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NJ FARMLAND ADVISORS ...0 COMMENTS

AFT selects New Jersey farmland advisors

Farmland advisors to assist New Jersey farmers with finding or transferring farmland

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Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS New Jersey. NRCS staff demonstrate how farmers can use a pasture stick to use to help manage the grazing of their pastures.

ALBANY — American Farmland Trust announces the selection of 15 participants for Farmland Advisors New Jersey, an advanced training program for professionals who work actively with farmers to access land and successfully transfer farmland to a new generation in New Jersey.

New farmers face substantial barriers in New Jersey, especially when it comes to finding land. New Jersey has the second highest farmland prices in the nation, making it difficult for beginning farmers to find suitable land at a price they can afford. Opportunities to lease appropriate farmland under secure conditions can often be difficult to find. At the same time, farm transfers within or outside a family can be complicated due to family, business, legal and tax hurdles.

This network of professionals will receive in-depth training over two-and-a-half years to strengthen their personal expertise and build statewide capacity to support beginning farmers, senior farmers and farmland owners across New Jersey.

“There is a wealth of opportunities for farmers in New Jersey to connect with consumers who want local produce, but the high price of land keeps many from getting into or staying in the business. Many potential new farmers don’t even know where to start,” says Dave Zelov, co-owner of Kittatinny Mountain Farm in Wantage. “I think the Farmland Advisors New Jersey program will be key to ensuring the next generation of farmers can keep the profession alive in the Garden State.”

“The transition of farmland from one generation to the next is a time when the land is most vulnerable,” says David Haight, vice president for Programs for American Farmland Trust. “With nearly a quarter of New Jersey’s farmland set to change hands in the coming years, it’s critical to build capacity across the state to support transitions that keep this land in farming. We are excited to engage an impressive network of professionals from across the state to further their efforts in addressing the challenges that farmers and landowners face in making their land available for a new generation of farmers.”

The Farmland Advisors New Jersey participants include:

- Cali Alexander, M.A., H.O.
- Gillian Armstrong, agricultural resource specialist, New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee
- Amanda Brockwell, director of programs and outreach, Monmouth Conservation Foundation
- Kendrya Close, executive director, Foodshed Alliance

- Katherine Coyle, director, Morris County Agriculture Development Board
- Gabi Grunstein, agricultural service provider
- Adrian Hyde, executive director, NOFA-NJ
- Tara Kenyon, principal, Kenyon Planning, LLC
- David Kimmel, agricultural resource specialist, New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee
- Melanie Mason, land steward, New Jersey Conservation Foundation
- Jennifer Matthews, program associate I, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland and Cape May County
- Meredith Melendez, agricultural agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County
- Rebecca Szotak, program associate II, Agriculture, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Camden County
- Laura Tessieri, associate director, North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council
- Edward Wengryn, research associate, New Jersey Farm Bureau

Farmland Advisors New Jersey is being coordinated by American Farmland Trust in partnership with Duke Farms, Farm Credit East, Foodshed Alliance, Kittatinny Mountain Farm, Monmouth Conservation Foundation, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, New Jersey Farm Bureau, New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee, NOFA-NJ, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

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To learn more about Farmland Advisors New Jersey program and participants, please visit www.farmland.org/njadvisors.

About American Farmland Trust: American Farmland Trust is the only national conservation organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting environmentally sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. Since 1980, AFT's innovative work has helped to permanently protect more than 6.5 million acres of farmland and ranchland and led the way for the adoption of conservation practices on millions more. No Farms, No Food. Learn more at www.farmland.org.

–American Farmland Trust