Reassessing the New Jersey Farmland Assessment Act: Barriers to Urban Farmer’s Market Commercial Sales

Kayla Fowler1, Lauren Errickson2, Tiffany Gathright3, Jennifer Papa4, Meredith Taylor1, Laura Lawson1
1Rutgers University, Department of Landscape Architecture, 2New Brunswick Community Farmer’s Market, 3Greater Newark Conservancy, 4City Green

Introduction

The New Jersey Farmland Assessment Act is responsible for "permits farmland and woodland acres that are actively devoted to an agricultural or horticultural use to be assessed at their productivity value" (Farmland Assessment Overview).

As of now the act creates commercial sale barriers to urban farmers’ markets through the "Five-Acre" Rule, where a farm is not considered a farm unless it consists of five contiguous acres, among other additional requirements.

The purpose of this research project is to propose urban policy reform to make food stamps and other federal assistance vouchers more accessible and allowed for use at New Jersey farmers’ markets to expand sales and purchases, while simultaneously increasing fresh produce accessibility in low-income communities.

References


Results

From the meta-analysis, the preliminary results gathered showed the following:

• SNAP universally accepted due to entitlement
• WIC/FMN more restricted because it is not an entitlement program
• Establishing a food policy council/department of food would aid in the process of linking government and community initiatives involving food security

Future Work

Complete surveying and evaluating each site in the respective demographic regions of New Jersey and how their communities are impacted by the restrictions of the New Jersey Farmland Assessment Act’s Five-Acre Rule.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank my family & friends who have supported me over the past eight weeks with their encouraging and uplifting support and motivation. I would especially like to thank Alice Cooper, Melissa James, Kelise Thorne, and Jada Anderson for their never-ending support, laughter, and love. I would also like to thank Laura Lawson & Meredith Taylor from the Department of Landscape Architecture for being patient and endearing faculty mentors. Lastly, I would like to thank our collaborators for their time and knowledge at the various sites across the state of New Jersey.