

Contact: Barbara Phillips, Public Affairs Specialist, Somerset, NJ
732.537.6044 or barbara.phillips@nj.usda.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Workshops To Explain Help Available for Farmers and Forest Land Owners

February 21, 2012 – New Jersey farmers and forest land owners who want to know more about how to improve the quality of the soil and other resources on their land are invited to attend one or more of nine morning workshops being offered in March and early April at various locations. Each workshop will include a presentation on the workshop's specific topic, how to develop a conservation plan, and the technical and financial assistance available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Technical experts will be on hand to answer questions and take applications from those who wish to sign up for NRCS assistance.

Energy Conservation workshops will cover ways to save money on your monthly electric bill and the funding available for farm energy audits, renewable energy and other energy savings measures. This topic will be offered March 12 at the Gloucester County Complex, Delsea Drive, Clayton, March 14 at the Monmouth County Ag. Complex / NRCS Service Center, 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold, and March 15 at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Garibaldi Hall on Eagle Rock Ave., Roseland. These start at 8:30 a.m.

Ethnic Specialty Crops workshops will highlight opportunities for farmers interested in growing crops for this market. Topics such as marketing, horticultural challenges, trial results and production tips will be presented. This workshop will be offered three times: March 16 at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County in Westampton (Language assistance for speakers of Korean, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese will be available at this workshop.), March 21 at Alstede Farms in Chester, and March 29 at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County in Millville. All start at 8:30 a.m.

Soil Quality and Composting will be the topic covered at the March 27 workshop at Genesis Farm in Blairstown. Experts will cover soil quality basics, crop management and fertility, composting and marketing organic and certified naturally grown food. Session starts at 8:30 a.m.

Forest Landowners workshop will include information on best practices for forest management and the cost share programs available to provide funding for these efforts. Maintenance of farmland assessment will also be covered. This workshop will be offered twice: March 31 at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County in Westampton and April 5, at the NRCS Service Center, 51 Cheney Road, Woodstown. Both start at 9 a.m.

Registration for these workshops is required. Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities is available at all sessions. Please request any necessary disability accommodation when you register. If language assistance is needed, please note that at time of registration and every effort will be made to accommodate these requests.

Workshops are sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in partnership with Gloucester County Soil Conservation District (SCD), Mercer County Soil Conservation District, and Morris County Soil Conservation District. Visit www.nj.usda.gov/about/events for workshop details and registration information, or call Gloucester County SCD (856) 589-5250, Morris County SCD (973) 285-2953, or Mercer County SCD (609) 586-9603.