



# NEWS

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## **SADC Preserves 315 Acres of Sheppard Farmland in Cedarville**

LAWRENCE TWP. – Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher today announced the preservation of 315 acres of farmland owned by the Sheppard brothers.

Erwin, Dave and Tom Sheppard farm approximately 1,500 acres of land in Cedarville, continuing a family farming tradition that started more than 300 years ago when four Sheppard brothers came to this country from England. Sheppard Farms grows a variety of products, including asparagus, cucumbers, peppers, lettuce, squash and tomatoes. The family operation is one of the largest fresh-market vegetable growers in the state.

The State Agriculture Development Committee purchased the development rights to preserve three parcels of land: the Jones Island farm on Bay Point Road owned by Erwin Sheppard and his wife Donna, the adjacent Green Barn farm owned by the brothers in partnership, and the Layton farm on Sayres Neck Road, also owned in partnership. The total purchase price was approximately \$1 million.

When landowners sell their development rights, they continue to own the land but agree to deed restrictions that permanently protect the land for agricultural uses.

The State Agriculture Development Committee administers New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program. To date, more than 1,800 farms covering approximately 179,000 acres have been permanently preserved statewide under the program, including 117 farms covering approximately 14,500 acres in Cumberland County.

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