



At a Glance:

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

May 2008

Overview

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

From 1996 through 2007, FRPP has enrolled over 533,000 acres in cooperation with more than 400 entities in 49 States.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages this program.

Legislative Changes

FRPP is amended in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). This legislation expanded the purpose of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program from "protecting topsoil" to "protecting agricultural use and related conservation values of the land."

The program now allows for long term agreements with cooperating entities. Such agreements may be 5 years in duration for certified entities and 3 years for eligible entities that are not certified.

The 2008 Farm Bill defines a "certified entity" as an eligible entity with a proven record of acquiring and monitoring conservation easements. Entities may submit proposals to protect farm and ranch lands throughout the term of the agreement.

The 2008 Farm Bill changes the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture from purchasing conservation easements to facilitating the purchase of conservation easements.

It also establishes that the Secretary may require a contingent right of enforcement in the conservation easement deed, but that the contingent right does not imply the acquisition is subject to Federal standards and procedures for land acquisition.

More Information

For more information and updates about GRP and other Farm Bill topics, please visit your local conservation district — listed on the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) web site at www.macd.org — the Michigan Natural Resources Conservation Service web site www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/ and/or the U.S. Department of Agriculture web site at www.usda.gov/farmbill.

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

Michigan's 79 Conservation Districts are elected units of government authorized by state law. Most are organized along county boundaries. Each Conservation District is governed by a five member, locally elected board of directors who act as a locally controlled resource management agency. The District is the only entity in Michigan accountable to the landowners within its jurisdiction and responsible to provide services and implement programs that meet the needs of private landowners, the community, and its natural resources.