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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FARMLAND PRESERVATION IS A WIN-WIN
FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF NEW JERSEY
Bond Issue Is Essential for Its Continuation**

TRENTON, NJ (June 1, 2009) -- The New Jersey Farm Bureau is advocating that the state legislature approve the placement of a public question in November to continue New Jersey's open space program, established in 1981. The bureau, which represents the state's farming community, strongly supports authorizing the Garden State Preservation Trust bond issue of \$600-million over a three-year period, under its current terms.

Farm Bureau maintains that the multi-year bond issue will sustain the preservation program while a permanent funding source is developed, rather than having to re-create such a program if funding is interrupted. Furthermore, while the bond-issue bills (S-1858 and A-3901) would authorize the funding, they would not require that the bonds be sold if other funding is found. A recent poll of voters by the Trust for Public Land indicates that a large majority will support the proposed bonding measure, by a margin of 59 to 33 percent.

"Farmland preservation is not only crucial to retaining agriculture in the country's most densely populated state, but also contributes to the quality of life for all residents," says Richard Nieuwenhuis, president of the Farm Bureau. He stresses that it is important for the public to understand the success of the farmland preservation program.

"In the program, farmers sell only those rights that they might otherwise sell for development," he says. "Once farmland is preserved, it not only remains actively used for production agriculture, it also provides scenic vistas, limits urban sprawl, protects water and soil, ensures a local supply of fresh farm products and nurtures a human connection to the land. Cultivated land remains on local tax roles, yet incurs very little municipal costs, unlike a residential development."

A recent environmental study showed that residential development costs municipalities more than it generates in taxes. For every tax dollar collected from such development, municipal costs can be anywhere from \$1.04 to \$1.67.

"Farmland can significantly contribute to the economy of the state," continues Nieuwenhuis. "With the growing trend toward consuming fresh, locally grown produce and the increasing popularity of agri-tourism, New Jersey farms are bringing money and tourists into many small towns that dot our rural landscape."

How Farmland Preservation Works

As of March 31, 2009, 1,810 farms have been preserved, for a total of 176,435 acres (about 17%) of the state's total of 4.75 million acres.

When a farmer sells his land into farmland preservation, he forfeits any rights to residential or non- agricultural development to retain that land forever in agriculture. Purchase funds might come from a single source or be made up of a combination of state, county and municipal monies.

The farmland preservation program is administered by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), which coordinates with County Agriculture Development Boards, municipal governments, nonprofit organizations and landowners in developing plans that best meet the needs of individual landowners. The property might be re-sold outright to the SADC, which then can auction it, potentially providing opportunities for other farmers to purchase it at reasonable prices. Or, it might be put into an eight-year preservation program, for which the seller receives no payment, but is eligible for various farmland preservation benefits and protections. The preserved land continues on the tax rolls as production farmland.

For further information, contact the New Jersey Farm Bureau, at The Farmhouse, 168 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608. Phone 609-393-7163; fax 609-393-7072; email mail@njfb.org; website www.njfb.org

The New Jersey Farm Bureau is a non-profit member organization of more than 13,000 farmers and farm-related individuals within the Garden State. It is the only organization solely dedicated to representing the grass- roots interests and directives of its members in educating all levels of government and the public on the farm community's policies and positions. The Farm Bureau also takes a lead in seeking out initiatives, activities and ventures to enhance the profitability of producer members and ensure the viability of agriculture in New Jersey -- the Garden State for Good Reason -- our farms.

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