



# CENTRAL VALLEY FARMLAND TRUST LEGACY

## Our Farms, Your Food

What's better than farm fresh, tree or vine ripened, delicious fruits, veggies, and local products? Little, if anything, especially when Californians can get them year round a short distance from home! How is this? Local certified farmer's markets have been supplying safe, nutritious, local food for well over 50 years. Farmland conservation supports the sustainability of local food production which ensures food safety regulations are met and sustains the land base for farmers and family businesses.

Certified Farmer's Markets (CFM) are special because they provide consumers a high level of security in knowing the products they buy there are local and meet safety standards set by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). At a CFM farmers sell their crops directly to consumers right off California's precious farmland. Before a farmer can sell at a CFM, the CDFA checks to make sure that the farmer grows the produce the farmer is selling.

CFM's provide a great opportunity for small to large farmers to market their products without the added expenses of commercial preparation. There are approximately 700 certified farmers markets throughout California and approximately 2,200 certified producers.



Fresh winter vegetables featured at local farmer's markets.

Mike Tanner, retired Merced County Ag Commissioner with CDFA for 40 years and member of the Central Valley Farmland Trust conservation easement monitoring team, said, "As an ag commissioner, it's our job to ensure the quality and source of a CFM's products. Maintaining the integrity of our local food supply in this way gives consumers confidence in the products they are buying, their loyalty helps keep farmers on the land."

Local farmland and therefore local farmers markets are an integral part of the urban/farm linkage and CFM's are continuing to grow in popularity. Consumers who want to know where their food is coming from and who is producing it can get this at a local market. Ag commissioners who regulate local producers also work to streamline county and state regulations on farmers. This helps maintain their land and operation supplying fresh and wholesome food to the public.

"I've always seen us as the 'protectors' of agriculture because we work locally and understand local issues so we can advocate for best policies," said Tanner. "Keeping farmers on the land protects the precious and invaluable soils of this great valley, a place like nowhere else on earth."

Tanner continued, "Los Angeles County and Santa Clara County used to be the top agricultural counties in the state, providing local food and countless jobs on and off the farm. We must protect the Central Valley or it too will go the way of LA and Santa Clara."

Farmer's markets provide a unique conduit for the public to interact with producers and learn more about their food and farming. This relationship draws the public and agriculture together where they can both support local food from local farms.

"Public support is important to ensure more on-the-ground farmland conservation. Farmers face many challenges to farming on the Valley floor and the enormous benefits we as the public receive from their farming practices must be protected," said Tanner. "So instead of buying your winter and spring produce at the grocery store – visit your local CFM, meet your farmers and support all they do for you." 🌱

## SPRING 2013

### Your Local Certified Farmer's Market Connection:

[www.cafarmersmarkets.com](http://www.cafarmersmarkets.com)

#### **Sacramento County**

Sacramento - Sundays  
Year Round Market  
8th & W Streets

[www.california-grown.com](http://www.california-grown.com)

#### **Stanislaus County**

Modesto - Saturdays  
Open April - December  
16th St, between H & I St.  
[www.modestocfm.com](http://www.modestocfm.com)

#### **San Joaquin County**

Stockton - Saturdays  
Year Round Market  
El Dorado St. & San Joaquin St.  
[www.stocktonfarmersmarket.org](http://www.stocktonfarmersmarket.org)

#### **Merced County**

Merced - Saturdays  
Year Round Market  
19th & N St.  
[www.mercedcfm.com](http://www.mercedcfm.com)



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## Martin Gives Keynote

[See Photo Below Right]

"Bill NAILED it!" said Marcus and Liz Bokisch after hearing Bill Martin's keynote address about Central Valley Farmland Trust at the American Ag Credit annual dinner on February 28, 2013. Others also observed that Bill had a very difficult audience to recapture in the bookend to a night of wine, food and socializing!

Barbara Smith, Vice President of the Valley Corporate Group in the Stockton Branch of American Ag Credit and CVFT Board Treasurer, said, "When I observed mid way through Bill's address that the room of about 550 people was pin drop silent, I knew he was making an impact, but the response I had afterwards tells the tale."

Barbara had requests from a number of guests who wanted to join CVFT's committees, several landowners who were interested in conservation easements and others who wanted to partner with the land trust in any way they could help further the conservation of farmland in the Central Valley!

## Our Mission:

To work with landowners and conservation partners to preserve agricultural lands in the California Central Valley for future generations.

Website address:  
[www.valleyfarmland.org](http://www.valleyfarmland.org)



## Director's Message

Change = Opportunity. Change is happening with or without us. I always equate "change" with "opportunity." Pay attention to what is happening, where things are headed, and derive a plan to be strategically positioned to take advantage of things to come. Across the country and here in the Central Valley changing demographics are rather telling and with that portends a unique opportunity to facilitate farmland conservation.

According to a February 2013 California Planning & Development Report, over the next four years in the San Joaquin Valley household population will grow 72%, requiring approximately 700,000 new households. Hispanic population will become the Valley's new majority. Across the country home ownership is projected to decline, incomes to remain stagnate over the next ten years, and energy costs will continue to increase. Consumer preference is strongly trending toward a demand for single family homes on small lots of less than 6,000 sq. ft. The majority of new residential housing to be built before 2050 will be in the form of attached units (i.e. apartments, townhomes, and condominiums).

How does all this facilitate farmland conservation? It is a loud and clear message to community leaders that large lot subdivisions consuming large tracts of farmland will fail to meet market demands. This dovetails well with the strategy of growing our communities via infill and efficient use of existing land already relegated to future growth under a municipality's established general plan or general plan update. It further facilitates the creation of farmland mitigation programs to help ensure our most valuable and non-renewable resource will remain viable for future generations.

How does the Central Valley Farmland Trust strategically position itself to take advantage of these coming and ongoing changes? The short answer is; we already have. We knew that community growth via infill and efficient use of existing land was the right strategy for communities to follow. We also knew that farmland mitigation would start to proliferate throughout the Valley as a result. So over the last eight years we have provided outreach and education for community leaders and planners regarding CVFT's ability to not only facilitate, but assist in the crafting of language for farmland mitigation programs. Today CVFT is arguably the "go to" farmland trust in the Central Valley when it comes to working with municipalities and developers to facilitate farmland mitigation requirements. It is nice when a plan comes together. ♫



Bill Martin gives keynote address at annual American AgCredit dinner

## Our Vision

Preservation of the Central Valley's agricultural lands is vital to protecting our agricultural economy, heritage, unique agricultural resources and quality of life. We envision a future in which the Central Valley can accommodate population growth and urban development while preserving the most productive agricultural lands, thus creating and maintaining our irreplaceable farmland and high-quality environment for future generations. ♫





Christine and Jon Brandstad



Liz Sanseau, Jeani Ferrari, Elise Boesch and Ursula Navaro

## Crab feed for Conservation

Thank you for supporting farmland conservation during the Crabs for Conservation event!

One hundred friends and supporters of Central Valley Farmland Trust ate their fill of delicious crab at Crabs for Conservation 2013! Guests and Central Valley Farmland Trust's board and staff enjoyed this event at the Waterloo Gun and Bocce Club in Stockton to raise the much-needed funds to continue the land trust's work to conserve farmland throughout the great Central Valley.

Staff and volunteers sold raffle tickets like hot cakes as guests mingled and circled the raffle prizes on display. Bill Martin, executive director, welcomed guests and Ron Freitas, board member, encouraged and inspired guests to 'give' to our farmland conservation cause by sharing his own heartfelt and deep connection to the work of Central Valley Farmland Trust. Ron shared with guests, "By joining us today, celebrating together, and giving to this cause, we will ensure that farmers can continue to farm and our future farmers will too."

A contingent of fun-loving crab eaters enjoyed themselves so much that many stayed until way after closing - just chatting the evening away. Ursula Navarro, Denair, a guest at the event shared on our Facebook page, "What a great crab feed--Crabs for Conservation! I fully intend to support this event next year as it was a first class crab feed." Ms. Navarro won tickets to the Crab Feed by purchasing the CVFT Basket at our annual Carnegie Arts Center event in October, Dinner with Degas.

A special thank you to our event committee members. Without their extraordinary effort this event would not be possible: Denae de Graaf, Ripon, Nonine Freitas, Modesto, and Susan Hooper, associate director for Central Valley Farmland Trust.

We look forward to this event next year and welcoming all of you back! ♪



Tim, Suzanne and Eric Byrd



Lynn Lamoure

## Event Sponsors & Donors

### Farmland Visionary:



E&J Gallo Winery

### Elite Farmer:



SUNBURST Plant Disease Clinic, Inc.

### Premiere Preservationist:

Farm Management, Inc./Ferrari Family

### Conservationist Sponsors:

Bokisch Ranches, Inc.  
Ron and Nonine Freitas  
Sacramento County Farm Bureau

### Silver Table Sponsors:

Jon and Christine Brandstad  
LangeTwins Family Winery and Vineyards

### Raffle Donors:

American AgCredit  
Matt Beekman  
Central Valley Farmland Trust  
Helena Chemical  
John and Jeani Ferrari  
Fredriks Almond Farms  
Bill Martin  
Mid Valley Ag Services  
Sacramento County Farm Bureau  
Duncan and Barbara Smith

### Wine Donors:

Barefoot Cellars  
Bokisch Vineyards  
E. & J. Gallo Winery  
Flip Flop Wines  
Foothill Wine Cellars  
Ironstone Vineyards  
Kenwood Vineyards  
Klinker Brick Winery  
LangeTwins Family Winery & Vineyards  
Mirassou Winery  
Robert Reynolds  
Oak Ridge Winery  
Unruly Wine Cellars  
William Hill





## Board Member Message - Monica Bianchi

I signed up for a builder event entitled "How to get out of a Williamson Contract." The ag lover in me cringed but was curious (I'm not foolish, we all have a place, but what good is a home if there's not a safe food supply). I went, and when the lawyer asked with a chuckle if there were any farm bureau members in the room it took all I had to not raise my hand. I had been looking for a land trust in the valley hoping the most precious of California's lands were not being ignored. The final speaker had me at his first sentence, "I'm Bill Martin, executive director of the Central Valley Farmland Trust." I was giddy. The next sentence, "I graduated from Cal Poly," meant we were kindred spirits (Go Mustangs)!

I introduced myself and seven years later I could not be more proud of all that has been accomplished by this amazing group of people. From formation, to accreditation, to the premier land trust in the valley I am truly inspired at all that the Central Valley Farmland Trust has achieved.

In the past year I have stepped away from other organizations, primarily to focus on my two young children. In the process I have become very aware of how lack of involvement equates to a lack of knowledge in what is going on with a particular entity. As an agricultural marketing major I see great opportunity to reach out to all who support CVFT.

The more ways we can reach out and show you who we are and what we are doing, the more I hope you will have a vested interest.

We recently had our annual board retreat and tried to predict what the next three to five years holds for us. One thing I know for sure is that agriculture is at a crossroad and we must be at the forefront of all that is happening. CVFT staff, its board, and its committees are working hard to care for our existing easements, complete the applications we have, and promote our work to ensure future preservation of agricultural lands. I thank you for your continued support of CVFT and encourage you to let us know how we can better serve you! ☺

# GREAT VALLEY SHOOT & BBQ!

to benefit the Central Valley Farmland Trust

Come join us for our first-ever sporting clay shoot to benefit the Central Valley Farmland Trust. All participants will enjoy lunch catered by Copper Spur BBQ of Denair. Shooters can enter as a single or with a team of 4-5 friends, no experience necessary.

There are 15 shooting stations where guests will aim to win one of our coveted prizes for top shooters and top team.

Space is limited to the first 75 shooters who reserve tickets!  
 Tickets: (entry fee includes 100 targets, lunch, and FUN)  
 \$95 per person (pre-registered), \$125 per person (at the door)  
*\*Bring your own gun and ammunition*  
*\*\*If you prefer to ride to each station bring your own golf cart or ATV, rentals are available on site.*

**Shoot Check-in 8:30 AM**  
**Safety Training 9:00 AM**  
**Shoot Begins 9:30 AM**  
**Lunch and large raffle prize drawing at 12:30 PM**

For additional information or to pre-register please contact:  
 Susan Hooper, (916) 687-3178 or [shooper@valleyfarmland.org](mailto:shooper@valleyfarmland.org).  
 You may also download our registration form on our website, [www.valleyfarmland.org](http://www.valleyfarmland.org) and fax or mail it to us! Checks or credit cards accepted.

**Event Sponsors:**  
 American AgCredit  
 E. & J. Gallo Winery  
 Sunburst Plant Disease Clinic  
 Farm Management, Inc/Ferrari Family  
 Bokisch Ranches, Inc.  
 Sacramento County Farm Bureau  
 Ron and Nonine Freitas

Sponsorship opportunities for the Great Valley Shoot are still available!  
 Please visit our website [www.valleyfarmland.org](http://www.valleyfarmland.org) or call our office to learn how we can work together to showcase your support.

For more information about Rooster Ranch visit  
[www.roosterranchonline.com](http://www.roosterranchonline.com)





## Mitigation Easements a Win-Win for Farmers and Cities

At a high level, the taking of farmland for other purposes is becoming more relevant under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and cities are beginning to realize that losing farmland isn't worth the development it's lost to. The Central Valley Farmland Trust (CVFT) routinely receives calls from land use planners and consultants for myriad land use or development projects where the associated environmental documents require mitigation for the loss of farmland.

"Five years ago you would never see that in an environmental document," said Bill Martin, executive director at Central Valley Farmland Trust. "So it follows that more Valley jurisdictions are starting to realize that having a farmland mitigation policy in place may help to fast track certain development projects, subject to CEQA review, as well as help save valuable farmland."

There are positive efforts at the state level to craft a statewide farmland mitigation policy. In addition, AB 823 was recently introduced into the state legislature by Assembly Member Susan Talamantes Eggman (D, Stockton). The bill requires mitigation for any conversion of farmland in California. It is also important to point out that the Stanislaus County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), a regulatory agency with county-wide jurisdiction, adopted a policy requiring municipalities within the County to provide for farmland mitigation upon annexing land into the City. Only a few LAFCo's in the state have such a policy.

The ground level impact on the loss of farmland starts at the local jurisdictions, the cities. The cities annex the land which ultimately gets developed. In years past cities were generally disregarding the need for farmland protection in favor of increasing the tax base through development. Today, they are starting to understand the need to protect farmland, but also that "sprawl" type development does not generate enough tax base to pay to deliver the infrastructure and services costs. The other agencies and jurisdictions, state, county, LAFCo's, etc., are also realizing this and are advancing policy(ies) to help protect farmland.

Martin continued, "Regardless of the type of mitigation policy required, a qualified land trust is a necessary and integral part of the ultimate success of the policy."

Farmland mitigation comes in a couple different forms: A fee is paid or a perpetual agricultural conservation easement is

placed to satisfy the mitigation requirement. If a fee is paid, the funds usually go to a qualified land trust, like CVFT, which ultimately uses the funds to place an agricultural conservation easement over a property. Currently, mitigation fees are all spent within the county where the loss has occurred.

Another emerging farmland mitigation form is an in-kind project, already common and successful among rangeland and habitat or species mitigation easements. In this situation, no fee is paid by the mitigating party, but to fulfill the obligation a conservation easement is placed on another like property. For example, CVFT is engaged in a two-to-one mitigation project where the developer is placing a 1,000-acre conservation easement on a farm nearby their 500-acre development project.

The Central Valley Farmland Trust plays a unique, and increasingly, important role as a facilitator to match mitigation fees with appropriate farmlands that will offset the loss of farmland. Often times, mitigation fees are collected but there is not necessarily a property lined up to place the conservation easement over. When a landowner is prepared to enter into a conservation easement on their property, CVFT works to match mitigation fees, with other public funding from federal and/or state agencies if needed, to complete the easement. This fulfills the mitigation requirements but also can fulfill the desires of a farm family to conserve their farming operation in perpetuity.

"Theoretically, as development and land conversion increases in response to our growing population, the potential pool of mitigation funds and opportunities could increase as well," said Martin. "Farmers who are interested in entering into a voluntary agricultural conservation easement on their property but do not have the cash to pay for it themselves may have new opportunities to protect their land."

As a non-profit and a land trust, CVFT is a neutral third party working to accomplish their mission of protecting farmland in perpetuity – forever. "We work on behalf of the landowner to meet their conservation goals and in doing so, meet mitigation requirements by cities and counties," Martin said. "We have worked diligently to bring awareness and to facilitate local jurisdictions need to mitigate for the loss of farmland and it is working – cities keep the integrity of their agricultural community while maintaining tax revenue on easement properties and farm families can keep producing local food and protect all the benefits farmlands give us – a win-win." ☑



**Editor's note:** This is the second article in a three part series to appear in the Legacy on the loss of farmland and its effect on food production and our water and soil resources. Vance Kennedy, a retired hydrologist with the Department of the Interior is the primary contributor.

## The Remedy: Modern Management, Conjunctive Use and Land Conservation

The difficult challenge facing all valley cities and counties is how they can sustain water resources. Whether it is for agriculture or city dwellers considering the unpredictable nature of our changing climate, water availability, and our growing population are enormous problems. In addition, valley water infrastructure is tired, outdated and in need of upgrading.

In life, we address the unpredictable nature of the future with insurance, whether that is flood, life, auto, etc. Land conservation may serve as our insurance policy for the unforeseeable nature of climate change and water availability. We must rely on local government's work for more modern management plans to address this challenge and the attempt to balance the needs of state, local water users.

"Farmland can be, and has been largely so in the past, recharge land," said Vance Kennedy, hydrologist retired from the Department of the Interior and a farmland conservation advocate. "If we can protect the farmland we have, we can keep our options for the best means of protecting our future water supply open, but still save water in the meantime. But farmers must continue to flood irrigate to replace pumped ground water."

Fifty percent of city water in Modesto comes from ground water and 60 percent of that is provided by flood irrigation recharge. Some valley cities rely completely on ground water," continued Kennedy. "Open farmlands, whose managers practice flood irrigation, restore our valley's ground water. Drip and sprinkler irrigation can be extremely detrimental to the overall water management system because they deplete the ground water and do little to replenish it."

Flood irrigation carries benefits beyond just recharge in that it flushes soils of dissolved salts that plants do not absorb. "Considering canal water or river water is essentially snowmelt, if we moved cities to a more strictly surface water use system, flood irrigation will flush soils of accumulated salts via clean snowmelt water and also recharge ground water stores with the same fresh water," said Kennedy.

"The inefficiency of flood irrigation carries benefits for recharge," said Scott Magnuson, an organic dairyman and farmer who placed a conservation easement over their family property in 2006. "Management of your flood irrigation practices is key. We keep a close eye on nutrient run-off and we work with experts to make sure we are doing the right things."



As the change in our climate continues warming, we will begin to see more intense precipitation when it occurs but fewer occurrences overall, elevating flood potential. These rain blasts will alternate with longer dry periods. "Capturing and storing storm water to be used when we have a water deficit is the challenge California faces," said Kennedy.

Many water districts, hydrologists, and city governments are looking at conjunctive use as a solution to manage our water resources as the uncertainty of the future unfolds. Conjunctive use is the coordinated management of surface water and groundwater supplies to maximize the yield of the overall water resources. This form of management is becoming a key part of the state's overall water management strategy in terms of coping with a growing population.

Recognizing the era of big water projects has passed, state and local officials have turned to a new supply paradigm that emphasizes regionally developed water supply alternatives and the need for innovative approaches that accentuate the opportunities offered by conjunctive management.

"Coupling modern management, farmers flood irrigation, and land conservation is the prescription for our valley's future water security," said Kennedy. ☺



Vance Kennedy

Read more about these issues in Part 3 of our series due out in our next newsletter of CVFT's Legacy.





## The Enhanced Easement Incentive Extended Through 2013

Congress recently renewed a 2006 incentive that enables family farmers, ranchers, and other moderate-income landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land. This invaluable conservation tool can help conserve many more acres of precious farmland in the Valley. Landowners who act quickly to conserve their land can now enjoy these benefits, but they're currently set to expire December 31, 2013.

Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation easements to the Central Valley Farmland Trust are inspired by many things: they love the culture and the great Central Valley, they feel connected to their land, they know that producing food and fiber locally is vital to our health and security, and they wish to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is central to our work to permanently protect valuable natural resources. But for almost all of our farmers, donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community.

The legislation allows easement donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%);
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and
- Continue to take deductions for as long as 16 years (previously 6 years).

As an example, under the prior law, an agricultural landowner earning \$50,000 (AGI) a year who donated a conservation easement worth \$1 million could take a total of no more than \$90,000 in tax deductions. Under the new law, that landowner can take as much as \$800,000 in tax deductions – still less than the full value of their donation, but a significant increase.

Bill Martin, executive director said, "All of us at Central Valley Farmland Trust are extremely pleased that this legislation has been extended and that landowners have another opportunity to take advantage of these incredible tax incentives. It is so important to conserve productive agricultural lands and open space that buffers our water supplies for the next generation. The enhanced incentive is an essential conservation tool at a time when land conservation, especially in California, needs all the resources it can muster. We look forward to working with Valley farmers who want to take advantage of this opportunity."

The Land Trust Alliance, the governing body for land trusts nationwide, worked diligently with land trusts across the country to get this extended and work continues to make this law permanent. "This incentive is a win-win opportunity for family farmers and conservationists in the Valley," said Denny Jackman, CVFT board president. "We are proud to support private, voluntary land conservation and we hope this incentive is made permanent. All families benefit from the incentive and the lasting conservation work of Central Valley Farmland Trust." ♫

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit: [www.lta.org/easementincentive](http://www.lta.org/easementincentive).

### IRA Charitable Rollover

Also included in this 2006 incentive legislation is the IRA Charitable rollover for those at least 70 1/2. IRA charitable rollover, for a donor who is at least 70½, can request that a distribution be paid from an IRA (other than a SEP or SIMPLE IRA) to a public charity like Central Valley Farmland Trust. The transfer to Central Valley Farmland Trust, if done properly, counts toward the taxpayer's required minimum distribution for the year without having to count it as taxable income.

Any amount up to a maximum of \$100,000 may be distributed in order to get the special tax treatment. Any amount in excess of \$100,000 will be included in income. If the donor is filing a joint return, the spouse can also make a distribution and exclude up to \$100,000.

Talk with your accountant or tax advisor to see if this will work for you. Information can also be found in IRS Publication 590 under Qualified Charitable Distributions.

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PRESERVING FARMS THAT FEED THE WORLD