

May 2008

*At a Glance:*  
**Farm and Ranch Lands  
Protection Program**

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**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 the FRPP and other Farm Bill topics, please visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture Web site <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill> or the Natural Resources Conservation Service Web site <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp>.

