



2002 California Fact Sheet



Farmland Protection Program

California Summary

Overview

The Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides up to 50% of the easement cost to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996.

FPP and the 2002 Farm Bill

The 2002 Farm Bill reauthorized FPP with a \$985 million overall budget increase covering the next 10 years. The program has been expanded beyond state and local governments to include non-governmental organizations as eligible entities. It also makes farm and ranch land containing historical and archaeological sites eligible. Additionally, landowners may now donate up to 25% of the required matching contribution.

Accomplishments

More than 1,481 acres have been protected in California since FPP's authorization in 1996. National totals exceed 108,000 acres. During the 2002 fiscal year California received approximately \$2.5 million in FPP funds. Enthusiasm for the program is growing with 17 proposals submitted on approximately 11,367 acres.

Program Options and Eligibility

Entire farms or ranches may be enrolled in FPP. The land must have agricultural value and be privately owned. Easement agreements are perpetual and may be customized depending on the property. The monetary value of a conservation easement is determined through a professional appraisal. Easements restrict non-farm development and subdivisions, and require development and implementation of a conservation plan.

Customer Focus

In 2001, the Farmland Protection Program (FPP) allowed Peter and Debbie Hunter of Yolo County, to replant 5,000 trees in their 40-year old prune orchard. The Hunter ranch is located just outside of Winters, and has felt the pressure of widespread development and urbanization in the surrounding Central Valley. By signing the permanent conservation easement, the Hunters were able to secure enough funds to replant their land and hold off further development.

The Hunters worked together with the Yolo County Land Trust, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the State of California's Department of Conservation (DOC), and the Yolo County Resource Conservation District to devise a partnership that would protect their family farm. The success of the partnerships and the signing of the conservation easement, have strengthened Peter and Debbie's hope of being able to pass onto their young sons an appreciation of the agricultural lifestyle .

Application Process and Cooperators

Persons interested in participating in FPP should contact the FPP Program Manager or their local Land Trust. Landowners wanting to apply for the program should contact State, Tribal, or local government or non-governmental organizations with an existing farmland protection program. The sponsoring organization will submit an application on behalf of the landowner. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. Eligible projects will be evaluated, prioritized and selected for funding as budget allocations permit.

State Contacts

Jim Kocsis, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, NRCS, 430 G Street #4164, Davis, CA 95616 (530) 792-5605.

For More Information

If you need more information about FPP please contact the FPP Program Manager at (530) 792-5605, or your local USDA Service Center listed in the telephone directory under Federal Government Agencies, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Information on the national program is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

California Counties with FPP Easements

County: Madera

Acres: 409

Total Easement Cost: \$3,770,498

Federal Percentage: 39%

County: San Luis Obispo

Acres: 38

Total Easement Cost: \$380,000

Federal Percentage: 50%

County: Merced

Acres: 74

Total Easement Cost: \$ 368,000

Federal Percentage: 50%

County: Yolo

Acres: 113

Total Easement Cost: \$150,000

Federal Percentage: 50%

County: Monterey

Acres: 778

Total Easement Cost: \$3,450,200

Federal Percentage: 50%

County: San Bernardino

Acres: 9

Total Easement Cost: \$756,659

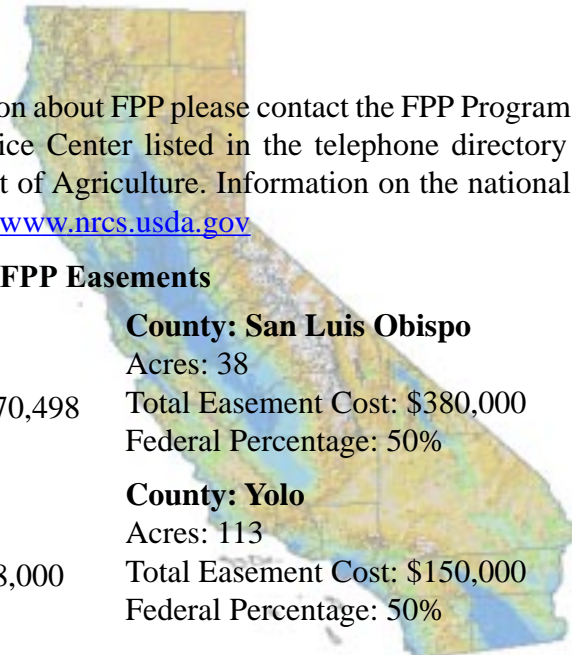
Federal Percentage: 79%

County: San Joaquin

Acres: 60

Total Easement Cost: \$408,000

Federal Percentage: 50%



Vineyards in Sonoma



Strawberries from Monterey

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