

Term Farmland Preservation Program

How It Works

Farmland owners agree to voluntarily restrict non-agricultural development on their land for a period of eight (8) or sixteen (16) years in exchange for certain benefits, including the opportunity to apply for soil and water conservation grants. There are two types of Term Farmland Preservation Programs: one type requires a formal agreement between the landowner and county, and the other (the municipally-approved program) requires an agreement between the landowner, county, and municipality.

Application

Farmers apply to their County Agriculture Development Board (CADB).

Criteria

The land must be located in an Agriculture Development Area (ADA), be eligible for Farmland Assessment, and meet local and/or county program criteria.

Benefits

Landowners enrolled in the Term Farmland Preservation Program receive no direct compensation for participating but are eligible to apply to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) for grants that fund up to 50-percent of the costs of approved soil and water conservation projects. Additionally, landowners who enroll in the municipally-approved program enjoy greater protections from nuisance complaints, emergency fuel and water rationing, zoning changes, and eminent domain actions.

Special Considerations

An eight (8) or sixteen (16)-year agreement is recorded with the county clerk in the same manner as a deed. Land may be withdrawn prior to expiration of the eight (8) or sixteen (16)-year period only in cases of death or incapacitating illness of the owner or other serious hardship or bankruptcy. Withdrawal from the program must be approved by the CADB and, for municipally-approved programs, the municipality.

Landowners who want to sell their farm while enrolled in a term program must provide the SADC with an executed contract of sale for the property. The SADC then has the first right and option to match the conditions of that contract and purchase the property itself.

For More Information

Landowners should contact their CADB (visit <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/contacts/cadbs.html> for contact information) or contact the SADC at (609) 984-2504.



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