

Alec Milucky

Farmers are a dying breed. It's a sad reality that became prevalent last year when local dairy farmers found themselves in a situation where they had no place to sell their milk to. My dad told me stories about when he was growing up that farmers were the people to be and that it was a good way to make a living. However, these days that is not the case. Less and less money is out there to be made for farmers making it harder to make a living. One way to solve this problem is through Natural Gas Exploration and Development (NGED).

Natural gas production has flourished in the northeast. Since 2013 Pennsylvania has been producing more of the country's natural gas than the Gulf of Mexico. Farmers and landowners look to welcome the gas companies to lease their land for a sizable portion of money. For a farmer having a hard time to make money, Natural Gas Exploration and Development can really be the saving grace. The economic benefits of the NGED are staggering. Local family farms would certainly benefit from leasing out land because of the added income. However, not all of Pennsylvania gets to benefit from this. The NGED has been rapidly expanding east of West Virginia until it reached the Delaware watershed. And Pennsylvania is not the only state that cannot reap the benefits of NGED. New York's governor Cuomo prohibited statewide fracking. This has put a halt in the expansion and landowner ready to lease land are left hanging.

Therefore, it is so crucial that Natural Gas Exploration and Development continues its exploration through the rest of the northeast. Local family farms can continue and even expand or improve their operations and not have to fear losing their farms. It is more than a farm going out of business, it is a way of life passed down from generation after generation that would be lost. The fact that farming is not as large as it used to be, makes it ever more important to preserve it and educate others about farming. It is for these reasons why I believe the Natural Gas Exploration and Development is crucial to agriculture and preserving family farming within the Upper Delaware River Basin.