



New Jersey NRCS FY 2018 Accomplishments



**THE USDA NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)
PROVIDES INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION
SOLUTIONS TO RESTORE, ENHANCE
AND PROTECT NEW JERSEY’S PRIVATE
WORKING LANDS.**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Jersey strives to use our conservation tools in creative ways to provide positive environmental uplifts on New Jersey’s private working lands. We strive to demonstrate that agricultural productivity is enhanced by good land stewardship and that good land stewardship not only benefits the farm footprint, but has far reaching benefits for the watershed community.

Because we only work with landowners and operators on a voluntary basis, we pride ourselves on developing respectful relationships and providing good customer service. This report attempts to capture New Jersey NRCS’s accomplishments and successes for fiscal year 2018 which covers October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018.

CARRIE LINDIG, State Conservationist

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Preserving New Jersey's Working Lands

\$3.3 Million in FY2018

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.



Grasslands of Special Significance Preserved in Salem County

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation applied for a USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easement on behalf of Grant and Betsy Harris. The application

was for the preservation of nearly 375 acres that surround Cowtown Rodeo, a business run by the Harris family on their Salem County property. The easement purchase, finalized in 2018, protects the environmental value of grassland of special significance, and also protects a viable and profitable agricultural operation.

Large blocks of well-managed grasslands like the two parcels included in this easement purchase support groundwater recharge and bird habitat. Among the several species that may benefit from this preservation is the Upland Sandpiper, a State Endangered species that relies on grassland bird habitat for nesting.

NRCS funded a major portion of the purchase with other funding provided by the Open Space Institute and the William Penn Foundation, and with assistance from Natural Lands Trust and Pilesgrove Township.

The NJTV News report from the April 2018 public event celebrating the preservation is online: <https://tinyurl.com/y4lkdyd9>.

NRCS partnered with these dedicated organizations to protect New Jersey's agricultural working lands in FY2018.

NJ State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC)
 New Jersey Conservation Foundation
 Hunterdon Land Trust

Somerset County
 Hunterdon County
 Salem County
 Warren County

ACEP-ALE Funds obligated in FY2018

ACEP-ALE Easements obligated in FY2018 are protecting nearly 850 acres of working agricultural land!

- \$3.3 Million for 9 easements
- \$732,000 additional for 2 easements through Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) agreements

Easements obligated in prior years for agricultural easements that closed in FY2018

Agricultural Land Easements:
 Grasslands of Special Significance
 2 easements, 373.63 Acres

General Agricultural Land Easements
 5 easements, 324.75 Acres

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
 4 easements, 163.15 Acres