

FARM ★ CITY FORUM



Brochure Cover



WORKING TOGETHER TO SAVE AGRICULTURE.



Pierce County is one of the fastest growing communities in the state. While there are benefits to rapid expansion, there are also great risks. One is the loss of our agricultural heritage. Intense urban pressure is causing our farmland to disappear at an alarming rate and international competition is making it difficult

for farmers to survive. Last October, I convened the Pierce County Farm-City Forum, a group of public officials, community leaders, and private citizens, to discuss ways farmers and urban residents can work together to balance the needs of local agriculture with the demands of our growing urban centers. Specific topics were identified and will be addressed at upcoming public meetings. I encourage citizens to participate in these meetings. I also ask that you join me in working to secure a strong future for Pierce County agriculture.

John W. Ladenburg, Pierce County Executive

WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT ANYWAY?

The pioneers who settled Washington knew exactly where their food came from and the toil that went into growing it. Over the years, industrialization and globalization have created a disconnect between urban residents and their food supply. People today don't understand the plight of farmers because they don't see it.

American Farmland Trust realizes that farmland loss is not just a rural problem. Farmers cannot be expected to save agriculture alone. Instead, when urban and rural residents begin viewing farms as shared treasures in their community, they can take great strides towards securing a future for agriculture.

WOULD PIERCE COUNTY BE THE SAME WITHOUT FARMS?

Farms are part of our history. Many local farmers trace their heritage back to the European settlement of the Puget Sound area. Today, the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of some early pioneers continue to operate local farms.



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In every sense, farms are an important link to our past.

Fact is, farms contribute a great deal to Pierce County. As more and more of our community is developed and our population and congestion continue to grow, we are losing the natural beauty we enjoy. Working farmland protects our environment and provides open space for recreation and scenery. It also helps insulate us from the stress of urban life.

That's not all. Well-managed farmland filters and protects clean water, recharges aquifers, controls floodwaters, and provides habitat for wildlife. Our best opportunities to restore salmon habitat are in the streams that run through our region's farms.

Lastly, locally grown food, like that sold at farmer's markets, is higher in quality, safer, and has better nutritional value than foods shipped long distances for processing or mass marketing. Farm-direct marketing is a strong contributor to the Pierce County economy, as well as a financial boost to farmers.

HOW IS THE FARM-CITY FORUM HELPING?

The mission of the Forum is to find ways to protect and enhance agriculture. When this occurs, cities naturally benefit. On October 31, 2001, an unprecedented meeting sponsored by American Farmland Trust and Friends of Family Farmers brought urban and rural leaders together for a day of learning and sharing of agricultural issues. By the end of the meeting, Forum participants had arrived at three topic areas for further attention by our community:

1. Buying locally. How can Pierce County residents increase the percentage of local food they buy?
2. Spreading the word. How do we inform people of the ways agriculture contributes to our community?
3. The role of government. What specific, achievable government actions could we promote to support local agriculture?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Speak up. It's easy to do. To address the three topic areas, Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg is inviting the public to participate in a series of free, open meetings at the times and location listed above. Your comments and suggestions will assist in developing a plan for the future of agriculture in Pierce County. We hope to see you there.



FARM-CITY FORUM

PLACE

Allmendinger Center-WSU Research Extension
7612 Pioneer Way East Puyallup, WA 98371

DATE

February 25, 2002

TIMES

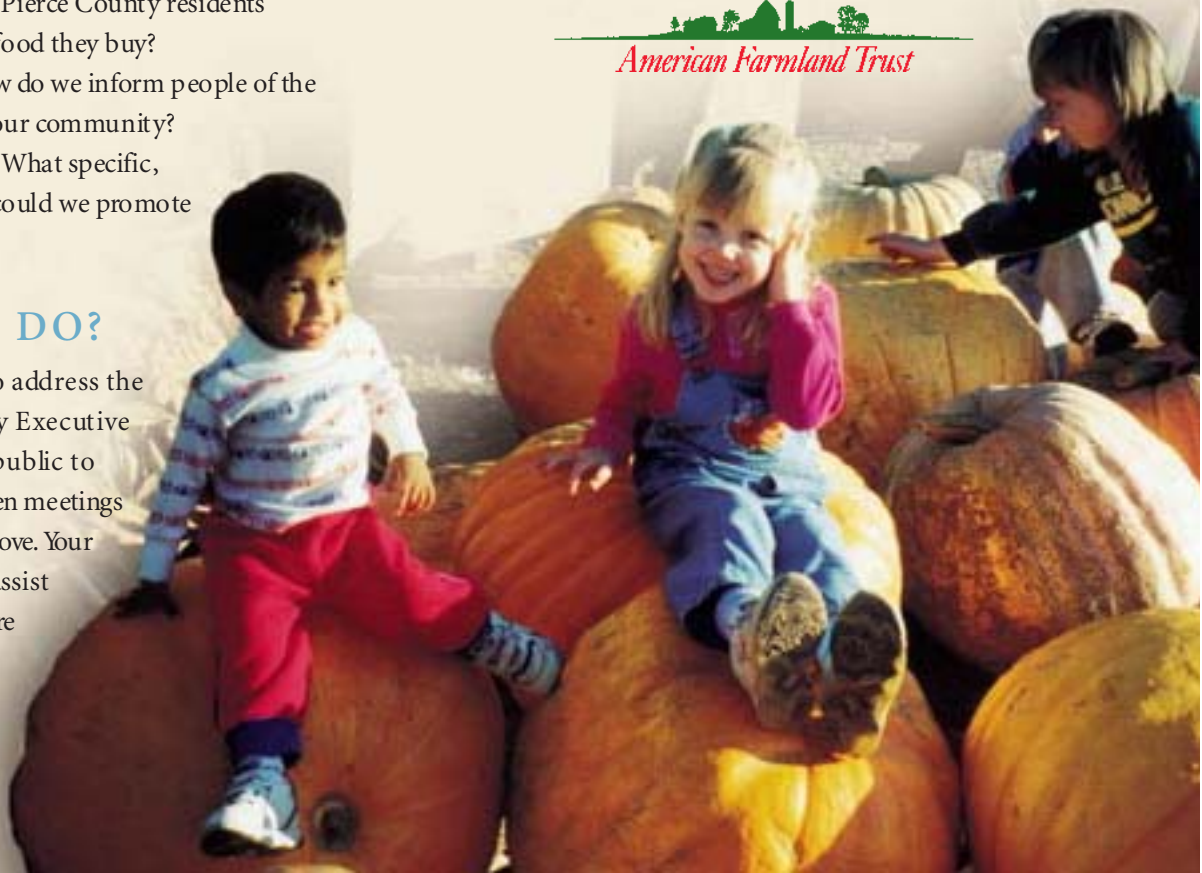
1. Buying locally. 8:00 - 10 AM
2. Getting the word out. 10:15 - 12:15 AM
3. The role of government. 1:30 - 4:00 PM

For more information, contact
American Farmland Trust at (253) 446-9384
or visit us on the web at www.farmland.org

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