

# The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County

## *Guide to Agriculture Conservation Easements*



### **WHAT IS AN AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT?**

A voluntary legal agreement between a landowner (grantor) and a land trust (grantee), such as the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, that will help protect farming and ranching as a way of life while the landowner continues to own the land and utilize it for production purposes. An Agriculture Conservation Easement protects a property for farming or ranching while limiting future development or other land uses incompatible with the conservation values. Easements can cover the entire farm or ranch or only portions of the property. Tax Benefits and/or financial compensation are often available for grantors of agricultural conservation easements and can be an integral step in succession planning.

### **WHAT ARE EASEMENT RESTRICTIONS?**

The Land Conservancy will meet with the landowner to draft an easement that reflects the landowner's desires and the need to protect the agricultural/conservation values of the property. Typically, an Agriculture Conservation Easement restricts development, subdivision and harmful land uses to the degree that is necessary to protect the agricultural production and conservation values. Landowners still hold title to their property and the rights of ownership, including the right to sell the property, lease the land, leave it to their heirs, and the right to privacy.

### **HOW IS AN EASEMENT VALUED?**

The value of an easement is calculated by subtracting the restricted value of the property with an easement on it, from the fair market value of the property as determined by a qualified appraiser.

### **HOW LONG DOES THE EASEMENT LAST?**

An Easement "runs with the land" meaning it will remain in place even after the property changes ownership. The easement is recorded with the county, binding the original owner and subsequent owners to the easements restrictions.

### **Our Mission Statement**

Through voluntary and collaborative measures, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County works to permanently protect and enhance lands having important scenic, agricultural, habitat and cultural values for the benefit of people and wildlife.

*For more information please contact:*

### **The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County**

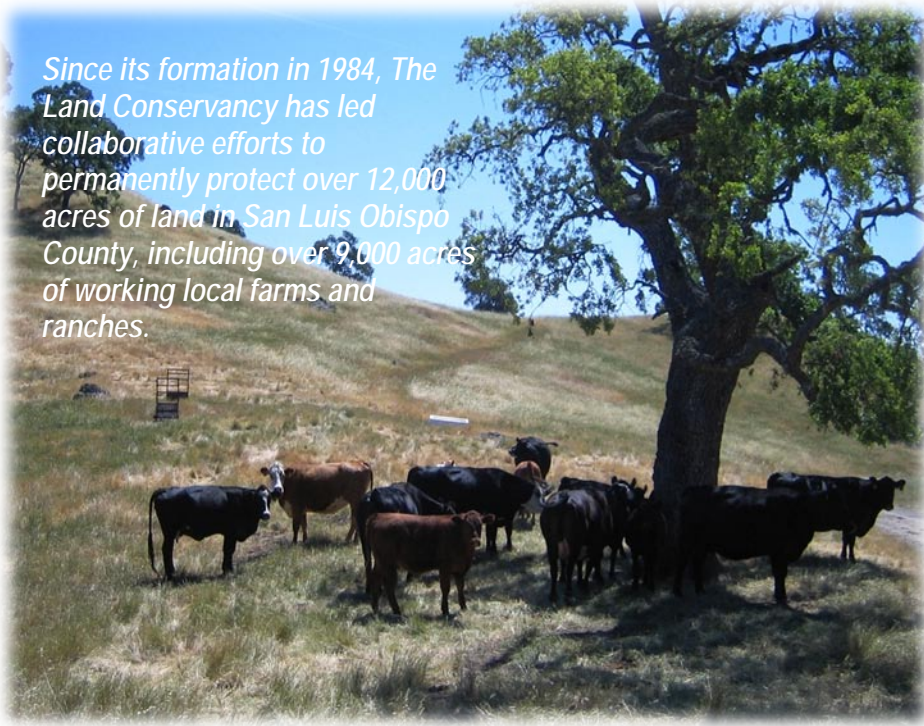
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Since its formation in 1984, The Land Conservancy has led collaborative efforts to permanently protect over 12,000 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County, including over 9,000 acres of working local farms and ranches.



**WHO IS  
THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF  
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY?**

We are a non-governmental, nonprofit land trust led by professional staff and board trustees with the support of approximately 700 local households. We are local, working to protect San Luis Obispo County – our staff, board and volunteers, work and play here too. We adhere to the highest ethical standards of practices and are members of the Land Trust Alliance.



***“If families don’t have to leave town to have a recreational experience, if our food is grown locally & sustainably, and if our air and water are clean, then we have a successful conservation strategy.”***

***Kaila Dettman, Executive Director***