

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting

October 23, 2025

Secretary Wengryn called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Mr. Roohr read the notice stating that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.

Roll call indicated the following:

Members Present

Secretary Wengryn, Chairman
Roger Kumpel
Scott Ellis
Jess Niederer
Richard Norz
Gina Fischetti
Julie Krause
Lauren Procida
Brian Schilling

Members Absent

Tiffany Bohlin
Charles Rosen

Charles Roohr, SADC Executive Director
Jason Stypinski, Esq., Deputy Attorney General

Minutes

Approval of SADC Open and Closed Session Minutes of September 25, 2025.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Ellis to approve the SADC Open and Closed Session Minutes of September 25, 2025. Ms. Procida abstained. The motion was approved.

Report of the Chairman

Secretary Wengryn stated this is National School Lunch Week and ensuring that students have access to healthy and nutritious food is a big part of the work that the Department of Agriculture does. Staff has been working with food banks and pantries on grants to assist in purchasing nutritious local foods for their communities and also build better relationships with the farming community.

Secretary Wengryn went to Mexico where he met with Secretaries and Commissioners from Canada, United States and the Mexican provinces and states to talk about agricultural issues such as free trade, animal health and invasive species. They also discussed next year's International Year of the Woman Farming and how the countries and states will promote the event. When

women in agriculture are empowered, it benefits the local communities, food systems and local government.

Report of the Executive Director

Mr. Roohr stated staff continues to do outreach to CADBs. Legal staff gave presentations this month to both Monmouth and Warren CADBs regarding Right to Farm. Warren CADB also asked for a future presentation regarding Special Occasion events.

Mr. Roohr discussed that Mr. Bob Blew, State Board of Agriculture president, who is from Cumberland County, stated at the board's meeting that a farmer in Cumberland County recently received a preservation offer that was over \$10,000 an acre due to the new formula. This has gotten the attention of other Cumberland County farmers and increased interest in farmland preservation.

Public Comment

Mr. AJ Sivakumar, as high school senior at Princeton Day School, presented "Growing Minds" which is a Kindergarten through 12th grade experiential agriculture education model that connects the classroom, the cafeteria and the community, preparing students with the skills and perspectives essential for a sustainable future by providing awareness of how agriculture helps shape health, technology and the environment.

Mr. Sivakumar stated there are limited options to educate students about farming and stressed the importance for students to get hands-on agricultural experiences. Growing Minds provide a continuous learning pathway from kindergarten to 12th grade. For K through 2nd grades students explore growth in nature through planting vegetables, meeting farm animals and learning the basics of soil and composting. From grades 3 to 5, students manage small gardens, study ecosystems and connect with local farmers linking food systems to community. In middle school the focus shifts to innovation with complex homesteading systems and aquaponics. In high school, students lead by managing school green houses, growing food for food banks and compete in internships or capstones in environmental science and agribusiness.

Mr. Sivakumar stated this model strengthens STEM programs, supports nutrition and sustainability and introduces clear career pathways in agriculture, biotechnology and environmental fields. Suggestions to implement this program include targeted investments in school gardens and grow labs, mobile farm experiences and strategic partnerships with petting zoos and local farms, student-run enterprises and professional development for educators. Growing Minds is not only an education initiative, but rather a strategic investment in health, sustainability and workforce readiness for the future by planting curiosity early and cultivating real world experience.

Ms. Patricia Springwell, Hunterdon County, commended the committee on the progress made on the house size limits for houses on a preserved farm because it allows future farmers to be able to purchase the land.

Old Business

A. Next Gen Farmer Program: Incubator Farm Concept Update – Case Farm

Ms. Brandeisky and Mr. Pearsall reminded the committee that staff presented an incubator farm concept last month and the committee asked for additional information regarding a potential

partnership with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey's (NOFA-NJ) small grains incubator project. Staff provided more details about land access, farmer candidates, the small grains market and startup costs. After extensive discussion, the committee agreed to support this concept and asked to review a draft agreement between the SADC, Rutgers and NOFA-NJ.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Schilling to approve the drafting of an agreement between SADC, Rutgers and NOFA-NJ for the SADC to lease 15 acres to NOFA-NJ for their small grains incubator project.

New Business

A. Stewardship

1. Resolution: House Replacement

- a. D & M Stavola, SADC ID#03-0024-FS, Block 2303, Lot 11, Springfield Township, Burlington County, 72.6 acres.**

Mr. Berkowitz referred the committee to a request for a house replacement for a single-family residence for D & M Stavola, LLC. He reviewed the specifics of the request with the committee and stated staff's recommendation is to grant approval to replace the existing structure of 4,500 square feet with a 2 story, four-bedroom single family residence at 2,600 square feet of heated living space.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Kumpel to approve Resolution FY2026R10(1) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any conditions of said resolutions. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R10(1) is attached to and a part of these minutes.

2. Review of Activities

- b. Peck Farm, SADC ID#11-0006-FS, Block 43, Lots 1, 4, 4.01, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, East Windsor Township, Mercer County, 72.473 easement acres.**

Mr. Willmott referred the committee to the Peck Farm which was purchased by the SADC in 2003 and resold at public auction to the Peck family who currently own the farm and have vegetable and nursery stock production. Mr. Willmott stated there are DOE compliance issues on this farm, some of which date back to 2014.

In 2014, staff found overgrown fields during annual monitoring and notified the landowner, who started to resolve the concern but did not complete the work. In 2017, staff observed dumping concerns involving logs, wood chips and fill material located next to a pond. In 2022, staff observed approximately 1.5 acres of additional fill material that had been dumped next to the pond and issued a Notice of Violation. Staff also noted the overgrown fields were getting worse at this time. The issues are still present to this day.

In 2022, staff asked for a corrective action plan. The owner responded with an explanation of the issues and stated the fill material was an attempt to control the flooding of the pond which resulted from the turnpike widening and beaver activity. In 2024, staff requested any engineering plans, soil testing, or approvals for the fill material, but the landowner did not have

them. The landowner is citing financial hardships and lack of resources for his lack of progress on the violations. Mr. Willmott stated staff finds that the importation of fill material, dumping and the overgrown fields are DOE violations and if the committee agrees, a draft resolution will be prepared for the December meeting. The committee expressed concern regarding the amount of time the violations have been occurring. Mr. Roohr stated after years of communication and suggestions made to the landowner, staff is now looking for the ability to engage with the Attorney General's office.

It was moved by Mr. Kumpel and seconded by Mr. Ellis for staff to draft a resolution citing the violations. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. FY26 Budget Request

Mr. Distaulo reviewed the recommended FY2026 budget with the committee and stated staff is requesting a budget of \$7,805,000, which is an increase of \$922,000 from what was requested in FY2025. The increase is a result of increased salary and corresponding fringe costs as well as anticipated legal fees. This request is seeking approval by the committee to authorize a maximum amount of \$7,805,000 for fiscal year 2026.

Mr. Distaulo stated the RTF budget is set by the state at \$83,000. Staff is trying to request more money through the budget cycle for Right to Farm (RTF) initiatives, but as is, staff is given this fixed amount to cover salary, fringe costs and any additional shared costs with legal services.

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Mr. Kumpel to approve the FY26 budget request. The motion was unanimously approved.

C. Resolution: Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update

Mr. Allen reviewed the Farmland Preservation Plan Update for Delaware and Manalapan Townships which will guide their future farm preservation efforts over the next 10 years and allow them to continue to participate in the Municipal PIG Program.

Mr. Allen stated Delaware Township, Hunterdon County is currently targeting approximately 5,000 acres over the next 10 years and currently have a dedicated tax that generates approximately \$500,000 annually for the Municipal PIG program. Manalapan Township, Monmouth County is currently targeting 1,000 acres over the next 10 years and currently have a dedicated tax that has generated approximately \$1.9 million annually for their Municipal PIG program.

It was moved by Ms. Niederer and seconded by Mr. Ellis to approve Resolution FY2026R10(2) granting final approval to the Farmland Preservation Plan Update, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions. The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R10(2) is attached to and part of these minutes.

D. Resolutions: Final Approval – County Planning Incentive Grant Program

NOTE: Mr. Kumpel recused.

Ms. Bacon referred the committee to three requests for final approval under the county planning incentive grant program. She reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Mr. Schilling to approve Resolution FY2026R10(3) through FY2026R10(5) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. Larry and Betty Roohr, SADC ID# 03-0448-PG, FY2026R10(3), Block 701, Lot 6, Southampton Township, Burlington County, 60.6 gross acres.
2. Cheung, Nang Lung and Chan, Siu Mei, SADC ID# 03-0460-PG, FY2026R10(4), Block 1601, Lot 6, Southampton Township, Burlington County, 57.88 gross acres.
3. Doyle Farm, LLC, SADC ID# 03-0454-PG, FY2026R10(5), Block 701, Lot 5 and Block 801, Lot 8, Southampton Township, Burlington County, 149.26 gross acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolutions FY2026R10(3) through FY2026R10(5) is attached to and part of these minutes.

E. Resolutions: Final Approval – Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program

Ms. Mazzella referred the committee to one request for final approval under the municipal planning incentive grant program. She reviewed the specifics of the request with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Kumpel and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolution FY2026R10(6) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolution.

1. Omar and Maria Lyettefi and Norman Lenchitz, SADC ID# 17-0268-PG, FY2026R10(6), Block 2201, Lot 14, Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, 10.08 gross acres.

The motion was approved. A copy of Resolution FY2026R10(6) is attached to and a part of these minutes.

F. Resolutions: Final Approval- Direct Easement Purchase Program

Ms. Mazella and Ms. Bacon referred the committee to seven requests for final approval under the county planning incentive grant program. They reviewed the specifics of the requests with the committee and stated that the staff recommendation is to grant approval.

It was moved by Mr. Kumpel and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve Resolutions FY2026R10(7) through FY2026R10(13) granting final approval, as presented, subject to any condition of said resolutions.

1. David Simon, SADC ID# 17-0401-DE, FY2026R10(7), Block 15, Lot 11, Alloway Township, Salem County, 68.39 gross acres.

2. Marita and James Carll, SADC ID# 17-0407-DE, FY2026R10(8), Block 24, Lots 9.01, 12 and 13, Lower Alloways Creek Township, Salem County, 80.21 gross acres.
3. Earl Pancoast, Jr., SADC ID# 17-0406-DE, FY2026R10(9), Block 24, Lot 7, and Block 22, Lot 20, Lower Alloways Creek Township, Salem County, 127.27 gross acres.
4. Herbert Ladner, Jr., SADC ID# 17-0397-DE, FY2026R10(10), Block 34, Lots 40, 4.01, 4.02, Quinton Township, Salem County, 33.91 gross acres.
5. Peimin Appel, SADC ID# 17-0379-DE, FY2026R10(11), Block 82, Lot 6, Upper Pittsgrove Township, and Block 1201, Lots 1 & 2, Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, 61.73 gross acres.
6. Norma Kurtz Irrevocable Trust, SADC ID# 17-0399-DE, FY2026R10(12), Block 15, Lot 1, and Block 14, Lot 4, Pilesgrove Township, Salem County, 73.52 gross acres.
7. Kathleen Kappus et al., SADC ID# 10-0310-DE, FY2026R10(13), Block 18, Lots 9.01 & 23, Alexandria Township, Hunterdon County, 138.06 gross acres.

The motion was unanimously approved. A copy of Resolutions FY2026R10(7) through FY2026R10(13) are attached to and part of these minutes.

Mr. Roohr asked for a motion to move the date of the January 2026 meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Kumpel and seconded by Mr. Norz to move the January 2026 SADC meeting to January 15, 2026. The motion was unanimously approved.

Public Comment

Ms. Springwell from Hunterdon County commented on the next generation farmer incubator farm program and stated that the farmers will need longer than a year-long lease to enable them to invest in their farm. She reiterated her feelings that farmland should be used to grow food and not build large houses and stated that the budget should prioritize expenditures for the stewardship program.

Ms. Christina Chrobokowa from 360 Earth Works commented that reclaiming viability on farmland takes a lot of time and preparation. She thanked the committee for their approval of the Next Gen Incubator project and for the backing of the stewardship program.

Mr. Jay Taylor thanked the state for its support of the farm in Cranbury. Over the past 6 months he has worked closely with the Henry brothers, and their love of the land, respect for heritage and commitment to legacy is inspiring. Mr. Taylor stated that this experience has gained him an understanding of how valuable and fragile farmland can be. He stated that partnership with the SADC is important and thanked them for their consideration.

Member Comment

There was no member comment.

Organic Regenerative Farming Board Presentation

Ms. Meredith Melendez provided a presentation to the committee regarding the results of a survey conducted by the Organic Regenerative Farming Board. The purpose of the survey was to describe organic and regenerative farming in NJ and determine what farmers needed to be successful.

CLOSED SESSION

At 11:30 a.m. Mr. Roohr read the following resolution to go into Closed Session:

In accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-13, it is hereby resolved that the SADC shall now go into executive session to discuss the certifications of values of farm properties in Cranbury Township, Middlesex County and Holland Township, Hunterdon County; the resale of the farm property in Holland Township, Hunterdon County; and any other matters under N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) that arose during the public portion of the meeting. The minutes of such meeting shall remain confidential until the Committee determines that the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

It was moved by Ms. Niederer and seconded by Mr. Norz to go into closed session. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action as a Result of Closed Session

A. Real Estate Matters – Certification of Values

It was moved by Mr. Norz and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve the certification of values for the Henry Realty Co., LLC as discussed in closed session. The motion was approved.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Ms. Niederer to approve the certification of values for the Schmied Farm as discussed in closed session. Mr. Norz voted against the motion. The motion was approved.

It was moved by Ms. Niederer and seconded by Mr. Kumpel to approve the resale of the Schmied Farm as discussed in closed session. The motion was approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charles Roohr, Executive Director
State Agriculture Development Committee