



NATHAN ANDERSON/UNSPASH

Resources

Farmland Information Center

The Farmland Information Center is a national resource center for information about farmland protection and stewardship, as well as some broader agricultural topics. The FIC is a partnership between AFT and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service developed to fulfill the public education requirement outlined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Together, AFT and NRCS have developed a clearinghouse of information that includes an extensive online collection of laws, literature, sample documents, and statistics at www.farmlandinfo.org. The webpages serving farmers and agricultural landowners were viewed more than 33,000 times last year, and documents and resources were downloaded at least 5,500 times. Over the FIC's lifetime, it has served over half a million users.

In addition to serving as an information clearinghouse, the FIC offers a team of specialists who provide technical assistance to anyone interested in saving



TED HOROWITZ/ALAMY

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agricultural land. FIC staff provides information about federal, state, and local programs that reduce conversion and permanently protect farmland and ranchland; supplies statistics and research results to help advocates make the case for policies and funding; recommends applicable model laws or documents, makes referrals to farmland protection entities, and reviews plans, lease agreements, easements, and ordinances.

Each year, the FIC offers direct assistance through its answer service to hundreds of individuals. More than a third of requests are from farmers and agricultural landowners. FIC staff provide information about finding or leasing farmland, accessing capital to start or expand a farm operation, how to protect land using an agricultural conservation easement, and how to transfer a farm to the next generation. Many resources and tools on these topics are also available on the FIC website.



PAT & CHUCK BLACKLEY/ALAMY

Our *Farmland Protection Directory*, a list of public programs and land trusts that protect farmland and ranchland, is used by agricultural landowners to find a farmland protection partner in their region. The FIC's list of *Farm Link Programs* helps connect farmers seeking land with landowners who have agricultural land available—it was viewed more than 7,000 times this past year.



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Requests for assistance can be submitted to FIC staff in a variety of ways:

- Call our toll-free number at (800) 370-4879
- Submit a question using the online request form
- Tweet us at @farmlandinfo
- Visit our website at www.farmlandinfo.org

American Farmland Trust Key Staff

John Piotti, president and CEO. John joined AFT in 2016, bringing more than 25 years of executive management and public policy experience along with a passion for saving the nation's farmland and ranchland from development. Prior to joining AFT, John was president and CEO of Maine Farmland Trust. A former member of the Maine State Legislature, John chaired the Agriculture Committee and served as Majority Leader.

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Hannah Clark, Pacific Northwest director. Hannah leads AFT's Pacific Northwest office. Previously, Hannah was the first executive director of the Washington Association of Land Trusts, where she led efforts to protect agricultural land. She also was the federal policy director for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, where she drove bipartisan efforts to support conservation funding through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

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Cris Coffin, senior advisor and director, National Agricultural Land Network. Cris returned to AFT in 2018 to expand AFT's policy work in the areas of farmland protection, farm transfer and succession, and land access. Formerly AFT's New England Director, Cris has also held several positions in the U.S. Senate, including on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and as Chief of Staff to Senator Herb Kohl. In addition to her policy work, Cris runs a small poultry operation in western Massachusetts.

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Jennifer Dempsey, director, Farmland Information Center (FIC). Jennifer leads the Farmland Information Center, which AFT created in 1995. A partnership with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the FIC provides free technical assistance to concerned citizens, farmers and policymakers who want to protect farmland and ranchland. Dempsey became its first farmland

information specialist and ultimately its director.

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Jennifer Filipiak, Midwest director. As the head of AFT's Midwest office and Women for the Land initiative, Jennifer works directly with farmers and farmland owners, especially women landowners, to advance conservation practices on agricultural operations. With a background in wildlife biology, Jennifer previously worked for Illinois Stewardship Alliance and for The Nature Conservancy, where she built the Iowa chapter's freshwater program.

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Julia Freedgood, senior advisor and director, Farms for the Next Generation. Julia oversees federal, state and local efforts to support farmland protection and agricultural viability. She also leads the nation's first comprehensive effort to develop a training curriculum around farmland retention, succession, and access. A recognized national leader in providing services to communities, Julia has spent much of her career ensuring a voice for agriculture in the community planning process.

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David Haight, vice president for programs/New York director. In addition to providing support to other state and regional directors, David leads AFT's New York office. He works closely with state and federal legislators as they work on agricultural and land conservation legislation and has helped coordinate projects to permanently protect more than 4,000 acres of New York farmland. He has also worked with more than 20 local governments to establish agricultural economic development and farmland protection plans since joining AFT in 2001.

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Kara Heckert, California state director. Kara leads AFT's efforts in California to scale up the adoption

of climate-smart agricultural practices; support existing and next generation farmers and landowners; and advocate for state farmland protection and smart-growth policies. As the former executive director of the Sonoma Resource Conservation District, Kara has spent the last 16 years applying technical, policy, and fundraising expertise to the development of successful agricultural sustainability and ecological restoration programs in California.

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John Larson, senior vice president. John joined AFT as executive director of programs in 2015, having previously served as the chief executive officer of the National Association of Conservation Districts. John also worked directly with Washington State conservation district associations for six years as the executive director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts. Before his nearly 20 years with conservation districts, John owned and operated his family's farm in Royal City, Washington.

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Nathan L'Etoile, New England director. Nathan leads AFT's work in the six New England states. Still active in his family's diversified farm, Four Star Farms, Inc., Nathan has served the farming community throughout his career. Beginning at the Massachusetts Farm Bureau as director of government relations, he later served as the youngest ever assistant commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and most recently worked with clients at Start Strategies LLC on land use and issues affecting natural-resource based businesses.

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Jennifer Moore-Kucera, PhD, climate initiative director. Jennifer directs strategy, provides leadership, and supports program activities for AFT's "Farmers Combat Climate Change" initiative. A nationally recognized soil health expert, Jennifer was the co-director/NRCS liaison

for the USDA-Northwest Climate Hub and West Region Soil Health team lead for the USDA-NRCS-SHD. She is a published researcher, educator, and presenter on soil health links to carbon sequestration.

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Michelle Perez, PhD, water program director. Michelle helps AFT succeed in a new era of farm conservation through researching, developing, and promoting innovative agricultural and conservation policies. She leads AFT's water initiative and manages a Conservation Innovation Grant awarded to AFT to study the economics of environmentally sound farming practices. Michelle was formerly a Senior Associate at World Resources Institute on the Water Team in the Food, Forests, and Water Program.

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Beth Sauerhaft, PhD, vice president for programs. Beth leads AFT's national initiatives to protect farmland, combat climate change, conserve water, engage women landowners, support farm viability, and bring a new generation of farmers on to the land. Before joining AFT, Beth served as senior director in corporate sustainability for PepsiCo, where she integrated social and environmental sustainability into PepsiCo's platform and piloted programs to make company agricultural supply chains more sustainable. Her agricultural background is extensive, previously having served as deputy to the counselor to the administrator for agricultural policy, USEPA; national ecological climatologist, USDA-NRCS; and district conservationist, USDA-NRCS.

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Ann Sorensen, PhD, senior advisor and research director. Ann directs the academic research that underlies AFT's policy work. Since joining the staff in 1992, the research she oversees has guided work on four Farm Bills and supported numerous other legislative efforts. She previously directed AFT's Center for Agriculture in the Environment. Ann currently co-leads AFT's "Farms Under Threat" initiative and is a member of the team that helped to design and implement the nation's first interstate water quality trading program for farmers in the Ohio River basin.

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