

CHAPTER 112

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

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

C.4:1-23.1 “New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry” established.

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

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

(2) register minority, women, disabled, LGBTQIA+, socially disadvantaged, and historically underserved farmers to receive notification of opportunities to apply for and participate in farm loan assistance and business assistance programs;

(3) assist in the prioritization of applications of State registrants, in accordance with subsection b. of this section;

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

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

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

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

d. Not more than 180 days after the establishment of the State registry, and every 180 days thereafter, the department shall:

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

(2) notify any State registrant not also registered with the federal USDA register of the benefits of registering with the federal USDA register; and

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

e. The department, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), may adopt rules and regulations necessary to implement this act.

f. As used in this section:

“Department” means the Department of Agriculture.

“Federal USDA register” means the United States Department of Agriculture Minority Farm Register and any other similar register for minority, women, and socially disadvantaged

farmers, administered by the Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

“LGBTQIA+” means a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, genderqueer, queer, intersex, agender, asexual, questioning, and other non-heterosexual-identifying community.

“State registrant” means a minority, woman, disabled, LGBTQIA+, socially disadvantaged, or historically underserved farmer registered with the New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry established pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

“State registry” means the New Jersey Minority, Women, and Underserved Farmer Registry established pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 22, 2022.