is happy to discuss these possibilities with you and your financial planner."*

## 7. Mitigation & compensation procedures

King County, Washington requires the re-conversion of land back to agricultural land in allowing the development of other land ('no net loss'- this is common in dealing with fish habitat).

This is also used by the BC Land Reserve Commission to justify adjusting agricultural reserve boundaries- land can be pro-rated as to quality in moving it in or out. Similarly, subdivision may be allowed if it is offset by consolidation of fragmented land elsewhere.

- Davis, CA: “assure as a baseline standard that anew peripheral development projects provide a minimum of 2:1 mitigation along the entire non-urbanized perimeter of the project. The proposed amendments shall allow for the alternate location of mitigations for such projects including but not limited to circumstances where the project is adjacent to land already protected.”

## 8. Transfer of development rights

This technique has been used quite a bit in areas like historic preservation. If you don't develop on one site (i.e., permanently preserve agricultural land), you can trade that density to another site. This assumes there are sites to trade density to (i.e., the base level is low enough). They are usually complex to determine fairly and administer reasonably.

Apparently, some US jurisdictions have 'publicly funded' TDR banks that trade in development rights.

- Sokolow: “In effect, the owner of a developable parcel purchases the development rights from the owner of a protected parcel. Through their land use control, local governments facilitate the transfers by designating ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ areas. Still regarded as an experimental technique...”
- Nelson: “The cornerstone of the TDR concept is the recognition that the possibility of developing land is a fungible commodity distinct from the land itself... Few programs, theoretically at least, seem to offer so much for so little... second-generation programs have gone much further toward fulfilling the original promise of the TDR concept... King County purchased the development rights to about 13,000 acres of agricultural land... Over the last ten years, Massachusetts has spent \$45 million to protect 22,000 acres of farmland.”

## 9. Cluster development

Surrey uses cluster zoning to protect trees- it was instituted by downzoning and bonusing back.

It is provided for by Strathcona's MDP in the policy on clustering- it is usually suggested for environmental reasons but could also be used for preserving agricultural lands or creating buffers if agriculture can be maintained.

- Nelson: “There is the special case of ‘rural cluster zoning’ in which large farmland tracts are subdivided into home sites but most of the tract is retained for farm use. The question, naturally is, what is the difference in agricultural productivity with the use of rural cluster zoning?”
- American Farmland Trust: “Cluster subdivisions can keep land available for agricultural use, but generally they are not designed to support commercial agriculture... Homeowners may object to renting their property to farmers and ranchers because of the noise, dust, and odors associated with commercial agriculture. Even if the owners are willing... undeveloped portions of cluster subdivisions may not be large enough for farmers to operate efficiently and access can also be a problem... has been used more successfully to preserve open space or to create transitional areas between farms and residential areas than to protect farmland”

## 10. Zoning for agriculture

Zone land for agriculture in the context of a long-term plan, while limiting or restricting competing or conflicting uses. The major difficulty with zoning as a tool for land preservation is that it is

enacted at the municipal level, where it can be changed in response to local pressure. Land values may be reduced.

Zoning can also be used to allow supplementary uses, such as home businesses, B&Bs, or on property farm sales, that may contribute additional farm revenue or second incomes.

Zoning should also ensure the provision of the services that agriculture requires, that there are opportunities for local processing, etc.

The size, scale, and type of development that requires permits might be considered by some as a burden. However, agricultural interests in, say tree clearing, may not be consistent with other community interests.

- Tom Daniels: *“The key ingredient here is the commitment of the farming community to remain in farming. If the farm economy sours for a few years, then pressure for re-zonings out of agriculture could become common. At present, however, it is not politically popular for elected township officials to openly favor the conversion of farmland to non-farm uses.”*
- Oregon: *“Over time, more and more uses unrelated to farming have been allowed in EFU zones, from churches to cemeteries and has expanded the list of permitted ‘farm uses’ to include such things as insect breeding.”*
- Central Valley, CA: *“This trend is known as the ‘fiscalization of land use’- tendency of local governments to make development decisions primarily according to their revenue implications. In this environment, farmland protection and other non-fiscal aspects of land use become a secondary consideration.”*

## 11. Stopping fragmentation/parcelization

There are two concerns with parcelization (or fragmentation) of the agricultural land base through the zoning and subdivision processes. The first is that land may be cut up so that it no longer provides the area necessary for a viable operation. Historically, in many areas of Alberta, this was viewed as either a quarter section (as is still the minimum in Rocky View) or 80 acres in communities like Strathcona.

The reality is that agricultural operations are either larger (say few thousand acres) or are smaller more intensive operations: the vanishing middle.

The second concern is the increase in the non-agricultural population in the rural areas. This leads to additional conflicts in the rural area between the two populations.

- Ontario Community Relations in the Rural Area: *“In recent years, much of the rural population growth has occurred through the establishment of non-farm development through the severance or plan of subdivision process. However, it must be recognized that while a substantial proportion of these lots were created for non-farm purposes, the farm community has also been active in the lot creation process. Many of these land use decisions reflected the short-term needs of the community, such as retirement or farm help lots. Unfortunately, many of these lots have been converted to non-farm residents with long-term impacts on the adjacent farm operations.”*
- Arthur Nelson: *“Families wishing to own one or two acres near urban areas are forced to buy farms and leave all but one or two acres untended. While surplus land may be rented to nearby farmers... typically do not involve maintenance of or investment in major improvements.”*

- USDA Economic Research Service: *“Agriculture can adapt to development, but does so by changing the products and services offered. Low-density, fragmented settlement patterns leave room for agriculture to continue. Farms in metropolitan areas are an increasingly important segment of US agriculture, making up 33 % of all farms, 16 % of cropland, and producing a third of the value of US agricultural output. However, to adapt to rising land values and increasing contact with new residents, farmers may have to change their operations to emphasize higher-value products, more intensive production, enterprises that fit better in an urbanizing environment, and a more urban marketing orientation.”*

## 12. Right to farm legislation

In some jurisdictions, this can be quite liberating for agriculture. States and provinces sometimes limit the ability of municipalities to impose restrictions on agriculture. In BC, municipalities are only empowered to control certain aspects of agriculture by special application for ministerial approval.

Many jurisdictions do not allow agriculture pursuits to be the subject of nuisance lawsuits provided generally accepted practices are used, etc.

Some municipalities have different standards, etc. for agricultural areas or do not impose nuisance bylaws in agricultural areas, etc.

- Colorado: *“In fact, Colorado has ‘right to farm’ legislation that protects farmers and ranchers from nuisance and liability lawsuits. It enables them to continue producing food and fibre.”*
- Arthur Nelson: *“Right-to-farm laws attempt to tip the balance in favor of farmers through statutory declarations that standard farming practices are reasonable land uses, despite their possible adverse impacts on neighbouring property...right-to-farm laws have several shortcomings.”*

## 13. Avoiding land use conflicts

The conflict arises from the intermixing of agriculture and non-agriculture residents. For one group, the countryside is a place for business, for the other group, it is a setting for a bucolic lifestyle.

Agriculture can be offensive to some neighbours. The conflicts can come from rutting elk, electronic warblers, manure or tractor noise, etc. at various times of the day or night. The shoe is on the other foot sometimes. Increased rural populations may impede farm traffic, prevent crop spraying, increase trespassing and vandalism, etc.

Conflicts between agriculture and non-agriculture can be reduced in a variety of ways. First, planning and zoning can reduce the interface between the two. In areas like BC where there is a relatively permanent boundary between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, a lot of effort has been placed on subdivision design and buffering to reduce conflict. This includes fencing, buffer strips, or separation of urban and farm traffic, etc.

Education, for both the agricultural and non-agricultural communities, may play a role in reducing conflicts. Municipal bylaws may be another tool.

- Davis, CA: *“Establish a 150-foot minimum agricultural buffer around the City. Require dedication from developers of lands to make up the buffer concurrently with any peripheral development.”*

- BC Land Reserve: *“There are several basic principles that provide for planning along agriculture’s interface. The ALR boundary is fixed and should form the focal point of edge planning. Both sides of the interface must be considered simultaneously. An edge plan must anticipate land use change... There is no single ‘right’ way to buffer.”*
- Ontario Guide to Agricultural Land Use: *“For non-farm residents and farm residents not involved in livestock agriculture, the Guide is an introduction to some of the complex decisions and current practices required in modern agriculture. The booklet sets out the limitation to creating a totally inoffensive environment immediately adjacent to some agricultural facilities. Non-farm residents who make a choice to accept the advantages of country life must be prepared to accept the noise, odour and dust associated with normal farm practices.”*

## 14. Resolving land use conflicts

Perhaps mechanisms for mediation or arbitration may be used when conflicts develop.

- California: *“The ordinances typically require that purchasers of residences adjacent to farms be notified about the nuisances associated with agriculture. Some jurisdictions have established procedures for handling complaints.”*
- British Columbia: *“One is associated with the right to farm provisions, the establishment of the new Farm Practices board and new means to deal with complaints related to farm operations.”*

## 15. Tax programs

These programs may address the tax burden placed on agriculture. These include differential taxation, also called use-value assessment (taxing on the income that can be received as a farm property, rather than on market value that may be established on the basis of future conversion to other uses). Some argue that this brings taxes in line with rural services. This may increase farm profitability, but also may subsidize land speculators. Objectors refer them to “tax expenditures,” a subsidy.

Some US states allow tax credits that offset municipal property taxes. In Michigan, this requires the landowner to enter into an agreement to limit development.

At least two states attempt to discourage land speculation by putting a special capital gains tax on it.

- American Farmland Trust: *“All states have at least one program designed to reduce the amount of money farmers are required to pay in local real property taxes.”*
- Marin Agricultural Land Trust: *“The Williamson Act works in this manner: an agricultural property owner enters into a contract with the County to restrict the use of the land to agricultural production for a period of not less than ten years. During the time of the contract, the landowner is taxed on the capitalization of income from the land as opposed to the potential market value of the property.”*
- Heimlich & Anderson: *“Existing monetary incentives for conserving rural land are not as effective as they could be... spreads resources over all qualifying rural lands, providing a small incentive to conserve all landowners. The size of the tax reduction is insufficient to keep land with the highest development potential from conversion.”*

## 16. Agricultural districts (agriculture security areas)

This is used in 16 US states. Special agricultural districts are set up (usually with both local and state involvement) which provide for benefits in exchange for preservation of agricultural land for an agreed upon period.

Benefits to agriculture may be reduced assessment, limitations on expropriation, enhanced right to farm protection, etc.

- American Farmland Trust: *“Agricultural district programs are a unique farmland protection technique because they use a combination of incentives to achieve the same goals as regulatory strategies. Instead of controlling land use, agricultural district laws offer farmers benefits for keeping their land in agriculture.”*
- Tom Daniels: *“Twenty one states have authorized local governments to provide for the voluntary creation of agricultural districts by landowners. The benefits of enrollment vary from state to state, but may include: reduced property taxation, exemptions from sewer and water assessments, greater protection against eminent domain actions, and eligibility to participate in purchase of development rights programs.”*

## 17. Provision of services

Does agriculture have the services that they need and can afford? Water, drainage, roads, etc. Weed control?

- Richmond, BC: *“A cleaning schedule for ditches must be incorporated every five years to prevent clogging.”*
- Kelowna, BC: *“The availability of an adequate water supply is fundamental to the survival of agriculture in the City... support a program of culvert improvements, in-channel upgrades, and hydraulic improvements to alleviate occasional flooding....”*

## 18. Agricultural education

Estate planning for farmers has been suggested. Estate planning should transfer ownership, minimize taxes, ensure security and peace of mind, and develop the next generation of management capacity.

Educating the agricultural operators about new practices that may minimize adverse impacts may be a positive step.

Agricultural apprenticeship programs have been suggested in some areas.

- Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food: *“That the provincial government, in cooperation with the federal government, place a priority on establishing a skills development program designed to help producers to remain in Saskatchewan by assisting in improving farm management skills, adjusting their enterprise into new agricultural opportunity areas, improving their skills for off-farm employment...”*
- Microfarm Sustainable Research & Education: *“Our mission is to aid rural residents living on small acreages to achieve economic independence by finding farming alternatives that will bring in sufficient income to keep rural residents and families on their land and to keep that land productive.”*

- BC Land Reserve Commission: *“In searching for way to heighten an awareness of agriculture, education- both formal and at times less formal- is a key... farm tours... farmers should be invited to join students in the classroom... school gardens... agriculturally oriented curriculum...”*

## 19. Public understanding of agriculture

People should know what they could expect to experience in agricultural areas- noise, smell, pesticides, etc. This is sometimes part of a ‘right to farm’ program. This is now a provision in Strathcona’s LUB to notify applicants for non-agricultural uses in or near agricultural areas.

Strathcona will have to undertake other initiatives to fulfill the spirit of the provincial legislation, such as brochures and newspaper advertisements, etc.

Signs are typically placed in agricultural areas to watch for slow moving farm equipment, animals on the road, etc.

Public communication has been tried elsewhere with certain success. Some communities, such as Surrey have regular farm tours.

- Larimar County Code of the West: *“Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Dairy operators sometimes milk without stopping and hay is often swathed or baled at night. It is possible that adjoining agriculture uses can disturb you peace and quiet... Chemicals are often used in growing crops... many of these chemicals are applied by airplanes that fly early in the morning. Animals and their manure can cause objectionable odors. What else can we say?”*

## 20. Advocacy in the municipal administration

One suggestion is to have an advocate for agricultural interests in the Planning Department or, at the very least, someone who is knowledgeable and sensitive to agricultural interests. They could help facilitate permitting or mediate enforcement.

- Larimar County, Colorado: *“In addition, the Task Force recommended that the County Commissioners appoint a permanent Agricultural Advisory Board and outlined tasks and responsibilities for such an Advisory Board, including taking an active and aggressive role in promoting the interests in agriculture through public policy and public education. The Agricultural Advisory Board was appointed early in 1997.”*
- Santa Clara County, CA: *“That the County review the existing use permit process in order to ‘streamline’ the process.”*
- Richmond, BC: *“The agricultural strategy team was established, representing the Richmond Farmers Institute, Agricultural Land Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Land Use Department staff. Also, a City staff team was set up representing staff from Engineering, Public Works, Transportation, Property Use, Parks, Development Applications and Business Liaison and Development.”*
- Surrey, BC: *“It is recommended that Surrey establish a staff person to act in a coordinator and liaison capacity for the development of agriculture within the City. The person would be responsible for taking the lead on developing the Agricultural Implementation Strategy, implementing the Agricultural Plan, and liaising with City staff in various departments including Engineering, Economic Development, and Planning and Development. The person, technically trained in and thoroughly familiar with agriculture...”*

## 21. Advocacy on the municipal council

It is the municipal council that sets the policy that affects the viability of agriculture from a local perspective.

- BC Land Reserve Commission: *“The need for local governments to maintain on-going links with the farm community is emphasized by the gradual shrinking of the number of farmers and ranchers serving on municipal councils and regional boards... designate a Council member as a ‘farm/ranch’ liaison person to act as agriculture’s voice.”*

## 22. Advocacy by the agricultural community

The agricultural community could form its own lobby/interest group (like the Surrey Farmers Institute) to pressure local government and others to be more supportive of agricultural interests. This could include convening and participating in conferences, partnerships, conducting research, sitting on local committees, working with the media and officials, communicating with the public, holding promotional events or fairs, being involved in planning processes, etc.

- Skagit County, WA: *Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland is a grassroots, non profit organization formed in 1989 and dedicated to protecting Skagit County’s rich agricultural heritage through public and landowner education... focuses on protecting farmland from competing uses and enhancing the economic viability of farming itself.”*
- Central Valley, CA: *“Instead, the most influential element in whether or not Valley county governments adopt strong farmland protection measures has been the degree of unified support among organized agricultural interests, especially local farm bureaus.*
- Richmond, BC: *“The Richmond Farmers Institute and the City are partners in the Agricultural Viability Strategy.”*

## 23. Economic development

Another method of advocacy is to have an economic development officer focusing on agricultural endeavors.

There are advantages for agriculture from proximity to an expanding metropolitan area. For example, there may be increased access to labour (if there are transportation systems in place, especially public transit). On the other hand, there are greater off-farm opportunities for secondary income for the farm family. Proximity to growing urban markets may provide marketing opportunities.

Initiatives could include incorporating agricultural business strategies into local economic development plans, promoting diversification, product development, assisting in preparing farm business plans, loan programs to buy and improve operations, promotion of direct marketing (through roadside stands, pick-your-own operations, nurseries, agri-tourism, grower cooperatives, municipal brochures and maps showing locations, signage, farmers markets, marketing direct to restaurants and food retailers, and community supported agriculture where consumers pay for a share of the harvest at the beginning of the year, etc.)

- American Farmland Trust: *“State and local governments can facilitate agricultural economic development by treating farms as other businesses, making loan funds, tax incentives and technical assistance available to producers.”*

- Davis, CA: *“Foster the growth of environmentally friendly agriculture business and industry in Davis.”*
- Santa Clara, CA: *“Ideas discussed include a media advertising campaign, a ‘sticker’ program that identifies the produce or product as Santa Clara County Grown, an expanded ‘County Crossroads’ map program identifying farms that conduct direct sales to the public, and the development of a large permanent regional farmers market to allow direct sales. These programs are generally funded through local government advertising budgets, tourism boards or local farming cooperatives.”*

## 24. Demonstration Projects

One facet of education is the demonstration project. Perhaps the acreage owners don’t know how productive their land can actually be?

- Puget Sound Farm Trust: *“The Farm Trust is purchasing 12 acres of farmland... make small parcels available to farmers... part of the land will be used for a small farm research and education centre... to provide models of small-scale, sustainable farming; and to educate the public, elected officials, and policy makers about the importance of preserving farmland... increased the awareness of the viability and benefits of urban fringe farming.”*
- OSALT: *“Visits to Natural Harvest Farm are generally restricted to the spring farm tour and the harvest festival. Educational group tours and activities can be arranged. Contact the farm for more information.”*

## 25. Comprehensive programs

No specific tool will create a viable long-term agriculture community. Tools should be used comprehensively, with the choice dependent on local circumstances.

- Pennsylvania: *“Lancaster County is employing a complementary set of farmland protection tools. The county comprehensive plan identified lands that should remain in agricultural use; nearly all townships have placed important farmland in agricultural zones... landowners in conjunction with townships have placed over 127,000 acres in agricultural security areas; and the purchase and donation of conservation easements have preserved nearly 28,000 acres of farmland. Moreover, the use of easement purchases to create large blocks of preserved farmland and to help create growth boundaries has strengthened the overall effort to channel growth to appropriate locations. .”*