Leftover produce donated to area soup kitchens

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MOORESTOWN

Farmers aren't packing up all their leftover produce to take back home when the farm market closes every Saturday at the Burlington County Community Agriculture Center.

They are giving some of it away to residents in need through soup kitchens in the county.

Dan Kennedy, county farm-land preservation coordinator, said the donations are being made in conjunction with the Farmers Against Hunger program in Trenton and the American Farmland Trust.

He said the county is now collecting about 200 pounds of produce a week from not only farmers but from community gardeners and from the cooperative farming operation at the preserved county farm at Centerton and Hartford roads in Moorestown.

Kennedy said he decided to have the county take up the cause of the late Neil Robson, a North Hanover farmer who was chairman of the county's agricultural development board and who regularly do-

See PRODUCE, Page 3B
Susan Roohr, of Cranberry Hall Farm in New Hanover, prepares a produce donation for Farmers Against Hunger during the Burlington County Farmers Market on Saturday.

Produce/Not all farmers participate

Continued from Page 1B

nated to Farmers Against Hunger.

“I respected that a lot and admired his thoughtfulness,” Kennedy said.

He said not all farmers are participating because the program is voluntary and some farmers have no leftovers after shoppers come to the market.

Farmers with stands at the county government-operated farm market load leftover corn, tomatoes, zucchini, melons and other vegetables onto a waiting truck. American Farmland Trust intern Derek Hardy of Willingboro, a Rutgers University student, assists in the effort at the market each Saturday.

Kennedy said the truck delivers the produce to the county’s Buttonwood Hospital for refrigeration until the charities pick them up on Mondays for distribution. Much of the food goes to Family Services and the rest to locations in Pemberton Township.

Joann and Tony Darino, a market vendor and owners of a farm on Cox Road in Moorestown, are one of the donors and pack up two boxes of vegetables every week for the needy.

“It is hard times for everybody, including us. If we can help anybody else, it makes us feel good,” the wife said.

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