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Spring 2000

Review of *Saving American Farmland: What Works*

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Saving American Farmland: What Works. American Farmland Trust. Northampton, MA: American Farmland Trust, 1997. xi+344 pp. Figures, tables, maps, index. \$34.95 paper.

This well-organized, comprehensive reference on protecting America's farmland provides, along with a brief history of the nation's loss of irreplaceable agricultural resources to urban sprawl, an account of the successful techniques and strategies state governments and communities have used to protect farmland and support agriculture.

Section One, "The Farmland Protection Toolbox," examines popular tools ranging from comprehensive growth management to specific applications such as mitigation ordinances. The first chapter offers brief descriptions of the tools and techniques state and local governments are using—some widely, others experimentally—to protect farmland and ensure the economic viability of agriculture. Many of the most effective farmland programs are both regulatory and incentive-based strategies. Chapter two discusses Agricultural Protection Zoning, the system of county and municipal zoning ordinances designating areas where farming is the desired land use, generally based on soil quality and a variety of locational factors, and how such zoning supports and protects farming by stabilizing the agricul-

tural land base. The section's remaining chapters cover the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, the transfer of development rights, agricultural tax programs, and Right-to-Farm legislation. Any community looking for ideas to incorporate into its land use plan would find valuable information here.

Section Two, "Putting It All Together: Building a Comprehensive Program to Protect Farmland," takes a look at how communities have combined different strategies to stabilize the land base and support the economics of agriculture. Case studies demonstrate how to build a comprehensive farmland protection program.

William K. Reilly, Chairman of the American Farmland Trust Board in July 1997 and former EPA Administrator, summarizes the book well: "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." **Lonnie L. Schulze**, *State Resource Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Salina, Kansas*.