

*The Mission of the San Benito Agricultural Land Trust is to conserve regionally significant lands that sustain productive agriculture, preserve open space, and maintain the rural character of the county.*



*The San Benito Agricultural Land Trust is governed by an all-volunteer board of directors. The board is composed of community leaders who have extensive experience with agriculture, public and private lands management, and related industries.*

*The San Benito Agricultural Land Trust is dedicated to providing financial options to farmers and ranchers in order to protect the agricultural heritage of San Benito County. The Land Trust can protect land permanently and directly by accepting conservation easements designed to meet the individual needs of farmers and ranchers. As a non-profit, private, tax-exempt organization, the land trust is funded through membership, donations, development mitigation and grants.*



SAN BENITO AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST  
P.O. Box 145, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045  
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## CONSERVATION EASEMENTS



## WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a land trust that legally and permanently restricts land uses in exchange for financial benefits.

“CONSERVATION”  
to preserve and protect

“EASEMENT”  
a legal right to use another's land  
for a specific limited purpose

San Benito Agricultural Land  
Trust conservation easements  
protect agriculture and support  
community sustainability.

Conservation easements benefit our  
nation through safeguarding the  
availability of farmland. The land  
remains in private ownership (does  
not become open to the public) and  
is secured for agricultural and  
other permitted uses by the  
property owner.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

A landowner and the Land Trust  
create a contract together that meets  
policy standards, supports  
agriculture and identifies current  
and future auxiliary building sites.

Expectations of the Land Trust -  
The property will be managed to  
preserve its agricultural value. Land  
trust stewardship will include  
annual monitoring of the property.  
The Land Trust will enforce the  
conservation easement contract.

Expectations of the landowner -  
The landowner will continue to  
manage their property for long term  
productive agriculture and  
determine their own best practices.

Possible incurred costs:  
Phase One Environmental Report  
Land Trust Baseline Report  
Legal Review  
Land Trust Stewardship Endowment  
Land Appraisal

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## WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND HOW ARE THEY DETERMINED?

When the opportunity to develop  
property is forfeited, the value of  
the land is reassessed. If the  
property value decreases, so do the  
property taxes. The greater the  
urbanization pressure, the greater  
the change in value (if the threat of  
development is minimal, there  
may be little or no change in  
value). The benefit remains -  
permanent agricultural land  
for future generations.

When a conservation easement is  
donated to a land trust or sold well  
below its value, the landowner  
may gain tax benefits.

If a land trust purchases the  
conservation easement, the amount  
paid to the landowner is the value  
of the development rights removed  
from the property.

Values of agricultural conservation  
easements may range from 20% to  
50% of the full property value.