



SAVING
AMERICAN
FARMLAND:
WHAT WORKS

American Farmland Trust

*This book is respectfully dedicated to Norm Berg,
who has devoted his life to inspiring and teaching
us all how to conserve our nation's
most precious natural resource.*

ABOUT AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

American Farmland Trust is the only private, nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to protecting the nation's strategic agricultural resources. Founded in 1980, AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Its activities include public education, technical assistance, policy research and development and direct land protection projects. Basic AFT membership is \$20 a year.

AFT provides a variety of professional services to state and local governments and public agencies, private organizations, land trusts and individual landowners. Services include customized information products and workshops on farmland protection and estate planning; policy research, development and evaluation; farmland protection program implementation and conservation real estate consulting.

For membership information or general information about AFT, contact the National Office or connect to our home page at <http://www.farmland.org>. To order this book or to find out more about AFT's publications, products and services call (800) 370-4879.

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ABOUT THE FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER

In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Agricultural Library, AFT has developed a farmland information center specifically on farmland protection. The FIC has two components that serve the public: an electronic library and a technical assistance service. The library offers a searchable database of farmland protection literature, state statutes, maps, resources and other reference aids. The FIC can be accessed at <http://www.farmlandinfo.org> or by calling (413) 586-4593 for technical assistance.

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No issue will be more important to 21st Century America than how we use our dwindling land resources. The competition for land—especially productive agricultural land—will intensify as our population grows and the communications revolution makes it easier for us to live and work in widely-dispersed communities. The irreplaceable land that produces our food and provides us with scenic open space, wildlife habitat and clean water is increasingly at risk from urban sprawl and rural subdivisions. To assure a prosperous future, we must save our farmland.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Efforts to protect America's farmland begin at the local level, where sprawl threatens community character and endangers fiscal stability. The strategies, policies and techniques described in this book will help farmers and ranchers, public officials, conservationists and other citizens understand how to protect precious agricultural land and landscapes.

However, local initiative is not always enough. The competition for land occurs in the context of a global economy and is strongly influenced by federal and state government policies. Even the most well-intentioned local efforts will fail if state legislatures and Congress continue to promote policies that facilitate development on agricultural land. Now is the time for policymakers at all levels of government to support agriculture and re-examine the transportation, tax, and even environmental programs that contribute to urban sprawl. This book offers the kind of insight and information needed to accomplish this task.

Saving American Farmland is the most comprehensive reference publication available on the subject. This guidebook complements and expands the vast resources of the American Farmland Trust-managed Farmland Information Center—an Internet-accessible database and library. Together they provide the most up-to-date information on the full range of public policies and programs that give landowners alternatives to selling farm and ranch lands for development.

Saving American Farmland features impressive success stories detailing how local communities have built comprehensive programs to protect farmland. AFT offers these stories to inspire concerned citizens and communities across the nation to protect the land that sustains us all.

William K. Reilly
Chairman of the Board
American Farmland Trust
July 1997



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Respectfully submitted
by Julia Freedgood
Director of Farmland Advisory Services