

Dates of Activity: October 2008 through December 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 (FCMP) has concluded with the delivery of a draft copy of the Farmland Conservation Model Program for Fresno County report. Included in the report is a series of recommendations for policy makers, elected officials, and decision-makers on action that can be taken to conserve farmland in Fresno County and the rest of the San Joaquin Valley. FCMP for Fresno County is intended to be a model for other San Joaquin Valley counties interested in developing a farmland conservation program within their communities.

The draft copy of the FCMP for Fresno County has been released for 45-day public review and comment by the Council of Fresno County Governments (Fresno COG). Other agencies in Fresno County such as Fresno County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and Fresno County Board of Supervisors are reviewing the report with an interest in helping guide the discussion of implementing agricultural conservation principles within Fresno County.

The draft FCMP for Fresno County made some recommendations on next steps for stakeholders to take regarding farmland conservation in Fresno County. Discussion is expected to take place between stakeholders on how to implement some of the recommendations made.

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

- Have the Fresno COG policy board accept the findings and recommendations of the final Farmland Conservation Model Program.
- Present the findings of the FCMP for Fresno County to mayors and city councils of those communities most impacted by the program. Outreach and scheduling meetings has already started with some of these communities.
- Share the findings of the final FCMP for Fresno County to key stakeholders such as the Fresno County LAFCO and the Fresno County Board of Supervisors.
- Disseminate and present the completed products of FCMP. These products include the GIS map accepted by the Advisory Committee, the toolkit, the final report, and the methodology to develop the FCMP in other counties within the San Joaquin Valley.

Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback

Feedback received on the FCMP for Fresno County has been quite positive. Many stakeholders have expressed satisfaction that stakeholders from many different industries have been able to come together to work on the Advisory Committee to contribute to the development of the program. Program stakeholders included representatives from agriculture, government, private industry, environmental groups, the building industry and more.

If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly.

Outreach for FCMP primarily took place in first quarter 2008. Several meetings took place with the general public and, more specifically, the agricultural community. Fresno COG and American Farmland Trust partnered with Fresno County Farm Bureau. With development of the program largely complete, additional outreach is expected to take place to stakeholders and the community to provide information on the recommendations made in the report.