



NEWS

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Governor Corzine Signs Into Law \$91M for Farmland Preservation Projects

Governor Jon S. Corzine has signed into law \$91 million to help fund farmland preservation projects across the state.

“This funding is eagerly awaited by towns, counties and nonprofit organizations that are working to protect farmland, deal with sprawling development and manage property taxes in communities across New Jersey,” said Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher, who chairs the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) that administers the Farmland Preservation Program.

“Now, at the peak of the Jersey Fresh growing season, we particularly can appreciate how much our farms offer us and why it is so important to maintain the momentum of our farmland preservation efforts.”

The funding provides the following:

- ✍ \$46 million to assist counties in preserving farms, including \$2 million to each of 15 counties under the County Planning Incentive Grant Program (PIG), and \$1 million to Cumberland County under the Traditional County Easement Purchase Program. Counties that exhaust their \$2 million grant under the County PIG Program are eligible to compete for up to an additional \$3 million from a \$15 million competitive grant fund for as long as that funding remains available. Counties participating in this first year of the County PIG Program are: Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Somerset, Sussex and Warren.

- ✍ \$27.75 million to help municipalities preserve farmland in project areas they have identified under the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program. The funding is targeted at 37 municipal project areas in seven counties: Franklin and Woolwich townships in Gloucester County; Alexandria, Delaware, East Amwell, Franklin, Holland, Kingwood, Raritan, Readington, Tewksbury and West Amwell townships in Hunterdon County; Hopewell Township, Mercer County; Colts Neck, Holmdel, Howell, Manalapan, Marlboro, Millstone and Upper Freehold townships in Monmouth County; Alloway, Pilesgrove, Pittsgrove and Upper Pittsgrove in Salem County; Bedminster, Bernards, Branchburg, Franklin,

Hillsborough and Montgomery townships in Somerset County; and Franklin, Freylinghuysen, Greenwich, Harmony, Hope, Knowlton and Pohatcong townships in Warren County.

- ✍ \$10.8 million for the SADC to directly acquire farmland or the development rights to farms statewide under its State Acquisition Program.
- ✍ \$6.45 million in grants to nine nonprofit organizations to assist in preserving their highest-priority farms among eligible projects in 15 municipalities in six counties: West Amwell, Kingwood, Raritan and Delaware townships in Hunterdon County; Upper Freehold and Howell townships in Monmouth County; Mannington, Lower Alloways Creek, Quinton and Carneys Point townships in Salem County; Bedminster Township, Somerset County; Frankford, Andover and Fredon townships in Sussex County, and Franklin Township in Warren County.

The \$91 million in funding includes \$69 million from the referendum approved by voters in November 2007 as well as reprogrammed funding from unsuccessful projects and revenue from the resale of farms purchased outright for preservation under the State Acquisition Program.

The funding also include \$247,000 for cost-sharing grants to assist owners of farms that have been permanently preserved or enrolled in eight-year preservation programs in undertaking eligible soil and water conservation projects.

More funding details are available on the SADC's website at <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/news/hottopics/index.html>.

The SADC administers the Farmland Preservation Program. To date, more than 1,800 farms covering nearly 180,000 acres have been permanently preserved statewide under the program.

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