

## **News for Immediate Release**

**Dec. 16, 2009**

### **Governor Rendell Hails Senate Confirmation of Russell C. Redding as Agriculture Secretary**

Adams County Native Becomes 24<sup>th</sup> Agriculture Secretary

**Harrisburg** – Russell C. Redding of Adams County was confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate as the state's 24<sup>th</sup> secretary of agriculture, Governor Edward G. Rendell announced today.

The Governor nominated Redding on Sept. 12. Since then, he has served as acting secretary.

"Russell is the right person to lead our state's agriculture industry," said Governor Rendell. "His commitment to this state and the agriculture industry is unrivaled, and his proven leadership at the local, state and federal levels will serve the commonwealth well. Russell is an outstanding advocate for Pennsylvania agriculture and I thank the Senate for confirming him as secretary."

As secretary, Redding oversees the department responsible for encouraging, promoting and protecting the state's leading economic industry, agriculture, and its related industries. The department also has regulatory authority over food safety, animal health and the state's dog law, as well as inspection of weight and measurement devices and amusement rides.

“For the past 15 years I have had the pleasure of working each day with some of the best public servants, both elected and appointed, this state has known,” said Redding. “My experiences during this period have confirmed for me that the achievements of the Pennsylvania agriculture industry are a reflection of the great work done by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture staff, as well as the more than 63,000 farms and thousands of related agricultural businesses that we serve.

“The Department of Agriculture has set a number of objectives for the coming months, which will help guide our efforts to keep Pennsylvania growing,” added Redding. “Our work touches the lives of every citizen in Pennsylvania, giving us a sense of urgency and perspective with all of our actions.”

Redding said that he will focus on ensuring that the department is open and accessible to preserve strong relationships with consumers and businesses; enhancing food safety in Pennsylvania by meeting the statutory mandate and through collaborative efforts such as the Governor’s Food Safety Council; expanding environmental stewardship efforts through continued leadership on farmland preservation; making full use of the authority from the Farm Bill for conservation by balancing the needs of farmers and the public with the need for clean water in the Chesapeake Bay; supporting Pennsylvanians who are at-risk for hunger; redoubling efforts of existing programs and initiatives to benefit future generations of producers and consumers; and strengthening the department’s connection to its sister agencies and related state and local partners.

Pennsylvania is widely recognized as one of the leading agricultural states in the nation, ranking in the top five in the production of many fruits and vegetables, livestock and commodities. The state’s diverse agriculture industry includes more than 63,000 farms and 7.75 million acres of farmland.

Agriculture contributes more than \$45 billion in total economic impact to Pennsylvania, supplying one in seven jobs across the state.

Pennsylvania ranks among the top five states in organic product sales and is third in the nation for direct sales to consumers. The state's dairy sector is the largest segment of agriculture, and Pennsylvania ranks fifth nationally in milk production. Other notable products produced here include mushrooms, hardwood lumber, apples, pumpkins, eggs, Christmas trees and trout.

For more information, visit [www.agriculture.state.pa.us](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us).



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