

New Jersey State Agriculture
Development Committee



FY2025 Annual Report

Private Land, Public Legacy



Front Cover Photos:

- Fastige Farm, East Greenwich Township, Gloucester County
- Tucker Farm, Peapack Gladstone Boro, Somerset County
- Wert Farm, Hopewell Township, Mercer County
- Durr Farm, North Hanover Township, Burlington County

Back Cover Photos:

- Barnes Farm, Kingwood Township, Hunterdon County
- Fichera Farm, Mannington Township, Salem County
- Franceschini Farm, Vineland City, Cumberland County
- Newkirk Farm, Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County

Philip D. Murphy
Governor



Tahesha Way
Lt. Governor

New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee
Members During FY2025

Secretary of Agriculture, Chairman SADC
Edward D. Wengryn

Ex-Officio Members

Julie Krause represented **Elizabeth Maher Muoio**,
State Treasurer

Lauren Procida & Judeth Yeany represented **Shawn M. LaTourette**,
Commissioner, Department of Environmental Protection

Gina Fischetti represented **Jacquelyn A. Suarez**,
Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs

Brian Schilling represented **Laura Lawson**,
Executive Dean, Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

Farmer Members

Martin Bullock

Scott Ellis

Peter Johnson (term ended 6/2/2025)

Jessica Niederer (6/2/2025-Present)

Richard Norz

Alternate Farmer Member

Roger R. Kumpel

Public Members

Tiffany Bohlin

Charles Rosen

Executive Director

Charles Roohr, *Deputy Executive Director (6/1/2024-2/12/2025),*
Executive Director (2/12/2025-Present)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

2. Farmland Preservation Totals

6. Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) Program & County PIG Program

8. Municipal PIG Program

9. State Acquisition Program

10. Nonprofit Program

11. Term Farmland Preservation Program

12. Farms Preserved in the Pinelands (Cumulative)

13. Farms Preserved in the Highlands (Cumulative)

14. Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula



*Eastlack Farm, Woolwich Township,
Gloucester County*

PLANNING FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION

15. Non-Ag Project Reviews, NJ Conservation Blueprint, & GIS Mapping

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

17. Next Generation Farmer Program

18. Farm Link & Wildlife Fencing Grants

20. Soil & Water Cost-Share Grants

22. Special Occasion Events

23. Rural Microenterprise

24. Renewable Energy & Easement Monitoring

25. Fee Simple Farm Update



*Chickadee Creek Farm, Hopewell
Township, Mercer County*

26. **RIGHT TO FARM PROGRAM**

27. **AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAM**

28. **OUTREACH, TRAINING, & GUIDANCE**

INTRODUCTION

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025) marked a pivotal chapter in New Jersey’s unwavering commitment to preserving its agricultural landscape and fostering a viable future for farming in the “Garden State.” The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) has, for over 40 years, been at the forefront of this mission, working collaboratively with county and municipal partners, nonprofit organizations, and dedicated landowners to protect valuable farmland from the unrelenting pressures of development. This annual report details the SADC’s strides in this ongoing endeavor, highlighting our progress, key initiatives, and our work to foster the sustainable viability of New Jersey’s agricultural community.

In June 2022, a comprehensive audit of the SADC conducted by the New Jersey State Auditor was completed. This two-year effort provided an opportunity to take a deep dive into the business of farmland preservation. The most significant takeaway was that the current pace of farmland preservation is not likely to meet our goal of 500,000 acres of preserved farmland.

The New Jersey Legislature responded by passing significant legislation (P.L. 2023, c. 245), which became law on January 8, 2024 and established the new Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula (“Statewide Formula”) as an alternative for valuing farmland entering the Farmland Preservation Program. This valuation method is a game-changer for farmland preservation across the state and is helping the SADC adapt its strategies to changing conditions to have more success in addressing the extreme demands of development pressure from traditional residential sources, as well as newer demands for warehouses and renewable energy facilities, which constantly challenge the integrity of our agricultural land base. In conjunction with more competitive preservation offers, the SADC has also begun the effort of eliminating unnecessary tasks and processes to speed the time it takes from accepting a farmland preservation application to a successful closing and the preservation of the farm.

Beyond land preservation, the SADC maintained its robust suite of programs designed to support the everyday needs of New Jersey farmers. We continued to provide cost-share grants for vital soil and water conservation projects and wildlife fencing, helping farmers improve sustainability and mitigate crop losses. Significant regulatory amendments were made to this program increasing overall eligibility limits and allowing cost-share grants to cover the cost of hiring private consultants when needed. The Right to Farm Program remained a cornerstone of our efforts, protecting commercial farms from nuisance actions and unduly restrictive local regulations, while the Agricultural Mediation Program provides no cost, informal dispute-resolution services.

A significant focus in FY2025 was on the future of New Jersey agriculture through the active development of the Next Generation Farmer Program. Following the adoption of the “Next Generation of Farming in New Jersey” report, the SADC began developing and implementing new initiatives focused on mentorship, land access, and farm succession planning to help new and established farmers navigate the complex challenges of modern farming.

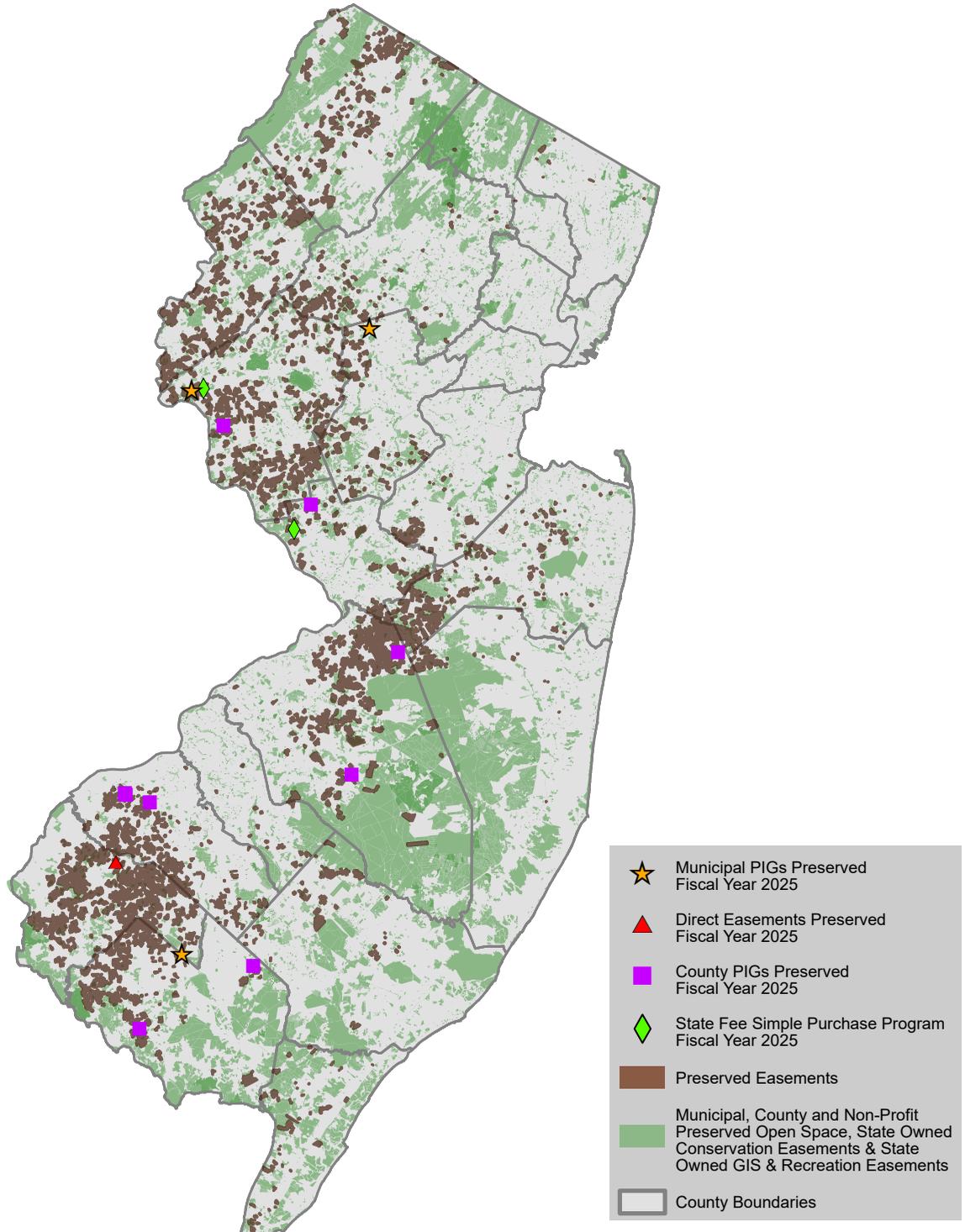
As we look back on the achievements of FY2025, we are reminded that preserving farmland is only part of the solution; ensuring agricultural viability is the other. The SADC remains dedicated to its vision of a thriving farming industry, where preserved land is productive, and a new generation of farmers can flourish. This report showcases the tangible outcomes of these efforts, demonstrating how, together with our preservation partners, we continue to cultivate a secure and sustainable future for New Jersey agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

At Fiscal Year's End

2,890 Farms & 253,014 Acres

Permanently Preserved Since the Inception
of the Program



Farmland Preservation Totals by Program

**rounded*

County Planning Incentive
Grant Program

9 Farms
478 Acres

Municipal Planning
Incentive Grant Program

3 Farms
64 Acres

State Direct Easement
Program

1 Farm
71 Acres

State Fee Simple Program

2 Farms
249 Acres

Summary of Farmland Preserved (Through 6/30/2025)

| Participating County | Number of Farms | Number of Municipalities | Acres | Average Farm Size | Total Cost | Per Acre Total Cost | State Cost | State Cost Share Percent | County Municipality Federal Cost Share |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Atlantic | 49 | 8 | 5,166 | 105 | 17,948,686 | 3,475 | 13,794,210 | 76.85% | 4,154,476 |
| Bergen | 8 | 5 | 335 | 42 | 19,752,944 | 58,927 | 10,866,840 | 55.01% | 8,886,103 |
| Burlington | 249 | 21 | 29,972 | 120 | 158,864,627 | 5,300 | 95,496,302 | 60.11% | 63,368,325 |
| Camden | 16 | 4 | 1,103 | 69 | 15,522,805 | 14,067 | 7,834,653 | 50.47% | 7,688,152 |
| Cape May | 51 | 6 | 3,141 | 62 | 18,969,353 | 6,039 | 11,428,961 | 60.25% | 7,540,392 |
| Cumberland | 242 | 12 | 22,599 | 93 | 68,667,140 | 3,038 | 49,918,231 | 72.70% | 18,748,909 |
| Gloucester | 231 | 14 | 16,536 | 72 | 135,007,326 | 8,164 | 85,927,973 | 63.65% | 49,079,353 |
| Hunterdon | 472 | 19 | 36,473 | 77 | 306,470,426 | 8,403 | 215,600,605 | 70.35% | 90,869,821 |
| Mercer | 123 | 8 | 9,113 | 74 | 112,592,270 | 12,355 | 68,572,917 | 60.90% | 44,019,353 |
| Middlesex | 57 | 7 | 4,956 | 87 | 63,532,916 | 12,820 | 41,569,450 | 65.43% | 21,963,466 |
| Monmouth | 216 | 11 | 15,599 | 72 | 248,495,477 | 15,931 | 153,547,391 | 61.79% | 94,948,086 |
| Morris | 116 | 12 | 7,344 | 63 | 149,223,868 | 20,319 | 83,127,249 | 55.71% | 66,096,619 |
| Ocean | 48 | 5 | 3,193 | 67 | 26,506,787 | 8,301 | 17,969,317 | 67.79% | 8,537,470 |
| Passaic | 2 | 2 | 56 | 28 | 3,553,345 | 63,399 | 1,539,426 | 43.32% | 2,013,919 |
| Salem | 412 | 12 | 43,519 | 106 | 191,505,440 | 4,401 | 147,769,588 | 77.16% | 43,735,852 |
| Somerset | 117 | 7 | 8,336 | 71 | 146,166,319 | 17,534 | 83,536,006 | 57.15% | 62,630,313 |
| Sussex | 162 | 14 | 17,019 | 105 | 58,178,974 | 3,418 | 40,512,717 | 69.63% | 17,666,257 |
| Warren | 319 | 19 | 28,553 | 90 | 170,381,011 | 5,967 | 118,921,587 | 69.80% | 51,459,424 |
| All Counties | 2,890 | 186 | 253,014 | 88 | 1,911,339,713 | 7,554 | 1,247,933,423 | 65.29% | 663,406,290 |

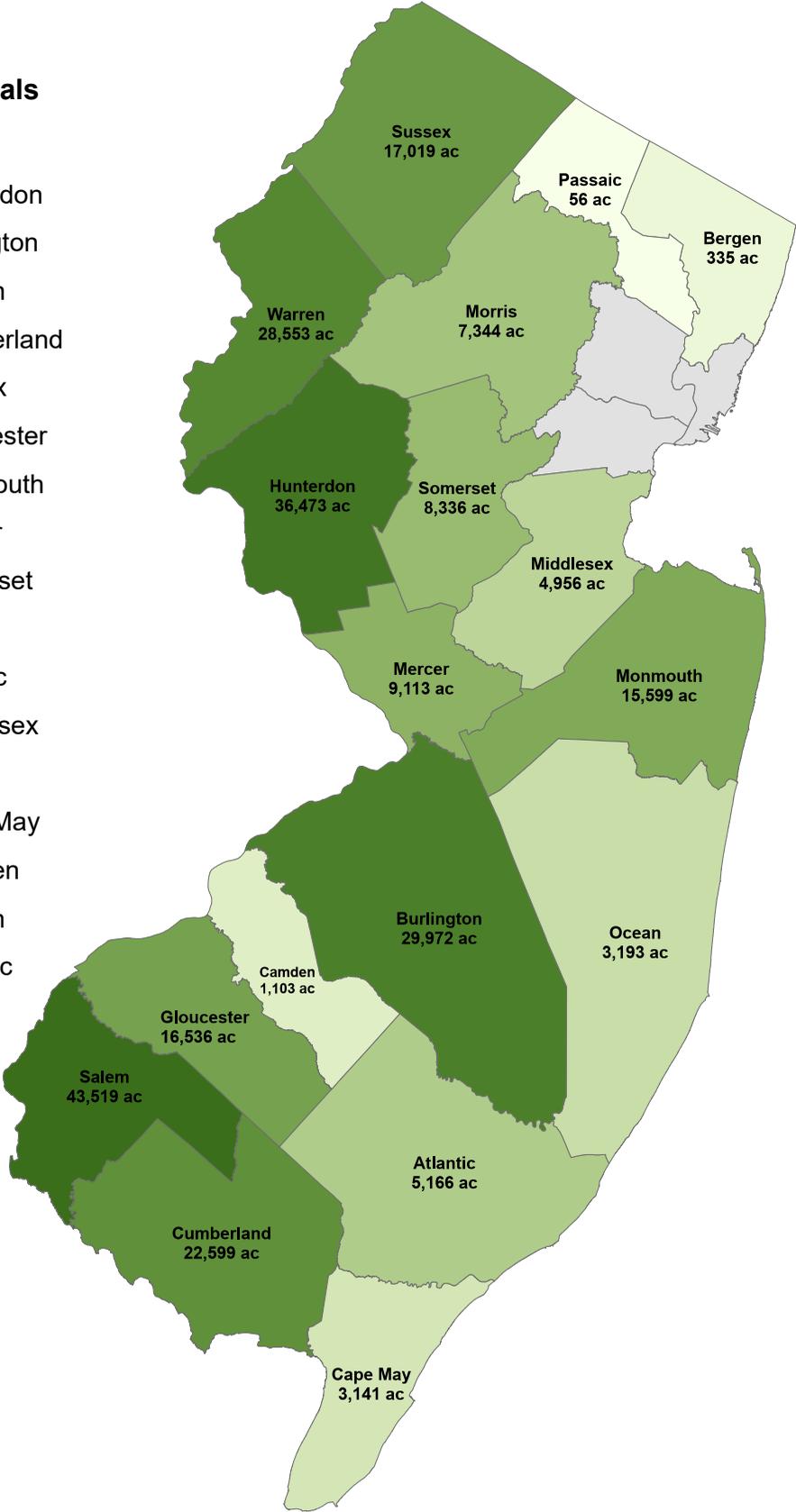
Summary of Farmland Preserved in FY2025 (7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025)

| Participating County | Number of Farms | Number of Municipalities | Acres | Average Farm Size | Total Cost | Per Acre Total Cost | State Cost | State Cost Share Percent | County Municipality Federal Cost Share |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Burlington | 2 | 2 | 252 | 126 | 1,842,025 | 7,317 | 1,159,711 | 62.96% | 682,313 |
| Cumberland | 2 | 2 | 50 | 25 | 174,940 | 3,478 | 120,427 | 68.84% | 54,513 |
| Gloucester | 3 | 1 | 125 | 42 | 4,307,215 | 34,574 | 2,536,291 | 58.88% | 1,770,924 |
| Hunterdon | 3 | 2 | 157 | 52 | 1,882,674 | 12,012 | 1,768,744 | 93.95% | 113,930 |
| Mercer | 2 | 1 | 162 | 81 | 3,367,734 | 20,805 | 3,317,371 | 98.50% | 50,363 |
| Salem | 2 | 2 | 82 | 41 | 464,901 | 5,636 | 438,231 | 94.26% | 26,670 |
| Somerset | 1 | 1 | 35 | 35 | 1,500,000 | 43,170 | 313,938 | 20.93% | 1,186,062 |
| All Counties | 15 | 11 | 862 | 57 | 13,539,488 | 15,698 | 9,654,712 | 71.31% | 3,884,776 |

Preserved Acres by County (Through 6/30/2025)

Counties
In Order of
Acreage Totals

-  Salem
-  Hunterdon
-  Burlington
-  Warren
-  Cumberland
-  Sussex
-  Gloucester
-  Monmouth
-  Mercer
-  Somerset
-  Morris
-  Atlantic
-  Middlesex
-  Ocean
-  Cape May
-  Camden
-  Bergen
-  Passaic



Planning Incentive Grant Program

The SADC's Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) programs require counties and municipalities to develop and adopt comprehensive farmland preservation plans to receive State funding for easement purchase. These plans detail farmland preservation goals and other key strategies to help retain agriculture with a focus on land use planning, economic development, natural resource conservation, and overall local support for agriculture.

SADC staff aid in the development of county and municipal plans, review plan drafts, and periodically review plan amendments. During FY2025, several municipalities and county partners worked on updates to their comprehensive farmland preservation plans. Of the county partners, Gloucester County completed its comprehensive farmland preservation plan update and received SADC approval.

The SADC's active PIG partners, 18 counties and 41 municipalities, aim to preserve a combined 220,379 acres of additional farmland. Of these active partners, 15 counties and 27 municipalities submitted annual applications for additional PIG funding for FY2025.

County PIG Program

The County PIG Program enables the SADC to provide grants to eligible counties to purchase development easements for the permanent preservation of farmland in designated project areas. 9 farms were preserved through the County PIG Program in FY2025, totaling 478 acres.



Heritage, Samuel E.
East Greenwich Twp., Gloucester County
Sweet corn and snap bean production
43.161 Acres



The Gloria S. Fastige Revocable Trust
East Greenwich Twp., Gloucester County
Turnip production
20.996 Acres



DeSimone Family Limited Partnership
East Greenwich Twp., Gloucester County
Soybean production
60.424 Acres



Barnes, Maia & David (tenants)
Kingwood Twp., Hunterdon County
Hay and equine production
20.086 Acres



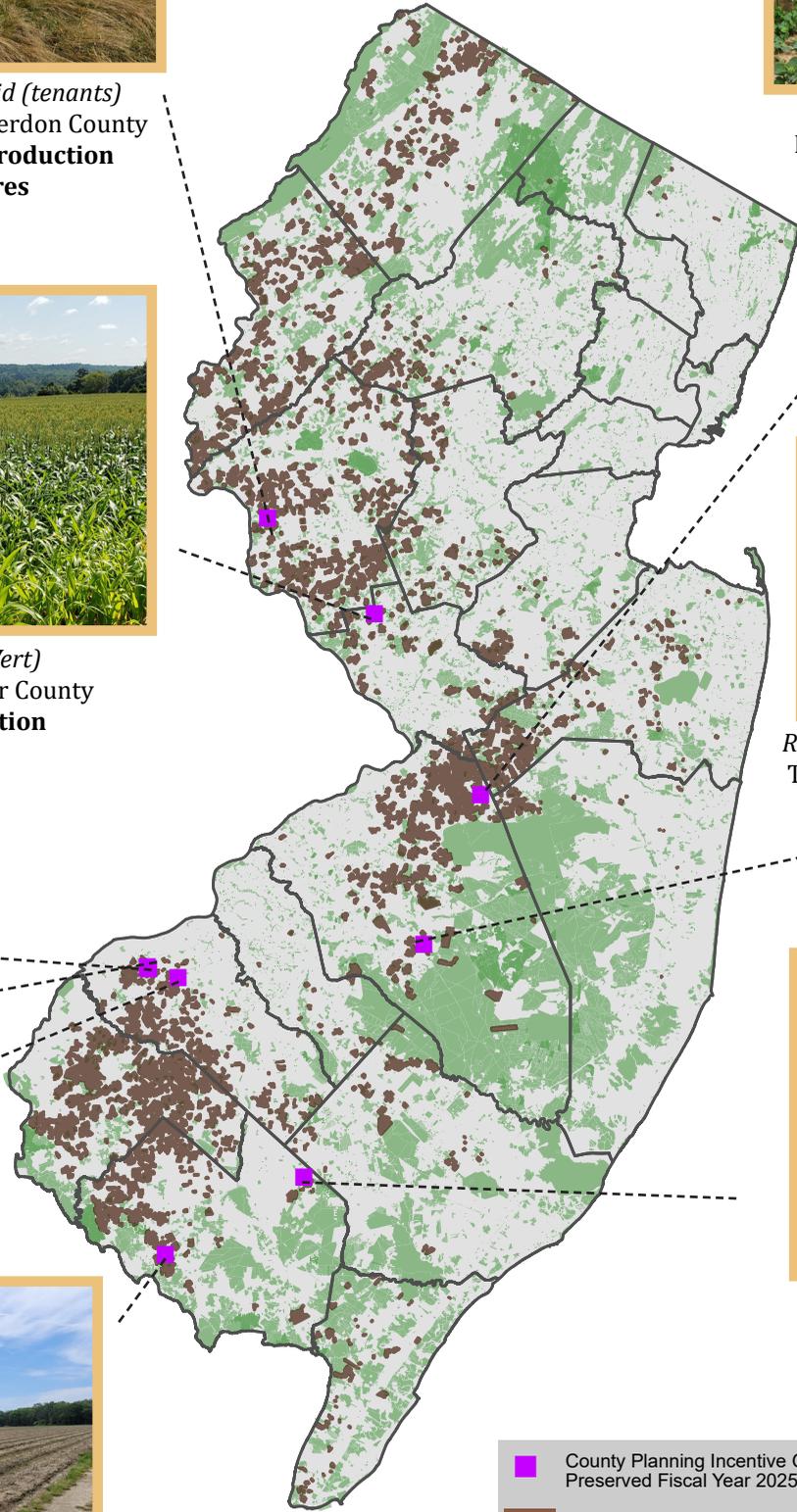
Durr, Lisa
North Hanover Twp., Burlington County
Vegetable, melon, and forest management production
98.868 Acres



Mercer County (Wert)
Hopewell Twp., Mercer County
Sorghum production
31.189 Acres



Russo's Fruit and Vegetable Farm, Inc.
Tabernacle Twp., Burlington County
Vegetable production
152.894 Acres
(Pinelands Region)



Franceschini, Ralph - Estate of
Vineland City, Cumberland County
Field crop production
23.536 Acres



SF Systems (Lot 7)
Lawrence Twp., Cumberland County
Vegetable and melon production
26.760 Acres

- County Planning Incentive Grants Preserved Fiscal Year 2025
- Preserved Easements
- Municipal, County and Non-Profit Preserved Open Space, State Owned Conservation Easements & State Owned GIS & Recreation Easements
- County Boundaries

Municipal PIG Program

The Municipal PIG Program enables the SADC to provide grants to eligible municipalities that adopt comprehensive farmland preservation plans to purchase development easements for the permanent preservation of farmland in designated project areas. 3 farms were preserved through the Municipal PIG Program in FY2025, totaling 64 acres.



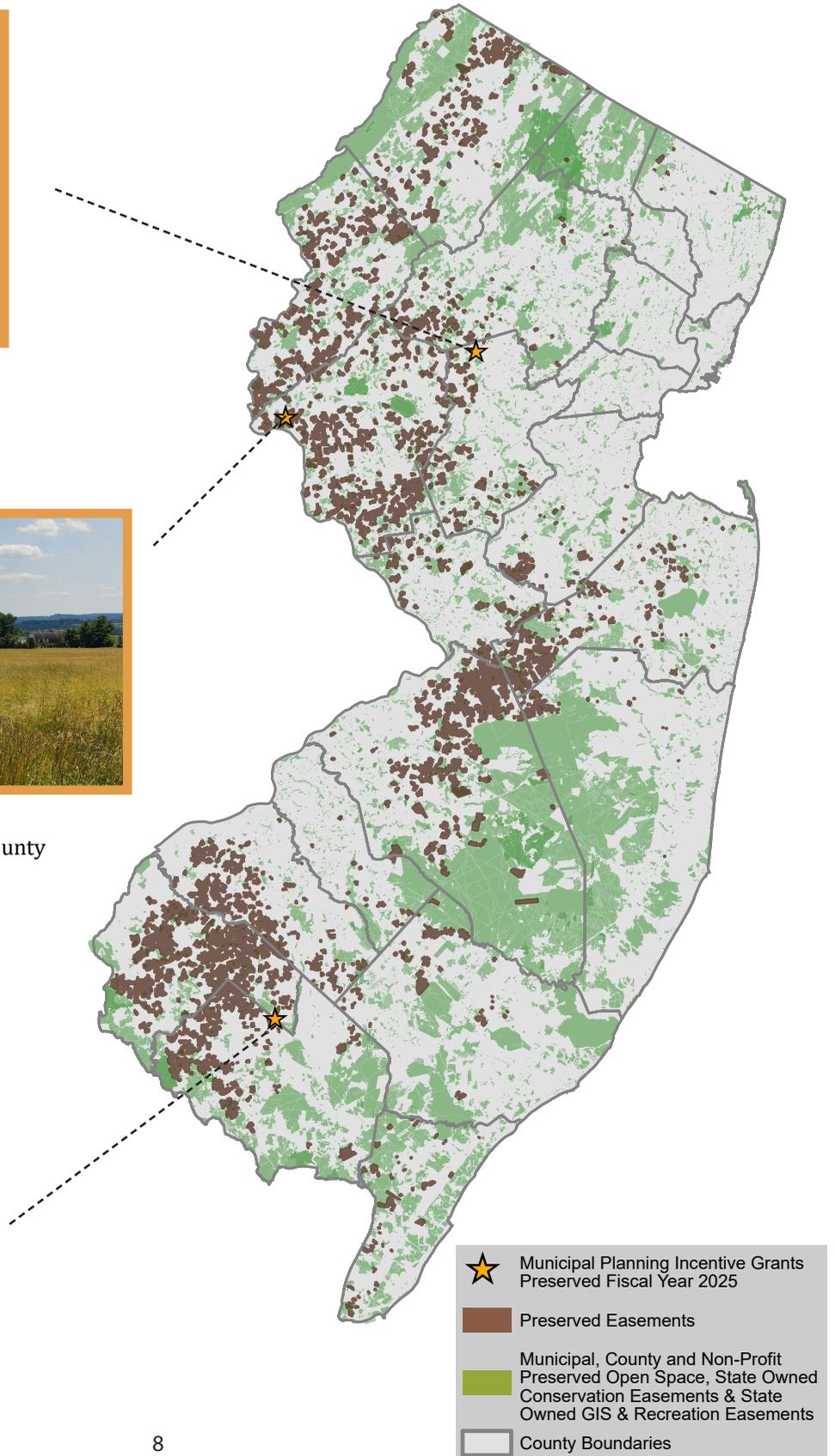
Tucker, Andrew J. F. & Judith L.
Peapack Gladstone Boro., Somerset County
Hay and cattle production
34.746 Acres



Schafer, John W.
Holland Twp., Hunterdon County
Hay production
17.929 Acres
(Highlands Region)



Caroccio, Sharon R.
Pittsgrove Twp., Salem County
Corn production
11.372 Acres



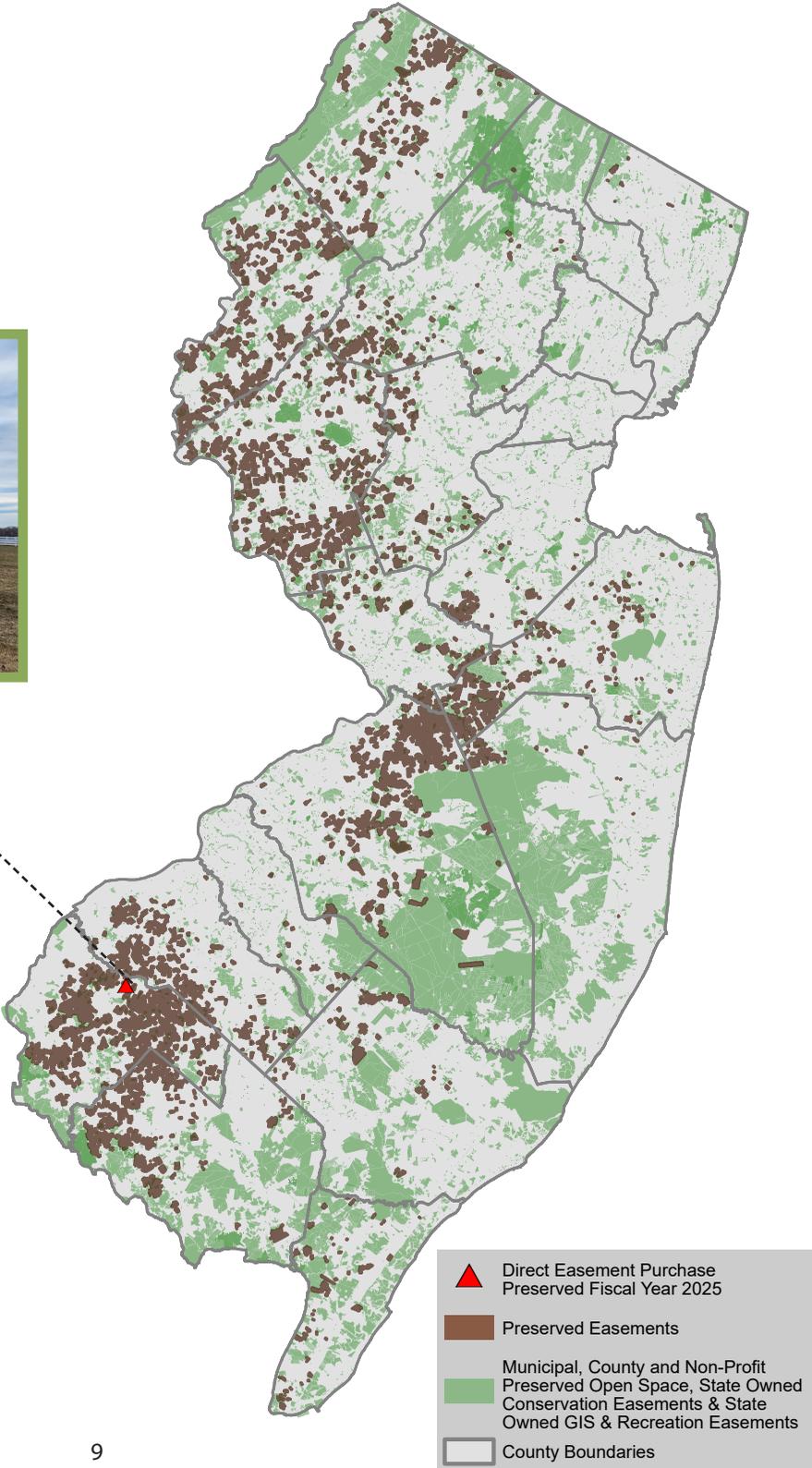
State Acquisition Program

Direct Easement Purchase

The SADC purchases easements directly from landowners to preserve farmland through its State Acquisition Program. A significant number of landowners voluntarily chose to delay their applications to wait for SADC's new "Statewide Formula" to receive and consider that value before moving forward. See more about the Statewide Formula Value on page 14.



Verechia, Carol L.
Pilesgrove Twp., Salem County
Hay and beef cattle production
71.115 Acres



State Acquisition Program

Fee Simple Purchase

In addition to purchasing easements on farmland where the landowner continues to own the farm, the SADC also purchases farms in their entirety, or fee-simple interest. In FY2025, the SADC purchased 2 farms through its Fee Simple Purchase Program, totaling 249 acres. The farms are maintained in agricultural production until they are sold at public auction as permanently preserved farmland and returned to private ownership.

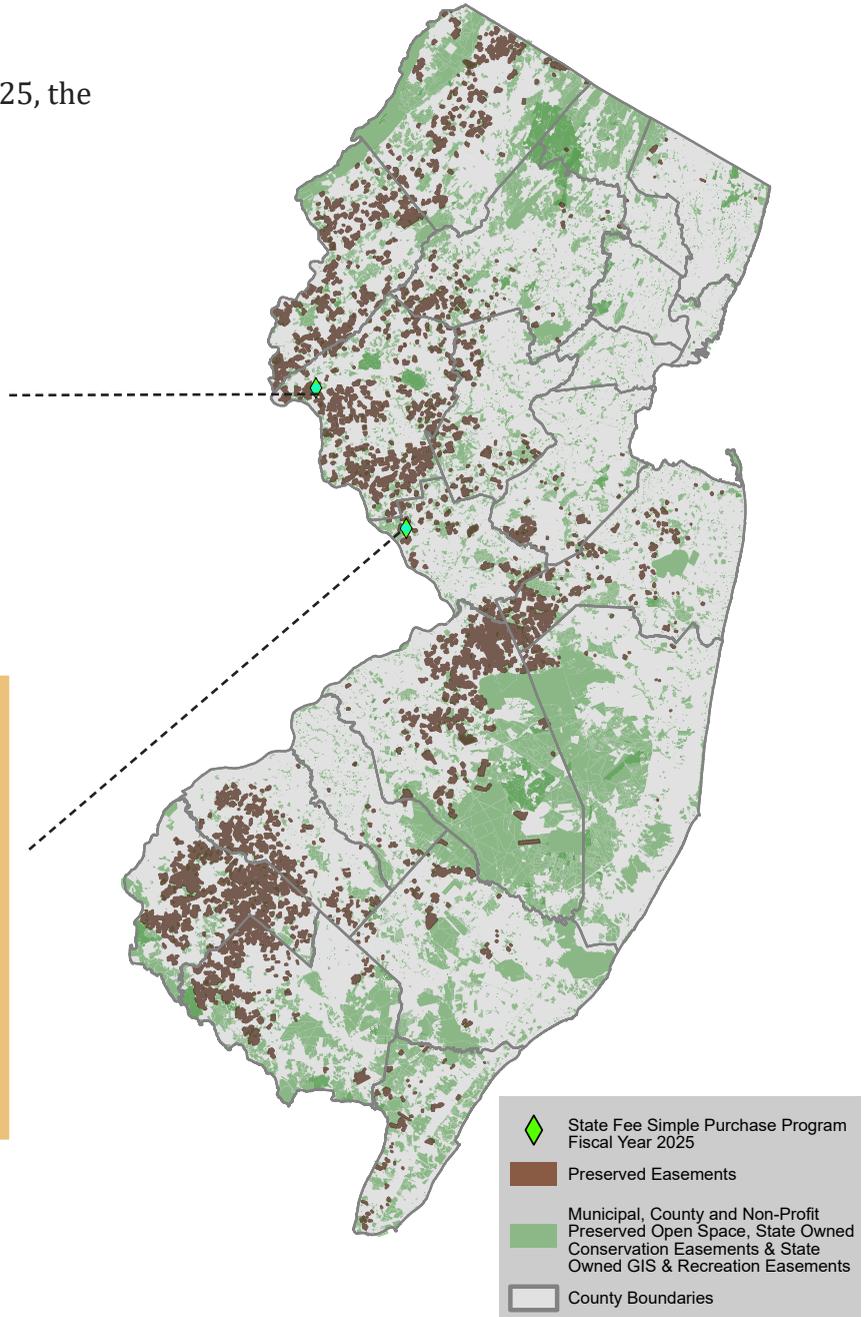
As of the end of the fiscal year, on June 30, 2025, the SADC owns 5 farms in fee totaling 915 acres.



Schmied, Wayne R.
Holland Twp., Hunterdon County
Hay production
118.722 Acres
(Highlands Region)



Patricelli, Patricia - Estate of
Hopewell Twp., Mercer County
Corn and soybean production
130.686 Acres



Nonprofit Program

The SADC provides cost-sharing grants to nonprofits to assist them in purchasing development easements, providing up to 50 percent of the fee simple or development easement values on farms to ensure their permanent preservation. At the close of FY2025, 107 farms totaling 6,571 acres have been preserved through the Nonprofit Program.



Verechia Farm, Pilesgrove Township, Salem County

Term Farmland Preservation Program

Landowners may choose to preserve their farms for an eight-year or sixteen-year term through the Term Farmland Preservation Program, rather than permanently. While landowners are not paid to enter a Term Preservation Program, enrolling their land makes them eligible for certain benefits, including the opportunity to apply for soil and water conservation grants. At the close of FY2025, there were 34 farms totaling approximately 1,403 acres enrolled in Term Farmland Preservation Program agreements.

| County | Farms Term Preserved | Active Term Acres | Eligible Grant Funds |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Atlantic | 8 | 451 | \$184,531 |
| Burlington | 5 | 347 | \$72,534 |
| Gloucester | 11 | 431 | \$217,533 |
| Hunterdon | 3 | 66 | \$39,491 |
| Monmouth | 2 | 16 | \$9,768 |
| Morris | 5 | 92 | \$54,366 |
| Grand Total | 34 | 1,403 | \$578,223 |

New Jersey Pinelands

During FY2025, 1 farm, totaling approximately 153 acres, was preserved through the SADC in the Pinelands region. Additionally, 3 new applications for preservation, totaling approximately 284 acres, were received in FY2025.

Farm owners in agricultural production, special agricultural production, and preservation areas benefit from the “Pinelands Formula” as an alternative to a traditional easement purchase appraisal. This formula considers not only Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) values and current development potential, but also the presence of important agricultural and environmental features. The Pinelands Formula Valuation also offers two value selections, one with and one without voluntary restrictions, in exchange for more compensation. With the new Statewide Formula Value (SFV), farm owners in eligible Pinelands regions and eligible for PDCs have four values to choose from: The traditional appraisal, SFV, Pinelands Formula, and the Pinelands Formula with voluntary restrictions.



*Russo's Fruit & Vegetable Farm,
Tabernacle Township, Burlington County*

Pinelands Region (Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2025)

| Participating County | Number of Farms | Number of Municipalities | Acres | Average Farm Size | Total Cost | Per Acre Total Cost | State Cost | State Cost Share Percent | County Municipality Federal Cost Share |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Atlantic | 49 | 8 | 5,166 | 105 | 17,948,686 | 3,475 | 13,794,210 | 76.85% | 4,154,476 |
| Bergen | 8 | 5 | 335 | 42 | 19,752,944 | 58,927 | 10,866,840 | 55.01% | 8,886,103 |
| Burlington | 249 | 21 | 29,972 | 120 | 158,864,627 | 5,300 | 95,496,302 | 60.11% | 63,368,325 |
| Camden | 16 | 4 | 1,103 | 69 | 15,522,805 | 14,067 | 7,834,653 | 50.47% | 7,688,152 |
| Cape May | 51 | 6 | 3,141 | 62 | 18,969,353 | 6,039 | 11,428,961 | 60.25% | 7,540,392 |
| Cumberland | 242 | 12 | 22,599 | 93 | 68,667,140 | 3,038 | 49,918,231 | 72.70% | 18,748,909 |
| Gloucester | 231 | 14 | 16,536 | 72 | 135,007,326 | 8,164 | 85,927,973 | 63.65% | 49,079,353 |
| Hunterdon | 472 | 19 | 36,473 | 77 | 306,470,426 | 8,403 | 215,600,605 | 70.35% | 90,869,821 |
| Mercer | 123 | 8 | 9,113 | 74 | 112,592,270 | 12,355 | 68,572,917 | 60.90% | 44,019,353 |
| Middlesex | 57 | 7 | 4,956 | 87 | 63,532,916 | 12,820 | 41,569,450 | 65.43% | 21,963,466 |
| Monmouth | 216 | 11 | 15,599 | 72 | 248,495,477 | 15,931 | 153,547,391 | 61.79% | 94,948,086 |
| Morris | 116 | 12 | 7,344 | 63 | 149,223,868 | 20,319 | 83,127,249 | 55.71% | 66,096,619 |
| Ocean | 48 | 5 | 3,193 | 67 | 26,506,787 | 8,301 | 17,969,317 | 67.79% | 8,537,470 |
| Passaic | 2 | 2 | 56 | 28 | 3,553,345 | 63,399 | 1,539,426 | 43.32% | 2,013,919 |
| Salem | 412 | 12 | 43,519 | 106 | 191,505,440 | 4,401 | 147,769,588 | 77.16% | 43,735,852 |
| Somerset | 117 | 7 | 8,336 | 71 | 146,166,319 | 17,534 | 83,536,006 | 57.15% | 62,630,313 |
| Sussex | 162 | 14 | 17,019 | 105 | 58,178,974 | 3,418 | 40,512,717 | 69.63% | 17,666,257 |
| Warren | 319 | 19 | 28,553 | 90 | 170,381,011 | 5,967 | 118,921,587 | 69.80% | 51,459,424 |
| All Counties | 2,890 | 186 | 253,014 | 88 | 1,911,339,713 | 7,554 | 1,247,933,423 | 65.29% | 663,406,290 |

New Jersey Highlands

The New Jersey Highlands is a 1,250 square mile region which acts as a natural protected watershed, helping to ensure high quality potable water for New Jersey’s residents. Two farms were preserved in the Highlands region in FY2025, adding 139 acres in the Highlands Planning area. No farms in the Highlands Preservation area were preserved through the SADC in FY2025.

Qualified farm owners in the Highlands continued to benefit from the “Dual-Appraisal Valuation Provision” which requires an appraisal valuation based on “pre-highlands” zoning and environmental regulations that were in place on January 1, 2004. This provision was extended another five years, expiring on June 30, 2029.

Highlands Preservation & Planning Areas (Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2025)

| Participating County | Number of Farms | Number of Municipalities | Acres | Average Farm Size | Total Cost | Per Acre Total Cost | State Cost | State Cost Share Percent | County Municipality Federal Cost Share |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Bergen | 4 | 1 | 291 | 73 | 9,128,750 | 31,400 | 5,795,420 | 63.49% | 3,333,330 |
| Hunterdon | 166 | 12 | 12,705 | 77 | 111,323,042 | 8,762 | 83,174,160 | 74.71% | 28,148,882 |
| Morris | 113 | 11 | 7,156 | 63 | 142,351,076 | 19,892 | 78,821,638 | 55.37% | 63,529,438 |
| Passaic | 1 | 1 | 41 | 41 | 986,695 | 24,000 | 592,017 | 60.00% | 394,678 |
| Somerset | 35 | 3 | 2,485 | 71 | 56,385,668 | 22,688 | 32,538,833 | 57.71% | 23,846,835 |
| Sussex | 26 | 6 | 2,763 | 106 | 11,929,195 | 4,318 | 8,496,586 | 71.23% | 3,432,609 |
| Warren | 258 | 18 | 23,759 | 92 | 149,227,036 | 6,281 | 105,549,257 | 70.73% | 43,677,779 |
| All Counties | 603 | 52 | 49,200 | 82 | 481,331,463 | 9,783 | 314,967,912 | 65.44% | 166,363,551 |

Highlands Preservation Area (Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2025)

| Participating County | Number of Farms | of Municipalities | Acres | Average Farm Size | Total Cost | Acre Total Cost | State Cost | Cost Share Percent | Municipality Federal Cost Share |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bergen | 3 | 1 | 244 | 81 | 5,263,844 | 21,609 | 3,568,386 | 67.79% | 1,695,458 |
| Hunterdon | 52 | 9 | 4,171 | 80 | 50,315,696 | 12,064 | 40,237,766 | 79.97% | 10,077,930 |
| Morris | 87 | 5 | 6,010 | 69 | 97,895,650 | 16,289 | 55,498,345 | 56.69% | 42,397,305 |
| Passaic | 1 | 1 | 41 | 41 | 986,695 | 24,000 | 592,017 | 60.00% | 394,678 |
| Somerset | 2 | 2 | 327 | 164 | 4,389,817 | 13,418 | 2,480,304 | 56.50% | 1,909,514 |
| Sussex | 8 | 2 | 1,144 | 143 | 3,671,296 | 3,209 | 2,800,177 | 76.27% | 871,119 |
| Warren | 91 | 13 | 7,728 | 85 | 41,439,170 | 5,362 | 28,510,784 | 68.80% | 12,928,386 |
| All Counties | 244 | 33 | 19,664 | 81 | 203,962,168 | 10,372 | 133,687,778 | 65.55% | 70,274,390 |

Highlands Planning Area

(Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2025)

| Participating County | Number of Farms | Number of Municipalities | Acres | Average Farm Size | Total Cost | Per Acre Total Cost | State Cost | State Cost Share Percent | County Municipality Federal Cost Share |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Bergen | 1 | 1 | 47 | 47 | 3,864,906 | 82,000 | 2,227,034 | 57.62% | 1,637,872 |
| Hunterdon | 115 | 8 | 8,609 | 75 | 61,905,402 | 7,191 | 43,834,451 | 70.81% | 18,070,951 |
| Morris | 28 | 10 | 1,591 | 57 | 50,655,911 | 31,830 | 26,892,607 | 53.09% | 23,763,304 |
| Somerset | 33 | 2 | 2,158 | 65 | 51,995,851 | 24,093 | 30,058,529 | 57.81% | 21,937,321 |
| Sussex | 19 | 6 | 1,691 | 89 | 8,974,234 | 5,306 | 6,126,210 | 68.26% | 2,848,024 |
| Warren | 172 | 17 | 16,873 | 98 | 111,300,122 | 6,596 | 79,741,512 | 71.65% | 31,558,609 |
| All Counties | 368 | 44 | 30,970 | 84 | 288,696,426 | 9,322 | 188,880,343 | 65.43% | 99,816,082 |

Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula

P.L. 2023, c.245 became law on January 8, 2024 and established the new Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula (“Statewide Formula”). The SADC began using the formula to make easement purchase offers to landowners through a special rule adoption process on April 7, 2025.

The Statewide Formula provides landowners with another value to choose from when seeking to protect their farm. Using 50% of the land’s unrestricted certified value as a base starting point, the Statewide Formula enhances payments based on the property’s agricultural and natural resource characteristics.

Landowners can now receive easement value for farm characteristics such as size, tillability, soil type, proximity to preserved farms and open space, presence of forest, wetlands, and streams, and imminence of change to nonagricultural uses. Landowners may also choose to accept up to two voluntary restrictions, in addition to the standard easement, that limit impervious cover and future house size, for additional payment.

Nearly 100 landowners in application chose to wait to close on their preservation easement until they received a formula offer. Those farms are scheduled to begin closing in late summer 2025. Scan the QR code or visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/publications/guidance/ for more information.



PLANNING

Non-Agricultural Project Reviews

Pursuant to the Agriculture Retention and Development Act (ARDA), the SADC is active in reviewing non-agricultural development projects involving preserved farmland and land in Agriculture Development Areas (ADAs) to determine their effects on the preservation and enhancement of agriculture in ADAs and overall state agriculture and development policies.

In FY2025, the SADC completed a review of a state-owned bridge-replacement project affecting a preserved farm in Warren County. Staff was also involved in an ongoing sanitary sewer pipeline project affecting preserved farmland in Warren County, a telecommunications project on a Monmouth County preserved farm, and several project proposals, which ultimately led to design amendments that avoided impacts to ADAs or preserved farmland. Lastly, the SADC began work with the New Jersey Turnpike Authority to minimize impacts to agricultural lands in ADAs as they plan the multi-year expansion of the Turnpike from Interchanges 1 to 4.

New Jersey Conservation Blueprint Project

The SADC continues to support the development of the NJ Conservation Blueprint project, a powerful and easy-to-use computer mapping site created by Rowan University's Geospatial Lab. The Blueprint project provides users with high-resolution, site-specific information on land in New Jersey, including various agricultural and environmental characteristics. SADC staff use this tool extensively to quickly identify farmland attributes, enabling better-informed discussions with preservation partners and landowners. The NJ Conservation Blueprint website can be found at www.njmap2.com/blueprint or via the QR code.



Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping

The SADC's GIS staff provides mapping and database support for the SADC's planning, acquisition, and stewardship activities. The majority of the SADC's work is directly related to all aspects of the preserved farms and those to be preserved in the future.

The SADC maintains its Public Web Map service, which provides access to an easy-to-use, interactive online farmland preservation map tool for locating preserved farmland and related information. A separate web map application is also available to aid Planning Incentive Grant administrators. SADC web maps can be accessed through the QR code or the SADC home page: <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/>.



PLANNING

Many of the SADC's spatial data layers are hosted as online services, allowing the public, our preservation partners, and other state agencies easy access for their mapping needs.

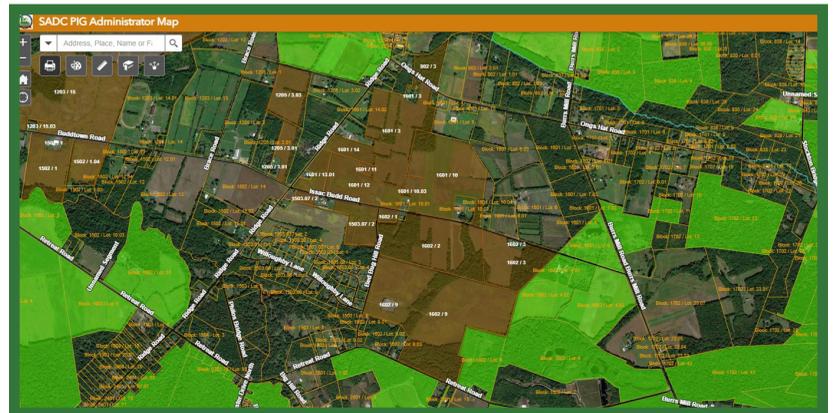
As GIS technology continues to advance, the SADC is continually improving ways GIS can assist with streamlining business processes and making the business of farmland preservation more efficient and accessible to those who are not GIS professionals.

These layers can be accessed through the New Jersey Geographic Information Network website or the SADC's ArcGIS online home page at <https://njdasadc.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html> or via the QR code.



In FY2025, the SADC completed a significant engagement with Rowan University's Geospatial Research Lab (Geolab). With the help of a team of Geolab staff and student interns, all the land use features on the state's preserved farms have now been digitized. The creation of this important dataset will help the SADC by informing future policy decisions and aiding in the stewardship of our preserved farmland, including annual monitoring and the implementation of soil protection regulations.

This year, GIS staff were also heavily involved in the development of the SADC's new Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula. The formula utilizes numerous geospatial data layers and processes, and SADC staff created an automated geoprocessing workflow to generate formula data and a web map that allows partners and landowners to view this data in relation to individual farms.



The GIS ModelBuilder Toolbox and Excel Workbook used to run the formula can be found on the "Technical Resources" page of the SADC website.

The Statewide Formula Value Reference Map can be found via the QR code, a link on the SADC's homepage or at this address: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/b0b0626a800c417f823ae2875de44743>



Wert Farm, Hopewell Township, Mercer County

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The SADC strives to ensure proper stewardship of preserved farmland and promote efforts to support the business of farming on preserved land. In addition to coordinating the Right to Farm, Agricultural Mediation, and Farm Link Programs, the SADC administers grant programs for wildlife fencing and soil and water conservation projects; administers other post-preservation requests, including those for rural microenterprises, renewable energy, and special occasion events; and supports the next generation of farmers and farm businesses through the Next Generation Farmer Program.

Next Generation Farmer Program

Traditionally, the next generation of farmers entered the industry and acquired land and farming knowledge by being raised on a farm or by marrying into a farm family; however, this is becoming less common. Many people from non-farming backgrounds are interested in agriculture, but it is often difficult for them to navigate the high barriers to entry, even with farming experience. Policymakers, farmers, and agricultural organizations in New Jersey and nationally have recognized the need to increase support for next-generation farmers. In response to these challenges and the need for a strategic response in New Jersey, the Legislature and the Governor provided funding for the SADC to establish a Next Generation Farmer Program.

The Next Generation Farmer Program, within the SADC's Agricultural Development area of business, provides support to New Jersey farmers as they get started, advance, and establish or diversify their own operations. This includes established farmers and their families, newcomers from non-farming backgrounds, active-duty military and veterans, women, urban growers, and others in historically underserved communities. It also includes supporting farm owners with succession planning, deciding the right course of action to develop the next generation of their farm operations, and addressing the common farm viability issues that affect farmers at all experience levels.

During FY2025, the Next Gen Program conducted extensive research and outreach to gather input from the agricultural community on the issues faced by next generation farmers in New Jersey, as well as ideas for addressing these challenges. This research and outreach culminated in the development of a policy report adopted by the SADC in March 2025, "[The Next Generation of Farming in New Jersey: Report on Cultivating the Future of Farming in the Garden State](#)". The report summarizes the current state of next generation farmers in New Jersey – who they are, the challenges they face, and the support that is currently available to them – and provides recommendations for addressing the challenges, filling gaps in programming, and enhancing support. The recommendations are intended to guide the development of the Next Gen Program and help create a strategic path forward for the SADC and partners to collaboratively support the next generation of farmers and farm businesses in the Garden State..

Following the adoption of [The Next Generation of Farming Report](#), the Next Gen Program developed a 2-year action plan to implement new programs and initiatives based on the report's recommendations. Initial efforts will focus on addressing challenges in land access, education and training, farm transfer and succession planning, support for active-duty service members and veterans, and urban agriculture. The Next Gen Program is working with partner organizations to develop these ideas, host events, and foster a coordinated network of support for New Jersey farmers. Next Gen Program staff are also continuing to provide direct assistance to next-generation and established farmers through resource referrals, technical assistance, networking, farm visits, and coordination of the Farm Link Program.

Farm Link

The Farm Link Program serves as a resource and referral center for farmers and landowners. The program's resource pages can be used to find more information on getting started in farming, leasing farmland, finding farmers/landowners, developing farm transfer and succession plans, and finding agricultural support businesses and professionals.

In FY2025, the program also developed the new SADC Agricultural Resource Pages, a directory of contractors, suppliers, cooperatives, and services that farmers commonly use. Additional resource categories will be added over the coming year. The SADC also began updating, verifying, and adding resources to the main Farm Link Resources pages: Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmlink/resources/>.



One key component of the Farm Link Program is NJ Land Link, www.njlandlink.org. This interactive linking website allows farmland owners and seekers to post their opportunities and contact one another. The types of opportunities posted on NJ Land Link include farmland for lease or sale, employment opportunities, and business partnerships. In October 2024, the SADC completed a review of all NJ Land Link postings to verify them as current and remove any that were outdated or non-



responsive. This review has become an annual feature of the SADC's agricultural development initiatives to ensure that the postings remain up to date. In addition, a new fact sheet to promote the website and guide new users through its basic functions has been developed: Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/documents/publications/njlandlinkfactsheet.pdf>. The SADC also initiated several functional updates to the site, with support from Rutgers University, to improve usability over the next year.

New registrants on NJ Land Link who request additional resources are contacted by SADC Agricultural Development Next Gen staff to discuss their farming goals and resources that may be helpful based on their needs. In this capacity, Next Gen Program staff serve as the bridge between the online linking site and the Farm Link Program's resource and referral services.

At the end of FY2025, NJ Land Link had 2,578 registered users, and 24 new listings had been created by landowners with farmland available and by farmers seeking access to land. Next Gen Program staff reached out to 106 beginning farmer registrants and 35 farmland owners in FY2025 to provide additional resources. Analytics show that the NJ Land Link website had more than 8,600 engaged sessions in FY2025.

Wildlife Fencing Grants

The "Wildlife Fencing Grant Program" provides cost-share grants for up to 50% of the costs of installing high-tensile woven wire deer fencing, electric bear fencing, and other wildlife fencing on preserved farms, up to \$50,000.

Owners, operators, and lessees of permanently preserved farms can apply to the SADC for a cost-share grant to help cover the cost of installing wildlife fencing on their farms. Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Approved applicants have grant funds obligated for 3 years to allow for time and flexibility to install the fencing.

In total, from the start of the program in FY2017 through the end of FY2025 on June 30, 2025, the SADC has approved 87 wildlife fencing grant applications and obligated \$1,748,647.62 in cost-share grant funding.

During this time, farmers have completed 40 deer fencing projects, and the SADC has reimbursed \$516,936.68 for successful deer fencing grant projects.

Farmers have responded positively, sharing that they intend to add new crops they would have avoided growing before they had the added protection of deer fencing. The nine farms whose applications were approved in FY2025 plan to grow flowers, alfalfa, timber, blueberries, corn, soybeans, sod, blackberries, fruit trees, herbs, vegetables, and wine grapes on approximately 473 acres to be fenced. The five farms that completed their fencing projects in FY2025 plan to grow grapes, hay, fruits, vegetables, timber, and flowers in the newly fenced areas.

In FY2025:

5 fencing projects installed and paid

\$79,642.14 reimbursed

3.73 miles of fencing installed

131 acres fenced

9 applications approved for funding

\$435,362.15 obligated for 3 years

473 acres planned to be fenced

9 miles of fencing planned

Since the Inception of the Wildlife Fencing Grant Program:

40 fencing projects installed and paid

87 fencing projects approved for funding

\$516,936.68 reimbursed

36.29 miles of fencing installed

1,464.21 acres fenced



Hinkle Farm

Tewksbury Twp., Hunterdon County



Applegate Orchards

Millstone Twp., Monmouth County



Soil & Water Cost-Share Grants

Farms permanently preserved or enrolled in the Term Farmland Preservation Program (for an 8 or 16-year term) can apply for soil and water conservation grants. Grant amounts are based on farm acreage and can fund up to 50% of approved project costs.

Eligible projects are designed to prevent soil erosion and sediment damage; control and reduce pollution on farmland; impound, store, and manage water for agricultural purposes; and improve land, soil, and water management to achieve maximum agricultural productivity. The State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) has approved 20 eligible project types for cost-sharing through the SADC Soil and Water Grants Program (see below).

In FY2025, the SADC approved 16 new planned projects in 5 counties. These grant awards, including irrigation, livestock watering, stream protection, and underground and open drainage projects, totaled \$386,852.52 and are planned for implementation in the next 3 years.

In FY2025, the SADC also reimbursed 19 farmers \$382,344.83 for successfully installed projects, including a grassed waterway, permanent vegetative cover, irrigation systems, underground and open drainage, livestock watering facilities, and animal waste control systems.

In June, the SADC proposed rule amendments to the program. These changes would revise the cost-share formula to increase funding available to participants, allow farmers to submit three bids when existing rates are not reflective of actual costs, develop a process to allow applicants to receive matching funds from partner agencies, and develop a new opportunity to reimburse farmers for the cost of hiring private conservation planners. The proposed changes will streamline the implementation of conservation measures across New Jersey and should increase the program's use.

For more information about the State Soil & Water Cost-Share Program, scan the QR code or visit www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/grants/.



Grants available for:

1. Terrace systems
2. Diversions
3. Contour farming
4. Strip-cropping systems
5. Grassed waterways
6. Windbreak restoration or establishment
7. Stream protection
8. Permanent vegetative cover
9. Precision land shaping & grading
10. Water impoundment reservoirs
11. Irrigation systems
12. Sediment retention, erosion, or water control structures
13. Permanent open drainage systems
14. Underground drainage systems
15. Livestock water facilities
16. Forest tree stand improvement
17. Forest tree plantations
18. Site preparation for natural regeneration
19. Animal waste control facilities
20. Agrichemical handling facilities

Soil & Water Cost-Share Grants: Highlights from FY2025



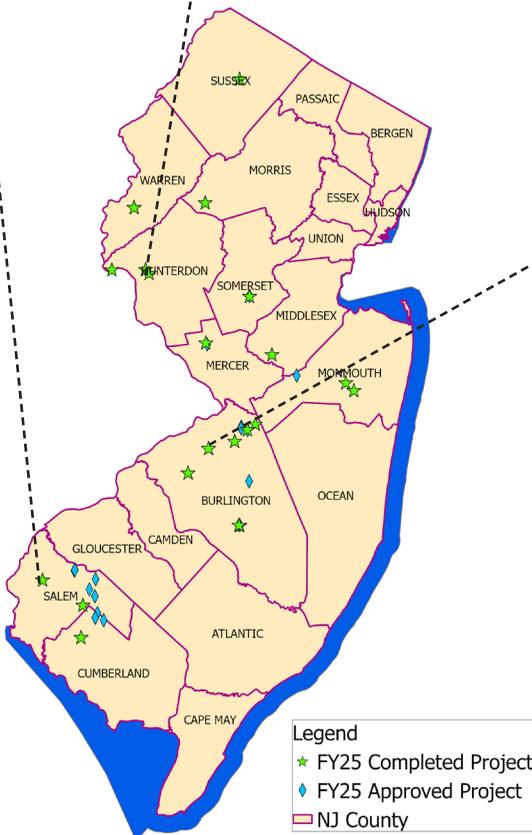
Irrigation system (mainline and center pivot), Salem County

Many New Jersey farmers are facing the need to reliably maintain and improve their agricultural production while growing food sustainably and resiliently alongside a changing climate. In FY2025, the SADC assisted this farmer in Salem County to install irrigation pipelines and a center pivot irrigation system from a pre-existing agricultural well that will improve production on 122 acres of cropland.



Animal waste control facility (stormwater runoff control), Hunterdon County

The goals of an animal waste control facility are to prevent and control animal waste from polluting the land, surface and ground water, and air; to prevent and reduce soil erosion; to improve livestock and crop health; and to help farmers better manage nutrient disposal and application. In FY2025, the SADC reimbursed this dairy farm in Hunterdon County for constructing a barn roof, roof gutters, and a trench drain, all of which help keep surface runoff free of excess nutrients and pathogens.



Irrigation system (well, pump, irrigation pipeline, and microirrigation), Burlington County

For many New Jersey farmers who don't have access to clean surface water, the sustainable use of groundwater is an option for irrigation. In FY2025, the SADC assisted this farming family in Burlington County with installing an irrigation mainline. This project followed a previous Soil & Water grant that assisted them with drilling a well and installing a pump as a new irrigation water source, demonstrating that these grants can occur in segments over time to build a successful conservation system. This new irrigation system will serve a 119 acre preserved farm with a diverse fruit, vegetable, and flower operation.

Special Occasion Events

P.L. 2023, c.9 became law on February 3, 2023 and was amended by P.L. 2025, c.83 on July 1, 2025, recognizing the positive effects that holding special occasion events (SOEs) on preserved farms can have under certain conditions. SOEs are defined as weddings, lifetime milestone events, and other cultural or social events. The law recognizes that SOEs can provide supplemental business opportunities for farmers and help improve the viability of the state's farm operations without displacing agricultural or horticultural use as the first priority use of the land or disrupting neighborhoods that surround preserved farms.

For the purposes of the SOE law, SOEs do not include recreational uses already permitted on preserved farmland; activities eligible for Right to Farm Act protection; weddings held for the owner, operator, or employee of the commercial farm; and weddings held for certain family members of the commercial farm.

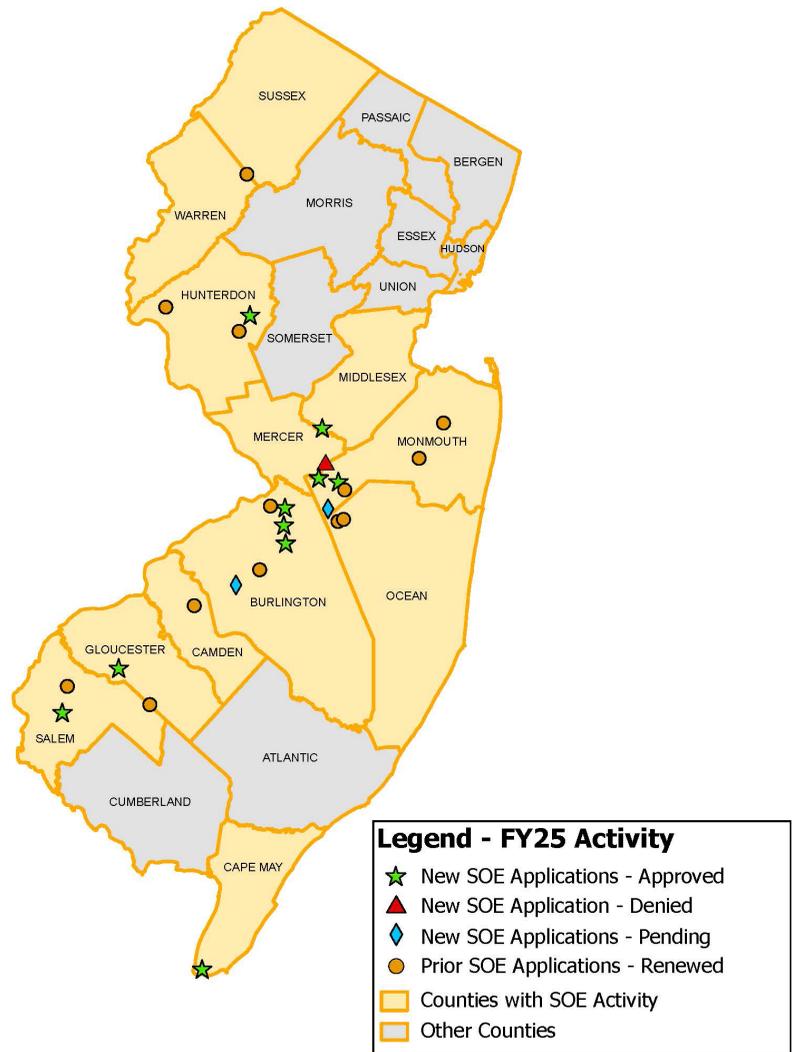
Not including renewals, easement holders reviewed 13 SOE applications in FY2025, including 12 new applications that were submitted in FY2025 and one application that was originally submitted in FY2024. These applications came from farms in Burlington, Cape May, Hunterdon, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Salem Counties. 10 of these 13 applications were approved for farms in Burlington, Cape May, Hunterdon, Gloucester, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Salem Counties; 1 application was denied for a farm in Mercer County; and 2 applications were pending as of the end of FY2025 for farms in Burlington and Monmouth Counties.

The approved new applications represented a wide variety of events, including wedding ceremonies and receptions; lifetime milestone events, such as private parties for birthdays, graduations, and anniversaries; and other social and cultural events, such as church and nonprofit fundraising events; nonprofit events like hosting meetings for County 4H clubs, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts; hosting community events, e.g., cultural and music festivals or a high school prom; children's school trips and social events serving the Hispanic community and other ethnic communities; and a Windmill Day celebration with guests, vendors, ribbon cutting, and a luncheon.

Examples of approved SOEs held in FY2025, as indicated on participating farms' CY2024 certifications, included wedding ceremonies and receptions; lifetime milestone events, such as birthday parties, a retirement party, a memorial, a family reunion, a baby shower, and a baby sprinkle; and other social and cultural events, such as an Irish Festival with bands and Irish dancers; a Koi festival; a Latin Ecuadorian carnival; an Ecuadorian corn harvest; an event with traditional Spanish music and food; cultural horse show and cultural horseback and bull riding events with music, food, and alcohol; an event with a horse dancing show, comic show, and dinosaur show; a corporate event; line dancing; touch a truck; a town centennial celebration; a holiday vendor market; a bridal showcase with wedding vendors; a meet and greet social event; church masses; nonprofit fundraisers; other events held by or for nonprofits; and field hockey team parties.

Under the SOE law, participating farms submit calendar year certifications regarding the SOEs that they held, and the SADC submits a report to the Governor and Legislature each year by August 1. The SADC’s initial annual report, dated July 25, 2024, covered the time period from February 3, 2023 through July 10, 2024 and included the CY2023 certification data. The SADC’s second annual report, dated July 24, 2025, included the CY2024 certification data and reviewed SOE activity through July 10, 2025.

The SADC began drafting SOE regulations in FY2025 to help add clarity regarding the SOE application, monitoring, and enforcement processes; the roles and responsibilities of easement holders; and other items from the program’s first few years. The SADC also plans to continue conducting outreach and education to ensure that all preserved farms are aware of and remain in compliance with the SOE law.



Rural Microenterprise

Under the Rural Microenterprise Law (P.L. 2015, c. 275) and the related rules that became effective in June 2018, a farmer who owns a qualifying preserved farm can apply for a special permit to conduct a rural microenterprise on the farm.

A rural microenterprise or “RME” is defined as a small-scale business or activity that is fully compatible with the agricultural use and production on the premises and does not, at any time, detract from, diminish, or interfere with the agricultural use of the premises and is incidental to the agricultural use of the premises. The program’s rules also promote and incentivize the preservation of historic and culturally significant agricultural structures on preserved farms.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

There were no RME applications received or approved during FY2025. Three RME’s are currently permitted to operate on preserved farmland:

- The Katona Farm in Chesterfield Township, Burlington County, utilizes an existing farm building for welding, fabrication, and full-service repair, and a maintenance shop to service utility terrain vehicles and farm equipment, and for the sale of used utility terrain vehicles.
- The Hart Farm in Hopewell Township, Mercer County, converted an agricultural storage shed into a butcher shop to offer processing services to local livestock operations, as well as participants of the Hunter’s Helping the Hungry program.
- Pheasant Hill Farm in Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County, converted a portion of an indoor riding arena into an equine clinic and surgery facility.

Renewable Energy

In FY2025, the SADC approved solar energy generation projects on 3 preserved farms pursuant to P.L. 2009, c. 213, which established certain limits and criteria for solar, wind, and biomass energy generation on preserved farms. Since the law’s inception, 61 solar energy projects have been approved on 50 preserved farms.

| Town/County | Approval Date | Rated Capacity (kWh) | Mounting Type | Ag Production | Occupied Area (Sq./ft.) | Demand Use |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Chesterfield Twp., Burlington County | 8/5/2024 | 13,769 | Rooftop | Corn & Soybeans | 1,310 | Residence, Barns & Irrigation Pump |
| Readington Twp., Hunterdon County | 3/4/2025 | 122,000 | Rooftop | Equine | 6,190 | Residence, Riding Arena, Barns & Stables |
| Bedminster Twp., Somerset County | 5/15/2025 | 26,000 | Rooftop | Hay | 1,620 | Residence & Garage |

Easement Monitoring

In FY2025, the SADC and its county and nonprofit partners, who also hold farmland preservation easements, visited 2,974 preserved farms. The annual monitoring visits offer an opportunity to discuss the farmland owner’s concerns, questions, or needs. In addition, the visits are meant to discuss plans for the farm business and possibly circumvent possible conflicts with the terms and conditions of the preservation easement.

Fee Simple Farm Update

As of June 30, 2025, the SADC owns five farms in fee: the Buckhorn Creek Farm in White Township, Warren County; the Case Farm in West Amwell, Hunterdon County; the Lamb Farm in Upper Freehold Township, Monmouth County; the Schmied Farm in Holland Township, Hunterdon County; and the Patricelli Farm in Hopewell Township, Mercer County.

The 567-acre Buckhorn Creek Farm was purchased in the Spring of 2024, and the SADC is currently considering how to utilize it with the goal of returning the land to private ownership. In the meantime, the farm will continue to be leased and stay in production.

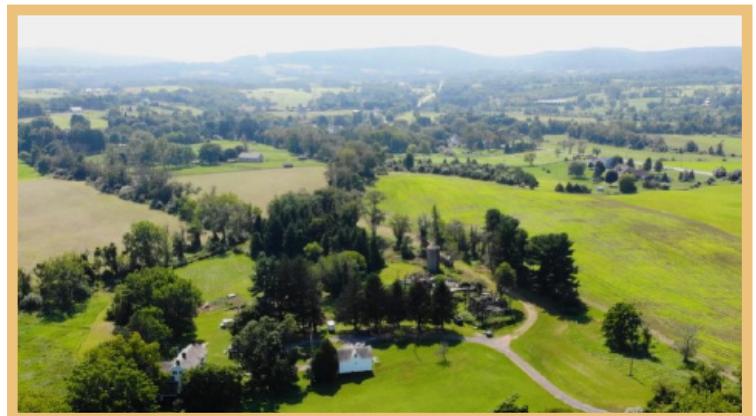
The Lamb Farm is a small farm parcel associated with the Horse Park of New Jersey, which the SADC owns in fee and leases for hay production and Horse Park use.

The SADC acquired the 87-acre Case Farm in fee simple in 2007 and offered it for lease with terms that provide for extensions, up to a total lease term of 12 years, for a tenant farmer who would successfully implement needed conservation practices on the farm, which had numerous areas of severe erosion. By the end of FY2022, the tenant farmer had installed most of these conservation practices. Most of the installation costs for the work were covered through Federal conservation cost-share grants through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), with the remainder of the tenant farmer's costs deducted from lease payments, as outlined in the farmer's lease agreement with the SADC.

This innovative approach of using a conservation oriented, long-term lease has resulted in many benefits:

- The erosion issues have been addressed in cooperation with the farmer and the costs were offset by utilizing over \$130,000 in federal grants.
- The long-term lease offers a more secure planning horizon for the farmer.
- Soil and water resources are better conserved.
- The long-term capital improvements make the farm more desirable.

This long-term leasing pilot project is in response to requests from the agricultural community for long-term leases to promote farm viability. The current farmer started renting the farm in 2018 and has extended the lease two times, with the lease now expiring in 2030. At that time, the SADC could lease the farm again to the same farmer, to a new farmer or farmers, or sell the land as preserved. The lease also allows the SADC to use a 15-acre portion of the farm for a next generation incubator farm project, a concept that the SADC began exploring in 2025.



Schmied Farm, Holland Township, Hunterdon County

The 118-acre Schmied Farm and the 130-acre Patricelli farm were purchased in the winter of 2024/2025. The SADC is currently preparing to resell the Schmied Farm and all or a portion of the Patricelli farm as preserved to private owners in early 2026.

RIGHT TO FARM PROGRAM

The SADC administers the Right to Farm Program in partnership with New Jersey's 18 County Agriculture Development Boards (CADBs) to protect responsible commercial farms from public and private nuisance actions and unduly restrictive local regulations. To receive Right to Farm Act protection, farms must be operated in conformance with generally accepted agricultural practices and comply with other eligibility criteria. Formal Right to Farm determinations are made by CADBs and the SADC on a case-by-case basis and must include a balancing of the interests of all parties, including consideration of relevant local ordinances.

In October 2024 the SADC, in response to a nuisance complaint forwarded by the Ocean CADB, determined that the storage and air curing of empty oyster and clam shells by a shellfish commercial farm was a generally accepted aquaculture management practice eligible for Right to Farm protection. The SADC returned the matter to the OCADB for a public hearing on the merits of the complaint, including consideration of the shellfish commercial farm's impact on neighboring properties.

In February 2025, and in response to a noise complaint forwarded by the Middlesex CADB, the SADC held that agricultural production on a property was eligible for Right to Farm protection but that certain commercial nonagricultural businesses also occurring on the property were ineligible. The SADC returned the matter to the MCADB for a public hearing on the merits of the complaint, including consideration of the impact of the agricultural operations on neighboring properties.

On May 9, 2025, P.L. 2025, c.55 added the housing of resident farm employees to the list of activities eligible for Right to Farm protection, under certain conditions, and directed the SADC to promulgate agricultural management practice regulations for such housing.

The SADC adopted a resolution on June 26, 2025 disapproving a CADB policy requiring commercial farmers seeking a site specific agricultural management practice determination to first apply to their local land use boards for site plan and/or variance approvals. The SADC found the policy inconsistent with the Right to Farm Act, lack of CADB legal authority to impose such a policy, the costs of land use board proceedings that would be incurred by commercial farmers, and burdens on farmers pursuing relief before a CADB and a land use board at the same time.

SADC staff are always available to provide Right to Farm presentations to government entities, boards, farmers, organizations, and the general public.



Cassaday Farms, Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County

AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAM

The Agricultural Mediation Program received 13 new mediation requests in FY2025.

Five cases involved Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor issues, i.e., issues between farmers and municipalities or farmers and neighbors; six cases involved issues with the USDA Farm Service Agency or USDA Rural Development; one case involved a farmland lease issue; and one case involved a credit issue related to a professional services invoice.

The range of Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor issues for which mediation was requested included municipal regulation of various items, e.g., special occasion events, agricultural labor housing, farm building construction, farm market location, and a neighbor dispute regarding the usage of an access easement. USDA issues for which mediation was requested included a farm operating loan denial, a determination requiring the repayment of emergency relief funds, and adverse Rural Housing determinations, e.g., a mortgage moratorium denial and payment assistance program denials.

In one farmer-municipality case and one USDA Rural Development case, one party's request for mediation helped spur the parties to resolve the issues before a mediation session was held. In two of the three Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor cases that had a mediation session, the parties reached an agreement. In four of the five USDA cases that had a mediation session, the sessions resulted in the USDA clients having a better understanding of their options and possible next steps, even if the USDA decisions were not modified.

Each mediation session is facilitated by a trained and impartial mediator who helps the parties examine their mutual issues, identify and consider options, and determine if they can agree on a solution. Mediation is voluntary, confidential, and free, and typically only takes a meeting or two to complete. The SADC coordinates in-person, remote, and hybrid meeting options.

Issues that can be mediated using the program include:

- Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor Issues
- USDA Program Issues
- Agricultural Loan and Credit Issues
- Lease Issues (e.g., land, equipment, livestock, buildings)
- Farm Transition Issues
- Organic Program Compliance Issues
- Other Issues as Appropriate



The program's mediators are required to complete continuing training annually to remain on the program's roster. In FY2025, the Agricultural Mediation Program held a continuing education training in collaboration with the New Jersey Association of Professional Mediators.

OUTREACH, TRAINING, & GUIDANCE

In addition to attending most regular County Agriculture Development Board meetings, the SADC regularly participates in conferences, workshops, and events around the state to connect with and educate preservation partners and members of the farm community about the program. Additionally, internal education for SADC staff ensures they are best able to provide a high level of customer service.

Some Examples From FY2025

- County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) meetings in Monmouth, Ocean, Burlington, and Cape May Counties to discuss and hear thoughts about the new Statewide Formula Valuation (SFV).
- General Outreach at the New Jersey Vegetable Growers Association Conference at the NJ Agriculture Convention.
- Presentations at Future Farmers of America Next Generation Ag Summit, Monmouth County Farm Summit, and Somerset County Resource Fair.
- Special Occasion Event (SOE) training for Rutgers Agricultural and Resource Management Agents.
- Presentation to provide Right to Farm Act and Agriculture Mediation education and basics for Rutgers agricultural agents.
- Presentation at Rutgers Farm Productivity Analysis undergraduate class, providing an overview of SADC programs.
- Presentation at the NJ Ag Society Monthly meeting on the progress of the Next Generation Farmer Program.
- Right to Farm Act training in Passaic County to CADB members, staff, and municipal officials.
- Right to Farm Act presentations at the annual League of Municipalities convention in Atlantic City and the annual fall conference of the NJ Association of Professional Mediators, and mediator training on the RTFA, under the auspices of the NJ Institute for Continuing Legal Education.
- Quarterly virtual meetings with CADB coordinators to provide guidance and answer questions regarding the Statewide Formula Value, Agriculture Development Initiatives and Right to Farm (RTF).

- Presentation at RootCamp201 to educate students in Camden about general SADC programs and Next Gen farming resources for land access and training opportunities.
- Presentation to SADC staff by the Next Gen team on Farm Transfer and Succession Planning, to provide a basic overview and talk about plans in this area for the coming year.
- Monmouth County legislative tour with Legislators, the Office of the Secretary, and the State Board of Agriculture.



SADC Annual Appraisal Conference

- An annual appraisal conference to educate appraisers who perform farmland preservation appraisals.
- Two continuing education training classes for Agriculture Mediators on the mediation program, the Right To Farm Act, and USDA programs.
- Presentation at the League of Municipalities to review and discuss SADC programs.
- Attendance at the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) winter conference to promote SADC programs.
- Next Gen presentation about farm transfer and succession planning at the NJ Farm Bureau Convention.
- Next Gen presentation and outreach to a Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Transition Assistance Program (TAP) class to promote the program to active-duty military service members.



Next Gen Staff at the NOFA Conference

- Next Gen participation in the Farm to School Academy program through Food and Nutrition. Staff provided coaching support and team building for the Camden City School District Farm to School Team.
- Monitoring & Conservation Training Seminar for Partners.



Visit Us Online:



@New Jersey Farmland Preservation



@NJ Farmland Preservation



nj.gov/agriculture/sadc



@New Jersey Farmland Preservation



@SADCfarms