

NEW JERSEY STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

—FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT—

Private Land, Public Legacy



Cover Photo Collage

See timeline on page 30 for photos with descriptions.

SADC member photo bottom right (from left to right)

Julie Krause, Gina Fischetti, Rich Norz, James Waltman, Roger Kumpel, Douglas Fisher,
Brian Shilling, Susan Payne, Martin Bullock, Peter Johnson, Renee Jones



**NEW JERSEY STATE
AGRICULTURE
DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

Annual Report
FY 2023

Philip D. Murphy

Governor



Sheila Y. Oliver

Lt. Governor

New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee

Members during FY2023

— Secretary of Agriculture, Chairman SADC —

Douglas H. Fisher

— Ex-Officio Members —

Julie Krause represented **Elizabeth Maher Muoio**, *State Treasurer*

Cecile Murphy & Renee Jones (term ended 6/20/2023)

Lauren Procida & Judeth Yeany (appointed 6/20/2023)

represented **Shawn M. LaTourette**, *Commissioner,*

Department of Environmental Protection

Gina Fischetti represented **Sheila Y. Oliver**,

Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs

Brian Schilling represented **Laura Lawson**,

Executive Dean, Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

— Farmer Members —

Martin Bullock

Scott Ellis

Peter Johnson

Richard Norz

Roger Kumpel, *Alternate Farmer Member*

— Public Members —

Denis C. Germano, Esq. (7/1/2022-2/3/2023)

James R. Waltman (7/1/2022-5/22/2023)

Charles Rosen (2/3/2023-Present)

Tiffany Bohlin (5/22/2023-Present)

— Executive Director —

Susan E. Payne

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Introduction

As we mark the 40th anniversary of the Farmland Preservation Program in January of 2023, and the State approaches a significant milestone of preserving over 250,000 acres, we celebrate all that has been accomplished together over the past four decades. From the dedicated landowners who chose to preserve their farms, the untold number of volunteers and program partners who've worked tirelessly to protect farmland resources, to the citizens of the state who continually demonstrate their strong support for farmland protection, we are reminded of how fortunate we are to pass such an enduring legacy to the next generation.

New Jersey's farmland is under a constant and ever-evolving development pressure from both "traditional" sources associated with residential housing development and new sources stemming from rapidly changing dynamics in the warehouse and renewable energy arenas. In response to these trends and the continuing need to support the viability of New Jersey farms, the SADC has convened a "Future Program" subcommittee to ensure we build on our progress to date, identify how conditions have changed over time, and develop recommendations for future program enhancements. The subcommittee's work will include engaging with Farmland Preservation Program partners, farmers, farmland owners, and a wide array of stakeholders, culminating in a report containing recommendations to guide the future of the Farmland Preservation Program.

Importantly, these efforts recognize that preserving farmland is only a part of the challenge – the other is supporting the viability of New Jersey agriculture – to ensure family farms can grow and thrive far into the future. The unprecedented challenges agriculture faces today, whether from fuel prices and supply chains, labor pressure, and more erratic weather, require an increased focus on ensuring agricultural viability.

P.L. 2023, c.9, signed into law this year, was yet another step in supporting and sustaining the agricultural industry and addressing the growing demand for agritourism activities on farmland by allowing Special Occasion Events (SOE) on Preserved Farmland.

As we look to the future, the SADC is more focused than ever on the future of farming and Farmland Preservation in the Garden State. As always, time is the enemy, and in FY23, we focus anew on preserving the next 250,000 acres of farmland – and recognize the need to accomplish that task in much less than another forty years' time. The SADC is proud of what has been achieved to date and looks forward to enhancing the Farmland Preservation Program to effectively meet the future needs of New Jersey's family farms and the fertile ground on which this and future generations will rely.

AGRICULTURAL RETENTION

Farmland Preservation Totals

At Fiscal Year's End:

2,841 Farms

&

249,659 Acres

Permanently preserved since
the inception of the program



Photo by Kelly Doyle

FY2023

41
FARMS

2,356
ACRES

Patten Farm, Salem County, Photo by Katie Mazella



AT A GLANCE



Farmland Preservation Totals By Program

*rounded up

County Planning Incentive Grant Program	FY23	11 FARMS	679 ACRES
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Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program	FY23	13 FARMS	562 ACRES
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State Direct Easement Program	FY23	15 FARMS	1049 ACRES
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Nonprofit Program	FY23	2 FARMS	67 ACRES
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Summary of Farmland Preserved (Through 6/30/2023)

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	49	8	5,166	105	17,948,686	3,475	13,794,210	76.85%	4,154,476
Bergen	8	5	335	42	19,752,944	58,927	10,866,840	55.01%	8,886,103
Burlington	245	21	29,642	121	156,581,311	5,282	94,059,601	60.07%	62,521,710
Camden	15	4	1,051	70	15,217,157	14,482	7,634,401	50.17%	7,582,756
Cape May	51	6	3,141	62	18,969,353	6,039	11,428,961	60.25%	7,540,392
Cumberland	237	12	22,330	94	67,903,768	3,041	49,307,233	72.61%	18,596,535
Gloucester	222	14	16,158	73	124,998,501	7,736	80,093,474	64.08%	44,905,027
Hunterdon	465	19	35,995	77	301,876,448	8,387	211,120,557	69.94%	90,755,891
Mercer	117	8	8,605	74	105,287,719	12,236	62,938,531	59.78%	42,349,188
Middlesex	55	7	4,921	89	62,771,482	12,756	41,112,589	65.50%	21,658,892
Monmouth	216	11	15,599	72	248,495,477	15,931	153,547,391	61.79%	94,948,086
Morris	116	12	7,344	63	149,223,868	20,319	83,127,249	55.71%	66,096,619
Ocean	48	5	3,193	67	26,506,787	8,301	17,969,317	67.79%	8,537,470
Passaic	2	2	56	28	3,553,345	63,399	1,539,426	43.32%	2,013,919
Salem	407	12	43,207	106	190,118,535	4,400	146,450,559	77.03%	43,667,975
Somerset	113	7	8,178	72	141,010,870	17,243	81,028,799	57.46%	59,982,071
Sussex	162	14	17,019	105	58,178,974	3,418	40,512,717	69.63%	17,666,257
Warren	313	19	27,719	89	141,994,047	5,123	91,055,188	64.13%	50,938,859
All Counties	2,841	186	249,659	88	1,850,389,270	7,412	1,197,587,042	64.72%	652,802,228

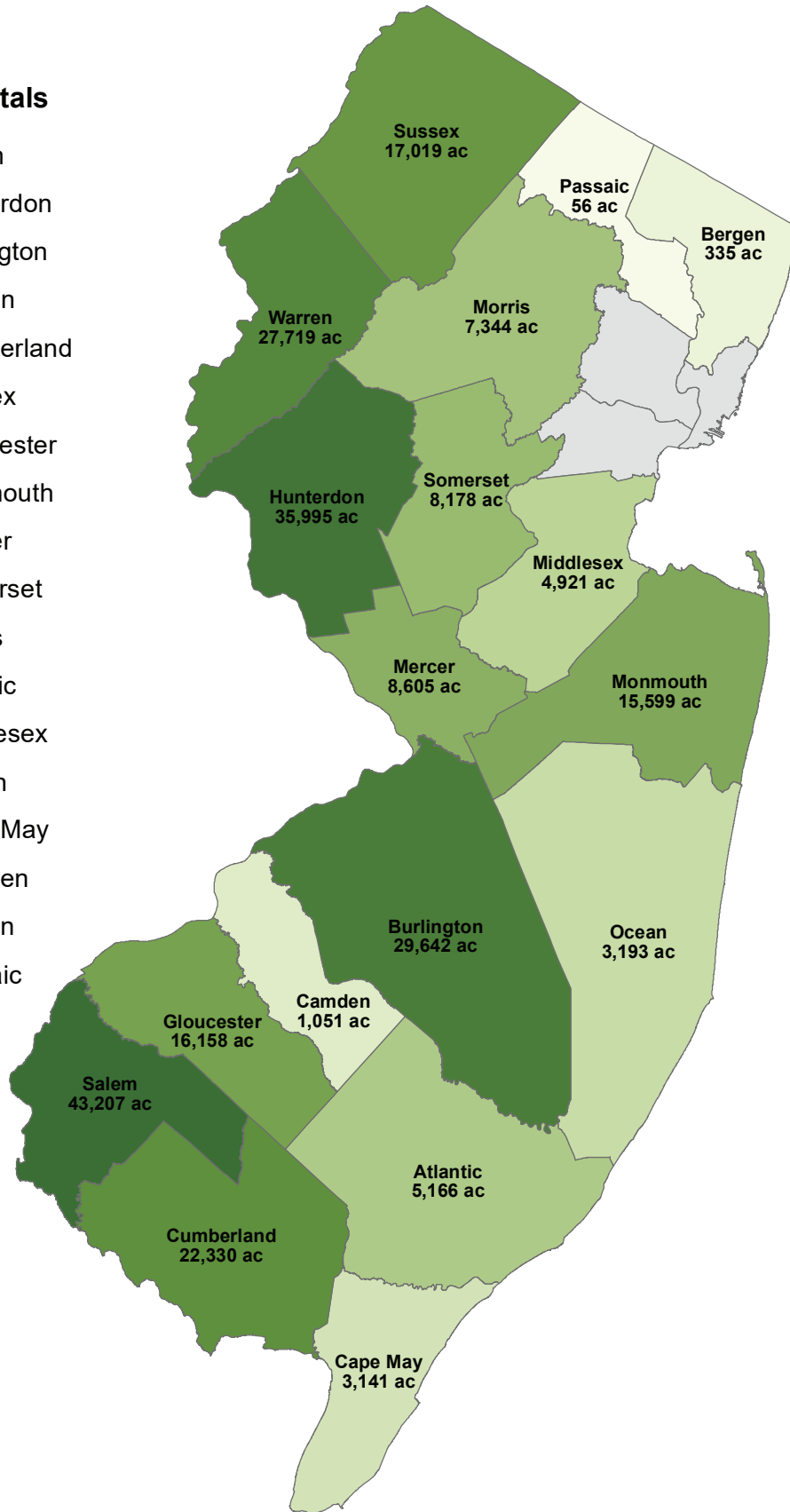
Summary of Farmland Preserved in FY2023 (7/1/2022-6/30/2023)

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	1	1	60	60	370,704	6,172	370,704	100.00%	0
Burlington	3	2	293	98	1,186,528	4,046	695,157	58.59%	491,371
Camden	1	1	39	39	1,484,448	37,600	1,484,448	100.00%	0
Cumberland	5	4	298	60	1,090,723	3,656	857,702	78.64%	233,020
Gloucester	1	1	15	15	187,241	12,250	112,345	60.00%	74,897
Hunterdon	4	4	166	42	2,083,402	12,529	1,851,566	88.87%	231,835
Monmouth	3	4	89	30	2,545,395	28,701	1,397,374	54.90%	1,148,021
Morris	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		0
Salem	14	5	794	57	3,222,282	4,058	2,780,882	86.30%	441,399
Somerset	2	2	55	28	1,279,104	23,162	724,632	56.65%	554,472
Sussex	1	1	97	97	238,233	2,450	238,233	100.00%	0
Warren	6	5	448	75	2,763,574	6,167	1,748,138	63.26%	1,015,436
All Counties	41	31	2,356	57	16,451,634	6,983	12,261,182	74.53%	4,190,452

Preserved Acres By County Through 6/30/2023

**Counties
In Order of
Acreage Totals**

- Salem
- Hunterdon
- Burlington
- Warren
- Cumberland
- Sussex
- Gloucester
- Monmouth
- Mercer
- Somerset
- Morris
- Atlantic
- Middlesex
- Ocean
- Cape May
- Camden
- Bergen
- Passaic



Planning Incentive Grant Program

The SADC’s Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) programs require counties and municipalities to develop and adopt comprehensive farmland preservation plans to receive state funding for farmland preservation. These plans detail farmland preservation goals and other key strategies to help retain agriculture, focusing on land use planning, economic development, natural resource conservation, and overall local support for agriculture.

During Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23), three municipalities received SADC approval of their Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (plan) updates: West Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, Alloway Township, Salem County, and Frankford Township,

Sussex County. The SADC also approved and adopted the first plan submitted by Washington Township, Warren County

The counties that received SADC final approval in FY23 for their plans were Burlington County, Cumberland County, and Hunterdon County.

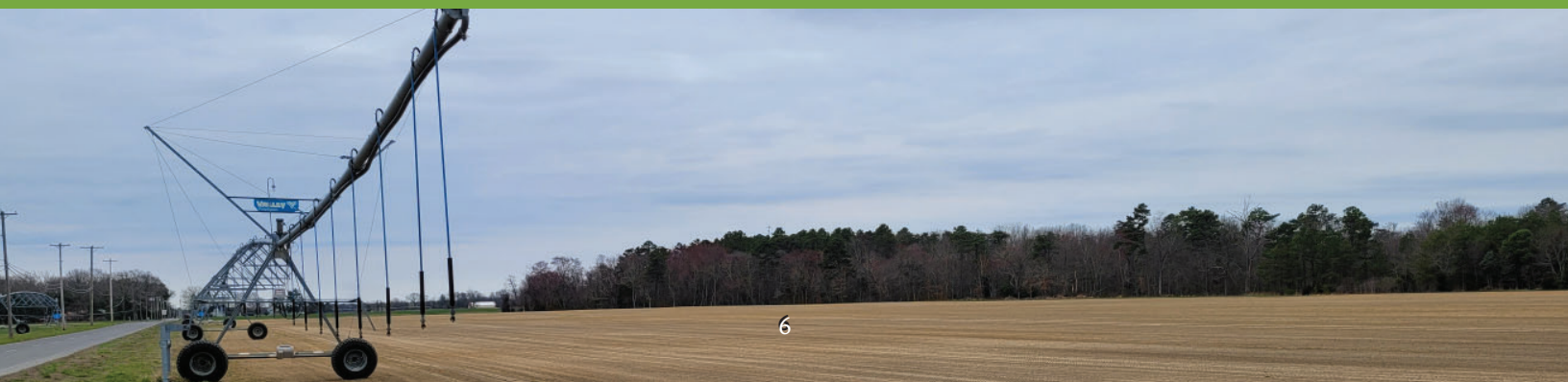
In total there are eighteen county plans that are actively seeking to preserve an additional 195,334 acres, and there are 45 municipals seeking to preserve an additional 105,539 acres. Accounting for the approximate 70% overlap between the county and municipal farms targeted for preservation, a total amount of 221,386 acres of farmland are targeted for preservation by county and municipal partners.

County PIG Program

Eleven farms were preserved through the County PIG Program FY23, totaling 679 acres.

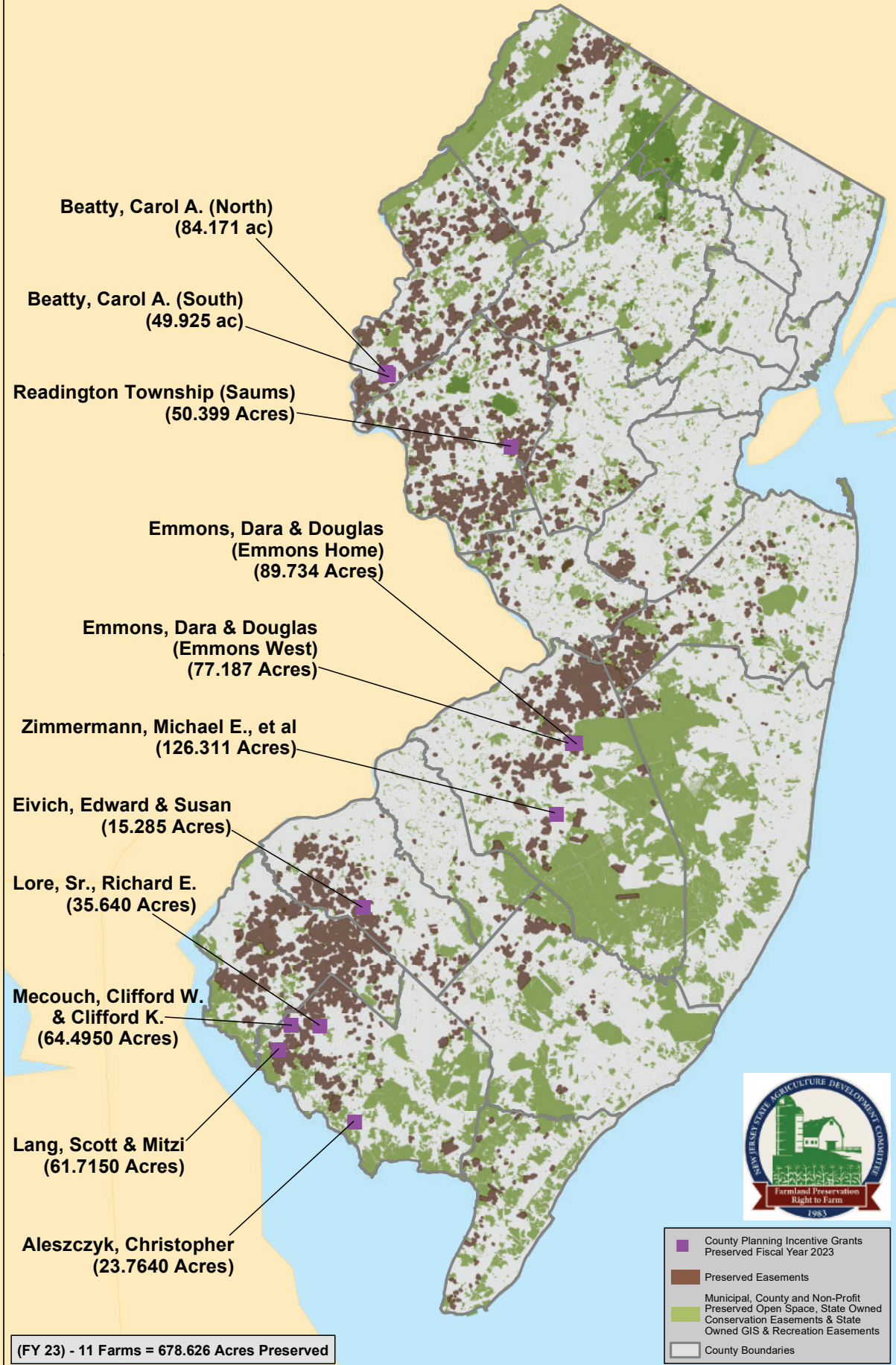
County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Burlington	Pemberton Twp.	Emmons, Dara & Douglas Edward (Emmons Home)	89.7340
Burlington	Pemberton Twp.	Emmons, Dara & Douglas Edward (Emmons West)	77.1870
Burlington	Tabernacle Twp.	Zimmermann, Michael E., et al	126.3110
Cumberland	Downe Twp.	Aleszczyk, Christopher	23.7640
Cumberland	Greenwich Twp.	Lang, Scott & Mitzi	61.7150
Cumberland	Hopewell Twp.	Lore, Sr., Richard E.	35.6400
Cumberland	Stow Creek Twp.	Mecouch, Clifford W. & Clifford K.	64.4950
Gloucester	Elk Twp.	Eivich, Edward & Susan	15.2850
Hunterdon	Readington Twp.	Readington Township (Saums)	50.3990
Warren	Greenwich Twp.	Beatty, Carol A. (North)	84.1710
Warren	Greenwich Twp.	Beatty, Carol A. (South)	49.9250

Zimmermann Farm, Burlington County, Photo by Cindy Roberts



County Planning Incentive Grant Program

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program - Permanently Preserved in FY 2023



Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program

Thirteen farms were preserved through the Municipal PIG Program in FY23, totaling 562 acres.

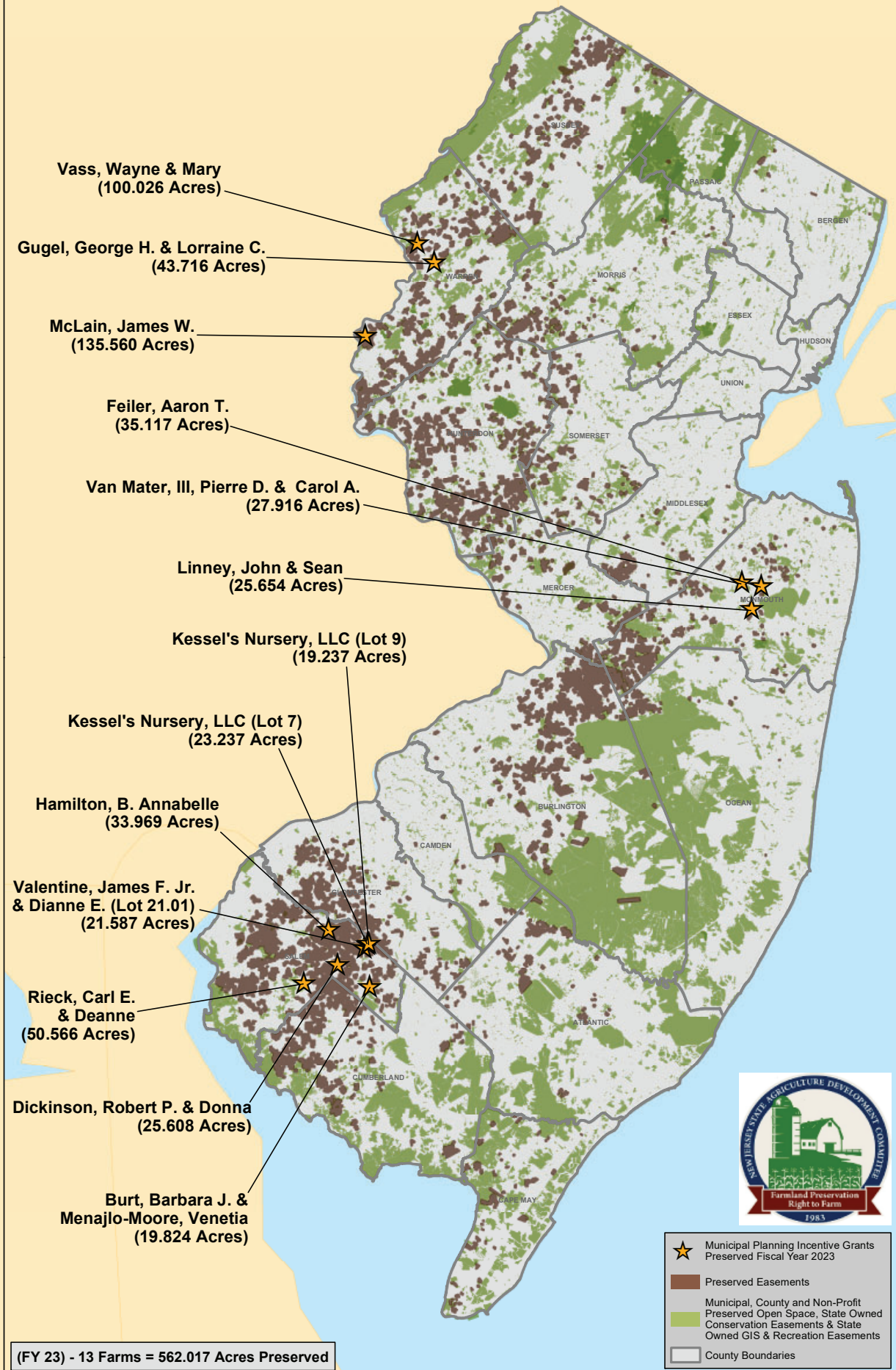
County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Monmouth	Colts Neck Twp.	Feiler, Aaron T.	35.1170
Monmouth	Howell Twp.	Linney, John & Sean	25.6540
Monmouth	Marlboro Twp. Freehold Twp.	Van Mater, III, Pierre D. & Carol A.	27.9160
Salem	Alloway Twp.	Rieck, Carl E. & Deanne	50.5660
Salem	Pittsgrove Twp.	Burt, Barbara J. & Menajlo-Moore, Venetia	19.8240
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Dickinson, Robert P. & Donna	25.6080
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Hamilton, B. Annabelle	33.9690
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Kessel's Nursery, LLC (Lot 7)	23.2370
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Kessel's Nursery, LLC (Lot 9)	19.2370
Salem	Upper Pittsgrove Twp.	Valentine, James F. Jr. & Dianne E. (Lot 21.01)	21.5870
Warren	Harmony Twp.	McLain, James W.	135.5600
Warren	Hope Twp.	Gugel, George H. & Lorraine C.	43.7160
Warren	Knowlton Twp.	Vass, Wayne and Mary	100.0260

Vass Farm, Warren County, Photo by David Zaback



Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program - Permanently Preserved in FY 2023



State Direct Easement Program

The SADC purchases easements directly from landowners to preserve farmland through its State Acquisition Program. Fifteen farms were preserved through this program in FY23, totaling 1,049 acres.

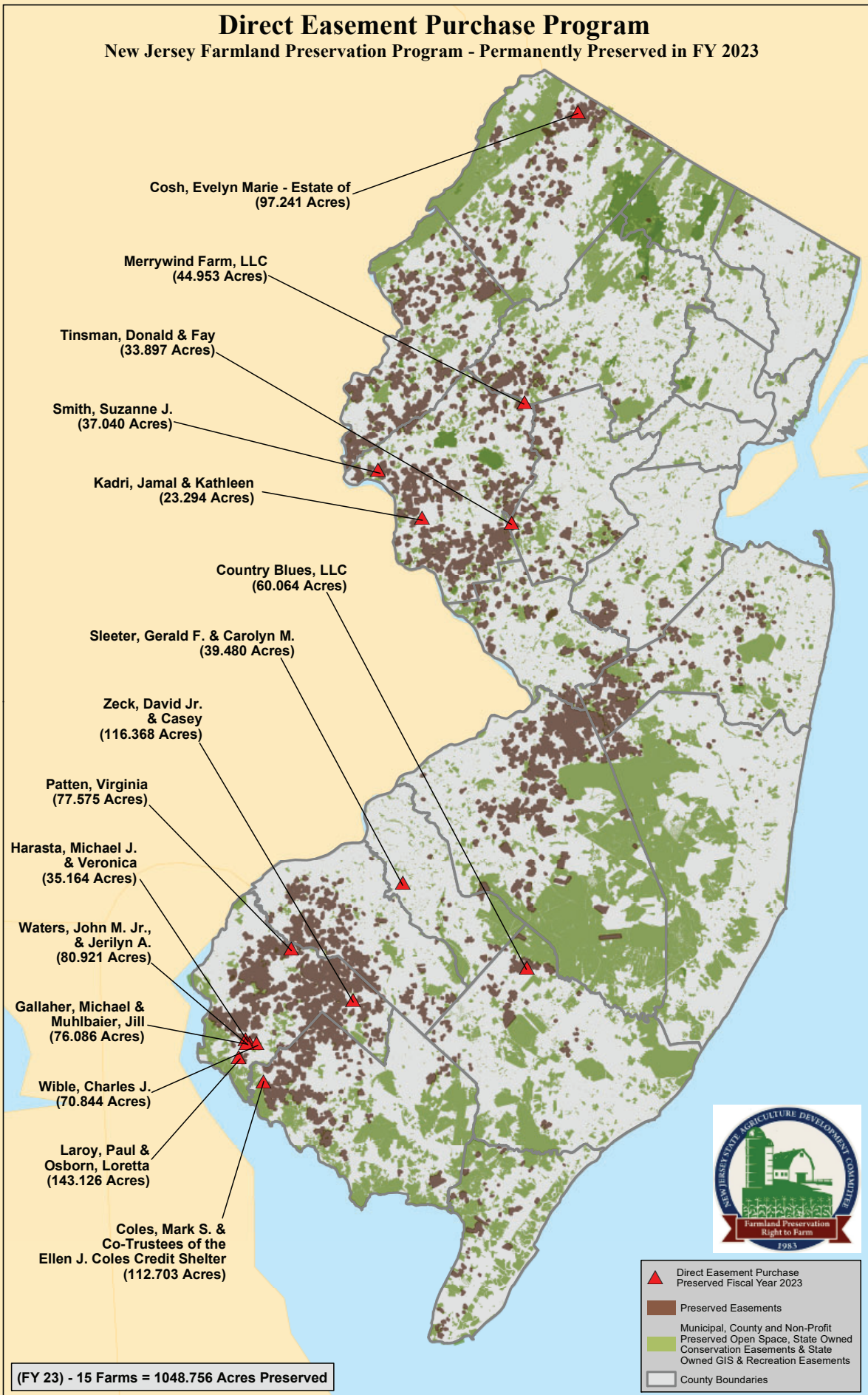
County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Atlantic	Hammonton Town	Country Blues, LLC	60.0640
Camden	Gloucester Twp.	Sleeter, Gerald F. & Carolyn M.	39.4800
Cumberland	Stow Creek Twp.	Coles, Mark S. & Co-Trustees of the Ellen J. Coles Credit Shelter Trust	112.7030
Hunterdon	Holland Twp.	Smith, Suzanne J.	37.0400
Hunterdon	Kingwood Twp.	Tinsman, Donald & Fay	33.8970
Hunterdon	Tewksbury Twp. Washington Twp., Morris Co.	Merrywind Farm, LLC	44.9530
Salem	Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	Gallaher, Michael & Muhlbaier, Jill	76.0860
Salem	Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	Harasta, Michael J & Veronica	35.1640
Salem	Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	LaRoy, Paul & Osborn, Loretta	143.1260
Salem	Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	Waters, John M. Jr., & Jerilyn A.	80.9210
Salem	Lower Alloways Creek Twp.	Wible, Charles J.	70.8440
Salem	Pilesgrove Twp.	Patten, Virginia	77.5750
Salem	Pittsgrove Twp.	Zeck, David Jr. & Casey	116.3680
Somerset	Hillsborough Twp.	Kadri, Jamal & Kathleen	23.2940
Sussex	Wantage Twp.	Cosh, Evelyn Marie - Estate of	97.2410

Top row: Sleeter Farm, Gloucester Twp., Camden County
 Bottom row: Kadri Farm, Hillsborough Twp., Somerset County (left); Gallagher Farm, Lower Alloways Creek Twp., Salem County (right); Photos by Stefanie Miller



Direct Easement Purchase Program

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program - Permanently Preserved in FY 2023



Nonprofit Program

The SADC provides cost-sharing grants to nonprofits to assist them in purchasing development easements to preserve farmland. Two farms were preserved through the Nonprofit program in FY2023 for an additional 67 acres.

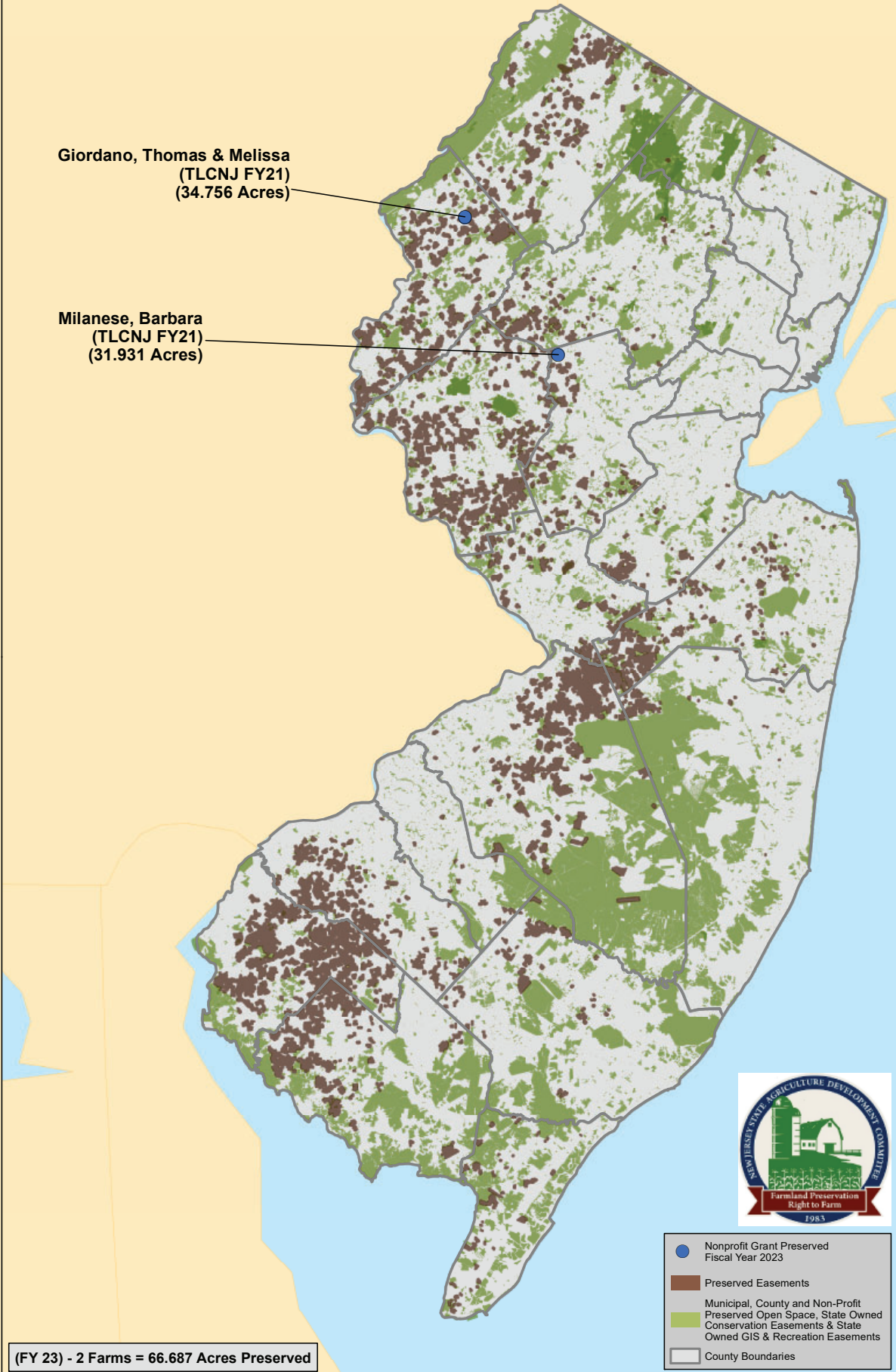
County	Municipality	Original Landowner	Easement Acres
Somerset	Bedminster Twp.	Milanese, Barbara (TLCNJ FY21)	31.9310
Warren	Frelinghuysen Twp.	Giordano, Thomas & Melissa (TLCNJ FY21)	34.7560

Milanese Farm, Somerset County, Photos by Stefanie Miller



Nonprofit Grant Program

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program - Permanently Preserved in FY 2023



Term Farmland Preservation Program

Landowners may choose to preserve their farms 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. At the close of FY2023, there were 43 farms totaling approximately 2,737 acres enrolled in a Term Farmland Preservation Program agreement.

Photo by Kelly Doyle



County	Farms Term Preserved	Active Term Acres	Eligible Grant Funds
Atlantic	17	640	\$271,474
Burlington	6	1,552	\$147,534
Gloucester	10	370	\$185,346
Hunterdon	3	66	\$39,491
Monmouth	1	10	\$6,480
Morris	5	92	\$54,366
Ocean	1	7	\$4,379
Grand Total	43	2,737	\$709,070

New Jersey Pinelands

Eight farms in the Pinelands region of Burlington and Cape May Counties were preserved in FY23 for an additional 701 acres.

Farm owners in 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 considers 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 6/30/2023)*

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	44	6	4,861	110	16,899,473	3,477	12,744,997	75.42%	4,154,476
Burlington	60	8	7,772	130	27,746,688	3,570	19,132,270	68.95%	8,614,418
Camden	12	2	910	76	3,628,094	3,987	2,633,714	72.59%	994,380
Cape May	10	4	1,000	100	2,624,039	2,623	1,515,424	57.75%	1,108,615
Gloucester	13	2	1,354	104	3,084,166	2,278	2,418,945	78.43%	665,221
Ocean	8	3	179	22	4,074,599	22,787	2,452,777	60.20%	1,621,822
All Counties	147	25	16,076	109	58,057,059	3,611	40,898,126	70.44%	17,158,932

Country Blues Farm, Atlantic County, Photo by Cindy Roberts



New Jersey Highlands

Twenty-two farms received SADC cost-share grants in the Highlands region in FY23 adding seven farms and 417 acres in the Highlands Planning area and one farm in the Highlands Preservation area for an additional 45 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 and Planning Areas

(Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2023)

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	163	12	12,482	77	109,252,075	8,753	81,150,693	74.28%	28,101,382
Morris	113	11	7,156	63	142,351,076	19,892	78,821,638	55.37%	63,529,438
Passaic	1	1	41	41	986,695	24,000	592,017	60.00%	394,678
Somerset	32	3	2,349	73	52,213,619	22,228	30,621,666	58.65%	21,591,953
Sussex	26	6	2,763	106	11,929,195	4,318	8,496,586	71.23%	3,432,609
Warren	253	18	22,954	91	120,980,679	5,271	77,778,939	64.29%	43,201,740
All Counties	592	52	48,036	81	446,842,089	9,302	283,256,959	63.39%	163,585,130

Smith Farm, Hunterdon County, Photo by Stefanie Miller



Highlands Preservation Area

(Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2023)

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	52	9	4,171	80	50,315,696	12,064	40,237,766	79.97%	10,077,930
Morris	87	5	6,010	69	97,895,650	16,289	55,498,345	56.69%	42,397,305
Passaic	1	1	41	41	986,695	24,000	592,017	60.00%	394,678
Somerset	2	2	327	164	4,389,817	13,418	2,480,304	56.50%	1,909,514
Sussex	8	2	1,144	143	3,671,296	3,209	2,800,177	76.27%	871,119
Warren	91	13	7,728	85	41,439,170	5,362	28,510,784	68.80%	12,928,386
All Counties	244	33	19,664	81	203,962,168	10,372	133,687,778	65.55%	70,274,390

Highlands Planning Area

(Summary of Preserved Farmland through 6/30/2023)

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	112	8	8,386	75	59,834,435	7,135	41,810,984	69.88%	18,023,451
Morris	28	10	1,591	57	50,655,911	31,830	26,892,607	53.09%	23,763,304
Somerset	30	2	2,022	67	47,823,802	23,654	28,141,362	58.84%	19,682,440
Sussex	19	6	1,691	89	8,974,234	5,306	6,126,210	68.26%	2,848,024
Warren	167	17	16,068	96	83,053,764	5,169	51,971,194	62.58%	31,082,570
All Counties	357	44	29,806	83	254,207,052	8,529	157,169,391	61.83%	97,037,661

Smith Farm, Hunterdon County, Photo by Stefanie Miller



PLANNING

Non-Agricultural Project Reviews

Pursuant to the Agriculture Retention and Development Act (ARDA), the SADC is active in reviewing non-agricultural development projects involving preserved farmland and land in Agriculture Development Areas (ADAs) to determine the effect of these projects on the preservation and enhancement of agriculture in the ADA and overall State agriculture and development policies.

Although no formal action was taken by the SADC in FY23, staff was involved in several project

proposals which led to design amendments that avoid impact to the ADA or preserved farmland.

In addition, the SADC is continuing to coordinate with affected farmland owners and the appropriate government agencies overseeing a proposed bridge repair project in Sussex County and a state highway intersection improvement in Salem County that will be ready for SADC review in the coming year.

Sewer Line, Middlesex County, Photo by Steve Bruder



Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping

The SADC's GIS section provides mapping and database support for the Committee's planning, acquisition, and stewardship activities.

The SADC maintains its Public Web Map service which provides access to interactive online farmland preservation mapping. Users can locate preserved farmland and related information. A separate web map application designed to aid Planning Incentive Grant administrators is also available. SADC web maps can be accessed through

the SADC home page: <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/>

Many of the SADC's spatial data layers are hosted as online services, allowing the public and our preservation partners easy access for their own mapping needs. These layers can be accessed through the New Jersey Geographic Information Network website or the SADC's ArcGIS online home page: <https://njdasadc.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>



New Jersey Conservation Blueprint Project

The SADC continues to support the development of the N.J. Conservation Blueprint project, a powerful and easy-to-use computer mapping site created by Rowan University's Geospatial Lab. The Blueprint project allows users to access high-resolution, site-specific information about land in New Jersey, including various agricultural and

environmental characteristics. SADC staff use this tool extensively to quickly identify farmland attributes to have better informed discussions with preservation partners and landowners. The NJ Conservation Blueprint website can be found here: www.njmap2.com/blueprint.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The SADC strives to ensure proper stewardship of preserved farmland and promote efforts to support the business of farming on preserved land. 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, renewable energy, and special occasion events; and supports next-generation farmers through beginning farmer initiatives.

Special Occasion Events

On February 3, 2023, P.L. 2023, c.9 became law, recognizing the positive effects that holding special occasion events (SOEs) on preserved farms can have, including weddings, lifetime milestone events, and other cultural or social events, under certain conditions. The law recognizes that holding SOEs can provide new business opportunities for farmers and help improve the viability of the state's farm operations without displacing agricultural or horticultural use as the first priority use of the land or disrupting neighborhoods that surround preserved farms.

For the purposes of the SOE law, SOEs do not

include recreational uses already permitted on preserved farmland; activities eligible for Right to Farm Act protection; weddings held for the owner, operator, or employee of the commercial farm; and weddings held for certain family members of the commercial farm.

Six SOE applications were submitted in FY2023, including one each in Warren, Burlington, Salem, and Mercer Counties and two in Ocean County. The SOE application in Burlington County was approved, and the others were pending as of the close of FY2023.



Deer Fencing Grants



Fernbrook Farm, Burlington County, Photo by David Kimmel

Eligible farmers can apply to the SADC for a cost-share grant to help cover the cost of installing deer fencing on permanently preserved farms.

Following successful first and second rounds of Deer Fencing Grants in FY2017 and FY2019 where applications had to be submitted by a specific date, in FY2020 the SADC updated its program policy to allow applications to be submitted on a rolling basis.

In total, the SADC has approved 71 deer fencing grant applications and obligated \$963,285.47 in cost-share grant funding through the end of FY2023. From FY2017 to the close of FY2023, farmers had completed 34 deer fencing projects, and the SADC had issued \$429,950.94 in deer fencing grant reimbursements. Farmers whose applications have been approved have three years to complete their projects.

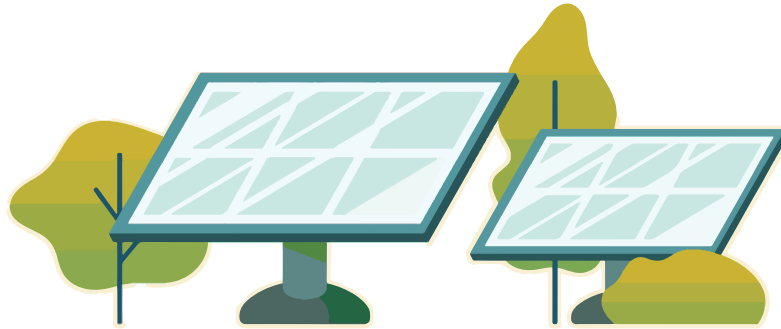
Farmers have responded positively and shared they intend to add new crops they would have avoided before having the added protection of deer fencing. Of the six projected completed during FY2023, farmers said they planned to grow pumpkins in three of the newly fenced areas. Farmers also planned to grow vegetables and pasture (each noted in two projects), and strawberries, grapes, hops, decorative corn, and row crops (each noted in one project).

71 applications approved
34 fence projects completed
~32 miles of fencing installed
~1,320 acres fenced
~\$430,000 reimbursed

Renewable Energy

In FY2023 the SADC approved proposed solar energy generation projects on one preserved farm 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 55 solar energy projects have been approved on 44 preserved farms.

Town/ County	Approval Date	Rated Capacity (kWh)	Mounting Type	Ag Production	Occupied Area (sq./ft.)	Demand Use
Readington Twp., Hunterdon County	10/4/2022	16,560	Rooftop	Hay and Pasture for Livestock	960	Residence, Barn, & Garage



Farm Link

The Farm Link Program is designed to help farmers and landowners connect and provide access to farming resources. Beginning and established farmers seeking to access land and farming opportunities can see farmland available online at www.njlandlink.org. Landowners with farmland and business opportunities can also use the interactive linking service to connect.

The SADC also has resource pages with valuable information about starting a farm, leasing farmland, and developing farm transfer and succession planning, available online at www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmlink/resources/.

During FY2023, NJ Land Link had 2,150 registered users and 293 active listings for farmland available or potential farmers seeking access to land. The NJ Land Link website was visited by more than 6,300 people during more than 11,700 sessions in FY2023.

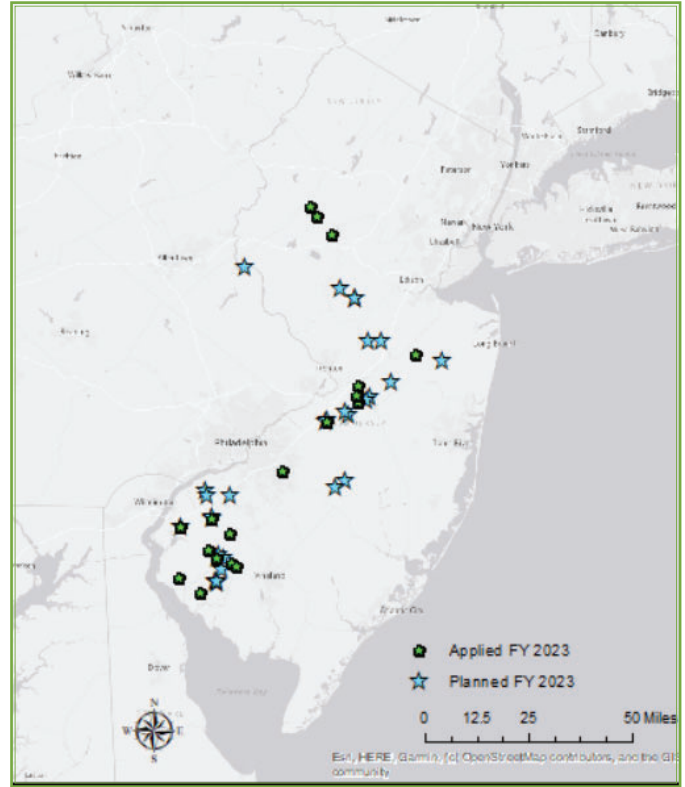


Soil & Water Conservation Grants

Farms that are permanently preserved or enrolled in the term farmland preservation program (for an 8 or 16-year term) can apply for soil and water conservation grants. Grant amounts are based on farm size and can fund up to 50 percent of approved project costs.

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 project types as eligible for cost-sharing through the SADC Soil and Water Grants Program (see the bulleted list of project types on page 25). For more information on specific projects, see the State Soil Conservation Committee’s rules, N.J.A.C. 2:90.

In FY23, the SADC approved 36 projects for \$1,000,000. During the same time frame, 21 existing projects were completed with a total of \$845,000



paid. Some of these projects include surface and subsurface drainage and irrigation systems.

Below: Case Farm, Hunterdon County



Grants Available For:

- Terrace systems
- Diversions
- Contour farming
- Strip-cropping systems
- Sod waterways
- Windbreak restoration or establishment
- Stream protection
- Permanent vegetative cover
- Precision land shaping & grading
- Water impoundment reservoirs
- Irrigation systems
- Permanent open drainage systems
- Sediment retention, erosion, or water control structures
- 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 facilities

Left: Case Farm, Hunterdon County

Rural Microenterprise

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 and 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.



Hart Farm, Mercer County, Photo by Sean Pizzio

The SADC approved one Rural Microenterprise permit during FY2023.

- The Hart Farm in Hopewell Township, Mercer County, converted an agriculture storage shed into a butcher shop to offer processing services to local livestock operations, as well as participants of the Hunter’s Helping the Hungry program.

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 implements needed conservation practices on the farm.

By the end of FY2022, the tenant farmer had installed the majority of the needed conservation practices. Most of the installation costs for the work were covered through Federal conservation cost-share grants through Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), with the remainder of the tenant farmer's costs deducted from lease payments, as outlined in the

farmer's lease agreement with the SADC.

This innovative approach of using a conservation-oriented, long-term lease has resulted in many benefits:

- Erosion issues being addressed, soil and water resources being conserved, and long-term capital improvements being made;
- Increase to the number of acres in production, improved farming efficiency, and a longer and more secure planning horizon for the farmer;
- Lower costs to the tenant farmer; and
- The maximal utilization of Federal grants.

The pilot project is in response to requests from the agricultural community for long-term leases to promote farm viability.

Case Farm, Hunterdon County, Photo by David Clapp



RIGHT TO FARM PROGRAM

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

On March 13, 2023, P.L. 2023, c. 20 was enacted, allowing certain shellfish aquaculture activities to be eligible for Right to Farm protection. SADC staff worked with key stakeholders in the shellfish industry, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture,

and the legislature to develop these revisions to the Right to Farm Act.

In FY2023, the SADC approved rule amendments updating Right to Farm agricultural management practices for commercial tree fruit production; commercial vegetable production; on-farm composting; and fencing installation for wildlife control. These updated rules will be formally proposed for adoption in early 2024.

The SADC also continued its public outreach to increase awareness and understanding of the Right to Farm Act by making a presentation to county agricultural extension agents on December 9, 2022. Staff remains available to provide Right to Farm presentations to government entities, farmers and the general public.

Saums Farm, Hunterdon County, Photo by Stefanie Miller



AGRICULTURAL MEDIATION PROGRAM

Issues That Can Be Mediated Using the Program Include:

- Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor Issues
- USDA Program Issues
- Agricultural Loan and Credit Issues
- Lease Issues (e.g., land, equipment, livestock, buildings)
- Farm Transition Issues
- Organic Program Compliance Issues
- Other Issues as Appropriate

The Agricultural Mediation Program received mediation requests in 13 cases in FY2023.

Eight cases involved Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor issues, 2 cases involved a farmland lease, and 3 cases involved organic certification, crop insurance, and general agricultural issues. The farmers and other parties reached an agreement in the three cases in which mediation sessions were held (2 Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor cases and the organic certification case).

The range of Right to Farm/Farmer-Neighbor issues for which mediation was requested included dust and stormwater runoff from agritourism; pesticides and health concerns; water and manure runoff; noise and health concerns; farm building construction; trespassing and vandalism; fence installation for livestock; on-farm weddings; and conflicts with local ordinances.

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, and free, and typically only takes a meeting or two to complete. The SADC coordinates in-person, remote, and hybrid meeting options.



OUTREACH, TRAINING & GUIDANCE

The SADC attends and hosts events around the state to educate partners and members of the farm community about the program. Additionally, internal education for SADC staff assists in assuring staff are best able to provide a high level of customer service.

Some events and activities during fiscal year 2023 include:

- A Farm Conservation Planning presentation for SADC and NJDA staff members to better understand farm conservation plans and their use in SADC programs.
- Booth to promote farmland preservation at the Springfield Township, Burlington County Community Day.
- Direct easement outreach meetings in Warren, Salem, Cumberland, and Somerset Counties to solicit new farmland preservation applications.
- Presentation to provide Right to Farm Act and Agriculture Mediation education and basics for Rutgers agricultural agents at their quarterly meeting.
- Presentation on farmland preservation, agricultural mediation, and Right to Farm in Atlantic County to provide background on SADC programs.
- Preserved farmland workshop in Central Jersey and South Jersey for municipal officials regarding post-preservation actions for preserved farms.
- Presentation to let landowners know about solar options on preserved farms.
- Several meetings and webinars through April, May, and June 2023 regarding Special Occasion Events.
- Annual appraisal workshop to educate appraisers who perform farmland preservation appraisals.
- Session at the League of Municipalities to review and discuss SADC programs.

Preserved Farmland Workshop, Chesterfield County, Burlington County





April 1973- The Blueprint Report recognized the alarming rate at which farmland was being lost to non-ag development. The report recommended the creation of a permanent farmland protection program to secure an ag land base of sufficient size and quality to support the ag industry, protect the natural resources present on farms, and provide consumers with ready access to locally grown food products.



May 1985- THE FIRST ONE! Gov. Tom Kean (L) and Sec. Art Brown (R) display the first check for purchasing development easements in NJ: 5 farms in Burlington County.



July 1991- Gov. Jim Florio signed a bill allocating \$20.5 million for farmland preservation. The Ceremony was held at White Farm in Middlesex County.

March 1988- The Bond Fund Bill is signed, which amends the 1981 \$50m farmland preservation bond fund by increasing the state's share in the cost of purchasing development rights. The law also allows certain endangered farmland to be bought outright.

County 'first' is cause for farm festivity

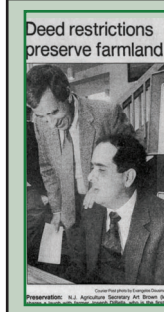
January 1990- First purchase of development rights in Middlesex County- Stults Farm.



Oct 1987- First purchase of development rights in Monmouth County- Cedar Knoll Farm.

(L-R) Preserved Farmland Owner David P. Meade, Sec. Art Brown, Freeholder Dir. Harry Larrison Jr.

Dec 1987- First purchase of development rights in Morris County- Cupo Family Farm.



1989- First purchases of development rights in Warren (Gibbs Farm), Sussex (Kirby Farms) and Gloucester (DiBella Farm) counties.

(L-R) Sec. Art Brown, Preserved Farmland Owner Joe DiBella.

1973

MILESTONES IN NJ

Dec 1985- First purchase of development rights in Hunterdon County: Blew Family Farm.

By the end of the 80's, New Jersey permanently preserved 32 farms over 3,737 acres!



Oct 1987- First purchase of development rights in Somerset County-Baron Family Farm.



Nov 1987- NJ's biggest farmland preservation ceremony to date: nearly \$600k in ceremonial state cost-share checks presented to farmland owners.

(L-R) Preserved Farmland Owners Marianne & Michael Plesher, Freeholder Dir. Harry Copeland, Sec. Art Brown, Preserved Farmland Owner Harriet Fisher.

Nov 1990- First purchases of dev. rights in Salem and Cumberland Counties. The farms were the first 2 farms purchased in fee simple, and both sold at auction in 1991.



Above: Successful bidder Grant Harris shaking hands with Secretary Art Brown.

January 1983- Gov. Thomas H. Kean signs the Agriculture Retention and Development Act and the Right to Farm Act into law.

(L-R) Chairman of the Somerset CADB Thomas Everitt, Sec. Art Brown, Preserved Farmland Owners Nancy & Stanley Baron.



May 1988- First purchase of development rights in Mercer County-Hendrickson Farm.

(L-R) Secretary of Agriculture Art Brown, Preserved Farmland Owner Edward Henrickson, Scott Ellis, Hannah Hendrickson, County Executive Bill Mathesius.



July 1993- 10 years of NJ Farmland Preservation and 17,141 acres permanently preserved!

Pictured: Sec Art Brown (L) &

Executive Dir. Donald Applegate (R) holding a celebratory cake.

2000s-The GSPT Act created the SADC's direct easement purchase program, nonprofit grant program, and planning incentive program— and broadened our partners to include over a dozen NJ land trust organizations. This fundamentally changed the program from a parcel-based program where one farm applicant competed directly with others, to a program based on the adoption of comprehensive agriculture retention plans at the municipal and county level, accompanied by a block-grant, and performance-based funding model.

Winslow farm gets grants;

2002- First purchases of dev. rights in Camden (Carl & Ruth Auwarter's Farm) and Bergen (Green Farm) counties.

Oct 2012- 200,000 acres of preserved farmland in New Jersey! Press conference held at Cassady Farms in Upper Pittsgrove.



Oct 1998- 50,000 preserved acres are celebrated with the addition of Mason Farm in Hunterdon County.

(L-R) Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, Congressman Mike Pappas, Preserved Farmland

Owners Catherine & Bill Mason, Senator Robert Torricelli, Sec. Art Brown, Co-Chairman of the Coalition to Preserve Natural Resources Michael Catania.

June 1999- Voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional dedication of \$200,000,000 per year to fund the state's farmland, open space and historic preservation programs, known as the Garden State Preservation Trust Act.



Jan 2004- 1,000th farm preserved in New Jersey! Press conference held at Boxwood Farm in Manalapan.

Pictured: Preserved Farmland Owners Taylor (R) and June (L) Palmer.



2011- 2,000 farms preserved in NJ!

Pictured: Secretary of Agriculture Doug Fisher.



2020- The American Farmland Trust – the nation's only land conservation organization dedicated exclusively to the retention of farmland, voted New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program NUMBER ONE in the nation!

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

2023



1995- NJ votes to pass the Bond Act, allowing more funding for the farmland preservation program.

Pictured: Secretary of Agriculture Art Brown.

2000s- The GSPT Act enabled the SADC to preserve land in the NJ Pinelands by authorizing the SADC to create a formula-based value for easements in the Pinelands.

By the end of the 90's, New Jersey permanently preserved 356 farms over 53,478 acres!

Jan 2011- First purchase of development rights in Passaic County.

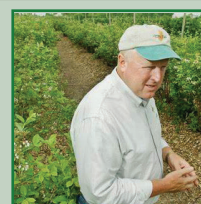
June 2016- With voter support, NJ authorized a permanent dedication of corporate business tax proceeds through the Preserve New Jersey Act to fund conservation efforts into the future. CBT funds now generate about \$100M/year for farmland preservation, an amount unmatched anywhere else.

2023- To date, utilizing over \$1.8 billion in state & local funds, over 250,000 acres of New Jersey's farmland has been permanently preserved- over one-third of all farmland in the state!



April 2003- 100,000 acres of farmland preserved! 100,000 acre farmland preservation announcement held at Giamarese Farm in East Brunswick, Middlesex County.

Pictured: Preserved Farmland Owner Jim Giamarese & New Jersey Gov. Jim McGreevy.



At the urging of Secretary Kuperus, the legislature ensured that farmland could continue to be preserved in the Highlands by authorizing the use of the "dual use" appraisal process – so that the SADC could offer easement values based on the zoning that was in place prior to the Act.

Plumsted farm joins preservation program

1991-1992- First purchases of development rights in Ocean (Hallock Farm), Cape May (Mason Farm) and Atlantic (Dacosta Fruit) counties.

1998- Gov. Whitman signs off on two more farm preservations during a visit to Fosaterfields Living Historical Farm in Morris County.

VISIT US ONLINE



Website- www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc
YouTube- www.youtube.com/SADCfarms

