

SBALT NEWS

Phil Foster Ranch fully protected forever

By Lynn Overteer

Strawberries. Leeks. Canary melons. Tomatoes. Basil. Walnuts. Apple juice. That is a sample of what you can buy from Pinnacle Organically Grown Produce either this Wednesday afternoon at the Hollister Certified Farmers' Market or Saturday morning at the Pinnacle farmstand. Thanks to the vision of Phil and Katherine Foster, the 51-acre farm they own on Duncan Avenue in San Juan Bautista will remain in agriculture forever.

The Fosters conserved the first 27 acres of their ranch in 2019 with an agricultural conservation easement purchased by SBALT with local mitigation funds from the County to offset the loss of 27 acres of farmland to new houses on Southside Road.

Funds for the second agricultural easement that protected the remaining 24 acres this July were made available through two programs. The first is the State's Strategic Growth Council's Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program (SALC), in collaboration with the Department of Conservation. SALC is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities. The second is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Agriculture



San Benito Agricultural Land Trust

tural Conservation Easement Program, which helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements. We are grateful for these programs and the taxpayers who fund them.

Please visit www.sanbenitolandtrust.org to learn how you can help protect more agricultural land in San Benito County. We can't do this work without you. ■



Foster Leeks. Photo by Cathy Summa-Wolfe



You can buy from Pinnacle Organically Grown Produce either this Wednesday afternoon at the Hollister Certified Farmers' Market or Saturday morning at the Pinnacle farmstand.

Grab some fresh summer tomatoes and basil and try the recipe below, generously provided by Katherine Foster.

Katherine's Fresh Tomato Pasta

- 6 cups ripe tomatoes cut into ¾" cubes
- 1 lb whole wheat pasta
- 2 cups fresh mozzarella cut in ½" cubes
- ¾ cup cotija cheese crumbled
- 1 cup basil leaves chiffonade
- Olive oil to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Hot pepper flakes to taste
- Serve with Parmesan and toasted breadcrumbs



Cook pasta according to instructions. While pasta cooks, prepare all other ingredients. Drain pasta, put in bowl, add cheese, and mix well. Add tomatoes and basil. Mix gently. Add about 1/2 cup olive oil. Add seasoning, mix, taste, and adjust. Serve with grated Parmesan and sprinkle with toasted breadcrumbs. Enjoy! ■

Foster initial site visit.



Foster Strawberries. Photo by Cathy Summa-Wolfe