



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

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FEDS, STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERMANENTLY SHIELD SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY WALNUT FARM FROM DEVELOPMENT

SACRAMENTO – John Galeazzi started farming nearly 50 years ago and always dreamed of passing on his legacy to his children and grandchildren. His vision was realized recently when his riverfront walnut orchard in San Joaquin County was permanently shielded from development in a collaboration involving federal, state and local government.

“As a farmer you want to see this rich soil remain in agriculture,” Galeazzi said. “With this land being protected now, I know my legacy of farming will be passed down to my kids and grandkids and they’ll be able to enjoy the walnut orchards for many years to come. That’s part of what farming is all about.”

The Galeazzi family purchased the 253-acre property in Lockeford, east of Stockton, in 2004. The farm is now enrolled in an agricultural conservation easement, permanently extinguishing development rights and ensuring that it will remain in agricultural use forever.

The Central Valley Farmland Trust (CVFT) will hold the easement. It obtained the bulk of funding to create the easement from the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. Other contributions came from the state Department of Conservation’s California Farmland Conservancy Program and city of Stockton farmland mitigation funds.

“NRCS is proud to partner with the Central Valley Farmland Trust and the Department of Conservation on protecting this agricultural treasure in San Joaquin County,” said Jeff Burwell, NRCS California acting state conservationist. “This property boasts prime soils, a healthy riparian area, and reliable water sources that will support local agriculture and wildlife for generations to come.”

The Galeazzi Farm forms a natural buffer between the northern edge of Lockeford and surrounding prime farmland. The farm includes almost a half a mile of frontage on the Mokelumne River, once used as a jumping-off point for shipments of goods to the mines during the Gold Rush. The area’s agricultural character is threatened by conversion to riverfront ranchettes in the short term and denser urban development in the long

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Galeazzi Agricultural Conservation Easement 2-2-2

term.

“Conserving California’s farmland is a prudent investment, helping to ensure food security and economic opportunity,” said Department of Conservation Director Mark Nechodom. “The CFCP is designed to protect important farmland in the path of development, and there’s a fair amount of ranchette development here. Protecting this property will benefit the agricultural economy and stability of this region, so we are very happy to be a part of this project.”

Added Bill Martin, Executive Director of the Central Valley Farmland Trust: “It was a pleasure working with the Galeazzi family, which understands the value of protecting this highly productive farmland for generations to come.”

About the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP): The FRPP provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement. For more information, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov.

About the Department of Conservation’s California Farmland Conservancy Program: Begun in 1996, the CFCP has provided more than \$77 million in funding to permanently shield more than 53,000 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.

About the Central Valley Farmland Trust: The CVFT is a private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. Its mission is to work with landowners and conservation partners to preserve agricultural lands in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The CVFT’s board includes farmers and agricultural business professionals with a passion for protecting farmland.

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