



Customer Focus

Fred and Margaret Kenyon keep the rich silty soils in the village of Usquepaug, Rhode Island for about forty years. With the passing of time their family has grown, the dairy industry has changed, and the surrounding community has become an affluent bedroom town. Pressure has mounted for the Kenyons, and their farming neighbors, to sell their land to residential developers. As retirement moved from being a distant image to a pressing need, the stage was set for either developing the land or protecting it for long term agricultural use.

Located in the northwest corner of the Town of South Kingstown, the village of Usquepaug is home to a cluster of active farms. The Town has a history of partnering with conservation agencies and organizations to protect valuable open space and farmland. The Kenyon's farm became a high priority for the Town to protect by purchasing its development rights. Its 172 acres of pasture, silage corn, and hayland, with a perimeter border of forests and wetlands along Muddy Brook, made the farm a prime candidate for several farmland and open space protection partners. The Town of South Kingstown, working closely with the Kenyons, sought out financial commitments from USDA's FPP, the State of Rhode Island's Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's open space protection program. With assistance from these three partners the Town assembled the \$775,000 needed to protect this historic, scenic, and productive farm. By contributing about 20% of the acquisition cost, USDA's FPP has assured that a centerpiece farm in the community is protected and that a family tradition can continue. With four farms now protected in the immediate vicinity, the village of Usquepaug is assured a future as a farming cluster of statewide significance.

Farmland Protection Program Rhode Island Summary

Overview The USDA Farmland Protection Program (FPP) helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The program assists States, Tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses. NRCS provides up to 50% of the easement cost to the cooperating entity, which acquires, manages, and enforces the easement. Landowners participate voluntarily, and protected farms remain in private ownership. Every protected farm operates under a conservation plan approved by the local Conservation District. Nationally, over \$52 million have been obligated to state and local entities since establishment of the program in 1996. Proposals were accepted in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2001.

Accomplishments In FY 2001 NRCS partnered with the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission and the Town of Richmond to protect a fifty acre sod farm by purchasing the development rights. This farm is part of a larger cluster of farms that have been targeted for protection by state and local interests. Using funds appropriated in 1998, the FPP contributed half of the \$200,000 purchase price of the easement.

Applications for FY 2001 FPP funding were solicited from entities throughout the state seeking assistance with their farmland protection program. Two towns and the State of Rhode Island submitted applications for FY 2001 FPP funds. The three applications requested a total of \$1,550,000 from USDA to help protect eight farms, covering a total of 1,184 acres. The estimated total cost to acquire agricultural easements on the eight farms was \$6,626,000. The applications were evaluated and \$505,000 of FPP financial assistance funds were allocated by NRCS to assist the Rhode Island applicants. Cooperative agreements were developed with each of the three applicants, providing funds for one farm each.

Outlook Interest in protecting farmland from urbanization remains very strong in Rhode Island. Public support for funding farmland protection and other open space initiatives has been unwavering for the past twenty years. Past efforts by State, local government and private organizations have yielded many heartening successes, but the job is far from over. As farmland owners age and family situations evolve, the need to receive cash value for farmland matures. It is anticipated that the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, and local governments, will continue to actively preserve farmland over the next decade. To date, the number of willing sellers has out-

State Contact:

Everett Stuart
FPP Manager
Phone: (401) 822-8830
everett.stuart@ri.usda.gov

Photo by:
Tim McCabe, NRCS



**Farmland Protection
Program
Rhode Island Easements
(As of December 2001)**

Rhode Island



Counties with both acquired and pending FFP acreage



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL RURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

NRCS-088

Approved for Release by NSA on 05-08-2014 pursuant to E.O. 13526

County: New Port
Acres: 169
Total Easement Cost:
 \$2,381,005
Average per acre: \$14,089
Federal payment amount:
 \$475,000
Percentage: 20%

County: Washington
Acres: 808
Total Easement Cost:
 \$5,159,500
Average per acre: \$6,386
Federal payment amount:
 \$1,205,700
Percentage: 23%

RHODE ISLAND TOTALS:
Acres: 977
Total Easement Costs:
 \$7,540,505
Average per acre: \$7,718
Federal payment amount:
 \$1,680,700
Percentage: 22%

Difference in Population between 1990 and 2000 Rhode Island



Change in Population

- < 0
- 0 to 5,000
- 5,000 to 10,000
- 10,000 to 25,000
- > 25,000

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

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