

NEWS RELEASE
Governor Jon S. Corzine
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**GOVERNOR CORZINE ANNOUNCES PRESERVATION OF 150,000 ACRES
OF FARMLAND, FIGHTING HUNGER AWARD IN MEMORY OF LEADING
BURLINGTON COUNTY FARMER**

NORTH HANOVER - Governor Corzine today announced New Jersey has surpassed the 150,000-acre milestone for preserved farmland, maintaining its role as a national leader in farmland preservation. He also announced the establishment of the annual Neil Robson Farmer's Fighting Hunger Award, in memory of a leading Burlington County farmer, to recognize farmers who make outstanding contributions to the fight against hunger by providing fresh fruits and vegetables to help feed the hungry.

"Including the Robson Farm, almost one in every five acres of New Jersey farmland is protected from development - the highest rate of any state in the nation," said Governor Corzine, who spoke at the Robson Farm in North Hanover. "I am proud of New Jersey's strong commitment to preserving our open spaces and I am even more proud of how we have used that valuable asset to benefit a greater good."

Robson, a third-generation farmer from North Hanover Township who died suddenly on September 25th, 2006 was a leading supporter of the Farmers Against Hunger Program. He ran a family operation that farms 1,200 acres in North Hanover, growing vegetables, fruits, ornamental crops and grain. The family's 500-acre home farm is permanently preserved.

New Jersey remains a national leader in farmland preservation, with more than 18 percent of its available agricultural land base permanently preserved. To date, almost 1,500 farms covering 150,120 acres have been preserved statewide under the Farmland Preservation Program.

"New Jersey's commitment to preserving our farmland enhances the quality of life in the Garden State in so many ways, providing for green and livable communities, creating markets for our consumers and establishing local connections between our farm families and the rest of our citizenry," said Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus. "The efforts of farmers like Neil Robson strengthen the long-standing roots of agriculture not only in their own communities but in all of those communities they serve."

In FY '06, New Jersey spent only \$338,000 on hunger assistance - less than every other state along the northeast corridor. This year, Governor Corzine increased that by \$3 million in addition to another \$1 million that will be spent on food storage and distribution to ensure that food stays fresh and gets to distribution centers when they need it.

Besides selling at his own three farm markets, Robson operated a stand at the West Windsor Farmers Market on Saturdays and every week would donate approximately 800 pounds of produce to the program. The produce was delivered to the Rescue Mission and Galilee Church in Trenton, which prepares a meal for homeless residents in the area every Sunday morning. Additionally, he opened his farm to gleanings, in which the program partners with schools and other groups to pick surplus produce. In 2005, Robson donated 20,375 pounds to the program.

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Photos and audio and video clips from Governor Corzine's public events are available in the Governor's Newsroom section on the State of New Jersey web page, <http://www.nj.gov/governor/news/>