

Creating Farming Opportunities for the Next

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We have a crisis in the making. Pennsylvania agriculture has twice as many farm operators over the age of 70 as under the age of 35. Who will be our next generation of farmers?

women. A linking service helps entering farmers and landholders locate appropriate farming opportunities, and individualized technical assistance, information, and referral are provided to any farm family.

Potential replacement farmers, under age 35, make up only 8 percent of our total number of farm operators, according to the 1997 Census. Minority farm operators accounted for only 2.5% of the total farm operators in Pennsylvania in 1997.

Pennsylvania Farm Link identified three major problems contributing to the decline in potential young farmers.

They are:

- the need for earlier farm succession planning,
- the need for start-up training assistance and hands-on experience for potential farm entrants, and
- the increasing entrepreneurial skills required to generate higher profit margins.

Pennsylvania Farm Link's programs aggressively address these needs by helping farmers develop better succession strategies and providing job training assistance to beginning farmers. Activities include workshops on farm succession planning, marketing/entrepreneurial development meetings, beginning farmer workshops, and a youth apprentice program targeted to minorities and