

Is Ag-in-the-Middle solely a farmer problem?

If you care about urban food security (healthy food access for urban populations), you should support Ag in the Middle farms.

The reason is simple if you do the math: NJ has 8.8 million residents; 1,196 people per square mile. In 2010, our farms produced \$112 per resident, per year, of wholesale farm products. But, half of our entire farm output is non-food, non-feed nursery, floriculture, and turf products.

Therefore, we currently produce \$56 of food per resident, per year.

How long would your family members thrive on \$56 of farm products?
That's insecure. We are a food deficit state.

Moreover, small and beginning farms that are the current focus of popular support depend on local ag supply dealer networks on their path to viability. These dealers need a critical mass of customers to remain in business. When their core customer base of Ag in the Middle farms no longer exist, we lose essential equipment and service suppliers, and *all agriculture* becomes less efficient, less competitive, and declines in viability.

Do we expect too much from farmers, without compensation?

We expect our farms and farmers to provide for us all the public benefits listed below. Yet, not one of these public benefits of farms is incorporated into the prices customers pay for products:

- Care for their animals properly, but not inconvenience us with occasional odors, flies, or slow animals crossing roads
- Protect the environment, like wildlife habitat and groundwater recharge, and help maintain open space against sprawl
- Be good citizens of their communities creating ag economic development which generate tax revenues while demanding far fewer government services than residential development
- Provide us with food products that have unique attributes and pleasurable eating experiences
- Provide us with food security; provide safe food, free of infectious agents and toxins
- Take care of production land for future generations
- Contribute to healthy landscapes, healthy communities, and a sustainable future