

To my friends, Pa State Legislatures, members of the Ag community and guests,
My name is John Kline and I am a farmer from Myerstown Pa, Lebanon County. I watched my Father toil the soil and milk the cows with his Father, my Grandpa looking on with elderly advice. When I wanted to farm, the discussions were easy and the transitions relatively simple. However, in today's economic environment, a well planned approach to farm transitions takes a new level of effort and engagement of professional advice. While it is extremely challenging, the rewards are incredible and well worth the effort. There is a world out there that needs farms and farmers to sustain.

When my wife Sharon and I approached the mid 50's, we knew the challenge before us as we had 5 amazing sons that were fully engaged in what we were doing on the day to day operation of Klinedell Farms. Our operation involved 2 dairy facilities with 200 milk cows and supporting young stock, calves and replacement heifers and 420 acres of some of the most productive cropland available to farmers. With limited growth potential in our land-locked community and the financial challenges of dairy, some of our sons took off site employment but their interest in ag remained as they approached the age to get married and live in our community. It was time for us to plan for the future at a higher level.

However, the costs involved to secure professional help seemed unattainable with dairy economics. We were searching for answers. Through conversations and research, we found out there may be help available. Thanks to the Pa Farm Bill and the support of Pa Legislative efforts, Sharon and I were able to secure a grant. The Pa Farm Vitality grant provided funds to assist our family in securing professional assistance to successfully begin the path to transition our farm to the next generation, our children and now grandchildren. We have transferred the first operation to our oldest son Jason and his wife Megan and the groundwork is spelled out for the next steps and the entire operation is either sold or leased to our dream team of sons and their families. While it is not all completed in transition, the first steps have been taken and completed with the remaining portion planned with no surprises. The farm operation will remain in ag as the land is in Pa Farmland Preservation and the plan is in place to keep our sons farming.

While some sons still have off farm employment, they are running the dairy as a family unit. Some days, I may get to the end of my day and realize how rewarding it is to have done something for each of my sons that day to help them in the fulfilling task of feeding the world. It is absolutely essential that our state and local public service and governing agencies know that it is extremely critical to provide funding for these programs that keep our farm families thriving. Our farmers work tirelessly to provide a product that is best in class while taking the best care for animals and the land and programs such as the Farm Vitality Grant will insure for a sustainable future in the great State of Pa and beyond. I'm thankful for the leadership our State of Pa has provided in leading the charge in, not only farmland preservation, but also keeping the farmer healthy into the future by leaning toward a Farm Bill with strong farm support.

Thank you for your interest and for supporting Pennsylvania farmers