



CUMBERLAND VALLEY RAIL TRAIL



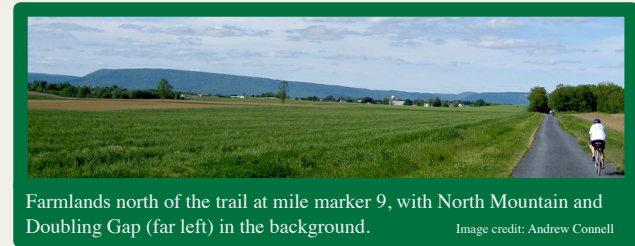
Agriculture in the Cumberland Valley

Agricultural Industry: Agriculture has been an economic mainstay in the Cumberland Valley since the late 1700s due to high-quality soil, agreeable weather patterns, dedicated and hard working farming families, and consumers who appreciate the choice food products produced in this fertile region of the state. Much of the farmland you see as you travel the rail trail has been in production for many generations. Local farms produce fruits, vegetables, grains, and raise livestock and less common animals such as llamas and peacocks.



Farm near Blossersville, PA, circa 1907. Source: Sylvia M. Smith

Family farms: Agriculture is the state's top industry, and Pennsylvania ranks fourth in the nation in food production. Most Cumberland Valley farms are family



Farmlands north of the trail at mile marker 9, with North Mountain and Doubling Gap (far left) in the background. Image credit: Andrew Connell

owned and operated, with several generations working together on the land. Frequently, every member of the family contributes to the production of the farm. While farmers face many difficult challenges adapting to unpredictable weather, crop damage from wild animals, plant and animal diseases, and fluctuating market prices, farming remains an important and viable industry in the Cumberland Valley.

Railroad's impact: The impact of the Cumberland Valley Railroad (CVRR) on agriculture in the valley cannot be overstated. The *American Volunteer*, a 19th-century Carlisle newspaper, proclaimed that:

A farmer can put his produce into a railroad car in the morning and the same evening have it on Broad Street, Philadelphia, and that, too, at one half of the expense it would cost him to have it taken by wagon.

By 1837 the CVRR was completed from Harrisburg to Chambersburg. Farmers began using rail transport, profiting from its speed and convenience, especially for perishable fruits and vegetables.



Fulton's Dairy is a modern, three-generation dairy farm located about one mile south of this location.

Image credit: Mark Fulton, Fulton's Dairy



Cumberland Valley farmers used to store their grain in the Oakville, PA, grain elevator pictured here (circa 1908). The grain would eventually be picked up for rail transport in CVRR hopper cars like the two depicted on the tracks to the right of the station.

Image credit: Newville Historical Society

In 1897, 35 freight cars loaded with peaches were shipped from the valley on the CVRR en route to Harrisburg and points east. The railroad's ability to make distant markets more accessible had clearly changed agriculture in the valley. The CVRR's steam engine *Mt. Alto #1*, built in 1872 (pictured in Chambersburg at right) was one of the engines that moved produce along this rail trail corridor during the last half of the 19th century.

Image credit: Cumberland Valley Historical Society

