

STATE, AG LAND TRUST PERMANENTLY SET ASIDE FISHER RANCH NEAR GREENFIELD FOR AGRICULTURE

SACRAMENTO – State and local organizations have partnered to permanently set aside for agriculture a Salinas Valley ranch potentially in the path of development. The California Department of Conservation (DOC) and Salinas-based Ag Land Trust have created an agricultural conservation easement on the Fisher Ranch a half-mile outside of Greenfield, working with a family ownership group to ensure it will never be developed.

“Our family bought the property about 25 years ago,” said Rob Fisher, part of the locally prominent farming family. “It was a dairy owned by a Swiss family at one time, but it was already in row crops when my father got the land and has been in grapes for about 15 years. The Ag Land Trust owns the property next door, so it made a lot of sense for our family to put a conservation easement on our land. It’s a really nice piece of farmland – 100 percent prime and very productive. It’s good to know it will stay in agricultural use.”

The Ag Land Trust not only owns the farm north of and adjacent to the 103-acre Fisher Ranch, it also has a contract to acquire an agricultural conservation easement between the Fisher property and the city of Greenfield. The Ag Land Trust has negotiated with that community, Monterey County, and a developer to create a buffer zone along the east and south boundaries of Greenfield.

“This completion of this easement project is a milestone in that effort,” said Richard Nutter, president of the Ag Land Trust. “What we’re aiming to do is encourage developers to look at land west and north of Greenfield rather than at the world-class farmland to the east and south. Agriculture represents more than 40 percent of the county’s economy, and we’re the nation’s leading vegetable crop producing county. It’s critical to ensure that land is set aside for farming and ranching for agriculture to continue to thrive.”

The Ag Land Trust received funding for the easement from DOC-administered California Farmland Conservancy Program and the Carmel-based Barnet Segal Charitable Trust.

“We congratulate the Ag Land Trust and the Fisher family on the creation of this conservation easement,” Department of Conservation Director Mark Nechodom said. “We have worked with the Ag Land Trust on nearly 30 easements to preserve the remarkable farmland of Monterey County and appreciate the work they do. The Fisher Ranch is in an area that the department and Ag Land Trust agree is a high priority, so we’re very pleased to be a partner in this effort.”

About the Ag Land Trust: Founded on August 1, 1984 the trust is a public benefit corporation created with the intent to preserve farmland and benefit the farmers who make their living from that land. The Ag Land Trust has permanently preserved more than 20,000 acres of land dedicated to agricultural use. The value of the annual agriculture productivity from these protected properties exceeds \$200,000,000 per year. For more information, visit <http://www.aglandconservancy.org/>.

About the Department of Conservation’s California Farmland Conservancy Program: Begun in 1996, the CFCP has provided more than \$78 million in funding to permanently shield more than 54,000 acres from development. Landowners and trusts are encouraged to contact DLRP for information about the program and potential funding. For details, visit: www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp.