



# NEWS

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## **Christie Administration Announces Major Preservation Milestone** *2,000 Farms Preserved Under State Farmland Preservation Program*

MANNINGTON TWP. – Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher today announced that 2,000 farms have been preserved under the state Farmland Preservation Program – a major milestone in New Jersey’s efforts to ensure that productive farmland and a strong agricultural industry remain an important part of the landscape, economy and way of life in communities throughout the state.

“This achievement would not have been possible without the strong partnership efforts at all levels of government, by the nonprofit community and by the scores of landowners who made the commitment to preservation,” said Secretary Fisher. “While our work is far from over, the preservation of 2,000 farms is a major step toward ensuring that we will continue to have abundant opportunities to buy the freshest food and other farm products, that seasonal farm visits will be traditions our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy with their own families, that our farmers always will have land to farm, and that New Jersey will continue to earn its reputation as the Garden State.”

The 102-acre Tark farm on Quaker Neck Road in Mannington Township, Salem County, was among the recent preservation projects that helped the state Farmland Preservation Program reach the 2,000-farm mark. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) preserved the farm in December by acquiring its development rights. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation worked closely with Ernest Tark Jr., throughout the process of preserving the farm, which he co-owns with his sister Maxine Rauch of Florida.

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Add One  
2,000 Farms

“New Jersey Conservation Foundation is thrilled to have assisted in the preservation of this landmark farm. The preservation of 2,000 farms underscores New Jersey’s continued role as a national leader in farmland preservation, which is reason for celebration by all of us who understand that saving our farmland is one of the greatest investments we can make toward protecting the beauty and bounty of our Garden State,” said Michele Byers, Executive Director of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Tark is retired, having farmed all his life – 10 years in Monmouth County and 45 years farming up to 600 acres in Mannington and Quinton townships, Salem County. He and his sister sold 50 additional acres of their farm to third-generation farmer Frank Battiato before preserving the remaining 102 acres. They now are in the process of selling him the preserved farm. Battiato, a vegetable and grain farmer, currently farms 400 acres in Mannington Township and Carneys Point.

The SADC administers the state Farmland Preservation Program, which was established in 1983. The first farms were preserved under the program in 1985. To date, approximately 190,000 acres of farmland have been permanently preserved under the program in 18 counties. More farmland has been preserved under the program in Salem County – 28,000 acres – than in any other county.

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