



Natural Resources Conservation Service
230 North First Avenue, Suite 509
Phoenix, Arizona 85003
Voice (602) 280-8801
Web: <http://www.az.nrcs.usda.gov>

News Release

Media Contact:
Valentino Reyes
(602) 280-8780

Program Contact:
Scott Morton
(602) 280-8823

USDA provides over \$6.8 million for agricultural easements in Arizona

PHOENIX, November 8, 2016 –USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service NRCS is now accepting a second round of applications for the Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) component of the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#) in Arizona. The 2014 Farm Bill created the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, or ACEP, keep lands in farming and ranching for the future.

NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program also protects grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving grassland, including rangeland, pastureland and shrubland. About \$6,825,000 is being invested this year in Arizona through ACEP.

Arizona NRCS will accept applications for the fiscal year 2017 ACEP-ALE funding throughout Arizona. Applications for the second round are due **December 7, 2016**. A third round of applications will be accepted from December 12th with a deadline of **January 13, 2017**. For more information or to apply, visit the [ACEP-ALE webpage](#).

Through ACEP, private or tribal landowners and eligible conservation partners working with landowners can request assistance from USDA to protect and enhance agricultural land through an agricultural easement.

These easements deliver many benefits over the long term, such as protecting prime agricultural land under high risk of development in urban areas to help secure the nation’s food supply and jobs in the agricultural sector.

ACEP consolidates three former NRCS easement programs – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, Grasslands Reserve Program and Wetlands Reserve Program – into two components – one that protects farmlands and grasslands and another that protects and restores agricultural wetlands.

Find more information on the ACEP-ALE program in Arizona [here](#). To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or [local USDA service center](#).

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