

# MEDIA KIT

  
**American Farmland Trust**  
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US



PAUL HIGLEY/ALAMY



LAWRENCE WHITE

American Farmland Trust is the only national organization dedicated to the land, what happens on it, and the people who steward it. We pursue this work holistically and comprehensively—protecting farmland, promoting environmentally sound farming practices, and helping farmers and ranchers thrive.

**NO FARMS NO FOOD®**

# What We Do

**Advocate.** AFT advances public policy at all levels (federal, state, and local) to improve land use, protect farmland from development, enhance conservation, and support farmers.

**Investigate.** AFT conducts research on topics from farmland loss to conservation outcomes to farmer demographics, catalyzing new policy and programming.

**Innovate.** AFT, which pioneered the conservation agriculture movement, continues to explore new tools and methods, from novel easement provisions to innovative farming practices.

**Educate.** AFT provides essential information and technical assistance to farmers, farm groups, conservation organizations, and all levels of government.

**Collaborate.** AFT does much of its work in partnership, actively collaborating with farmers and ranchers, land trusts, municipal planners, state officials, academics, and others.



*Farmland is critical infrastructure, akin to roads and bridges. Without farms, there's not only no food, there's no future. We need farmland to feed us and sustain our economy—but also to help restore our planet.*

— John Piotti

# Why It Matters

Without farms and ranches, we lose:

- The capacity to grow food, fiber, and fuel
- Biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- Agricultural processes that naturally purify air and water
- Plants and soil that capture atmospheric carbon, countering climate change
- Scenic landscapes that help keep America beautiful
- Economic activity that provides 11 percent of total U.S. employment
- The backbone of rural communities across the country
- Our ability to meet a growing population's future demands for food, fiber, and energy

But it's even more than that.





AGSTOCK IMAGES/ALAMY

## What's at Stake

**The land itself.** America is losing farmland and ranchland at a rate of 175 acres every hour—over 1.5 million acres every year. At the same time, we lose roughly 1.7 billion tons of topsoil from erosion each year. We are losing our land, both by the acre and by the inch.

**The broader environment.** Farms harm waterways with misplaced nutrients (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus) and pollute the air with greenhouse gases. Though farmers are improving their practices, change is not happening at the scale or pace that's needed. Farming “done right” can purify water and combat climate change; but to restore our planet while time allows, farmers must move beyond “best practices” to what AFT calls “next practices”—and soon!

**Our farmers and ranchers.** We are losing the people who know how to grow food and care for the land—the very people our future depends on. We simply can't hope for any form of agriculture that is truly sustainable without enough farmers and ranchers to work the land. Yet the average age of U.S. farmers has climbed to 58, one-third of farmers are 65 or older, and the number of new farmers is declining. We face a demographic crisis unprecedented in agricultural history.

### Our Food Supply



### Our Society



### Our Planet



## How We Work

AFT works in service to our nation's farmers and ranchers, often partnering with state and local agencies, other farm groups, conservation organizations, and academic institutions. We have traditionally served as a convener and go-between, because we understand both agriculture and the environment—and we have earned respect within both communities.

We work on both sides of the aisle to educate members of Congress and state legislatures about the urgent need to protect farmland, increase conservation (for healthier soils and cleaner air and water), and support new and next-generation farmers.

We engage on some issues nationally, while conducting other work through regional offices in key places (where the need is great, where the opportunity exists, and where others aren't operating as we can).

## Our Impact

More than any other entity, AFT created and then advanced the conservation agriculture movement. We have had an outsized impact on land conservation, conservation practices, and efforts to

support America’s primary conservation stewards, our farmers and ranchers (who care for about 55 percent of our nation’s land area). At the same time, AFT’s widely recognized No Farms No Food® message—which connects the food we eat to the farms that grow it—has built public support for farmland, farming, and farmers.

## Land Conservation

- AFT wrote the federal legislation that acknowledged agricultural conservation easements and then became the prime advocate for federal easement funding (which exceeds \$1.5 billion to date, with another \$2 billion secured over the next 10 years).
- As one of the first agricultural land trusts in the nation, and the only one operating in multiple states, AFT tested ideas and refined protocols to share with new groups getting started.
- AFT helped create (and continues to serve) over 125 private land trusts and public farmland protection programs, which have permanently protected over 6.5 million acres of agricultural land.
- AFT successfully advanced current use taxation and smart growth policies across the nation, which have reduced development pressure on over tens of millions additional acres of agricultural land.

## Conservation Practices

- AFT led the charge to incorporate a “Conservation Title” into the 1985 Farm Bill, a mechanism that has enabled conservation programming to play an ever-increasing role in federal policy.
- AFT championed the Conservation Reserve Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program, now mainstay USDA programs that have proven their effectiveness.



USDA-NRCS



TODD PARKER

- AFT was one of the first organizations in the nation to recognize the value of conservation cropping systems (e.g., no till) and to help farmers adopt such practices.
- As a visionary leader, for over 25 years AFT has helped test, refine, and promote farming practices that build soil health and thus capture carbon and combat climate change.

## Conservation Stewards

- Since our founding, AFT has recognized that farms and ranches can only produce our food and enhance our environment if they remain in business, so we’ve pursued a holistic strategy.
- AFT advances farmland protection through compensated easements that either enable existing farmers to innovate or expand, or enable new farmers to buy land more affordably.
- AFT promotes environmentally sound farming practices that improve a farmer’s bottom line; we have also pioneered environmental markets that pay farmers to take additional steps.
- In these ways, AFT has directly supported the economic viability of thousands of farmers and ranchers.

For more information, contact  
**Lori Sallet**, Media Relations Director at **(202) 378-1259** or **lsallet@farmland.org**