



NEWS

New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program & Mercer County Announce Landmark Preservation Project

Hopewell Township, Mercer County – Today, the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program and Mercer County jointly announce the preservation of the Kerr farm, a beautiful and historic stretch of farmland containing 355 acres of productive farmland located on Bear Tavern Road in Hopewell Township, Mercer County. The farmland was preserved by Mercer County as four separate farms owned by various Kerr Family members and was made possible through a grant provided by the NJ State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), the agency that administers the state program, in addition to county preservation funds. The project also includes an open space component with a 28.5-acre conservation easement area that will provide public access along Jacobs Creek.

The Kerr family's heritage on this land began in the 1930s when they purchased the farm. The land is both agriculturally and historically significant, as it is located adjacent to the fabled Jacobs Creek, where George Washington and 1,800 cold and weary troops endured their only major stream crossing on the way to the infamous Battle of Trenton, with horses and artillery in tow. The land rises from Jacobs Creek, located on a ridge, and is how the estate got its name, "Kerr Ridge Farm." The property is part of the Jacobs Creek Crossing Rural Historic District, with the original houses dating back to the 1700s. The fourth generation of the Kerr family currently operates the farm, which will now remain in agriculture forever.

"New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program is committed to preserving the state's precious farmland resources and does so through partnership with its tireless program partners – county and municipal governments, the nonprofit community, farmland owners, and the agricultural community," said Joe Atchison, Assistant Secretary of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. "We are incredibly pleased to participate in bringing this farmland preservation project to the finish line."

County Executive Brian M. Hughes said, "This is one of the largest remaining farms in Mercer County and the residents of Mercer County have shown time and again that they value open space and farmland preservation. I am pleased to add this working landscape to the roster of permanently preserved farms in Mercer County."

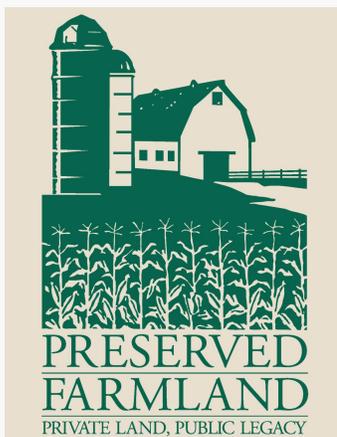
"The SADC would like to thank the Kerr family for their decision to preserve this wonderful farm and congratulate them on the conservation legacy they have achieved," said Susan Payne, Executive Director of the SADC. "Every farm that is preserved helps New Jersey residents secure access to fresh, locally grown food and farm products, both now and in the future."

The Kerr Family farmland preservation project brings the total farmland preserved through the state program to a total of 250,777 acres and 8,951 acres in Mercer County.

With this milestone, over one-third of all of New Jersey's farmland has been preserved under the program, and the State is approximately half-way to its goal of permanently preserving at least 500,000 acres of farmland statewide. Mercer County continues to prioritize over 2,100 more acres of farmland in the County for future preservation.

The SADC preserves farmland directly with landowners and provides grant funding to counties, municipalities, and nonprofit entities to preserve farmland consistent with local agricultural and farmland preservation plans. The program also provides grants to owners and operators of preserved farmland for soil and water conservation projects, including irrigation, erosion control, manure facilities, and for the construction of deer fencing.

Kerr Ridge Farms Aerial



For more information about the farmland preservation program and the State Agriculture Development Committee, go to <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/>

and for the Mercer County Agricultural Development Board, visit <https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/planning/farmland-preservation>

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Heidi Winzinger, SADC Communication & Resource Manager at Heidi.Winzinger@ag.nj.gov 609-815-6479(cell)