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BURLCO SURPASSES 20,000 ACRES OF PRESERVED FARMLAND

STATE GIVES COUNTY \$3 MILLION FOR 300-ACRE GREENBERG FARM

MANSFIELD – Joined by State Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus, the Burlington County Freeholders today marked the preservation of over 20,000 acres of farmland, more than any other county, during a ceremony at the 300-acre Reuben Greenberg Farm in Mansfield.



Secretary Kuperus and Freeholder Haines mark the preservation of more than 20,000 of farmland in Burlington County

With the addition of the Greenberg Farm to the rolls of preserved farms, Freeholder William S. Haines, Jr. reported that Burlington County, with support and funding from the State and Municipalities, had permanently preserved 194 farms totaling more than 21,000 acres.

“This is a tremendous, proud milestone for Burlington County and its residents, which support our Farmland and Open Space Preservation Programs,” said Haines. “Farmland preservation not only supports ongoing viability for agriculture as an industry, but also provides scenic vistas, protects our water supplies, and encourages redevelopment of our towns.

The Greenberg Farm, located just south of Columbus off Route 206, is a former well-known dairy farm along the Assicunk Creek. It is now rented to a local farmer who is growing field crops on the land.

The County paid \$7.3 million for a fee simple purchase of the property with partial reimbursement from the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC). The county plans to sell the farm at auction next year.

The SADC gave Burlington County a \$2.9 million check this week for its cost share of the Greenberg Farm, which is the largest reimbursement the County has received to date.

“The very first farms in the state Farmland Preservation Program were preserved here in Burlington County, and 20 years later, Burlington is still making history as the first county to surpass the 20,000-acre milestone for preserved farmland,” said Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus.

“Whether it’s implementing transfer of development rights programs or planning for agriculture, Burlington County continues to be in the forefront of innovative efforts to strengthen agriculture. I congratulate Burlington County and look forward to continuing our partnership efforts to preserve farms and keep agriculture an important part of the Burlington County landscape for generations to come,” Kuperus added.

Haines noted that Burlington County, which has a four-cent dedicated property tax for farmland and open space preservation, created the template for fee simple purchases and is the only county to use installment purchase agreements with landowners to leverage and thus extend the program.

The County also purchases the development rights on many farms, thus preserving land in perpetuity at less cost than through outright acquisition.

Haines, who championed the referenda for the stable funding source, received a national conservation award in March from the Trust for Public Land and National Association of Counties for the county’s leadership in preservation.

The daughters of the late Reuben and Mae Greenberg, who sold the farm to county, also attended the ceremony. Both expressed their joy in being able to preserve the farm in memory of their parents.



Secretary Kuperus and Freeholder Haines discuss farmland preservation plans with a neighboring property owner to the Greenberg Farm

During today’s event, County officials also discussed the planned “rails-to-trail” project, converting portions of the former Kinkora Railroad to a public, recreational trail. Ceremony attendees walked a portion of the proposed trail, which will pass through the rear portion of the Greenberg Farm near the Mansfield Community Park.

The County’s goal is to develop an approximate 13-mile long trail to link the Delaware River in Mansfield to the Rancocas Creek in Pemberton Township.

“This trail will offer great opportunities for hiking or biking through some of our most scenic areas,” Haines said. “We’re working with municipal officials as well as representatives from the agricultural and park development communities to design a trail that will be fun for the public but will also respect the private lands and agricultural operations of adjacent landowners.”

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