

February 28, 2008 SADC Meeting Highlights

Secretary's Report

In his proposed FY09 budget, Governor Corzine called for the elimination of three agencies – including the Department of Agriculture – and the consolidation of their essential functions into other departments. The farm community expects an intense public dialogue over the proposed elimination of the Department of Agriculture in the coming weeks and months.

Executive Director's Report

The Attorney General's office has filed for an injunction to halt all activity at Quaker Valley Farms in Franklin Township, Hunterdon County. Following an investigation of extensive earth moving, grading and leveling activities at the farm, the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) on February 14th found the operator in violation of the farmland preservation deed of easement.

Gary Mount, a farmer member of the SADC has submitted his letter of resignation.

A "Get to Know Your PIG" meeting for county agriculture development board administrators has been scheduled for March 13 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Health/Agriculture Building in Trenton. Administrators are encouraged to email any particular questions they have in advance to ensure those questions are covered in the discussion.

More than 50 farmers share their advice and experience on how to avoid conflicts and maintain good relationships with neighbors and municipalities in a new publication developed by the SADC in cooperation with several other agencies and organizations. Copies of the brochure, "Farmer-to-Farmer Advice for Avoiding Conflicts with Neighbors and Towns," are available at <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/publications/farmersadviceforavoidingconflicts.pdf> or by contacting the SADC.

County Planning Incentive Grant Comprehensive Plan Reviews

The SADC reviewed comprehensive plans submitted by Somerset, Sussex, Warren, Monmouth and Salem counties under the new county planning incentive grant (PIG) program. A total of 15 counties have applied to the new program to preserve up 2,588 farms covering nearly 159,000 acres in 88 project areas at an estimated total easement cost of \$2.2 billion. The remaining county plans will be reviewed at the March and April SADC meetings, along with a summary of the 37 municipal PIG plans and applications. The SADC is expected to consider approval of all 52 county and municipal plans and applications at its May 22nd meeting.

Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program Funding (2008)

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has informed the SADC that it is eligible to receive \$1.96 million in federal farmland preservation funding for federal fiscal year 2008. The SADC authorized a list of eligible farms to receive that funding and execution of a cooperative agreement with NRCS. All of the farms are applicants to the SADC's FY09 nonprofit grant round.

Atlantic County

The SADC approved new eight-year programs for Anthony J. and Patrice Berenato, Anthony J. Berenato and Joseph J. Donio, Sr., of Hammonton.

Burlington County

The SADC reviewed activities occurring on the permanently preserved Pettit Farm in Lumberton and Southampton townships. The review was requested by the Burlington County Freeholders who had determined the farm is in violation of the farmland preservation deed of easement and had asked the SADC whether it agrees or disagrees with the County's findings. The SADC reviewed the extent of a veterinary practice, as well as grooming, kenneling and canine obedience training services on the farm. The SADC found the owner to be in violation of the deed of easement and is coordinating with the County to take appropriate action.

Gloucester County

The SADC approved a new eight-year program for Benjamin and Elaine DuBois, Clayton and Franklin townships.

Hunterdon County

The SADC granted preliminary approvals under the nonprofit program to the Middleton and Ramirez farms in Kingwood and Alexandria townships, and the Cain farm in Holland Township (all Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance projects).

The SADC granted final approval to the Steinhardt/Skeuse Farm in Delaware Township under the planning incentive grant program (2001A funding round)

Morris County

The SADC gave final approval to the Young Farm in Chester Township under the planning incentive grant program (2004A funding round)

Monmouth County

The SADC granted amended final approval to the Smith Farm in Upper Freehold Township under the planning incentive grant program (2003A funding round) to reflect revised cost shares to account for a shortfall in remaining SADC funding for this project area.

Warren County

The SADC granted final approval to the Bardon-Goodbody Farm in Hope Township under the direct easement purchase program.