

NRCS National Funding FY2012* (in Millions)

Discretionary funding:

Conservation Technical Assistance	\$762
All Other Conservation Operations Programs	<u>\$137</u>
Total, Conservation Operations	\$899

Mandatory funding:

Total, Farm Bill Programs	<u>\$3,648</u>
Total, NRCS Programs	\$4,547

*rounded to the nearest million

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned. Farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, tribes and others who own rural lands make daily decisions about natural resource use and management, impacting soil, water, and air quality and wildlife habitat. NRCS provides technical assistance and offers financial assistance to producers who install conservation practices through Farm Bill programs.

NRCS technical assistance is supported with discretionary and mandatory funds. Discretionary funding, provided annually through the Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA), is pivotal to NRCS' success. CTA supports everyday operations, scientific research, technology transfer, and is key to the development of individual conservation plans. The land user, in consultation with NRCS specialists, develops a conservation plan that is suited to his or her individual operation. Once a producer has a conservation plan, he or she can implement it with or without further assistance from NRCS.

Financial assistance is available to eligible applicants to implement their conservation plans. Mandatory funds provided through Farm Bill programs are used to cover the costs of detailed planning needed to implement conservation practices and provide financial assistance to help defray some of the costs of conservation practices installation.

The table above describes NRCS' national discretionary and mandatory funding in fiscal year 2012. Farm Bill Program funding details specific to New Jersey are on page 4.

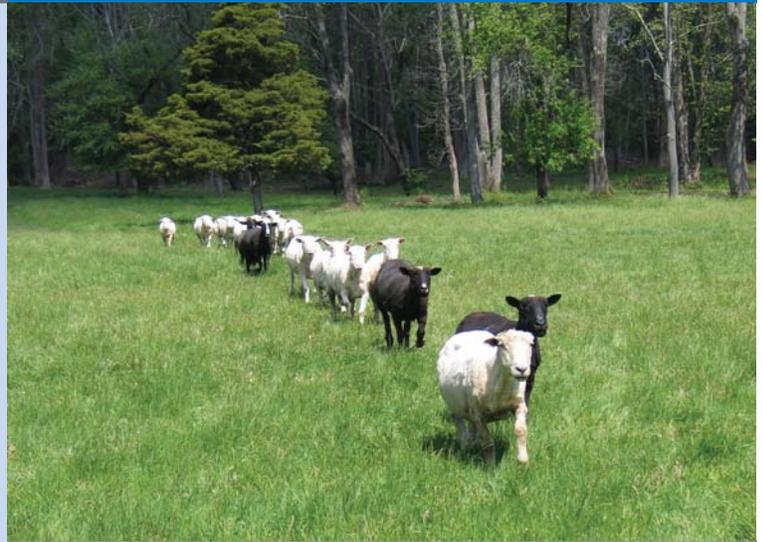
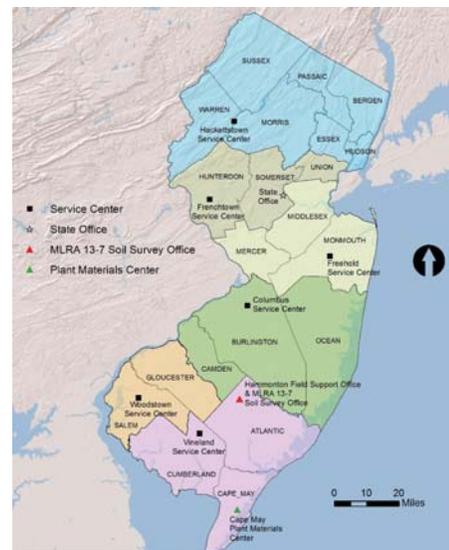


Photo: courtesy Conservation Resources, Inc.

New Jersey has over 200,000 acres of preserved farmland. That is about 35% of existing farmland in the Garden State! NRCS has helped support this effort through the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program.

New Jersey NRCS Service Centers



New Jersey Quick Facts:

- Number of NRCS Employees = 69
- Number of NRCS Field Offices = 6
- Acres of Cropland = 733,450 (about 13% of state)
- Acres of Forestland = 1.5 million acres (about 31% of state)
- Preserved Farmland = 200,000 acres
- Preserved Farmland that is Prime Soils = 50% (estimated)



If history has taught us anything it is soil needs to be covered, and the benefits are plenty. Through long term management our soils are improved for future generations to come. They increase organic matter and help break up pest cycles, along with helping weed suppression and reducing soil erosion. The NRCS agency provides the resources through education, assistance, guidelines, and financial support to facilitate proper systems. These systems over time will help lead me to have a more productive farming operation.

---Dean Fisher, Burlington County Farmer

Cover Crop for Soil Health

Dean Fisher is implementing cover crop on 63-acres of farm fields he leases in Burlington County. "I have found cover crop to be very beneficial to my farming," he says.

In 2009, Fisher worked with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement a plan for three years of legume cover crop on over 20 acres at another location that he farms, and he liked the results. "The practice is good for the soil and really helps with weed suppression. It also keeps moisture in the soil, which is increasingly important with the current weather trends of drought," Fisher says. Cover crops keep the ground covered, add organic matter to the soil, trap nutrients, improve soil tilth and reduce weed competition. In addition to improving soil fertility and water-holding capacity, this conservation practice offers erosion control.

This year, NRCS recommended Fisher added conservation crop rotation to his conservation plan. His conservation plan for the 63-acre parcel now includes a conservation crop rotation of soybeans and sunflowers, a summer cover of sorghum-sudangrass and a cover crop of rye or rye and hairy vetch. Conservation crop rotation can help reduce runoff and erosion, increase organic matter, improve moisture efficiency, improve pest management, and provide wildlife habitat.

Fisher farms about 200 acres in total and has taken measures on his operation to manage the nutrient inputs and control pests. He has installed special plantings to provide pollinator habitat, a benefit to his operation and neighboring farms, and regularly tests the soil in his fields.



Above and right: sorghum bicolor, hairy vetch, perennial ryegrass.

Below: By June, a good stand of summer cover was emerging, promising protection and improvement for the soil.



He has utilized the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program to help with the planning and cost of some of these practices. Since he has been farming for less than 10 years, he has been able to take advantage of the benefits available to Beginning Farmers through the program.

NRCS in New Jersey is committed to helping farmers improve the health of the soil. In New Jersey, over 6,000 acres of cover crop were installed in fiscal year 2012.

Look for this link on the NRCS website to learn more about unlocking the secrets in the soil!



Photo by Jennifer Anderson @ USDA-NRCS

Photo by Larry Allain @ USDA-NRCS



Two Liberty Township, NJ, homes were destroyed by a landslide after two major storms wreaked havoc on the Garden State in September 2011. NRCS engineers and soil scientists were able to help through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.



Liberty Landslide Stabilized Through Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Late in August 2011, Hurricane Irene landed in New Jersey and brought a swath of destruction to the Garden State. Unprecedented flooding and high winds produced a wide range of challenges for New Jersey residents. In addition to power outages, the rains swelled rivers and creeks to overflowing. In September 2011 Tropical Storm Lee delivered a second punch, with serious results for a Liberty Township, Warren County, community.

Heavy, prolonged downpours from these storms saturated the soils around Mountain Lake to the point of instability. After the skies had cleared, the groundwater was rising and suddenly, a chunk of mountainside slid downhill like liquid. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of slope had failed, taking two homes, two cars and large trees with it. The plume of mud and debris stopped on township owned property just short of Mountain Lake.

Liberty Township officials applied for funds available through the Emergency Watershed Protection program (EWP). Their consultants worked with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) engineers and soil scientists to stabilize the damaged slope to help prevent further loss.

In 2012, work to restore the area began. A network of sub-surface drains was installed to safely convey groundwater away from the site. The slope was rebuilt in compacted lifts of soil and seeded with a mix of grasses. Stabilizing the hillside prevented further damages to neighboring homes and protected the town's recreation facility at the lake.



The damaged slope was restored, and the nearby recreation facilities and lake were protected (below). EWP, NRCS provided \$126,000 in EWP funds to assist in the project which had a total cost of about \$210,000.



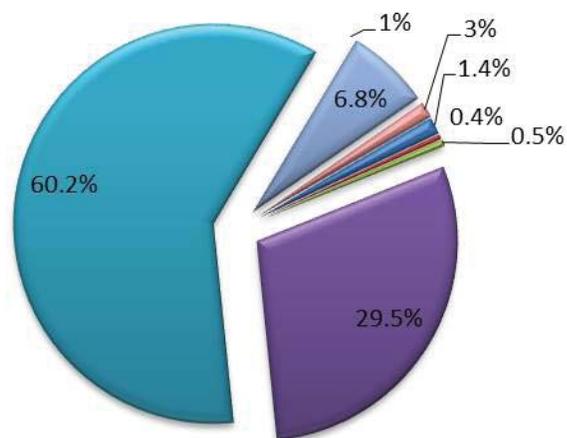
Through EWP, NRCS and township leaders were able to give the homeowners around the mudslide some peace of mind. Working together, NRCS and the local government were able to make a difference.

CARRIE MOSLEY

State Conservationist
 732-537-6040
 carrie.mosley@nj.usda.gov
 www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS FY 2012 Percentage of Financial Assistance to New Jersey Participants by Program

- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)



FY 2011 and FY 2012 Contracts and Financial Assistance to New Jersey Participants by Program

Program	Number of Contracts		Financial Assistance Dollars	
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2011	FY 2012
Agricultural Management Assistance	15	11	\$337,000	\$218,000
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program	5	3	\$125,000	\$61,000
Conservation Stewardship Program	5	9	\$42,000	\$84,000
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	198	206	\$4,833,000	\$4,724,000
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	24	23	\$8,110,000	\$9,651,000
Grassland Reserve Program		0		\$4,000
Wetlands Reserve Program	4	4	\$1,072,000	\$1,087,000
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program	17	10	\$301,000	\$207,000
Grand Total	268	266	\$14,820,000	\$16,036,000

Discretionary funds through the Conservation Technical Assistance for New Jersey in FY 2012 was \$3,422,068

Sources: FMFI, ProTracts 10/2/2012 and NEST 10/4/2012

NRCS strives to provide current and correct information in a timely manner. Please contact your state conservationist or an NRCS legislative specialist if you need assistance. You can reach NRCS Legislative Affairs Division at (202) 720-2771.