

Minutes of December 15, 2025
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the December 15, 2025, of the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (SCADB) Meeting began at 8:25 A.M. This meeting was held in person in the Commissioner's Meeting Room at the Somerset County Administration Building in Somerville, N.J.

Open Public Meetings Statement

Chairperson, Mark Kirby, reported the meeting had been duly advertised in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act as follows:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.*, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided. The date and time information for this meeting was published in The Star Ledger and the Courier News. The agenda for this meeting was also posted on the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board's website.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken. There was a Quorum.

Members in Attendance:

Mark W. Kirby, Chair
Debbie Norz, Vice Chair
Laura DePrado, Secretary
Jimmy Abma
John Lima
Joanne Powell
Matt D'Alessandro, Soil Conservation District
Kate Brown, Rutgers Extension Agent

Members Not in Attendance:

Robert Schultz

Somerset County Staff:

Kate Katzer, Somerset County Agriculture Development Board Manager
Sarah Fitzpatrick, Esq., Deputy County Counsel
Imani Carrillo, Administrative Assistant

Public Present:

Sandra Rue, Past Board Member
Pete Staats- Past Board Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the November 24, 2025, meeting were approved. The motion was made by Joanne Powell and seconded by John Lima. A roll call vote was made, and the motion was passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT & PRESENTATIONS:

The Board was pleased to welcome back and present Sandra Rhue, past SCADB Board Member, with a resolution of appreciation for her time and dedication to the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. SADC Meeting –Update

Kate Katzer shared that the SADC has offered to come to CADB meetings to cover a topic of the Board's choosing. If the Board is interested in learning more about a topic – please let staff know so that they may set up a date with the State. The Board suggested a discussion covering the new Formula Value process to better understand it now that it has been utilized around the State.

2. County /State Boards of Agriculture – Update

Debbie Norz shared that the state board Agrotourism grant is coming out, no further information has been shared yet.

3. Staff Comments

Kate Katzer mentioned that the 2026 roster is being passed around. If any Board Member has any changes or updates, please make a note on the document - if not initial and return to staff. As a reminder, following today's meeting, the SCADB will be holding their Christmas Breakfast downstairs in the Engineering Conference Room.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

The following items were presented to the Board by Somerset County Agriculture Development Board Manager, Kate Katzer:

1. Axcel Farm- Hillsborough Twp.

Staff scheduled a site visit on Wednesday to Axcel farm, and SADC will be in attendance. Staff is going on the site visit to see how far along Axcel is with the cleanup process that must be done by December 31st. This matter will be discussed further during closed session.

2. Naturally Nurturing- Hillsborough Twp.

Kate Katzer announced that there will be a site visit on Wednesday with Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District, NRCS, and the SADC to review practices occurring onsite. Additional information will be discussed further during closed session.

3. Kafka Farms- Watchung

Staff distributed the Kafka farms commercial farm certification documents. The Right to Farm Committee reviewed and determined that Kafka Farms meets the criteria set forth in the Right to Farm regulations as a Commercial Farm. The Right to Farm Committee has recommended that the Board approve the Commercial Farm Certification. A motion was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by Laura DePrado to send a letter approving Kafka Farms as a commercial operation.

4. Monitoring 2025

Staff mentioned that we will be going over the monitoring presentation during closed session. Additional dates had to be added to the schedule due to inclement weather. If additional violations are found during the remaining dates, that information will be presented at the January meeting. This will be discussed further in closed session.

5. 2026 Committee Assignments

The 2025 committee list was in packet for review. If anybody would like to change their committees, please speak to Debbie or Mark. The finalized version will be disseminated at the January meeting.

6. 2026 Board Roster

If there are any corrections, those will be made prior to the January Meeting. A finalized version will be in the packets for next meeting.

7. Closed Session

At 9:18 a.m. a motion to go into closed session was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Debbie Norz. A roll call vote was made, and the motion was passed.

8. Results and Actions from Closed Session

At 9:48 a.m. a motion to come out of closed session was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by John Lima. A roll call vote was made, and the motion was passed.

A motion was made for Debbie Norz and Jimmy Abma to attend the SADC meeting in December on behalf of the Board and to represent the SCADB during a joint Board site visit to Naturally Nurturing with the SADC. The motion was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by John Lima. The motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made to send a follow-up letter to Joe Cichowski about the progress of the site clean-up and to schedule a follow-up site visit to review the progress. A motion to approve was made by Debbie Norz and was seconded by Jimmy Abma. The motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made to send a Notice of Violation to Los Amigos Ranch for the unapproved pergola, outdoor kitchen, and non-agricultural food trucks onsite. The motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Debbie Norz. The motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made to send a Notice of Violation to Nahkla for nonagricultural car hauler found on the preserved ground. A motion was made by Jimmy Abma and seconded by John Lima. The motion unanimously carried.

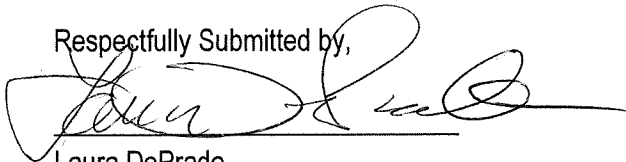
A motion was made to send a Notice of Violation to Snyder's Farm for mobile home found on the preserved ground. A motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Jimmy Abma. Debbie recused herself. The motion unanimously carried.

A motion for approval to work with the Somerset County Board of Agriculture on a joint poster contest for Ag Day. The motion was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by Laura Deprado. The motion unanimously carried.

9. Adjournment

At 10:00 a.m., a motion was made to adjourn by Laura DePrado and seconded by Jimmy Abma. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura DePrado', written over a horizontal line.

Laura DePrado
SCADB Secretary

The Next SCADB meeting will be held on Monday, January 26th, 2025, at 8:15 am.