

SENATE, No. 3559

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 15, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator NELLIE POU

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Senator JOSEPH PENNACCHIO

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Turner

SYNOPSIS

Directs Department of Agriculture to establish New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/16/2021)

1 **AN ACT** concerning the establishment of a New Jersey Minority,
2 Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry and supplementing
3 Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. a. The Department of Agriculture shall establish a New
9 Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry.
10 Through the Farm Liaison designated pursuant to section 1 of
11 P.L.2019, c.94 (C.4:1-48), the department shall:

12 (1) coordinate outreach to minority, women, disabled,
13 LGBTQIA+, socially disadvantaged, and other farmers in the State
14 who have been historically underserved by farm loan assistance
15 programs, and programs for beginning farmer loans, emergency
16 farm loans, farm loan servicing, farm operating loans, guaranteed
17 farm loans, direct operating loans, direct farm ownership down
18 payment loans, microloans, and other business assistance offered to
19 farmers in the State;

20 (2) register minority, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, socially
21 disadvantaged, and historically underserved farmers to receive
22 notification of opportunities to apply for such loans and participate
23 in such programs;

24 (3) assist in the prioritization of registry applications for
25 minority, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, socially disadvantaged,
26 and historically underserved farmers;

27 (4) provide each State registrant with information concerning
28 the federal USDA register; and

29 (5) provide each State registrant the opportunity to register with
30 the federal USDA register.

31 b. In cooperation with other State agencies, departments,
32 independent authorities, and lending institutions in the State, the
33 department shall assist each State registrant to apply for assistance
34 programs, farm loan programs, beginning farmer loans, emergency
35 farm loans, farm loan servicing, farm operating loans, guaranteed
36 farm loans, direct operating loans, direct farm ownership down
37 payment loans, microloans, and other business assistance available
38 to farmers in the State.

39 c. To the greatest extent possible, the department shall ensure
40 the criteria for inclusion in the New Jersey Minority, Women, and
41 Underserved Farmer Registry is the same as the criteria for
42 inclusion in the federal USDA register so that any State registrant
43 may be included in both registries. Whenever the criteria for
44 inclusion in the federal USDA register is updated to include any
45 additional individuals or groups of farmers, the department shall
46 update accordingly the criteria for inclusion in the State registry and
47 coordinate outreach to the additional individuals or groups of
48 farmers.

- 1 d. Not more than 180 days after the establishment of the State
2 registry, and every 180 days thereafter, the department shall:
- 3 (1) review and compare the State registrants with the farmers
4 who have registered on the federal USDA register;
- 5 (2) notify any State registrant not also registered with the
6 federal USDA register of the benefits of registering with the federal
7 USDA register; and
- 8 (3) encourage the State registrant to register with the federal
9 USDA register.
- 10 e. The department, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure
11 Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), may adopt rules and
12 regulations necessary to implement this act.
- 13 f. As used in this section:
- 14 “Department” means the Department of Agriculture.
- 15 “Federal USDA register” means the United States Department of
16 Agriculture Minority Farm Register and any other similar register
17 for minority, women, and socially disadvantaged farmers,
18 administered by the Farm Service Agency of the United States
19 Department of Agriculture.
- 20 “LGBTQIA+” means a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual,
21 pansexual, transgender, genderqueer, queer, intersex, agender,
22 asexual, questioning, and other non-heterosexual-identifying
23 community.
- 24 “State registrant” means a minority, woman, disabled,
25 LGBTQIA+, socially disadvantaged, or historically underserved
26 farmer registered with the New Jersey Minority, Women, and
27 Underserved Farmer Registry established pursuant to subsection a.
28 of section 1 of this act.
- 29 “State registry” means the New Jersey Minority, Women, and
30 Underserved Farmer Registry established pursuant to subsection a.
31 of section 1 of this act.
- 32
- 33 2. This act shall take effect immediately.
- 34
- 35

36 STATEMENT

37

- 38 This bill directs the Department of Agriculture to establish a
39 New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry.
40 Through the Farm Liaison designated by the Secretary of
41 Agriculture, the bill directs the department to:
- 42 1) coordinate outreach to minority, women, disabled,
43 LGBTQIA+, and socially disadvantaged farmers in the State who
44 have been historically underserved by farm loan assistance
45 programs, and programs for beginning farmer loans, emergency
46 farm loans, farm loan servicing, farm operating loans, guaranteed
47 farm loans, direct operating loans, direct farm ownership down

1 payment loans, microloans, and other business assistance available
2 to farmers in the State;

3 2) register minority, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, socially
4 disadvantaged, and historically underserved farmers to receive
5 notification of opportunities to apply for such loans and participate
6 in such programs;

7 3) assist in the prioritization of registry applications of
8 minority, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, socially disadvantaged,
9 and historically underserved farmers;

10 4) provide each registrant with information concerning the
11 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) minority farm
12 register; and

13 (5) provide each registrant the opportunity to register with the
14 USDA minority farm register.

15 The bill also provides that, 180 days after the establishment of
16 the State registry, and every 180 days thereafter, the department
17 would be required to:

18 1) review and compare the State registrants with the farmers
19 who have registered with the USDA federal register;

20 2) notify any State registrant that is not registered with the
21 federal USDA register of the benefits of being registered with both
22 registers; and

23 3) encourage the State registrant to register with the federal
24 USDA register.

25 Furthermore, the bill provides that, to the greatest extent
26 possible, the department would ensure that the criteria for inclusion
27 in the New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer
28 Registry is the same as the criteria for inclusion in the federal
29 USDA register so that any State registrant may be included in both
30 registries. The bill also provides that, whenever the criteria for
31 inclusion in the federal USDA register is updated to include any
32 additional individuals or groups of farmers, the department shall
33 update accordingly the criteria for inclusion in the State registry and
34 coordinate outreach to the additional individuals or groups of
35 farmers.

36 The United States Department of Agriculture Minority Farm
37 Register was established to promote inclusion and diversity in the
38 agricultural and horticultural sectors of the nation's economy.
39 Establishing a parallel registry in the State would include and
40 bolster the participation of New Jersey minority, women, disabled,
41 LGBTQIA+, and historically underserved farmers in the available
42 State and federal loan and assistance programs for farmers. The
43 diversification of the types of people involved in farming in the
44 State would strengthen the agricultural and horticultural sectors of
45 the New Jersey economy and would support the goals and efforts of
46 the Vision 2025 plan prepared by the New Jersey Agricultural
47 Experiment Station at Rutgers, the State University.

1 The Vision 2025 plan prepared by the New Jersey Agricultural
2 Experiment Station (Rutgers Vision 2025) is a system of
3 responsive, innovative, and inclusive programs, farms, stations, and
4 centers that is prioritizing investments in infrastructure, information
5 technology, and equipment designed to enable the expansion and
6 development of cutting-edge programs. The New Jersey
7 Agricultural Experiment Station's programs, farms, stations, and
8 centers are designed to be national models of responsive,
9 innovative, and inclusive research, education, and outreach that can
10 address grand challenges of the State and broader society, as well as
11 being known for the sustainable management of the land and natural
12 resources these efforts encompass.

13 A primary focus of the Rutgers Vision 2025 is to evaluate as
14 assets the inclusion of qualified people with the needed skills to
15 deliver new and expanded programs and foster diversity in
16 developing and strengthening the agricultural and horticultural
17 sectors in the State.