



The Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey

Denis Krowicki, President

February 13, 2009

Commissioner Mark N. Mauriello
NJDEP
401 E. State St.
7th Floor, East Wing
P.O. Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402

Dear Commissioner Mauriello,

As President of the Vegetable Growers Association of New Jersey, I have been directed by my constituents to present to you their position regarding water use on farms. Farmers do, of course, use water. They do this to water their crops, which provide food and fiber to New Jersey residents and beyond. However, they do not abuse water. It is put back into the ground to replenish the aquifers. This process is not far removed from what nature intended. By so doing, they provide jobs, maintain open space, remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, add to food security and minimize fuel use by producing crops close to their end users. In some cases they provide open ground for runoff from impervious surfaces, such as major highways, to find its way back into the aquifers.

For what farms contribute to the quality of life, the economy and the environment, they use very little water. And that recharges the supply. New Jersey farmers that persist in their chosen professions need to be recognized for what they do. As the Garden State, farmers once dominated all aspects of community, the economy and even politics. Certainly the farm industry has contracted, but not as much as people perceive. That is because the population of non-farm residents has increased beyond what one would have expected 100 years ago, dwarfing the farm population. In spite of a reduction in land base, farms continue to produce much the same volume as in days gone by. This is due to the quality of our farms and farmers and their constant striving to remain on the cutting edge of production technology. And so they continue to feed and clothe this burgeoning population while their voice is drowned.

Can we as a State in the most populated corner of this country, afford to compromise the ability of these dedicated professionals to continue doing what every resident of this State needs them to do? Water is essential to the growing of crops. Crops of both food and fiber are absolutely necessary to the well being of humankind. Agriculture must remain viable environmentally and economically to continue. Access to water is critical.

We ask that you support New Jersey farmers by preventing any cost to farmers for the use of water in the production of crops.

Sincerely,

Denis C. Krowicki

CC: Diane Zalaskus, Bureau Chief

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