

1/26/06 SADC Meeting Highlights

Secretary's Report

The State Agricultural Convention will be held February 6-8 at the Tropicana Casino and Resort in Atlantic City. Farmers Institute topics will include a look at Future Trends in the Produce Industry. More details are available on the Department of Agriculture's website.

Executive Director's Report

A new SADC staff organizational chart was distributed. Among the key changes are the addition of Heidi Winzinger as Director of Acquisition supervising all of the preservation programs, the appointment of Chuck Roohr as Stewardship Manager to handle post-closing activities and Tim Brill shifting focus from day-to-day planning to long-term planning in assuming the role of Planning Manager. The organizational chart includes direct phone lines for SADC staff.

S206 -- which allows farmers to apply for permits to conduct certain nonagricultural activities and allow the erection of cell phone towers on preserved farms -- was signed into law January 12th. It was noted at the meeting that only farms preserved prior to enactment of the law without any exceptions are eligible for a permit for a nonagricultural use. The SADC subsequently has clarified that the law does not apply this provision to cell towers, meaning that the owner of any farm that has been preserved, now or in the future, is eligible to apply for a permit to erect a cell tower.

Direct Easement 2006 Round Criteria

The SADC approved amendments to its Direct Easement criteria designed to streamline the acquisition process and preserve the largest, strategically located, high-quality farms within each county. Farms will be prioritized using 2002 U.S. Census data and internal quality score averages for each county.

The prioritization system will result in the identification of Priority Farms that SADC staff will be able to act on immediately, Alternate Farms that will require Committee authorization to pursue, and Other Farms that may be pursued if SADC targeting and outreach within that county yield no other suitable applications. The changes are part of the SADC's comprehensive streamlining effort to make farmland preservation processes as effective, efficient and predictable as possible.

Condemnation of Easements or Fee Simple Interest

The SADC approved a policy that would prohibit it from providing cost-share funding to participate in the preservation of land or development easements acquired through eminent domain.

Also of Note

Registration forms have been mailed for the 1st Annual Farmland Preservation Summit. The registration form also is on the SADC website at www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/sadc.htm. Registration is \$15. Registration forms and payment must be received by February 21st. All preservation partners are encouraged to attend.

County-Specific Actions:

Atlantic County

The SADC gave amended approval for priority-one soil and water conservation grant funding for Daniel Franchetti, Sr., Evelyn Franchetti and Daniel Franchetti, Jr., in Mullica and Hammonton. The amended grant of \$21,825 reflects common ownership of two separately preserved farms and, therefore, eligibility for a higher level of cost-share funding.

Burlington County

Based on NRCS recommendations, the SADC approved closing down the water treatment system on the former Russell Farm (fee simple, North Hanover) prior to auctioning the farm, but to leave the lagoon intact since it could have a practical agricultural use.

The SADC approved priority-one soil and water conservation cost-share grants totaling \$70,045 for six farms -- Doris S. Lamson & Trustees, Chesterfield; John C. & Judith Probasco & John C. Probasco & Denise Nadeau, North Hanover Township; Al, Josephine and Roseanne Greenburg, Chesterfield; William Pettit, Sr. & Dorothy Pettit, Springfield; Roger Kumpel, Southampton; and Carmine Infante, Chesterfield -- and priority-three grant funding for \$14,547 for Michael Wilk, Tabernacle.

Gloucester County

The J. Jeps, LLC., South Harrison Township, request for agricultural labor housing was approved.

The SADC approved a priority-one soil and water cost-share grant for David E. & Mary Duffield, Washington Township, totaling \$22,739.

The Liccardello (Woolwich Township) request for division of premises was denied, with the SADC finding it was not for an agricultural purpose and the resulting parcels would not be agriculturally viable and capable of supporting a variety of agricultural operations.

Hunterdon County

Final approvals were granted to the following planning incentive grant farms: Chandor Farm (2003A) and Tauber Farm (2004A), Tewksbury Township. Amended Final Approval was granted to the Young Farm, Tewksbury Township, to correct the SADC cost-share.

The SADC granted another 30-day extension to the county to confirm alternative funding to cover the county cost-share on the Masfield and Fentzlaff farms (2006 county easement purchase round) in Lebanon Township.

The SADC granted amended final approval to the Young Farm in Tewksbury (2001A planning incentive grant) to correct the per/acre value and recognize the township's ability to seek State reimbursement for a portion of the interest it incurred in preserving the farm.

The SADC approved a priority-one soil and water conservation cost-share grant for John A. Peterson, Jr., Franklin, totaling \$15,986.

Mercer County

Requests for agricultural labor housing were approved for Mazza, Hamilton Township, and Bluestone Farms, Hopewell Township.

Monmouth County

Final approvals were granted to the following planning incentive grant farms: Dey Farm (2001A) and Mullery Farm (2001A), Millstone Township; DeGroot Farm (2003A), Colts Neck Township; and HP Precision Farm (2003A), Upper Freehold Township.

The request for division of the premises on the Perretti farm, Upper Freehold Township, was approved.

Salem County

The SADC authorized the resale of the Sassi Farm, Carney's Point Township. The auction will be held in the spring/summer of 2006 with a minimum bid of \$200,000. One RDSO has been allocated.

The SADC approved priority-one soil and water conservation cost-share funding totaling \$88,416 for two farms – Bruce W. Bishop in Upper Pittsgrove and Harry S. DuBois in Pilesgrove/Oldmans townships.

Somerset County

The SADC granted amended final approval to the Harris Farm, Franklin Township (2001A), to recognize the State will hold the easement and the township will assume the county's cost-share in addition to its own.

Sussex County

The request for division of the premises on the Morris Farm, Wantage Township, was approved.

The SADC granted amended final approval to the Fountain House Farm (County easement purchase 2003) to reflect expansion of the exception to approximately 30 acres and easements to provide access from the road to the cemetery and access to the restricted farm.

Warren County

Final approvals were granted to the following planning incentive grant farms: Diecidue Farm (2004A), Knowlton Township, and Hill Farm (2005A), Maine Farm (2005A), Ruh Farm (2005A) and Woodcock Farm (2005A), all in Blairstown Township.