



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

## helping people help the land

# Boparai Farms

“I wanted to find a better way to ensure all our crops received water at the same time, while also reducing the amount of water we used.”

- **Baljit Boparai**



### Boparai's Conservation Practices:

- Installed drip irrigation lines throughout his grape vines and almond orchards
- Applied road oil onto his dirt roads to meet the San Joaquin Valley's air quality standards
- Preparing to become eligible to participate in the Conservation Stewardship Program

Baljit Boparai learned from an early age that hard work and perseverance are the most important factors to running a successful farming operation.

When he was young, Boparai and his brother

would manually harvest the family's raisin crop alongside their father and grandfather. They would spend long hours in the field watering the vines, and applying fertilizer and pesticide when needed. Their water and electricity bills continued to go up and Boparai needed a solution.

“It would take nearly 10 days to flood irrigate our vines and typically it put too much stress on the final rows,” said Boparai. “I wanted to find a better way to ensure all our crops received water at the same time, while also reducing the amount of water we used.”

After hearing from a friend about NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Boparai met with Ken Grimes and Sam Vang, both soil conservationists at the Fresno Service Center, to contract on installing a new drip irrigation system. After discovering that both his water and electrical usage had reduced by half after installation, Boparai continued to look for further ways to conserve resources and increase production.

Over time, Boparai applied to enter into an EQIP contract for his dirt roads to be oiled, to help him meet the San Joaquin Valley's air quality standards. Boparai also invested in a smart sprayer system so he could apply pesticide more accurately onto his vines, and ensure that no unnecessary pesticide was released into the atmosphere.



Vang (left), Grimes (center) and Boparai discuss the effectiveness of irrigating almond trees using a drip irrigation system.

When Boparai and his father expanded their farming business to include growing almonds as well, they immediately began installing a drip irrigation system in their orchard.

Furthermore, Boparai has started the process of becoming eligible to participate in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), which encourages agricultural and forestry producers to address resource concerns by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving and maintaining existing conservation systems.

“I know that he is a perfect candidate for CSP because of his dedication to make all elements of his farming operation sustainable,” said Grimes. “He continues to seek out expanded

opportunities to conserve water, and to protect local water and air resources.”

Boparai is unique in that he not only comes from a multi-generation farming family but his family is also of Sikh descent, a vitally important constituency of California’s Central Valley farming community. Boparai strives to be a role model to his peers and younger farmers through education and outreach.



*Above: The Boparais spread out their freshly picked grapes onto sheets of paper, laid out on the ground, to dry into raisins.*

*Left: Boparai discusses his need for extending his well depth to better access well water during drier seasons.*