



## Massachusetts Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Pro-

### **Customer Focus**

Paul Maiewski is a fourth generation farmer from Whately, located in Franklin County. He owns 100 acres of farmland along the Connecticut River in Western Massachusetts. Paul recently purchased 11 acres of prime farmland from his uncle. He decided to use those acres to grow organic produce.

“It’s a big commitment” Paul says of the shift to organic farming. Paul received Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funding to place a perpetual conservation easement on the 11 acre property. Matching funds were provided by the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. Together, the two programs helped Paul keep his land in agriculture. “My neighbors to the north and south have already put their land under farmland preservation. I hope to pay off my mortgage with the funding.”

In addition to preserving the soil resource base, this FRPP project has enhanced critical wildlife habitat and maintained scenic vistas along one of America’s designated Heritage Rivers.

### ***Overview:***

The USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) helps farmers and ranchers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program partners with States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. NRCS provides up to 50% of the fair market value of the easement to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership.

Conservation plans are developed on all highly erodible cropland. Nationally, over \$101.3 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. The 2002 Farm Bill produced some changes in the program, including the addition of a provision providing for the protection of historical and archaeological resources on farm and ranchlands, and the inclusion of nongovernmental organizations as eligible entities. The Farm Bill also significantly increased the amount of financial assistance available under FRPP, authorizing nearly \$600 million through Fiscal Year 2007. Sixty-seven million dollars was allocated to states to purchase easements in FY 2003.

### ***Accomplishments:***

Cooperating entities’ proposals are selected through a competitive process designed to protect parcels that will help accomplish FRPP and local land use goals. FRPP easements protect entire working farms, woodlands, wetlands, important natural areas, and historical and cultural resources. Through FY 2002, \$5.3 million in FRPP funds have been awarded to purchase easements on approximately 4,297 acres of valuable agricultural land in Massachusetts.

Due to increasing development pressure throughout the state, requests for FRPP funds have increased dramatically in recent years, far outpacing the program’s funding capacity. In FY 2003, partners in Massachusetts requested \$11,876,600 in FRPP funds. This request represents 18.2 percent of the total amount of FRPP funds available nationwide in FY 2003. Massachusetts was allocated \$2,261,000 to purchase conservation easements in FY 2003.

### ***State Contact:***

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**Outlook:**

Massachusetts has some of the best agricultural land in the United States. The Connecticut River Valley's fertile soil produces top quality products. Preserving land for agriculture in Massachusetts is not easy. Development pressures are increasing in the area at a rapid rate. Between 1982 and 1997, Massachusetts lost 18% of its agricultural land--in all, 89,000 acres. The FRPP serves to help bolster the Commonwealth's \$500,000,000 agricultural industry by helping to keep farms in active commercial use for perpetuity and by sending a strong message to the industry and its farmers that state and federal government are serious about encouraging a viable agricultural economy. Since 1977, Massachusetts state government has invested over \$118 million to protect more than 500 agricultural properties totaling more than 50,000 acres.

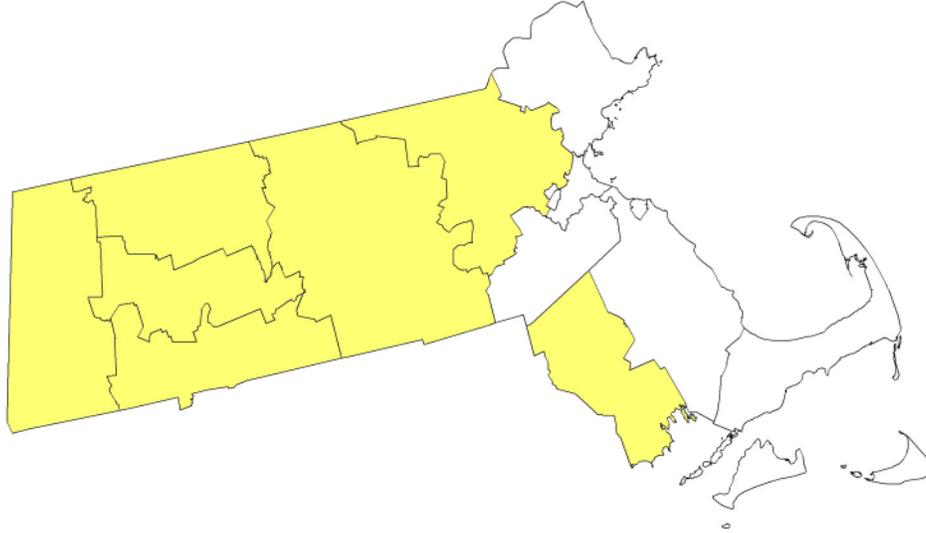
**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program - Massachusetts Easements  
as of June 2003  
Number, Acres, Easement Costs by County**

Massachusetts					
County	Easement Cost			Federal Payment	
	Acres	Total (\$)	Avg. (\$/acre)	\$	%
Berkshire	1,168	3,112,000	2,664	1,089,750	35%
Bristol	59	313,000	5,305	154,000	49%
Franklin	922	2,309,000	2,504	909,125	39%
Hampden	413	1,565,000	3,789	706,000	45%
Hampshire	372	1,898,500	5,103	760,000	40%
Hancock	200	170,000	850	75,000	44%
Middlesex	373	4,402,400	11,803	1,071,900	24%
Worcester	647	1,503,500	2,324	314,000	21%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>15,273,400</b>	<b>3,677</b>	<b>5,079,775</b>	<b>33%</b>
*Totals do not include FY 2002 pending easements					

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# Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program - Massachusetts Easements as of June 2003

## Massachusetts



 Counties with acquired FPP acreage



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Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Resource Assessment Division  
Washington, D.C. July 2003

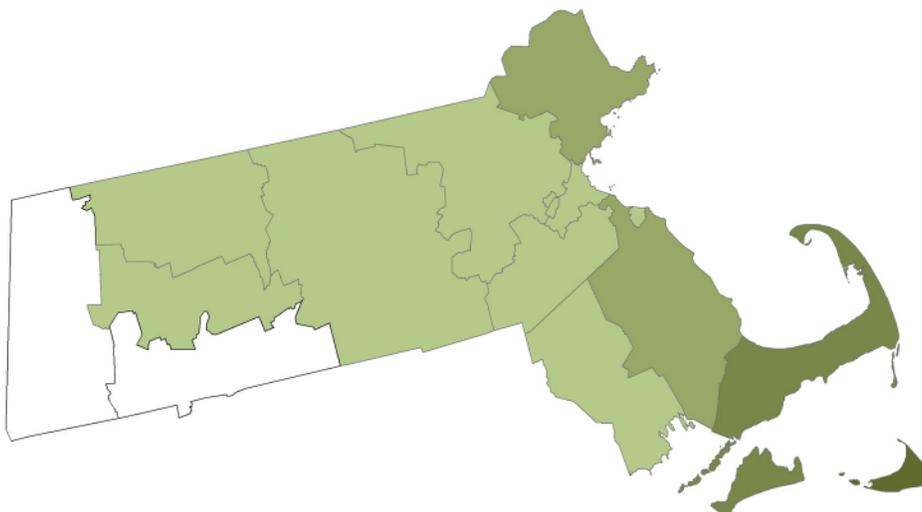
Map ID: 7426

Source: Farmland Protection Program, NRCS/USDA

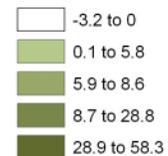
## Trends in Population by County - Massachusetts 1990 to 2000 (Census Data)

### Percent Change in Population between 1990 and 2000

#### Massachusetts



#### Change in Population



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Resource Assessment Division  
Washington, D.C. July 2003

Map ID: 7427

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population 2000