



# NEWS

New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee

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## **\$500,000 in Grants Available for Soil and Water Conservation Projects on Preserved Farms**

Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher today announced that \$500,000 is available in cost-sharing grants to farmers and landowners to help them implement soil and water conservation projects on preserved farms.

“Conserving soil and water resources is essential to maintaining the productivity of preserved farmland and sustaining our agricultural industry,” said Secretary Fisher. “The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) is pleased to be able to offer these cost-sharing grants to assist farmers in undertaking projects that conserve natural resources and promote strong farming operations.”

Through a memorandum of understanding with the SADC, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will be providing technical assistance to applicants and will assist landowners in planning and implementation of conservation practices in support of the Soil and Water Conservation Grant program. Landowners should apply for soil and water conservation grants at their [local NRCS office](#). Completed applications will be forwarded by NRCS to the State Soil Conservation Committee, which will approve and recommend eligible projects to the SADC for funding.

Acting State Conservationist Christine Hall said, “NRCS professionals offer technical expertise that will help producers plan and implement soil and water conservation practices that will safeguard the valuable resources being protected through farmland preservation.”

The SADC will provide 50 percent cost-sharing for eligible projects. Maximum grant amounts will be determined by acreage under common deed ownership. The grants are funded by legislation recently signed into law by Governor Christie that appropriated \$65.3 million for farmland preservation, including \$1.5 million for soil and water conservation grants and other stewardship activities on preserved farms.

Landowners and farmers are eligible to apply for grants for projects on farms that are permanently preserved or enrolled in an eight-year preservation program. Under an eight-year program, landowners agree to voluntarily restrict nonagricultural development for a period of eight years and become eligible for certain benefits, including soil and water conservation grants.

Soil and water conservation projects include those designed to control and prevent soil erosion and sediment damages; control pollution on farmland; impound, store and manage water for agricultural purposes, and improve management of land and soils to achieve maximum agricultural productivity.

Examples of eligible projects include terrace systems; diversions; stream protection; water impoundment reservoirs; irrigation systems; sediment retention, erosion or water control structures; drainage systems; animal waste control facilities; agri-chemical handling facilities, and forest tree stand improvement.

The SADC administers New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program and promotes innovative approaches to maintaining the viability of agriculture. To date, approximately 2,500 farms covering 227,000 acres have been permanently preserved under the program. For more information on soil and water conservation grants, contact the SADC at (609) 984-2504.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides assistance to private land owners in the conservation and management of their soil, water, and other natural resources. The agency delivers technical assistance based on sound science and suited to a customer's specific needs.

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