

Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Agriculture Development Board Announces Spring Round for Farmland Preservation Projects

The Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) invites interested landowners to apply for the Spring Round of Farmland Preservation Planning Incentive Grants. The deadline for applications is April 9, 2020. The CADB considers farms on an individual basis with an emphasis on soil quality and long-term agricultural viability. While 40 acres is the preferred minimum for preservation, all applicants are urged to contact CADB Administrator Bob Hornby for details.

Freeholder John E. Lanza, Planning Department Liaison, said, "We encourage farm owners to apply for the Grants. Not only does it provide solutions for farmers to improve operations or reduce debt, land is permanently preserved, even if sold, and will always be designated for agricultural use, improving quality of life for residents and increasing economic stability."

The Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders generously support this popular program. Using a combination of funding now totaling more than \$287 million, 440 individual farms (the most of any county in NJ) covering more than 34,000 acres (~12% of the county and 30% of the assessed farmland) have been preserved in Hunterdon County since 1985. About 70% of the overall funding has come from the State Agricultural Development Committee. The remainder has been provided through municipal and County Open Space Tax receipts as well as increasingly important partnerships with non-profit and federal funding sources. More than 900 acres were permanently preserved in 2019 with 93% of the funding coming from state or federal sources.

The Farmland Preservation Program provides landowners with opportunities to infuse cash into farm operations, to pay down debt, or as a vehicle to amicably settle estate situations. Preserved land stays in private ownership and may be sold on the open market with the provision that it remains in agricultural use. Farmland preservation plays an important role in keeping agriculture a viable sector of the economy, making land affordable for farming, preserving the agricultural infrastructure, and protecting the rural nature of Hunterdon County.

The application form and additional information is available on the Hunterdon CADB website at <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/cadb.htm>. Potential applicants are encouraged to schedule staff site visits ahead of submission.

For more information contact: Bob Hornby
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