



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STATE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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February 23, 2006 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.

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