



## Connecticut Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

### **Customer Focus**

*The Jones Family has long had a reputation as stewards of the land, and has remained faithful to its credo – “Be good to the land and the land will be good to you.”*

*Under the stewardship of Terry Jones, his wife Jean, and son Jamie, the family continues their tradition of growing Christmas trees, as well as strawberries, blueberries, pumpkins, gourds, squash, raspberries and wine grapes on their 400-acre farm.*

*Located in the suburban White Hills section of Shelton and situated in a public water supply watershed, the Jones’ closely follow their NRCS conservation plan that includes provisions for erosion control, wildlife habitat, and protection of water and soil quality and health.*

*They also look for new and innovative ways to balance economic reality with environmental protection. The Jones’ are advocates for the wise use of natural resources and are actively involved in national, state, and local organizations that promote the protection of working lands.*

*Through USDA’s Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), the Jones have been able to preserve one of their farms under a permanent conservation easement, giving them an opportunity to purchase additional land to expand their operation while helping to protect farmland and slow urban sprawl in Shelton.*

### ***Overview:***

The USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) helps farmers and ranchers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program partners with States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value of the easement to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership.

Conservation plans are developed on all highly erodible cropland. Nationally, over \$101.3 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. The 2002 Farm Bill produced some changes in the program, including the addition of a provision providing for the protection of historical and archaeological resources on farm and ranchlands, and the inclusion of nongovernmental organizations as eligible entities. The Farm Bill also significantly increased the amount of financial assistance available under FRPP, authorizing nearly \$600 million through Fiscal Year 2007. Sixty-seven million dollars was allocated to states to purchase easements in FY 2003.

### ***Accomplishments:***

Cooperating entities’ proposals are selected through a competitive process designed to protect parcels that will help accomplish FRPP and local land use goals. FRPP easements protect entire working farms, woodlands, wetlands, important natural areas, and historical and cultural resources. Through FY 2002, \$4.7 million in FRPP funds have been awarded to purchase easements on approximately 2,821 acres of valuable agricultural land in Connecticut.

Due to increasing development pressure throughout the state, requests for FRPP funds have increased dramatically in recent years, far outpacing the program’s funding capacity. In FY 2003, partners in Connecticut requested \$8,832,575 in FRPP funds. This request represents 13.6 percent of the total amount of FRPP funds available nationwide in FY 2003. Connecticut was allocated \$1,593,000 to purchase conservation easements in FY 2003.

### ***State Contact:***

Kip Kolesinskas, Connecticut FRPP Manager  
Phone: (860) 871-4047  
kip.kolesinskas@ct.usda.gov

**Outlook:\***

Although many people think of Connecticut as predominantly suburban, there are still many farms throughout the state. In fact, agriculture contributes \$2 billion to the state's economy each year. Many of the state's farms have been lost to sprawling development, which has rapidly eaten away at some of the best farmland. Today, there are only 370,000 acres of farmland left in Connecticut, covering less than 12 percent of the state's land base.

Since 1984, Connecticut has lost 21% of its farmland to development and urban sprawl, one of the fastest rates of farmland loss in the country. As farmland has disappeared, Connecticut residents increasingly have lost access to locally grown foods, wildlife habitat and scenic farm landscapes. By matching funds from the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program, FRPP is helping to relieve the pressure on farmers to sell their farms to developers by providing an alternative that can help preserve farming operations. (\*Source: American Farmland Trust)

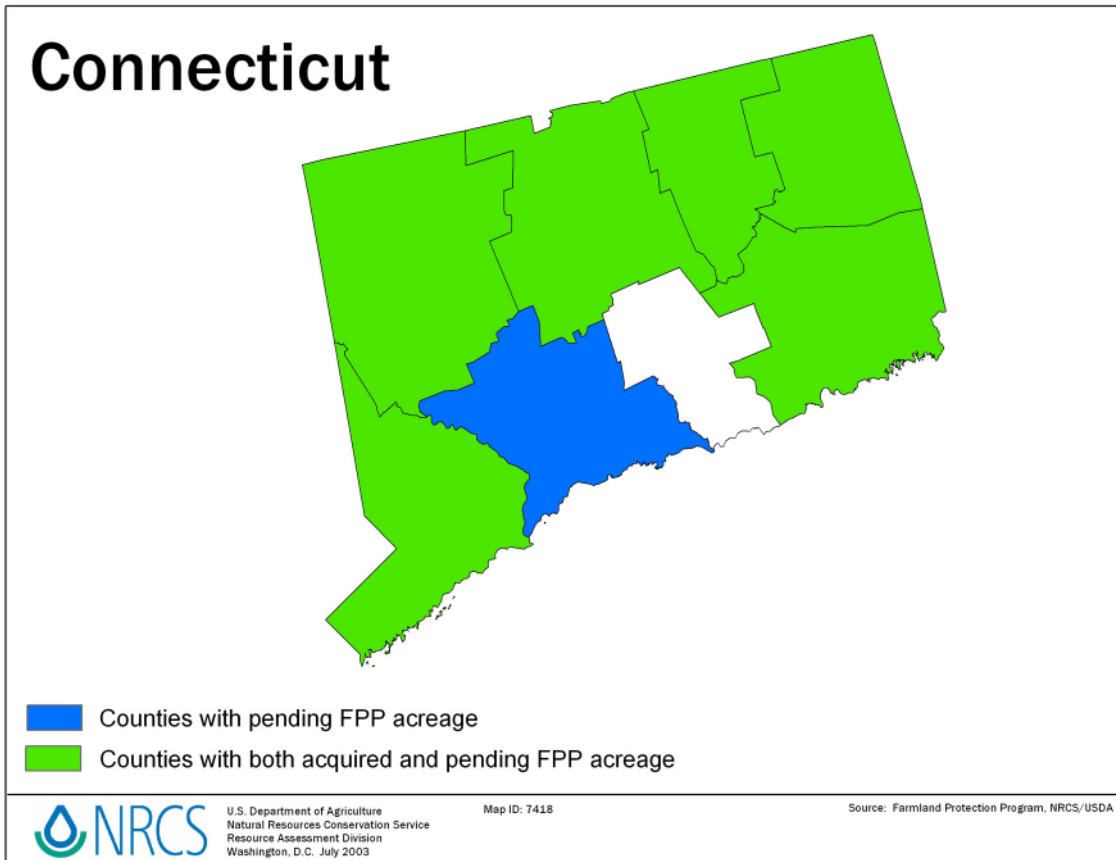
**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program - Connecticut Easements  
as of June 2003  
Number, Acres, Easement Costs by County**

Connecticut					
	Easement Cost			Federal Payment	
County	Acres	Total (\$)	Avg. (\$/acre)	\$	%
Fairfield	92	1,116,637	12,137	399,869	36%
Hartford	135	738,815	5,473	241,588	33%
Litchfield	252	668,513	2,656	324,606	49%
New London	1,090	2,193,461	2,012	1,095,416	50%
Tolland	605	2,043,702	3,378	1,004,148	49%
Windham	328	752,267	2,293	345,723	46%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>2,502</b>	<b>7,513,395</b>	<b>3,003</b>	<b>3,411,350</b>	<b>45%</b>

\*Totals do not include pending FY 2002 easements

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# Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program - Connecticut Easements as of June 2003



## Trends in Population by County - Connecticut 1990 to 2000 (Census Data)

