

News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Somerset County Purchase of Gund Farm Preserves Both Active Farmland and Natural Resources

*County Preserved Farmland Passes 9,000 Acres with the Acquired
Development Rights*

FRANKLIN NJ – Somerset County secured development easement rights for Gund Farm on Canal Road in Franklin Township, surpassing 9,000 farmland acres preserved through its open space and farmland preservation efforts.

In addition to the preserved farmland, the Gund Farm also resides within the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission's designated Canal Review Zone. The purchase of development rights from Somerset County ensures the protection of natural resources along the D&R Canal and the Millstone River Scenic Byway.

"By preserving property within the D&R Canal Review Zone, we not only ensure it will remain active farmland, but also that the County's natural resources will be a source of drinking water and recreation for future generations," said Freeholder Melonie Marano, County Agriculture Development Board liaison.

The owner of the farm, Gordon Gund, currently grows wheat and hay on almost 110 acres of property that he and his late wife purchased in the summer of 1986. The county reached an agreement with the Gund family to acquire easement rights for 100.179 acres of the property. The family retained three acres for a future single-family residence and six acres of open space.

The purchase of the property was made in collaboration with the State Agricultural Development Committee through the County Planning Incentive Grant, which preserves farms identified in the county's Agriculture Development Area and Planning Incentive Grant project areas.

The sale price was \$15,000 per acre. The state refunded 60%, or \$901,620, of the purchase price to Somerset County. The county share of funds came from the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

The Somerset County Agriculture Development Board will hold the easement on the Gund Farm and will be responsible for monitoring property use on an annual basis.

For more information, contact Principal Planner Katelyn Katzer, Somerset County Planning Board, at 908-231-7021 or katzer@co.somerset.nj.us.

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