

Dates of Activity: July 2008 through September 2008
Seed Grant: Farmland Conservation Model Program/Uniform Farmland Database
Grantee Organization: Council of Fresno County Governments
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Description of Activity by Goal and Objective

Work on the Farmland Conservation Model Program continued in the third quarter of 2008. Most of the activity that took place was the development of the Farmland Conservation Model Program Toolkit. Several discussions have been taking place over the past couple of months with the Farmland Conservation Model Program Advisory Committee in order to understand the agricultural industry in Fresno County and to define the different policy options available to elected officials, decision-makers, and stakeholders. Meetings with the Advisory Committee concluded in mid-October and focus is shifting towards completing the Farmland Conservation Model Program.

Planned Activities by Goal and Objective (for next 3-6 months)

Goals and objectives for the next three months are as follows:

- Conclude discussions with the Farmland Conservation Model Program Advisory Committee that is developing material for the toolkit currently in development.
- Completion of the Farmland Conservation Model Program Toolkit. This is a collection of best practices, solutions, etc., tailored to the unique needs of the San Joaquin Valley.
- Completion of the Farmland Conservation Model Program Final Report. This document is currently in process.
- Disseminate and present the completed products of the Farmland Conservation Model Program. These products include the GIS map accepted by the Advisory Committee, the toolkit, the final report, and the methodology to develop the Farmland Conservation Model Program in other counties within the San Joaquin Valley.

Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback

The Farmland Conservation Model Program Steering Committee for the past several months has been holding ongoing discussions with the Farmland Conservation Model Program Advisory Committee to develop material for the toolkit. Since participants on the Advisory Committee are industry and community leaders, their time is very much in demand. As a result, it was very challenging to have consistent participation on an ongoing basis. Different committee members participate in different meetings. The result was a change in the direction of discussion with every meeting held since the same people are not really present over the course of two meetings.

If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly.

The outreach for the Farmland Conservation Model Program took place primarily in the first quarter of 2008. Several meetings took place with the general public and, more specifically, the agricultural community. Fresno COG and the American Farmland Trust partnered with the Fresno County Farm Bureau. The information during the outreach in the first quarter of 2008 served to in part, guide the dialogue taking place within the Advisory Committee.