



# NEWS

**New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee**

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## **New Handbook Promotes Agricultural Mediation for Farm-Related Disputes**

Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher announced today that the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) has published the New Jersey Agricultural Mediation Program Handbook to promote the use of mediation in resolving agriculture-related disputes.

“Many farm-related conflicts stem from miscommunication or a lack of communication,” said Secretary Fisher. “Mediation can help bridge the gap by providing a trained mediator to guide discussion and resolution of issues quickly and amicably, saving farmers and everyone else involved time and money.”

The New Jersey Agricultural Mediation Program Handbook explains how the program works and provides examples of successful mediations. Mediation can be used as an alternative to the state Right to Farm Act’s formal conflict resolution process or to the federal appeals process for resolving U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program disputes. It also can be used to resolve agricultural credit issues with private lenders.

Mediation is a voluntary process in which a trained, impartial and certified mediator helps disputing parties examine issues, identify and consider options, and determine if they can agree on a solution. The mediator serves as a facilitator to help the parties focus on the key issues and explore potential solutions. Because the mediator has no decision-making authority, successful mediation is based on the voluntary cooperation of all parties. Mediation is confidential, free and generally takes only a meeting or two to complete.

To obtain a printed copy of the New Jersey Agricultural Mediation Program Handbook, contact the SADC at (609) 984-2504 or [sadc@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:sadc@ag.state.nj.us). The handbook and more information on agricultural mediation are also available on the SADC’s website at [www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/agmediation](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/agmediation).

Publication of the handbook was supported by a USDA cost-share grant.

The SADC administers New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program and promotes innovative approaches to maintaining the viability of agriculture.

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