



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 9, 2012
Contact: Hope Gruzlovic (609) 984-2504

**Christie Administration Announces Major New Milestone
for Farmland Preservation**
“200,000 Acres and Growing”

UPPER PITTSBORO TWP. – New Jersey has reached a major farmland preservation milestone with the permanent protection of the 200,000th acre of farmland, Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher announced today.

“The preservation of 200,000 acres of farmland is an extraordinary achievement that underscores New Jersey’s continued reputation as a national leader in farmland preservation,” said Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher. “This accomplishment would not have been possible without the strong commitment of all the farmland preservation partners – all levels of government, the nonprofit community, farm owners and the voters who have consistently supported farmland preservation funding.

“Thanks to these cooperative efforts, New Jersey continues to move closer to the goal of ensuring that agriculture has an adequate land base for the future and that our farms remain an important part of the Garden State’s economy, our communities and our everyday lives for all time.”

Secretary Fisher made the announcement at Cassaday Farms in Upper Pittsgrove Township, Salem County, where he was joined by farmland preservation partners from across the state.

“This is a great day, not only for New Jersey, but Salem County too. Preserving our farmland not only prevents sprawl, but it helps keep our economy moving and protects our hard-working farmers,” said Senator Stephen M. Sweeney.

-- more --

ADD ONE/200,000 Acres

“By preserving our working farms we ensure that New Jersey’s agriculture industry remains strong and that families continue to have access to fresh, local food,” said Tom Gilbert, NJ Keep It Green chairman. “Governor Christie and his administration along with Senate President Sweeney and the Legislature should be commended for their ongoing leadership in keeping the Garden State green.”

Secretary Fisher recognized several counties, towns and a nonprofit organization as statewide leaders in farmland preservation, specifically:

-- **Burlington County**, the county leader in the number of farms (171) and total farmland acreage (21,191) preserved under the County Grants Program – a program under the State Farmland Preservation Program in which counties take the lead role in farmland preservation;

-- **Salem County**, the county leader in total acreage (29,418) preserved through all programs under New Jersey’s Farmland Preservation Program;

-- **Hunterdon County**, the county leader in the number of farms (357) preserved through all programs under New Jersey’s Farmland Preservation Program;

-- **Readington Township**, Hunterdon County, the municipal leader in the number of farms (24) preserved under the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program – a program under the State Farmland Preservation Program in which municipalities take a lead role in farmland preservation;

-- **Pohatcong Township**, Warren County, the municipal leader in total farmland acreage (1,167) preserved under the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant Program;

-- **Upper Freehold Township**, Monmouth County, the municipal leader in the number of farms (93) and farmland acreage (9,219) preserved through all programs under New Jersey’s Farmland Preservation Program;

-- **New Jersey Conservation Foundation**, which leads nonprofit organizations in the number of farms (18) and total farmland acreage (1,405) preserved through the Nonprofit Program – a program under the State Farmland Preservation program in which nonprofits initiate farmland preservation projects.

-- more --

ADD TWO/200,000 Acres

Cassaday Farms, operated by George Cassaday Jr., is one of the largest vegetable farms in the state and one of more than 2,000 preserved farms that helped New Jersey reach the 200,000-acre mark.

“I want to congratulate both Salem County and Mr. Cassaday for their efforts to protect our farmland. By saving and maintaining our farms, we do a valuable service to both those who count on farms for a living and those who rely on them for good, fresh food on a daily basis,” said Assemblyman John J. Burzichelli.

The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) administers New Jersey’s Farmland Preservation Program. The program was established in 1983 and the first farms were preserved in 1985.

A summary of preserved farmland by county is available at <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/progress/stats/index.html>.

A list of the 58 farms that were preserved this year under the State Farmland Preservation Program and helped carry New Jersey to the 200,000-acre threshold, can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/progress/preserved/2012farmsto200,000acres.pdf>.

For a listing of all farms preserved since the inception of the program, visit <http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/progress/preserved/preservedfarmslist.pdf>.

#

S:\press releases\2012\200,000 acres (b).doc