



# SUMMER 2024 NEW JERSEY FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWS

## Newsletter for Owners & Operators of Preserved Farmland Published by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC)



John Charles Smith Farm,  
Somerset County

### Preservation Statistics (as of July 1, 2024)

Total farms preserved:  
**2,874 Farms**

Total acres preserved:  
**251,989 Acres**



S.F. Systems Farm,  
Cumberland County

***State Acreage Goal: 500,000 Acres***

County with the most farms  
preserved:  
**Hunterdon County,  
468 Farms**

County with the most acres  
preserved:  
**Salem County,  
43,374 Acres**

## Preserved Farmland Sign Orders



**Small Sign**

**18"x 24", hanging on a  
single 10' post**



**Large Sign**

**3'x 4', nestled inside a frame  
and 10' cedar posts**



**Karen Flaith and Stuart Tait,  
Hunterdon County**

***We want to see you with your sign! Please  
send photos to [Alyssa.Esposito@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Alyssa.Esposito@ag.nj.gov)***

There are three ways to request your free preserved farmland sign:

- 1) Fill out the online application on our website at [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/documents/signorderform.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/documents/signorderform.pdf)
- 2) Email [Heidi.Winzinger@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Heidi.Winzinger@ag.nj.gov) with the type of sign, your contact information, and the farm location information
- 3) Call the SADC's main office number, (609) 984-2504, and ask a staff member to take your order over the phone



### Next Generation Farmer Program

Farmers in New Jersey have traditionally entered farming by being raised in a farm family or marrying into one, and farmland has historically been passed down from one generation to the next. However, in New Jersey and across the nation, many children of farm families have chosen to pursue other paths, creating a void in what historically has been the standard transition of farm operations.

Many people are interested in farming, including younger people starting out and older ones beginning second careers. But farming has high barriers to entry, including the capital needed to start a business or purchase equipment, learning how to farm, and most of all, finding access to farmland. Many who want to farm and have obtained experience through college, apprenticeships, or beginning farmer programs are unable to start their own farm operation. Others may need more hands-on training, mentorship support, or help figuring out how to run a new farm business.

As a result, the SADC has established a "Next Generation Farmer Program" to support new and beginning farmers in accessing land, securing technical training, and establishing new, viable farming enterprises. Two new staff members will lead the research and development of this new SADC program, obtaining feedback from New Jersey's agricultural community to help guide the direction of the program, and developing strategies for coordinating and collaborating with NJ's agricultural service providers already working on next-generation farmer issues. The SADC is looking to support existing efforts, fill in the gaps with new initiatives, and think outside of the box to help qualified new farmers successfully farm.

For more information on the program or to learn about upcoming outreach events, contact Brendon Pearsall at [Brendon.Pearsall@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Brendon.Pearsall@ag.nj.gov) or (609) 913-6610, or Jessica Brandeisky at [Jessica.Brandeisky@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Jessica.Brandeisky@ag.nj.gov) or (609) 913-6611. An online survey is also being developed where people will be able to connect and share input.



#### **Brendon Pearsall, Next Gen Farmer Senior Coordinator**

Brendon has substantial Next Generation Farmer Program knowledge from his experience coordinating the Rutgers Beginning Farmer Training Program "RU Ready To Farm", where he worked closely with Middlesex County Agricultural Agent Bill Hlubik to design, develop, and implement a system to identify, train, equip, and support next-generation NJ farmers. His experience at Rutgers included teaching beginning farmers about a range of topics and developing relationships with various industry stakeholders that will assist him in this new position. Brendon also worked at Giamarese Farm and Orchards for two years and ran a small-scale specialty cut flower business on the side.



#### **Jessica Brandeisky, Next Gen Farmer Assistant Coordinator**

Jessica has eight years of on-farm experience, including participating in the apprentice/mentorship program at Fernbrook Farms CSA. She was an apprentice and then Assistant Manager alongside Farm Manager Jeff Tober at Fernbrook. After managing the farm for the 2020 season, Jessica moved to Rancocas Creek Farm where she continued as an Assistant Manager with Jeff. Jessica has first-hand experience operating a successful CSA, training farm staff, and cultivating relationships with farm members, the public, and businesses. She also has a keen awareness of the challenges and barriers that next generation farmers face.



## Current SADC Members:

### Chairman

Edward D. Wengryn, Secretary of Agriculture

### Farmer Members

Martin Bullock, *Monmouth County*

Scott Ellis, *Mercer County*

Peter Johnson, *Burlington County*

Richard Norz, *Somerset County*

Roger Kumpel, *Burlington County* (Alternate Member)

### Public Members

Charles Rosen

Tiffany Bohlin

### Ex-Officio Members

Julie Krause, *representing the State Treasurer*

Lauren Procida, *representing the Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner*

Gina Fischetti, *representing the Department of Community Affairs Commissioner*

Brian Schilling, *representing the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences Executive Dean*

The SADC meets on the fourth Thursday of most months at 9:00am.

For more information, visit [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc).

If you have any questions, please contact Jess Uttal at [Jessica.Uttal@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Jessica.Uttal@ag.nj.gov) or (609) 913-6567.

## Soil Protection Standards (SPS): Rules Update

The SADC has updated the Soil Protection Standards (SPS) draft rule in response to comments received. New exemptions have been added to the list of exempt farm practices already included.

The SPS concentrates on soil disturbing activities such as buildings, graveled areas, soil compaction, and cut/fill activities that exceed the proposed 12% or 4-acre limit (whichever is larger). The rule does grandfather disturbances existing as of Spring 2023 when the SADC utilized aerial imagery to estimate the existing soil disturbance on each preserved farm.

The SPS rule does not change the deed of easement terms but clarifies two competing deed provisions: (1) The right to conduct agricultural development; and (2) the obligation to conserve soil and water resources on preserved farms.

To address comments received to date regarding agricultural viability, the updated rule proposal allows for new agricultural practices yet to be developed by providing the flexibility to have these innovative practices approved by the SADC.

In addition, numerous provisions were eliminated or simplified to reduce the rule's complexity. Updated maps with the existing soil disturbance of every preserved farm will be mailed out in the coming months.

The proposed changes are tentatively slated to be published in the NJ Register on July 15, 2024 as an amended rule proposal, subject to a 60-day public comment period.

For more information or to review a red-line version of proposed changes, visit [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/soilprotection/](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/soilprotection/) or contact Dave Clapp at [David.Clapp@ag.nj.gov](mailto:David.Clapp@ag.nj.gov) or (609) 913-6563.





## Deer Fencing Grant Program Renamed & Expanded



Chickadee Creek Farm, Mercer County

On January 8, 2024, P.L. 2023, c. 233 was signed into law, enhancing the SADC deer fencing grant program. The program, now called the “Wildlife Fencing Grant Program,” still provides cost-share grants for up to 50% of the costs of installing fencing on preserved farms. However, eligibility to apply has been expanded to farm operators and lessees, not just the landowner. Also, the grant funding has increased from the prior cap of \$20,000 to \$50,000, and now includes high-tensile woven wire deer fencing, electric bear fencing, and other wildlife fencing.

Applications may be submitted at any time and farms that previously received a deer fencing grant may be eligible to apply for additional funding. For more information, visit [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/postpres/#2](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/postpres/#2) or contact Dave Kimmel at [David.Kimmel@ag.nj.gov](mailto:David.Kimmel@ag.nj.gov) or (609) 913-6594.



## Soil and Water Grants



The SADC provides grants to help fund up to 50% of the costs of approved soil and water conservation projects on farms enrolled in permanent or term (8 or 16-year) farmland preservation programs.

Landowners apply to their local Soil Conservation District, which assists in developing a farm conservation plan and ensures projects are necessary and feasible. Applications are forwarded to the NJ State Soil Conservation Committee, which recommends projects to the SADC for funding approval.

For more information, visit [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/grants/](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/grants/).



## Preservation of Warren County Farm Slated for Warehouses

On May 16, 2024, the SADC announced that New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program purchased the ~566-acre "Buckhorn Creek Farm" in White Township, Warren County. The property was previously owned by Jaindl Land Co. and slated for over 2 million square feet of warehouse development.

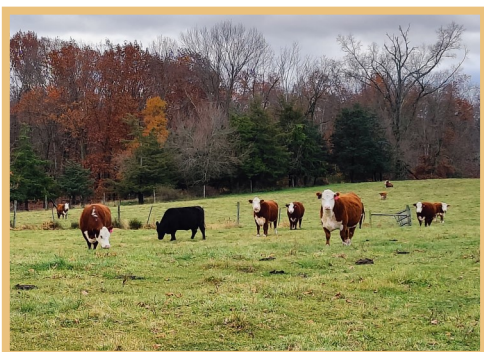
The farm is highly productive, located in an area designated by Warren County as an Agricultural Development Area (ADA) and within the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Areas of the Highlands Council's comprehensive land use plan.

The SADC's Farmland Preservation Program typically avoids land zoned for high-density development. However, in the case of this farm, the proposed development was not in line with good planning principles. The lack of adequate transportation and other public infrastructure needed to support this scale of industrial development was a key factor in the SADC's decision to intercept the project. The SADC now owns the fee simple title to this land and will make plans to transition the farm to private ownership.



**Former SADC Executive Director Susan Payne and Secretary of Agriculture Ed Wengryn**

## An Alternative Method for Valuation of Farmland Preservation Applications



**Baron Family Farm, Hunterdon County**

P.L. 2023, c.245 became law on January 8, 2024, and establishes the Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula ("Statewide Formula") as an alternative method for the valuation of farmland entering the Farmland Preservation Program. The SADC is endeavoring to adopt the Statewide Formula within approximately one year with the assistance of a professional planning and economics consultant.

The Statewide Formula will consider the importance of preserving agricultural lands in the municipality and county, the value of natural resources in the municipality and county in which the land to be acquired

is located, and other relevant factors including, but not limited to, the rate of inflation, the quality of the agricultural soils, the size of the agricultural lands to be preserved, the risk of conversion of the land from productive agriculture to nonagricultural use, and proximity to preserved land.

For more information, visit [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/publications/guidance/](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/publications/guidance/) or contact SADC Chief of Acquisition Stephanie Kreiser at [Stephanie.Kreiser@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Kreiser@ag.nj.gov) or (609) 913-6612.





### Susan E. Payne, SADC Executive Director, Retires

Susan E. Payne, the Executive Director of the SADC, retired on June 1, 2024. Susan has spent her 35+ year career in New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program, first at Burlington County for 16 years and then at the SADC for nearly 20 years. She leaves a legacy of excellence in developing, administering, and managing one of the most successful farmland preservation programs in the United States.

During Susan's tenure as Executive Director at the SADC, she spearheaded the creation of the Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) program, giving Counties and Municipalities block grants so they could have much more control over their preservation priorities and programs. Under Susan in 2020, the SADC was honored by The American Farmland Trust when New Jersey was ranked #1 in the nation for addressing the loss of farmland.

As of June 1, 2024, 251,765 acres of farmland have been preserved. During Susan's career, 2,180 farms and 160,389 acres were preserved, or nearly 60% of all the farmland preserved to date in the great Garden State.



### SADC Welcomes New Chief of Acquisition



The SADC welcomes Stephanie Kreiser, Chief of Acquisition, to the SADC team. Stephanie has over 20 years of experience in land conservation, serving in various roles with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF). With this leading NJ land preservation nonprofit, she served as their Southern New Jersey Director before joining the SADC.

Her experience implementing strategic plans and engaging with landowners and communities will be particularly beneficial to the SADC. She will play a lead role in evolving the Acquisition program to meet NJ's changing needs, including leading the "Future Program" and new "Statewide Formula" subcommittees.

### Farmland Preservation Bumper Stickers & Magnets

Support farmland preservation with a free bumper sticker (L) and/or magnet (R)! Email [Heidi.Winzinger@ag.nj.gov](mailto:Heidi.Winzinger@ag.nj.gov) or call (609) 913-6576 with your name, address, and the number of stickers/magnets you would like.

