



News Release

Natural Resources Conservation Service

220 Davidson Avenue 4th Floor, Somerset, NJ 08873

Web: <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov>

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Contact: Barbara Phillips, Public Affairs Specialist

(732) 537-6044 or barbara.phillips@nj.usda.gov

For Immediate Release

[Combined resources can increase assistance to protect resources on preserved NJ farmland](#)

Application Periods set for 2018 conservation and easement programs.

SOMERSET, October 17, 2017- New Jersey farms already enrolled in the New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee's (SADC) farmland preservation program that are eligible for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) may apply for both EQIP and N.J. Department of Agriculture (NJDA) Conservation Cost-Share Program (CCSP) this year. This opportunity to enhance natural resource protection on preserved farms is part of SADC's "[Whole Farm Systems Conservation Trial](#)," a project that was awarded \$644,000 through NRCS's 2017 [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#).

Through this RCPP agreement, NRCS has set aside \$344,000 to support conservation practices offered through EQIP for landowners who have preserved their farmland through the SADC farmland preservation program. By participating in both of these programs, landowners can realize a higher rate of payments for implementing soil and water conservation practices on permanently preserved farmland, estimated to be about 75 percent to up to 90 percent of project costs. Eligible applicants interested in this opportunity should submit an application at their [local NRCS office](#) by COB **November 17, 2017**, to be considered for the FY18 programs.

The additional \$300,000 of RCPP funding will be available in Salem County through NRCS's [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\) - Wetlands Reserve Easements \(WRE\)](#). This pilot program will help farmland owners in that county preserve wetlands or other environmentally sensitive areas of a farm under a separate conservation easement at the time a farm enters the [NJ Farmland Preservation Program](#). Applicants from Salem County interested in this opportunity should contact NRCS in Woodstown (856-769-1126, ext. 3) for questions regarding WRE. Questions about the State Farmland Preservation Program should be directed to Katie Mazzella (SADC) (609-984-2504). The application period for FY18 ACEP-WRE will close **November 30, 2017**, and those interested are encouraged to contact NRCS and SADC soon.

In addition to SADC and NJDA, the Open Space Institute/William Penn Foundation, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are making additional funding available to supplement the federal program, contributing over \$9 million to this partnership effort in New Jersey.

NRCS program information is available at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov. For more information about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, follow links to Financial Assistance>Environmental Quality Incentives Program. For more information about the opportunity in Salem County, follow the link to Easements> Agricultural Conservation Easements Program>Wetlands Reserve Easements.

NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to help agricultural producers with erosion control, water management, water quality, and other resource concerns through conservation programs authorized by the Farm Bill. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), 800-877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866-367-8642 (Relay voice users).

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