



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California 2009 Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Signup Announced

DAVIS, Calif., April 14, 2009—Applicants for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), may apply for the program for the 2009 fiscal year between now and June 15, 2009. Ranking and selection of parcels will take place immediately thereafter and funds will be obligated by July 15, 2009.

NRCS State Conservationist Ed Burton noted that while each fiscal year has its timelines for annual consideration for the program, the 2008 Farm Bill provides for a continuous signup to allow eligible entities more opportunities to potentially enroll parcels.

Eligible entities must be State, Tribal, or local units of governments or be non-government organizations that meet specific requirements. These entities must have an established farm and ranch land protection program; the authority to hold and manage easements; the capacity to acquire, manage, and enforce the easements; and necessary funds to match the Federal contribution.

The FRPP can provide up to 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the easement on the farm or ranch. At least 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the easement must be provided by the eligible entity with at least 25 percent in cash. The eligible entity must secure the appraisal, survey, and title search; prepare the conservation easement deed; and pay for the closing. Landowners may accept less than the appraised fair market value. If they do so the difference between the appraised value and the purchase price accepted is considered a landowner donation.

Land proposed for funding in FRPP must meet one of three eligibility categories: contain at least 50 percent soils of special designation (prime or unique farmland soils and/or soils of statewide or local importance); contain historic or archeological resources; or contain land that supports the farm and ranch land protection policies of state or local programs.

Owners of the parcels must have an adjusted gross income of less than \$1 million and be in compliance with the USDA highly erodible land and wetland compliance requirements.

The highest quality parcels will be selected for funding to the extent FRPP resources are available.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

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For further information see www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov or contact Roney Gutierrez, State Program Specialist, at 530-792-5649 or roney.gutierrez@ca.usda.gov.
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