

Preservation of Farmland Benefits Farmers:

- The landowner continues to own the land and can sell it or lease it as farmland.
- The preservation program provides capital that can help the landowner realize financial goals, minimize debt load and expand operations.
- Landowners in the program benefit from limited protection against eminent domain and public and private nuisance complaints.
- The landowner is eligible for cost-sharing grants for water and soil conservation projects (not available to unpreserved farms).
- The preservation program increases the viability of farming and farmland for future generations.
- Farmland Preservation preserves rural communities.

Preservation of Farmland Benefits our Communities:

- There is economic value to the production of agriculture.
- There are opportunities to purchase farm fresh goods and for the farm to serve as an educational resource in the community.
- There is natural resource protection value associated with a viable agriculture land base.
- Farms serve as a visual and aesthetic asset, softening the urban landscape and enhancing view corridors and landscapes.
- The farmer retains the land—Privately owned and managed farmland requires very few services unlike new development which requires new services such as schools, roads, and fire/police protection.
- Nationwide, farm, forest and open lands more than pay for the services they require while tax income from residential land use falls short of municipal service costs.
- The land stays on the tax roll and continues to be farmland assessed.



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Agriculture Development Board

Farmland Preservation Program



Preserving Farmland and
Fostering Sustainable Agriculture
in Middlesex County

How is Farmland Preserved?

One way that farmland is preserved is through the **Sale of Development Easements**.

Landowners who want to continue farming their land can sell their development easements.

When landowners sell development easements, they still own their land but sell the rights to develop it for anything other than agriculture. Those deed restrictions remain in force for any future owners.

Landowners can sell the development rights on their land to the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), County Agriculture Development Boards (CADB), municipalities or nonprofit organizations.

The sale price is based on the difference between what a developer would pay for the land and what it is worth for agriculture.

Most farms have entered the Farmland Preservation Program through the sale of development rights.

Those interested in the multiple programs available to landowners should consult the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) website: www.state.nj.us/agriculture/sadc/farmpreserve/ or contact: Laurie Sobel, CADB Administrator at the Middlesex County Office of Planning, 732-745-4014 email: Laurie.Sobel@co.middlesex.nj.us



The Process

Land is eligible for the Farmland Preservation Program if it meets the SADC's minimum eligibility criteria, qualifies for farmland tax assessment and is part of an agricultural development area, an area where the County Agriculture Development Board has determined that farming is viable over the long term.

County Planning Incentive Grants

The County Planning Incentive Grant Program encourages a comprehensive planning process for farmland preservation at the county level. The program enables counties to accept and process farmland preservation applications year-round, and rewards counties that complete transactions in a timely manner with the potential for additional funding.

County Agriculture Development Boards

The Middlesex County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) is responsible for approving applications to the Farmland Preservation Program. Therefore, the CADB is a starting point for most interested landowners. The County Agriculture Development Board reviews and approves applications, and then forwards them to the SADC, coordinating with the State and local municipality throughout the process.

The value of a farm or development easement is established first through two independent appraisals and an independent review at the county level. The second and final review of the appraisals is completed by the SADC staff. The SADC reviews the staff recommendations and determines the per acre value of the farm by way of a certified value which is then voted on by the CADB. Once a value has been determined and agreed upon, and an application has been approved, the sale can proceed.

The CADB has already approved and preserved over 5,000 acres of farmland in the county. With over 26 square miles of farmland assessed property, it is our challenge to continue to bring more of our valuable farmland into the preservation program so that future generations of farmers, county and state residents can benefit from this valuable resource.

What does Farmland Preservation mean?

Through the process of purchasing development rights, the Farmland Preservation Program ensures that the property will forever be protected for agricultural use. Landowners who have sold their development rights still can sell their land at any time. Deed restrictions prohibiting non-agricultural development run with the land, so future owners of preserved farms also would be required to comply with the deed restrictions.

The sale of development rights does NOT make farmland public property. The public has no right to access or use a deed-restricted farm without the landowner's consent.

For landowners, participation in the Farmland Preservation Program means a stronger land base to support New Jersey's agricultural industry, the satisfaction of knowing their land will forever be preserved as farmland, and access to the resources that can help them achieve their personal and financial goals.

For all of us, farmland preservation is an important part of keeping New Jersey green and prosperous. Preserved farmland limits urban sprawl, protects our water and soils, provides us with an abundance of locally grown farm products and maintains our connection to the land and the longstanding agricultural traditions that earned our reputation as the Garden State.

For more information please contact:

**Middlesex County Office of Planning,
Division of Comprehensive Planning and the
Environment**

**Laurie Sobel, CADB Administrator at the
Middlesex County Office of Planning**

732-745-4014 or email:

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