

CHAPTER 141

AN ACT concerning organic farming and supplementing Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.4:10-80 “Organic Farming Board” established; definitions.

1. There is established in the Division of Marketing and Development in the Department of Agriculture the Organic Farming Board.

a. The purpose of the board shall be to develop, administer, and oversee programs in consultation with the Department of Agriculture on topics related to organic farming, including the certification program established pursuant to P.L.2003, c.176 (4:10-79), the federal organic farming certification program implemented by the United States Department of Agriculture, best practices for organic and regenerative farming, incentives to encourage more organic and regenerative farming in the State, new techniques to carry out organic and regenerative farming, and programs to provide outreach, education, and marketing support to organic and regenerative farms in New Jersey.

b. The board shall consist of seven members as follows:

(1) two certified organic farmers to be appointed by the Governor;

(2) two organic farmers from historically underserved communities to be appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be recommended by the Speaker of the General Assembly and one of whom shall be recommended by the Senate President;

(3) one regenerative farmer, to be appointed by the Governor; and

(4) two organic trade representatives to be appointed by the Governor.

c. The chairperson shall be a member of the board and shall be elected by the board for a term of three years. The public members shall serve for terms of three years and may be reappointed and may serve until a successor has been appointed. Of the public members first appointed, three shall be appointed for terms of three years, two shall be appointed for terms of two years, and two shall be appointed for a term of one year. Vacancies in the membership of the board shall be filled in the same manner provided for the original appointments.

d. The board shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of a majority of its members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the board. The board shall meet quarterly in different regions of the State as determined by the chairperson in consultation with other members of the board. The board shall invite organizations, including, but not limited to, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey, the Foodshed Alliance, North Jersey RC and D, the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the United States Department of Agriculture, or other agricultural organizations and farmers in order to enhance the public process, provided that a representative of the agricultural organization or a farmer is not serving as an organic trade representative on the board.

e. The public members shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available to the board.

f. The board shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

g. The Department of Agriculture shall provide staff support to the board and the board shall be entitled to call to its assistance other State representatives or specialists as necessary.

h. Every two years, the board shall submit a written report on the status of organic farming in the State, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action, to the

Governor and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The report shall also be posted on the Department of Agriculture's Internet website.

i. The board shall report monthly to the State Board of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture on any actions taken, needs of the board, achievements, and updates within the organic farming community. The board may submit quarterly reports directly to the Department of Agriculture, and the department shall respond with a follow-up response within 30 days after the submission of the quarterly report.

j. As used in this section:

“Regenerative farming” means farming and grazing practices that (a) prioritize soil health and ecosystem health, (b) reduce reliance on synthetic inputs, (c) reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter, sequestering carbon, and restoring degraded soil biodiversity, and (d) engage in conservation practices to ensure the long-term health of the farm’s ecosystem, among many benefits.

“Organic trade representative” means a representative of an individual, or a not-for-profit or for-profit partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or entity, who is legally registered and operating in the State, who engages in the business of aggregating, processing, and distributing organic fiber, feeds, and other organic agricultural-based supply and consumer products, including any commodity or product derived from organic livestock, that is marketed in the United States for human or livestock consumption, or who directly engages with, or supports and advocates for, organic and regenerative farmers in New Jersey.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 10, 2023.