



New Jersey State
Agriculture Development
Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

FY2019



New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee

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Governor



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Lieutenant Governor

State Agriculture Development Committee

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Photo by Kelly Doyle

INTRODUCTION

New Jersey is a national leader in farmland preservation, with over one-third of our farmland permanently protected, reflecting a public investment that exceeds any other state in the nation. With more than 2,600 farms and 234,000 acres of preserved farmland in New Jersey, the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), in conjunction with our county, municipal and nonprofit partners, continue the work of ensuring that much of the State's agricultural landscape remains intact for generations to come.

Preserving local farms affords a locally-grown food supply, gives the public exceptional tourism and recreation opportunities and helps ensure a permanent place for farming in New Jersey's economy. Protected farms maintain our connection to the land, limit our carbon footprint and give municipalities another tool to avoid unwanted development and retain community character.

The SADC is acutely aware that preserving the land is just one way to support agriculture in New Jersey. With that in mind, the SADC continues to hone it's focus on developing useful grant assistance programs, workshops, guidance documents and training to support agriculture as a whole, well beyond land preservation goals.

This year the SADC continued elevating the use of soil & water grants, providing preserved farmland owners with up to a 50% cost-share grants for implementation of projects such as irrigation wells and systems, erosion control measures and manure handling. In addition, the SADC's deer fencing grant program continued providing financial relief and protection to many farms.

SADC continued listening to and addressing the needs of our municipal preservation partners through increased communication with the forty-five Municipal Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) participating in the SADC Planning Incentive Grant Program. Through these discussions, significant rule amendments have been drafted accommodating the most common roadblocks in the preservation process, including access to more funding and a reduction in planning application requirements to ease administrative burdens.

Reaching beginning farmers through workshops coordinated with the American Farmland Trust (AF) was another highlight this year. These practical workshops focused on helping would-be farmers to assess their financial readiness to begin farming, to fully assess a farm to lease or purchase, and then how to negotiate the purchase or lease agreements.



Photo by Kelly Doyle

Farmland Preservation Planning

The SADC coordinates with counties and municipalities in developing and updating comprehensive farmland preservation plans. Eighteen counties and 45 municipalities currently have comprehensive farmland preservation plans that seek to protect an additional 204,000 acres over the next ten years.

Comprehensive farmland preservation plans utilize mapping tools to identify priority farmland for preservation according to the municipal and/or county priorities. These plans identify agricultural development areas (ADAs) and project areas, within the ADA, which serve as the geographic focus of preservation efforts. The SADC coordinates efforts to continually update and refine plans.

In September 2018, Atlantic County received SADC final approval of its updated comprehensive farmland preservation plan. This plan was developed as part of an extensive county master plan re-examination. Both Tewksbury Township, Hunterdon County and Hopewell Township, Cumberland County also received final approval of their comprehensive farmland preservation plans at the September 2018 SADC meeting.

Finalizing comprehensive farmland preservation plans allows the participating municipalities and counties to accept and process applications for preservation from individual farmland owners.

Farmland Preservation Totals

At Fiscal Year's End:

2,622
FARMS

235,128 ACRES

Permanently preserved
since the inception of the
program

FY2019



62 4,204
FARMS ACRES

Rainbow Ridge Farm, East Amwell, Hunterdon County,
Photo by Stefanie Miller



AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

Summary of Farmland Preserved

(through 6/30/2019)

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	48	8	5,105	106	17,577,982	3,443	13,423,506	76.37%	4,154,476
Bergen	8	5	335	42	19,752,944	58,927	10,866,840	55.01%	8,886,103
Burlington	235	21	28,943	123	158,798,787	5,487	95,939,649	60.42%	62,859,139
Camden	14	3	1,011	72	13,732,709	13,579	6,149,953	44.78%	7,582,756
Cape May	50	6	2,785	56	18,153,977	6,518	11,062,041	60.93%	7,091,936
Cumberland	214	11	20,592	96	59,620,212	2,895	43,161,829	72.39%	16,458,383
Gloucester	209	14	15,431	74	119,700,818	7,757	76,359,334	63.79%	43,341,484
Hunterdon	430	17	33,639	78	284,543,052	8,459	197,687,640	69.48%	86,855,412
Mercer	113	8	8,281	73	101,022,581	12,200	59,473,308	58.87%	41,549,272
Middlesex	54	7	4,845	90	61,608,465	12,715	40,400,036	65.58%	21,208,429
Monmouth	205	11	15,342	75	235,545,438	15,353	146,504,369	62.20%	89,041,070
Morris	114	12	7,284	64	147,687,575	20,275	82,314,639	55.74%	65,372,936
Ocean	47	5	3,240	69	26,499,229	8,178	18,018,684	68.00%	8,480,545
Passaic	2	2	56	28	3,553,345	63,399	1,539,426	43.32%	2,013,919
Salem	346	12	39,160	113	169,058,051	4,317	129,515,412	76.61%	39,542,640
Somerset	106	7	7,922	75	135,300,750	17,080	78,010,987	57.66%	57,289,763
Sussex	149	14	15,938	107	53,832,532	3,378	36,334,624	67.50%	17,497,909
Warren	278	19	25,218	91	130,105,783	5,159	83,291,445	64.02%	46,814,338
All Counties	2,622	182	235,128	90	1,756,094,229	7,469	1,130,053,721	64.35%	626,040,509

Summary of Farmland Preserved in FY2019

(7/01/2018 - 6/30/2019)

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	1	1	70	70	559,709	8,016	227,915	40.72%	331,794
Cape May	2	2	72	36	392,609	5,473	360,415	91.80%	32,194
Cumberland	10	5	381	38	2,087,431	5,477	1,377,703	66.00%	709,729
Gloucester	5	3	306	61	1,821,540	5,955	1,287,240	70.67%	534,300
Hunterdon	13	7	944	73	7,058,877	7,480	5,950,427	84.30%	1,108,450
Monmouth	2	2	73	36	1,426,213	19,542	742,815	52.08%	683,398
Salem	21	8	1,819	87	10,118,781	5,564	6,971,547	68.90%	3,147,234
Sussex	2	2	127	64	604,904	4,753	404,541	66.88%	200,363
Warren	6	3	413	69	1,889,230	4,573	1,064,697	56.36%	824,533
All Counties	62	33	4,204	68	25,959,294	6,175	18,387,300	70.83%	7,571,994

Farmland Preservation Funding

Appropriation bills authorizing **~\$25 million** in **FY2019** funding for the Farmland Preservation Program were signed into law in January 2019.

**Municipal
Planning
Incentive Grant
(PIG)**

\$15 million

**State
Direct Easement
Program**

\$5 million

**Nonprofit
Program**

\$1.6 million

**Stewardship Cost
Sharing Grants**

Soil & Water and Deer Fence

\$710,000



Boxed Kale, Ferrari Farm, Cumberland County, Photo by Kelly Doyle

County & Municipal Planning Incentive Grant ("PIG") Programs

The SADC's Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) programs require counties and municipalities to develop and adopt comprehensive farmland preservation plans as a condition of receiving state funding for farmland preservation. These plans detail farmland preservation goals and other key strategies to help retain agriculture, including those related to land use planning, economic development, natural resource conservation and overall local support for agriculture. Twenty-six farms were preserved through the County PIG Program and 17 farms through the Municipal PIG Program in FY2019, totaling 1,520 acres.



Buena Vista Farms, Vineland, Atlantic County, Photo by Kelly Doyle

FY2019



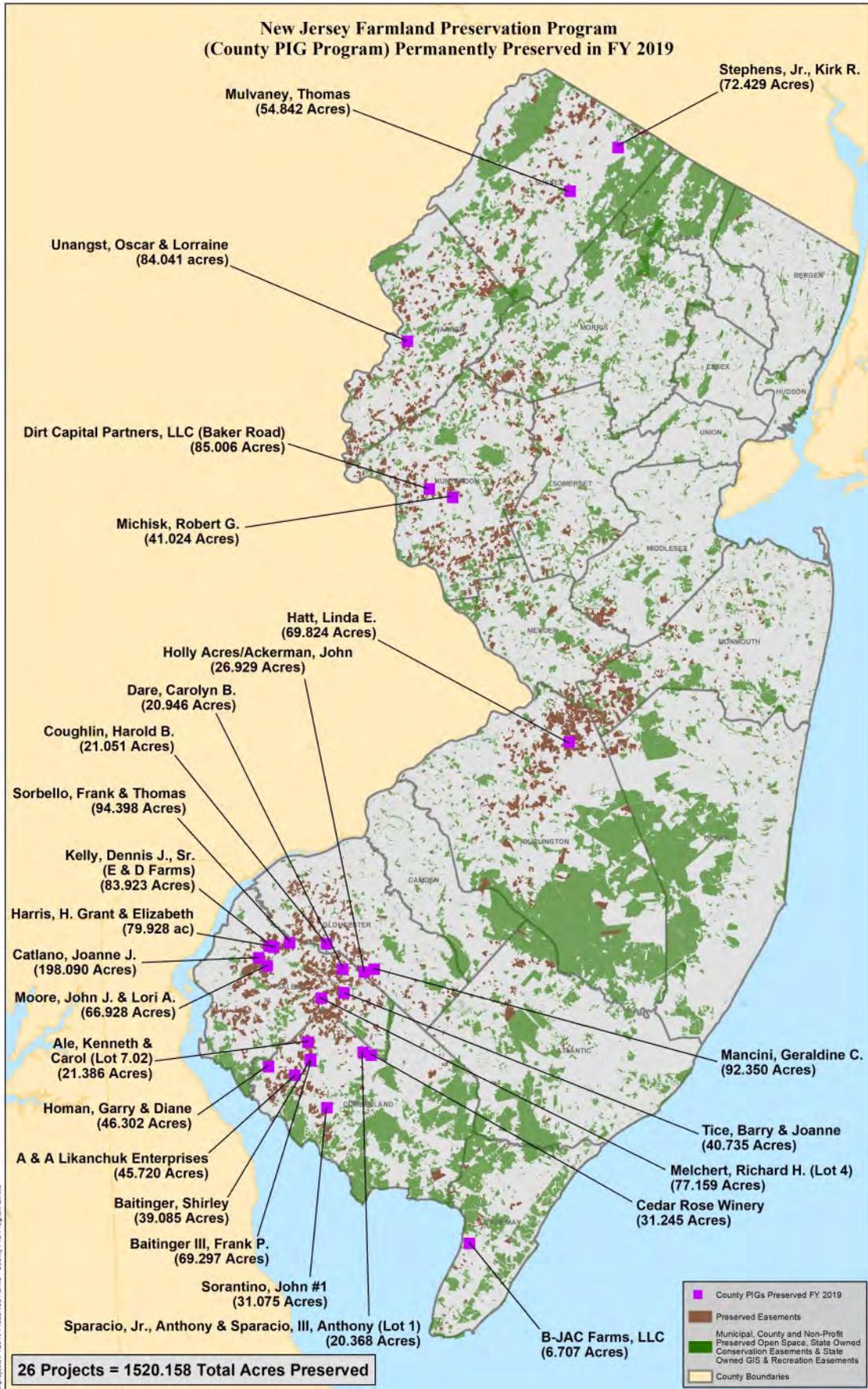
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FARMS ACRES

County Planning Incentive Grant Program

Farms Preserved in
FY2019 (7/1/18—6/30/19)

County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
County Planning Incentive Grant Program			
Burlington	Chesterfield Twp.	Hatt, Linda E	69.8240
Cape May	Middle Twp.	B-JAC Farms, LLC	6.7070
Cumberland	Deerfield Twp.	Cedar Rose Winery	31.2450
Cumberland	Deerfield Twp.	Sparacio, Jr., Anthony & Sparacio, III, Anthony (Lot 1)	20.3680
Cumberland	Fairfield Twp.	Sorantino, John #1	31.0750
Cumberland	Hopewell Twp.	A & A Likanchuk Enterprises	45.7200
Cumberland	Hopewell Twp.	Ale, Kenneth and Carol (Lot 7.02)	21.3860
Cumberland	Hopewell Twp.	Baitinger, III, Frank P.	69.2970
Cumberland	Hopewell Twp.	Baitinger, Shirley	39.0850
Cumberland	Stow Creek Twp.	Homan, Garry & Diane	46.3020
Gloucester	Elk Twp.	Holly Acres, LLC	26.9290
Gloucester	Elk Twp. Franklin Twp.	Mancini, Geraldine C	92.3500
Gloucester	South Harrison Twp.	Coughlin, Harold B.	21.0510
Hunterdon	Franklin Twp. Kingwood Twp.	Dirt Capital Partners, LLC (Baker Road)	85.0060
Hunterdon	Franklin Twp. Raritan Twp.	Michisk, Robert G.	41.0240
Salem	Mannington Twp.	Catalano, Joanne J.	198.0900
Salem	Mannington Twp.	Moore, John J. & Lori A.	66.9280
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Harris, Howard Grant & Elizabeth	79.2980
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Kelly, Dennis J., Sr. (E & D Farm)	83.9230
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Sorbello, Frank & Thomas	94.3980
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Dare, Carolyn B.	20.9460
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Melchert, Richard H. (Lot 4)	77.1590
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Tice, Barry & Joanne	40.7350
Sussex	Hardyston Twp.	Mulvaney, Thomas	54.8420
Sussex	Vernon Twp.	Stephens, Jr. Kirk R.	72.4290
Warren	White Twp.	Unangst, Oscar & Lorraine	84.0410

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION



AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

FY2019



17

817

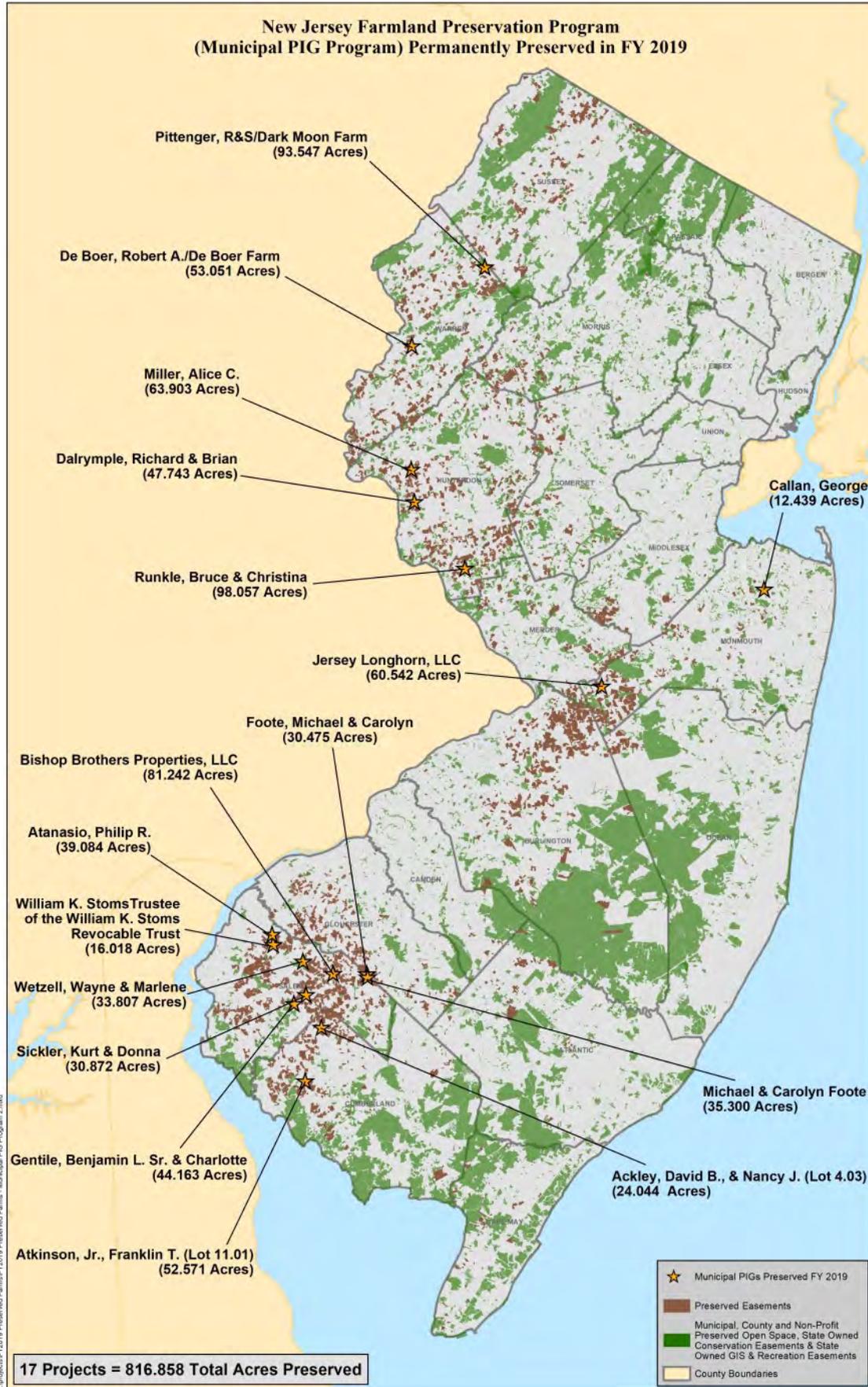
FARMS ACRES

Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program

Farms Preserved in FY2019
(7/1/18—6/30/19)

County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Cumberland	Hopewell Twp.	Atkinson, Jr., Franklin T. (Lot 11.01)	52.5710
Cumberland	Upper Deerfield Twp.	Ackley, David B. & Nancy J. (Lot 4.03)	24.0440
Gloucester	Elk Twp. Upper Pittsgrove Twp., Salem Co.	Michael & Carolynn Foote	35.3000
Hunterdon	Alexandria Twp.	Miller, Alice C.	63.9030
Hunterdon	Kingwood Twp.	Dalrymple, Richard K. & Brian S.	47.7430
Hunterdon	West Amwell Twp.	Runkle, Bruce & Christina	98.0570
Monmouth	Holmdel Twp.	Callan, George	12.4390
Monmouth	Upper Freehold Twp.	Jersey Longhorn, LLC	60.5420
Salem	Alloway Twp.	Gentile, Benjamin L. Sr. & Charlotte	44.1630
Salem	Alloway Twp.	Sickler, Kurt & Donna	30.8720
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Atanasio, Philip R.	39.0840
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Wentzell, Wayne & Marlene	33.8070
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	William K Stoms Trustee of the William K. Stoms Revocable Trust	16.0180
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Bishop Brothers Properties, LLC	81.2420
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Foote, Michael & Carolynn	30.4750
Warren	Frelinghuysen Twp.	Pittenger, Ronald & Sharon (Dark Moon)	93.5470
Warren	White Twp.	De Boer, Robert A.	53.0510

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State Direct Easement Program

Farms Preserved in FY2019 (7/1/18—6/30/19)

FY2019

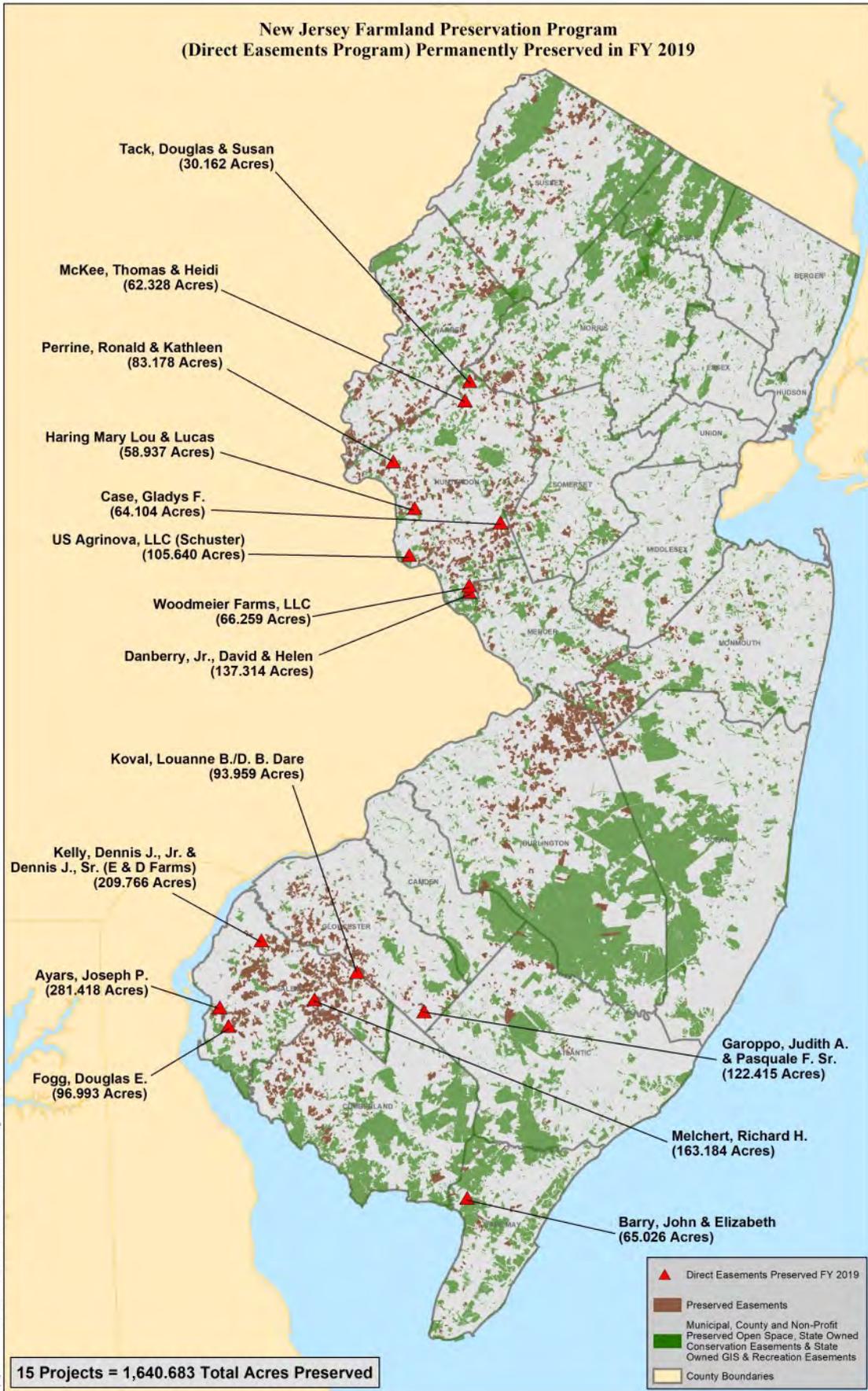


15 1641
FARMS ACRES

The SADC purchases development easements directly from landowners to preserved farmland through its State Acquisition/Direct Easement Purchase Program. Fifteen farms were preserved through this program in FY2019.

County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Cape May	Dennis Twp.	Barry, John A. & Elizabeth A.	65.0260
Gloucester	Franklin Twp.	Garoppo, Judith A. & Pasquale F. Sr.	122.4150
Hunterdon	Alexandria Twp.	Perrine, Ronald & Kathleen	83.1780
Hunterdon	Kingwood Twp.	Haring, Mary Lou and Lucas	58.9370
Hunterdon	Kingwood Twp.	US Agrinova, LLC (Schuster)	105.6400
Hunterdon	Delaware Twp.		
Hunterdon	Lebanon Twp.	McKee, Thomas & Heidi	62.3280
Hunterdon	Lebanon Twp.	Tack, Douglas & Susan	30.1620
Hunterdon	Raritan Twp.	Case, Gladys F.	64.1040
Hunterdon	West Amwell Twp.	Danberry Jr., David B. & Helen	137.3140
Hunterdon	West Amwell Twp.	Woodmeier Farms, LLC	66.2590
Salem	Elsinboro Twp.	Ayars, Joseph P.	281.4180
Salem	Salem City		
Salem	Elsinboro Twp.	Fogg, Douglas E.	96.9930
Salem	Lower Alloways Creek Twp.		
Salem	Oldmans Twp.	Kelly, Dennis J., Jr. & Dennis J., Sr. (E & D Farms)	209.7660
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Koval, Louanne B. & Dare, David Bruce	93.9590
Salem	Elk Twp., Gloucester Co.		
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Melchert, Richard H.	163.1840
Salem	Alloway Twp.		

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION



Nonprofit Program

Farms Preserved in FY2019 (7/1/18—6/30/19)

FY2019



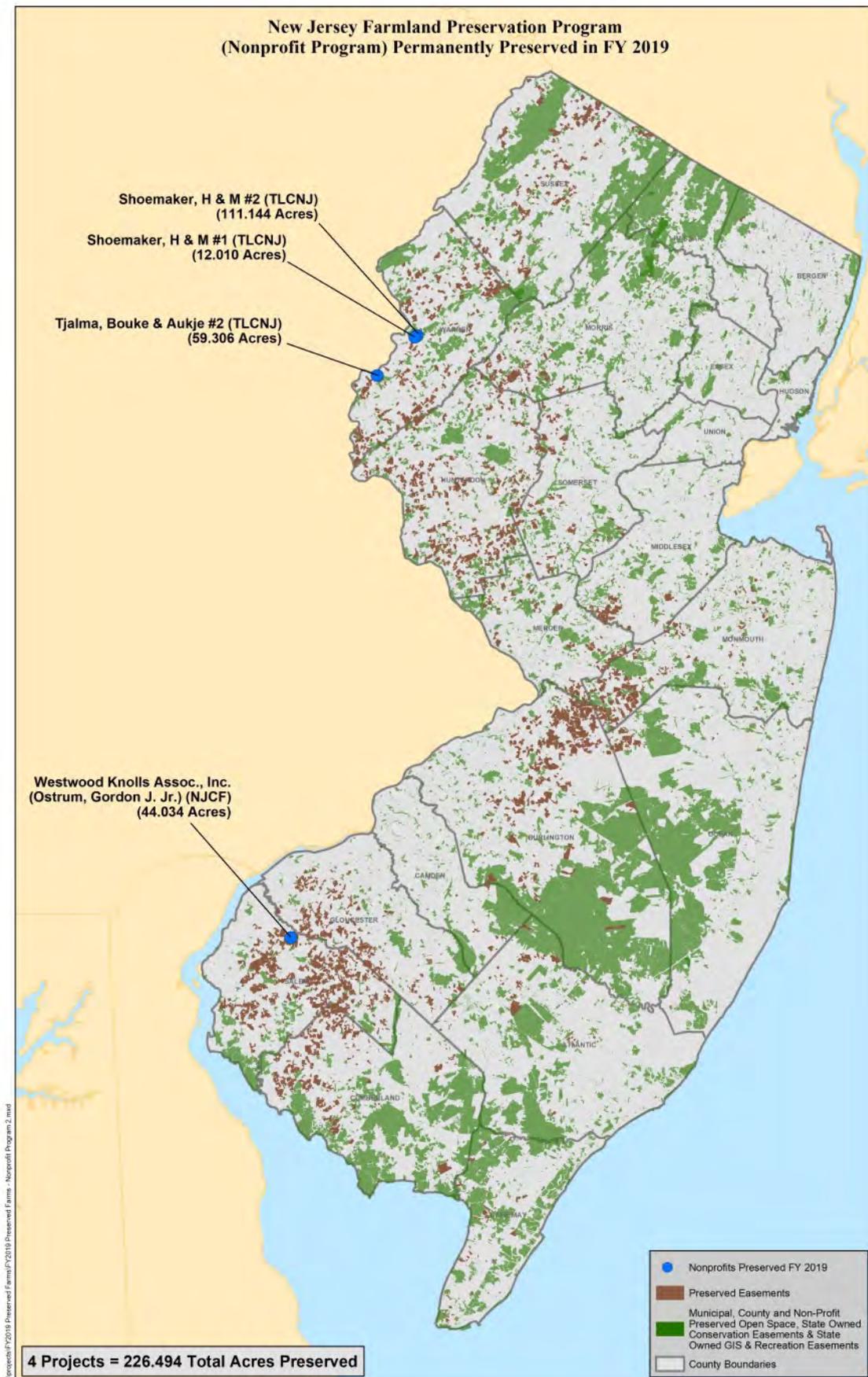
4 FARMS **227 ACRES**

The SADC provides cost-sharing grants to nonprofits to assist them in purchasing development easements to preserve farmland. Four farms were preserved through the Nonprofit program in FY2019.

Photo Kelly—Salem - NJCF Fichera - mums

County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Nonprofit Grant Program			
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Westwood Knolls Associates Inc. (Ostrum, Gordon J. Jr.) (NJCF)	44.0340
Warren	Harmony Twp.	Tjalma, Bouke & Aukje #2 (TLCNJ)	59.3060
Warren	White Twp.	Shoemaker, H & M #1 (TLCNJ)	111.1440
Warren	White Twp.	Shoemaker, H & M #2 (TLCNJ)	12.0100

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION



FY2019



66 3,763
FARMS ACRES

Term Farmland Preservation Program

Landowners may choose to preserve their land for agricultural purposes for an eight-year or sixteen-year term, rather than permanently. While landowners are not paid to enter a term preservation program, enrolling their land makes landowners eligible for certain benefits, including the opportunity to apply for soil and water conservation grants. In FY2019, there were 66 farms totaling approximately 3,763 acres enrolled in a Term Farmland Preservation Program agreement.



Barry Farm, Dennis Township, Cape May County, Photo by Cindy Roberts

New Jersey Pinelands

One farm in the Pinelands region of Gloucester County was preserved in FY19 for an additional 122 acres. Farm owners in the agricultural production, special agricultural production and preservation areas continue to benefit from the “Pinelands Formula” as an alternative to a traditional easement purchase appraisal. The formula takes into account not only Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) values and current development potential, but also the presence of important agricultural and environmental features.

Pinelands Region

Summary of Preserved Farmland (through 6/30/2019)

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	43	6	4,801	112	16,528,769	3,443	12,374,293	74.87%	4,154,476
Burlington	51	8	7,745	152	28,162,999	3,636	19,488,419	69.20%	8,674,581
Camden	12	2	910	76	3,628,094	3,987	2,633,714	72.59%	994,380
Cape May	9	4	644	72	1,808,663	2,807	1,146,505	63.50%	660,158
Gloucester	12	2	1,268	106	2,564,042	2,022	2,081,509	81.18%	482,533
Ocean	7	3	228	32	4,067,040	18,003	2,502,144	61.52%	1,564,897
All Counties	134	25	15,593	116	56,759,608	3,640	40,228,583	70.88%	16,531,025



Photo by Stefanie Miller

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

New Jersey Highlands

12 farms received SADC cost share grants in the Highlands region in FY19 adding 10 farms and 687 acres in the Highlands Planning area and 2 farms in the Highlands Preservation area for an additional 92 acres. 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. The Highlands Act was amended in 2019 to extend this provision another five years, until June 30, 2024.

Highlands Preservation Area

Summary of Farms Preserved (through 6/30/2019)

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	3	1	244	81	5,263,844	21,609	3,568,386	67.79%	1,695,458
Hunterdon	50	7	4,047	81	48,537,604	11,994	39,094,483	80.54%	9,443,121
Morris	85	5	5,863	69	94,499,281	16,063	53,716,628	56.84%	40,782,654
Passaic	1	1	41	41	986,695	24,000	592,017	60.00%	394,678
Somerset	1	1	78	78	1,422,545	18,300	699,940	49.20%	722,605
Sussex	7	2	1,028	147	3,544,144	3,446	2,673,026	75.42%	871,119
Warren	83	13	6,993	84	37,510,490	5,364	25,360,428	67.61%	12,150,062
All Counties	230	30	18,314	80	191,764,604	10,471	125,704,908	65.55%	66,059,696

Highlands Planning Area

Summary of Preserved Farmland (through 6/30/2019)

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	100	8	7,484	75	53,543,676	7,154	36,783,367	68.70%	16,760,308
Morris	28	10	1,659	59	52,515,987	31,657	27,861,715	53.05%	24,654,273
Somerset	28	2	1,956	70	45,934,476	23,490	27,119,818	59.04%	18,814,658
Sussex	16	6	1,371	86	6,923,295	5,050	4,458,171	64.39%	2,465,124
Warren	149	15	14,654	98	76,642,918	5,230	48,364,058	63.10%	28,278,860
All Counties	322	42	27,171	84	239,425,258	8,812	146,814,163	61.32%	92,611,095

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

Highlands Preservation & Planning Areas

Summary of Preserved Farmland (through 6/30/2019)

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	149	10	11,456	77	101,183,224	8,832	74,979,795	74.10%	26,203,429
Morris	111	11	7,097	64	140,814,783	19,843	78,009,029	55.40%	62,805,754
Passaic	1	1	41	41	986,695	24,000	592,017	60.00%	394,678
Somerset	29	2	2,033	70	47,357,021	23,291	27,819,756	58.74%	19,537,263
Sussex	22	6	2,327	106	9,751,105	4,191	6,701,396	68.72%	3,049,709
Warren	227	16	20,862	92	110,943,120	5,318	71,236,481	64.21%	39,706,639
All Counties	543	47	44,107	81	420,164,699	9,526	265,133,895	63.10%	155,030,804



Long Valley preservation area. (Morris County Preservation Trust)

Non-agricultural Project Reviews

The SADC has been active in the review of non-agricultural development projects involving preserved farmland and other land in Agriculture Development Areas (ADAs) to determine the effect of these projects upon the preservation and enhancement of agriculture in the ADA and upon overall State agriculture and development policies. In FY19, these projects included an interstate natural gas pipeline project, an electric transmission line project and several bridge improvements.

The SADC continues to monitor developments in the ongoing litigation surrounding the proposed PennEast pipeline, an interstate project that would cross through Hunterdon and Mercer counties. Coordination is ongoing with FERC, PennEast, landowners, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), County Agriculture Development Boards and other interested parties in the evaluation of agricultural and preserved farm impacts.

Two phases of an electric transmission improvement project proposed by Public Service Energy and Gas (PSE&G) were reviewed in FY19. The 55-mile “Metuchen-Trenton-Burlington Transmission Project” was reviewed for impacts on 25 ADA parcels and 9 preserved farms in Middlesex and Burlington Counties.

The SADC coordinated with affected farmland owners and the appropriate local government agencies overseeing three ongoing bridge repair projects in Bergen, Burlington and Somerset counties.

Transfer of Development Rights

The State Transfer of Development Rights Bank Board works to promote the use of transfer of development rights (TDR) for land preservation and assists municipalities in the establishment of such programs.

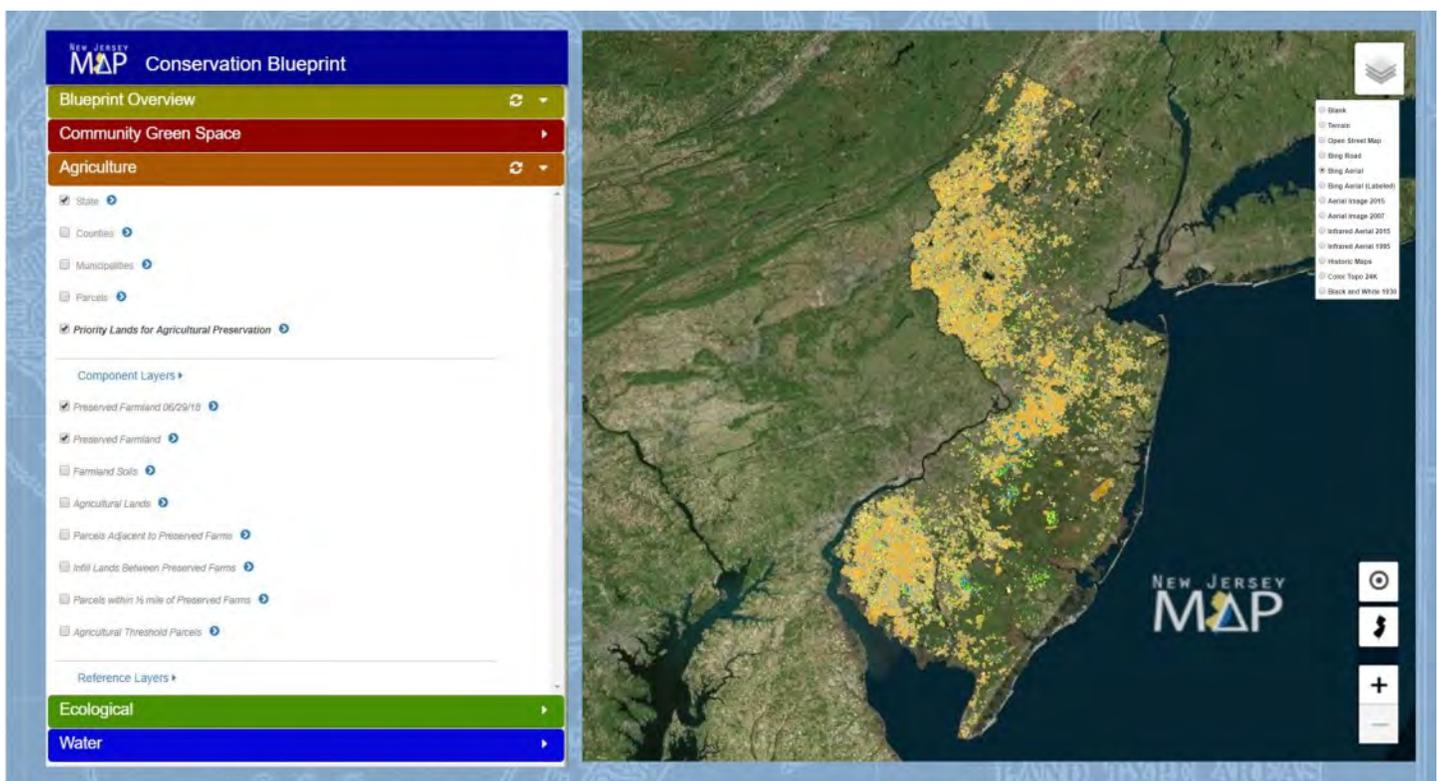
Woolwich Township, Gloucester County, remains active in the pursuit of TDR, and SADC staff continues to support the municipality in its efforts to ensure the planning and infrastructure necessary to make TDR viable is made available.

The State TDR Bank also provides Planning Assistance Grants to aid municipalities in conducting the extensive research and proactive planning work required under the TDR enabling statute. Thirteen municipalities have received Planning Assistance Grants, for up to \$40,000 each, from the State TDR Bank. A total of \$240,000 has been distributed to date.

New Jersey Blueprint Project

The SADC continues to support the development of the Blueprint project, a powerful and easy to use computer mapping site created by Rowan University's Geospatial Lab that allows users to access high-resolution, site-specific information about land in New Jersey, including various agricultural and environmental characteristics. It has the potential to become an important tool for land planners, local officials and conservation organizations statewide. SADC staff use this tool extensively to easily identify farms and their attributes in order to have better-informed discussions with preservation partners and landowners.

The project has been made possible with the support of The William Penn Foundation and The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. The team leaders are Rowan University, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and The Nature Conservancy. The SADC participated in the development of the project in an advisory capacity to ensure the efficacy of the tool in agricultural land assessment. The result was a geospatial model used to identify priority lands for farmland preservation within the project's Agriculture theme map. The mapping site can be accessed at www.njmap2.com/blueprint.



AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

The SADC works to ensure proper stewardship of preserved farmland and promote efforts to keep New Jersey's farms viable. In addition to coordinating the Right to Farm, Agricultural Mediation, and Farm Link Programs, the SADC administers grant programs for deer fencing and soil and water conservation projects; administers other post-preservation requests including for rural microenterprises and renewable energy; supports next generation farmers through beginning farmer initiatives; and administers the winery special occasion events pilot program.

Deer Fencing Grants

2 Rounds, FY2017 & FY2019



47 Grants Awarded

13 Projects installed to date

- ~16 Miles of fencing or 764 Acres Fenced
- ~\$200,000 Reimbursed

Chickadee Creek Farm "Trail-Cam" Photo by Jess Niederer

Eligible farmers can apply to the SADC for a cost-share grant to help cover the cost of installing deer fencing on their permanently preserved farms. The grants may cover up to 50 percent of the costs of materials and installation, and may not exceed \$200/acre or a total grant of \$20,000.

Following up on the successful first round of Deer Fencing Grants in FY2017, the SADC held a second round in FY2019. Between these two rounds, the SADC has approved 47 grant applications and obligated \$687,094.48 in cost-share grant funding. By the close of FY2019, farmers had completed 13 deer fencing projects and the SADC had issued \$198,226.86 in deer fencing grant reimbursements.

Soil & Water Grants

FY2019

97 applications in progress

(estimated need ~\$2.75 million)

42 projects funded

(~\$790,000 obligated)

9 projects completed

(~\$180,000 paid)

Farms that are permanently preserved or enrolled in the term farmland preservation program (for an 8 or 16-year term) are eligible to apply for soil and water conservation grants.

Grant amounts are based on farm size and can fund up to 50 percent of the cost of approved projects.

Eligible projects include those designed to control and prevent soil erosion and sediment damage; control pollution on farmland; impound, store and manage water for agricultural purposes; or improve management of land and soils to achieve maximum agricultural productivity. The State Soil Conservation Committee has approved twenty projects types as eligible for cost-sharing through the SADC Soil and Water Grants Program (see the bulleted list of project types on the right).

For more information on specific projects, see the State Soil Conservation Committee’s rules, N.J.A.C. 2:90.

- Terrace Systems
- Diversions
- Contour Farming
- Strip-cropping Systems
- Sod Waterways
- Windbreak Restoration or Establishment
- Stream Protection
- Permanent Vegetative Cover on Critical Areas
- Land Shaping or Grading
- Water Impoundment Reservoirs
- Irrigation Systems
- Sediment Retention, Erosion, or Water Control Structures
- Permanent Open Drainage Systems
- Underground Drainage Systems
- Developing Facilities for Livestock Water
- Forest Tree Stand Improvement
- Forest Tree Plantations
- Site Preparation for Natural Regeneration
- Animal Waste Control Facilities
- Agrichemical Handling Facility

AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT



Water Impoundment Reservoirs



Underground Drainage Systems



Irrigation Systems

Renewable Energy

In FY2019 the SADC approved proposed solar energy generation projects on four 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 inception of the law, a total of 43 solar energy projects have been approved on 38 preserved farms by the close of FY2019.

Landowner Name	County	Township	Ag Operation	System Type	Size (kW)	Mount Type	Structure	Occupied Area (acres)	Demand Use
FY2019									
Canright/Hansen	Hunterdon	Bethlehem	Vegetable	Solar	7,849 kwh	Rooftop	Existing barn	0.004	House/Farm
Kimmelman	Hunterdon	Tewksbury	Hay	Solar	55,341 kwh	Ground	N/A	0.2	residences
Toscano	Middlesex	Cranbury	Apiary, Veg, Hay	Solar	28,301 kwh	Rooftop	Existing barns	0.034	House/Farm
Furman	Monmouth	Millstone	Hay/Grain	Solar	23,183 kwh	Rooftop	Existing barns	0.044	House/Farm



Rural Microenterprises



CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0) Public Domain Dedication

Under the Rural Microenterprise Law (P.L. 2015, c. 275) and the related rules that became effective June 2018, a farmer who owns a qualifying preserved farm can apply for a special permit to conduct a rural microenterprise on the farm. 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; 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. The first RME, an agricultural equipment repair shop, was approved by the SADC on 9/26/2019.



Farm Link

The Farm Link Program serves as a resource and referral center for farmers and landowners. Beginning and established farmers who are seeking access to land and farming opportunities, and landowners who have farmland and business opportunities available, can use the Program’s interactive linking service – NJ Land Link, www.njlandlink.org – to connect with one another. Farmers and landowners can also use the Farm Link Program’s resource pages, <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmlink/resources/>, to find more information on getting started in farming, leasing farmland, finding farmers/landowners, and developing farm transfer and succession plans. The NJ Land Link website, www.njlandlink.org/, was visited by over 4,500 people in FY2019. On the SADC website, <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmlink/resources/>, the SADC also continued to maintain Farm Link Program resource pages on Access to Land, Leasing Farmland, Farm Transfer and Succession, and New and Beginning Farmers.

During FY2019, NJ Land Link had more than 1050 registered users and more than 200 active listings making farmland available or seeking access to land. The NJ Land Link website, www.njlandlink.org, was visited by over 4,500 people in FY2019.

Agricultural Leasing Pilot Program

In May 2018 the SADC entered into a long-term lease on an 87-acre preserved farm it owns in West Amwell, Hunterdon County. The SADC acquired the 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 successfully applies for and implements needed Farm Bill conservation practices on the farm. The tenant farmer’s cost-share for the practices will be deducted from lease payments. The pilot project is in response to requests from the agricultural community for long-term leases to promote viability.

Winery Special Occasion Events Pilot Program

In June 2018 the SADC issued an Interim Report to the Legislature and Governor on the Pilot Program for Winery Special Occasion Events, in accordance with legislation signed in May that extended the pilot program for two years until May 30, 2020. The report summarizes the information the SADC has collected under the pilot program and the agency’s observations to date. Seven wineries registered for the pilot program in 2017.



Old York Cellars, Ringoes, Hunterdon County, Photo by Stefanie Miller

Right To Farm Program

The SADC administers the Right to Farm Program in partnership with New Jersey's 18 County Agriculture Development Boards to protect responsible commercial farms from public and private nuisance actions and unduly restrictive local regulations. In order to receive formal Right to Farm Act protection, farms must be operated in conformance with generally accepted practices and 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 consideration of the interests of each party, including relevant local ordinances.

Two significant cases were handled by the agency in FY2019. The SADC issued a final decision in the I/M/O CLC, LLC case in which the agency held that a start-up farm operation was a "commercial farm", and eligible for Right to Farm protection, based on the value of the agricultural products being cultivated on the property but not yet sold. The SADC also issued a final decision in the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) case of Glassboro Borough v. Summit City Farms and the Gloucester CADB, which dealt with the issue of whether Right to Farm protection was limited strictly to agricultural activities physically occurring within a commercial farm's property boundaries. The SADC held that the parking of commercial, non-customer vehicles on the street fronting Summit City's farming operation was eligible for Right to Farm protection and remanded the matter to the OAL for fact-finding on whether such parking was entitled to such protection.

The SADC also continued its outreach efforts to increase the awareness and understanding of Right to Farm among all audiences and make educational presentations on RTF to farmers, the public, local officials, county agriculture development boards (CADBs), agricultural advisory committees, and administrative law judges.



Mill Stream Farm, Mannington Township, Salem County , Photo Kelly Doyle,

Agricultural Mediation Program

The SADC administers the Agricultural Mediation Program to help farmers and other parties resolve agriculture-related disputes quickly, amicably, and in a cost-effective manner. Farmers have long-used the program to address Right-to-Farm issues, such as complaints from neighbors or municipal issues; USDA program disputes, such as Farm Service Agency loan issues and conservation program issues; and agricultural credit issues with private lenders.

In December 2018, the Farm Bill expanded the types of cases on which the SADC could use its USDA mediation grant funds. Now, New Jersey farmers also can use the Agricultural Mediation Program to help resolve lease issues, such as issues related to leasing land, equipment, livestock, buildings, and other farm-related items; farm transition issues, such as transition, transfer, and succession issues with family members or others; and organic compliance issues, such as certification matters.

Issues That Can Be Mediated Using the Agricultural Mediation Program:

- Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor Issues
- USDA Program Issues
- Agricultural Credit Disputes
- Lease Issues (land, equipment, livestock, buildings)
- Farm Transition Issues
- Organic Compliance Issues
- Other Issues (wetlands, pesticides, etc.)

The Agricultural Mediation Program received mediation requests in 18 cases in FY2019. Thirteen cases involved Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor issues, 3 cases involved USDA program issues, 1 case involved a farmland lease, and 1 case involved a loan with a commercial bank. In more than half the cases, the farmers and other parties were able to reach an agreement.

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, free, and generally only takes a meeting or two to complete.

OUTREACH & TRAINING

Outreach, Training & Guidance

As a result of spring 2018 outreach to Municipal Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) members, SADC staff were able to learn firsthand about each municipality's individual needs including funding in preparation for the FY19 appropriation. Subsequently, the SADC initiated a Municipal Planning Incentive Grant rule update to include a competitive fund accessible by all participating municipalities and easing of plan submission requirements. In addition, SADC staff coordinated with AAC members and staff in identifying and addressing their needs related to developing or enhancing existing and meaningful outreach to unreserved farmland owners in their municipality. Each municipality was supplied large scale SADC-generated maps showing preserved land and farms eligible for the SADC Direct Easement or County PIG programs in order to identify farms the Municipality may like to prioritize for outreach.



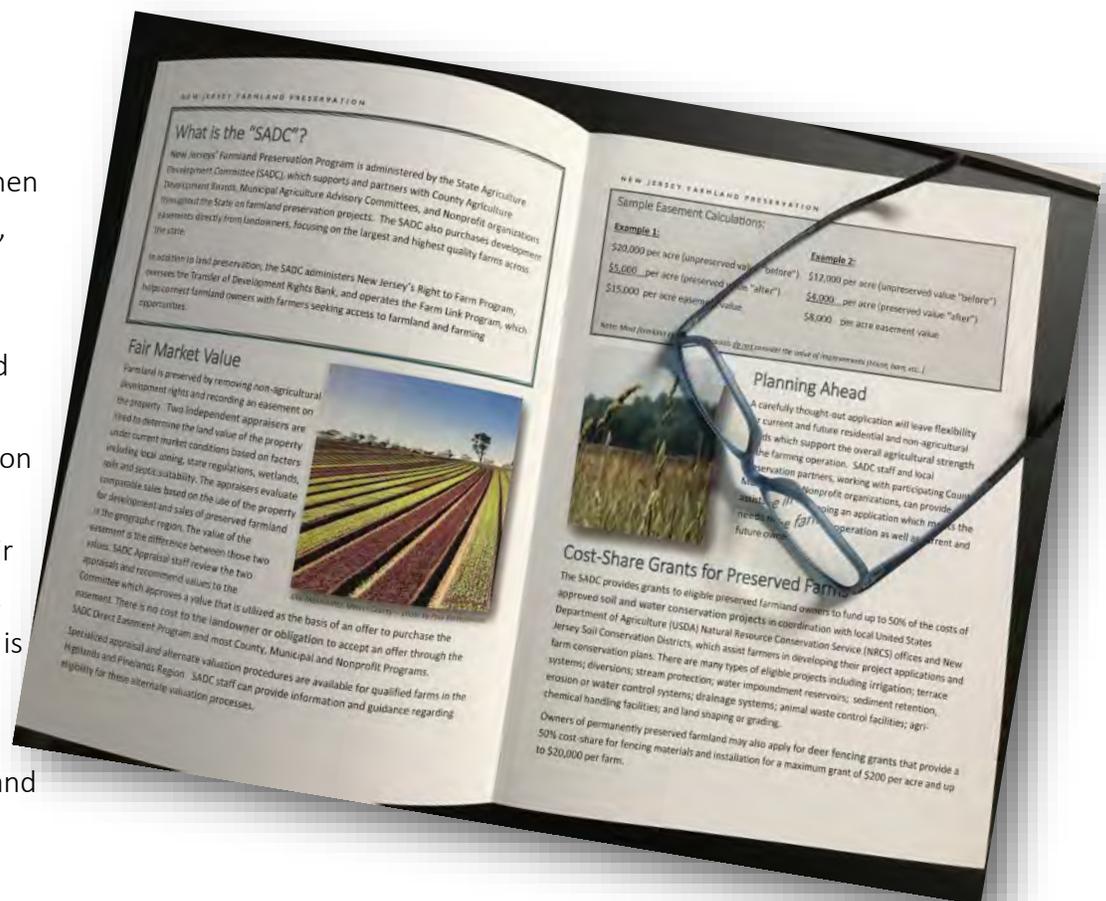
Photos by Lynn Lemyre

Municipal Agricultural Advisory Committees

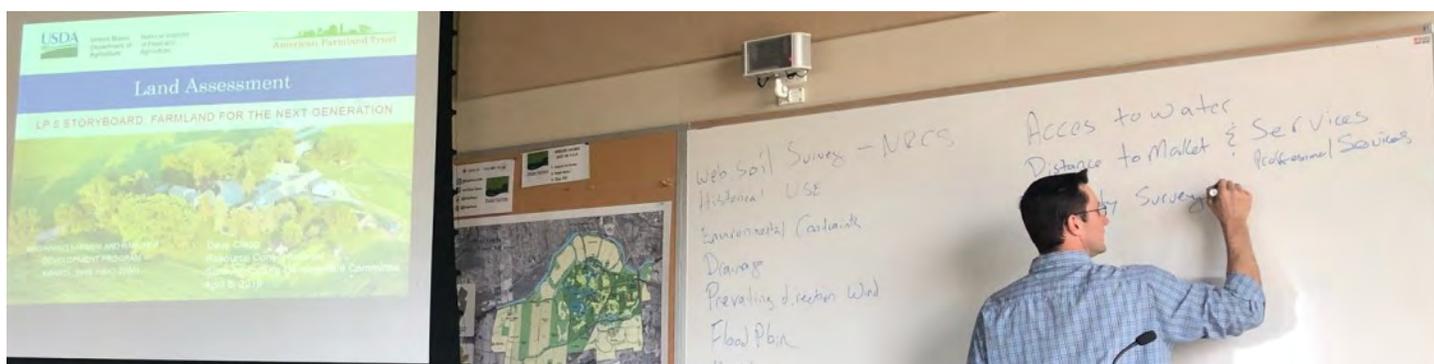
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Plain Language Preservation Overview

To address some of the most common questions farmland owners face when considering preservation, SADC staff developed a plain language, easy to read, four-page Farmland Preservation Overview providing basic information about the benefits of preservation, how the fair market value is assessed, how the easement value is calculated and when to seek the advice of professionals for estate and tax planning.



Beginning Farmer Initiatives



SADC Stewardship Manager Chuck Roohr



Assessing Finances Workshop, October 2018 Photos by Heidi Winzinger

The SADC worked with the American Farmland Trust (AFT) on two initiatives aimed at encouraging and assisting potential farmers: AFT's "Farmland for the Next Generation" and "NJ Farmland Advisors" programs. The SADC held a series of workshops to help new and aspiring farmers assess their financial readiness to purchase and maintain farmland; conduct a thorough and meaningful evaluation of farmland for lease or purchase; and review the intricacies of leasing or purchasing farmland.

The workshops consisted mostly of novice farmers and individuals exploring the dream of starting a small farm, with 50% of attendees reporting no experience and 28% reporting less than 10 years of experience in farming. Attendees reported they found the workshops very informative and appreciated the interactive learning exercises, exposing participants to real world scenarios. They felt the sessions encouraged them to think critically about how they might make decisions when leasing, purchasing, and evaluating farmland.

Subsequently, participants have reached out to the SADC directly and through the Farm Link website seeking further assistance and help finding the right farmland for their needs. Through the NJ Farmland Advisors program, the SADC will continue the work of educating beginning farmers through coordinating directly with more experienced farmers to assist in providing valuable advice and knowledge including on complex issues such as transitioning land from its existing ownership to the next generation of farmers. Workshop videos can be found on SADC's YouTube channel.

OUTREACH & TRAINING



SADC Resource Conservationist, Dave Clapp, instructs beginning farmers how to assess farmland using traditional and simple homemade tools.

Photos by Heidi Winzinger



