

A graphic featuring a globe with the Americas highlighted in green. The globe is surrounded by radiating sun rays. Below the globe is a silhouette of a farm with a barn and trees.

FARMING
IS OUR FUTURE
NO FARMS NO FOOD®



“ Farmland is our planet’s protection. Without enough farmland, we can’t apply regenerative practices at the scale needed to heal the earth. Food will always be fundamental. But we need farmland and the farmers and ranchers who steward that land for much more.

JOHN PIOTTI
President, American Farmland Trust



Farming Is Our Future!

The future of everyone on earth today, and everyone yet to be born, depends on farming.

Our farms and ranches provide us with life-giving food—and so much more.

Vibrant rural communities. Scenic landscapes. Outdoor recreation.

Wildlife habitat and irreplaceable biodiversity. Plants and soil that purify our water and air. Natural processes that capture carbon and combat climate change.

A deeper connection to the earth—and a deeper connection to one another.

Farming nurtures us—in multiple ways. And farming holds promise to help restore our planet.

We cannot hope for a sustainable future without healthy farmland and hardworking farmers—without plenty of both. It's that fundamental.

Simply put, the future of farming is *our future*.

And the future of farming hinges on what we do next.



What's at Stake



American Farmland Trust created a movement that has protected millions of acres of agricultural land and improved farming practices on millions more, while supporting our nation's primary conservation stewards: our farmers and ranchers.

Yet four decades into this work, the challenges before us have only grown.

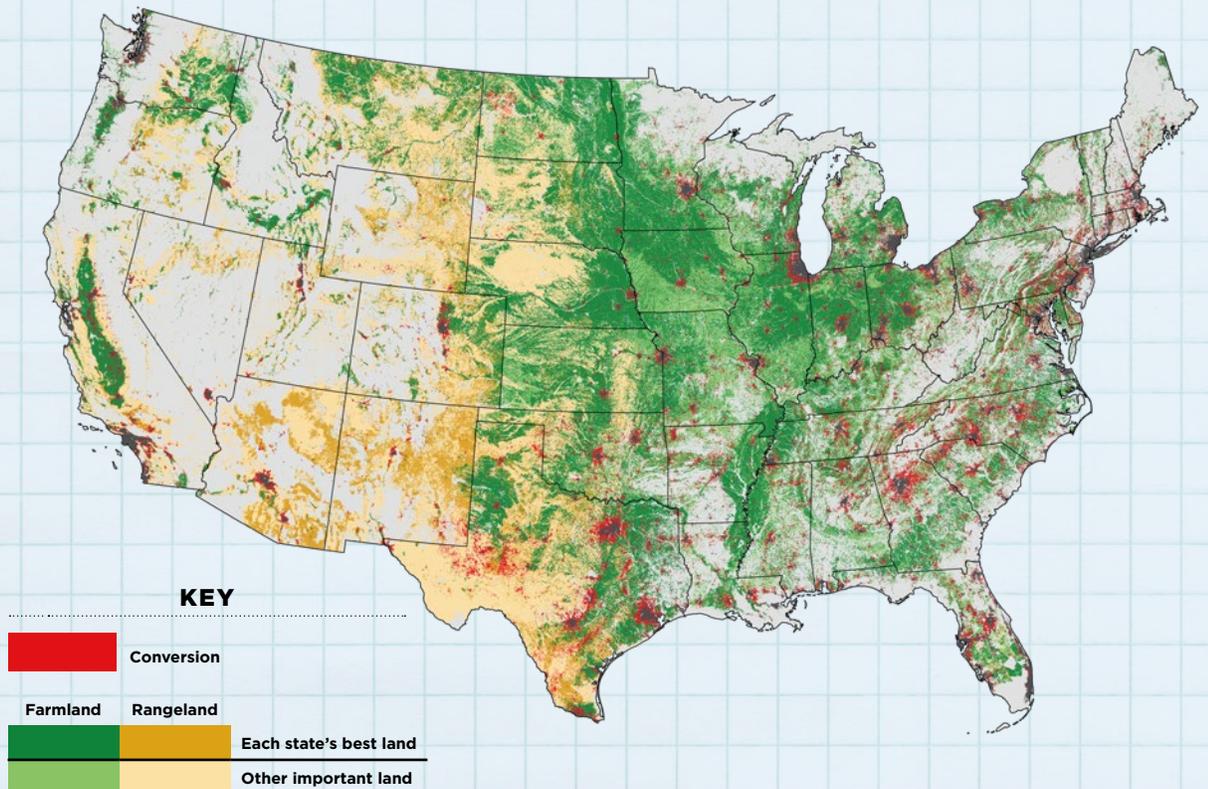
What's at stake? Nothing less than our future.

- **LAND:** America is losing irreplaceable agricultural land at an alarming rate—2,000 acres every day.
- **PRACTICES:** We are not adopting farming practices that rebuild soil health and sequester carbon at the levels needed to heal our planet.
- **PEOPLE:** With 40 percent of farmers and ranchers now 65 or older, over one-third of America's agricultural land is about to change hands—and we don't have enough new operators to take over.

LOSING OUR GREATEST RESOURCE

America boasts 10% of the planet's arable land—more than any other nation. Yet in 15 years, we lost 11 million acres—the equivalent of over two-thirds of all the farmland in Indiana.

The loss is high around cities, but we are also losing large amounts of farmland and rangeland in rural regions. Every state is threatened.





We need farmland to grow our food—and the global demand for food is expected to increase 60 percent by 2050.

Some people hold out great hope for technology. They believe that, in the future, far more food will be grown indoors or on rooftops, while the productivity of remaining field crops will soar. But AFT believes that the vast bulk of our food will continue to be grown on farmland long into the future. And we don't expect productivity to increase faster than demand.

Even more is at stake than our food supply. That's because we also need farmland to restore our planet. When properly managed, farmland and ranchland support wildlife and biodiversity, recharge aquifers, clean water, and—of paramount importance

in our fight against climate change—sequester carbon.

We now know that we cannot meet global climate goals unless we take steps that go beyond reducing emissions. We also need to remove carbon already in our atmosphere. And when we lose farmland, we reduce this ability. We also put more pressure on the farmland that remains in production, because with less land available to grow the food we need, we can't manage all the remaining farmland for optimal environmental benefit. It's a double hit.

Long before we run out of farmland to grow our food, we risk running out of the farmland we need to restore our planet's health.



Our Campaign for the Future

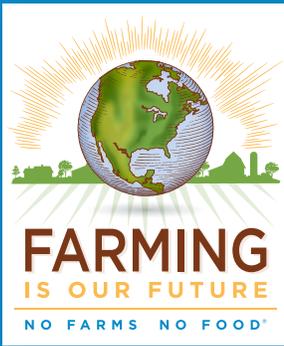


To secure our future, we must do everything possible to protect farmland, promote sound farming practices, and keep farmers on the land.

AFT confronts these pressing needs like no other organization—through our roles as innovator, thought leader, trusted convener, and collaborator. We are a source of objective research not available elsewhere. And we have proven ourselves—time and time again—as highly effective advocates for policy change.

It's now time to build upon that background and expertise to take our work to the next level. Our campaign will raise funds to scale up programming and to boost our membership and endowment.

\$100 million is a small price for all we expect to accomplish. As in the past, AFT will leverage far greater impact than our size suggests. We do this by conducting research that leads directly to action, by advancing game-changing public policy, and by supporting other groups and professionals across the nation.



Campaign Priorities

Priority #1

To catalyze a new wave of agricultural land protection.

Priority #2

To promote widespread use of regenerative farming practices that rebuild soil and sequester carbon.

Priority #3

To help the next generation of farmers and ranchers get on the land and succeed in agriculture.

Priority #4

To sustain AFT's new level of activity after the campaign ends.

USE OF FUNDS

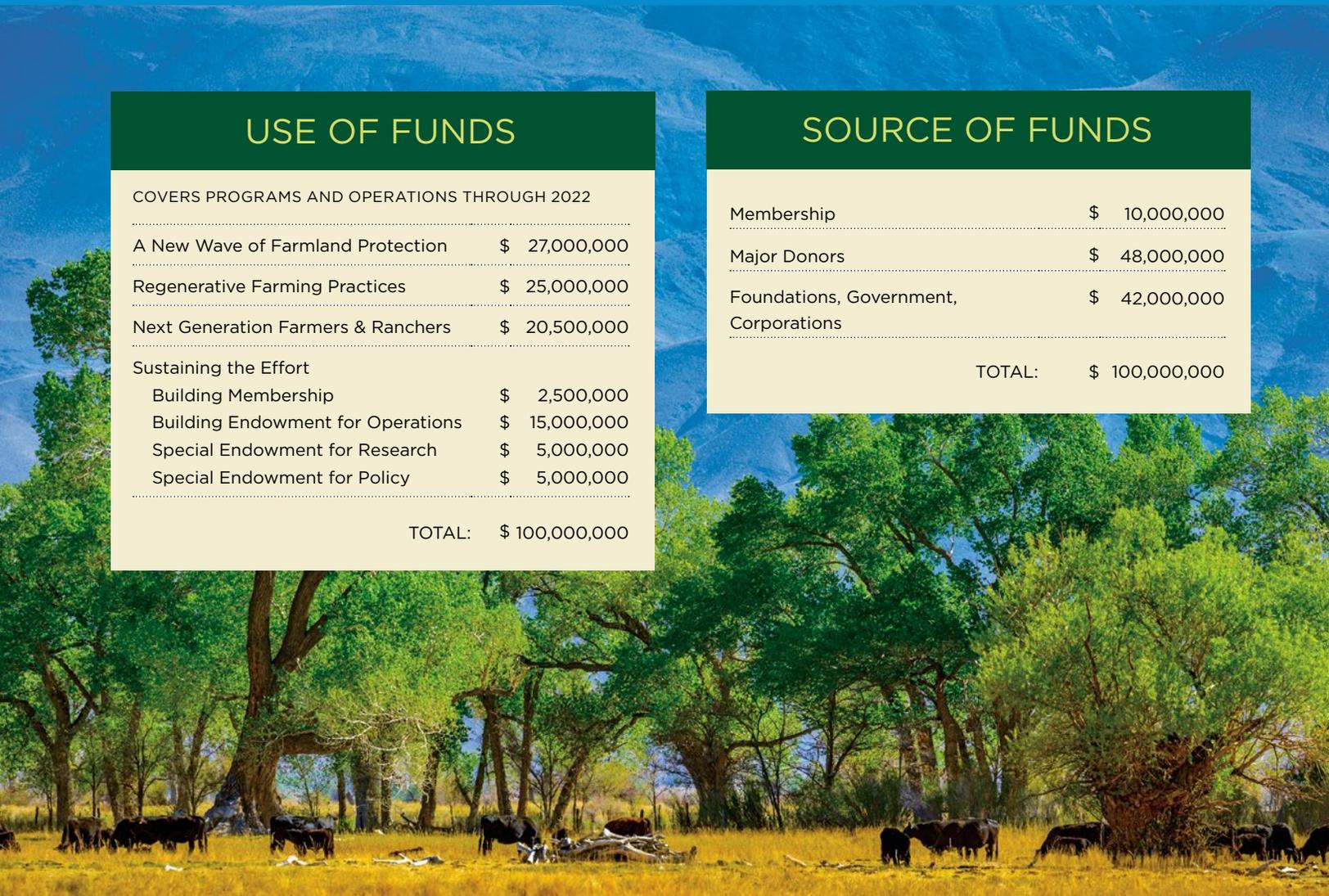
COVERS PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS THROUGH 2022

A New Wave of Farmland Protection	\$ 27,000,000
Regenerative Farming Practices	\$ 25,000,000
Next Generation Farmers & Ranchers	\$ 20,500,000
Sustaining the Effort	
Building Membership	\$ 2,500,000
Building Endowment for Operations	\$ 15,000,000
Special Endowment for Research	\$ 5,000,000
Special Endowment for Policy	\$ 5,000,000

TOTAL: \$ 100,000,000

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Membership	\$ 10,000,000
Major Donors	\$ 48,000,000
Foundations, Government, Corporations	\$ 42,000,000
TOTAL:	\$ 100,000,000



Priority #1

A New Wave of Farmland Protection



We have the tools to protect farmland and ranchland. But to prevent the alarming loss of this irreplaceable resource, we need to apply them far more aggressively.

What we've done

AFT is the national leader in protecting farmland with agricultural conservation easements. We've helped create private land trusts and public programs that purchase and hold easements—and we continue

to provide these groups with essential services. We've also been the primary force behind federal funding for easements. Altogether, this work has permanently protected over 6.5 million acres.



Beyond this, AFT has advanced strategies that lessen development pressure on farms and ranches, such as current-use taxation and smart land-use planning. As a result, over 300 million acres of agricultural land are less likely to become houselots or big box stores.

Mounting threats

We may have slowed the loss of agricultural land, but we continue to lose ground way too fast. AFT's latest land-use study, *Farms Under Threat: The State of the States*, documents that we are converting 2,000 acres a day—including our most productive, versatile, and resilient land. Moreover, even if we can stop sprawl in its tracks, climate change will reduce arable acres, as rain patterns shift and sea levels rise. AFT and our partners in farmland protection clearly have much more work to do.

What we will do

Over four decades, AFT has developed farmland protection tools that work. We know what to do and are poised to scale our efforts. We will increase our services to states and land trusts, engage in regions of the country where we haven't been active, and help boost state and federal funding.

KEY STATES

AFT will catalyze new state programs and re-energize old ones that have become stagnant. And we will open an office in the Southeast, bringing expertise to a region where farmland is going fast.



SUPPORT FOR LAND TRUSTS

AFT has since our founding assisted agricultural land trusts in multiple ways. We will expand this traditional function through our new National Agricultural Land Network.

AFT'S LAND PROJECTS

AFT is itself an agricultural land trust, the only one with national scope. We have always taken on projects where no group is active, but now we will also partner with groups that want our help to do more.

FEDERAL FUNDS

AFT scored a huge victory in the 2018 Farm Bill, which boosted easement funding by \$200 million a year. Yet that only covers 10 percent of need. We will push Congress for more funds and better tools.

PRIORITY #1 IMPACTS

- 1) Double the amount of permanently protected farmland by 2040
- 2) Reduce current rate of farmland loss by 50% by 2030 and 75% by 2040.



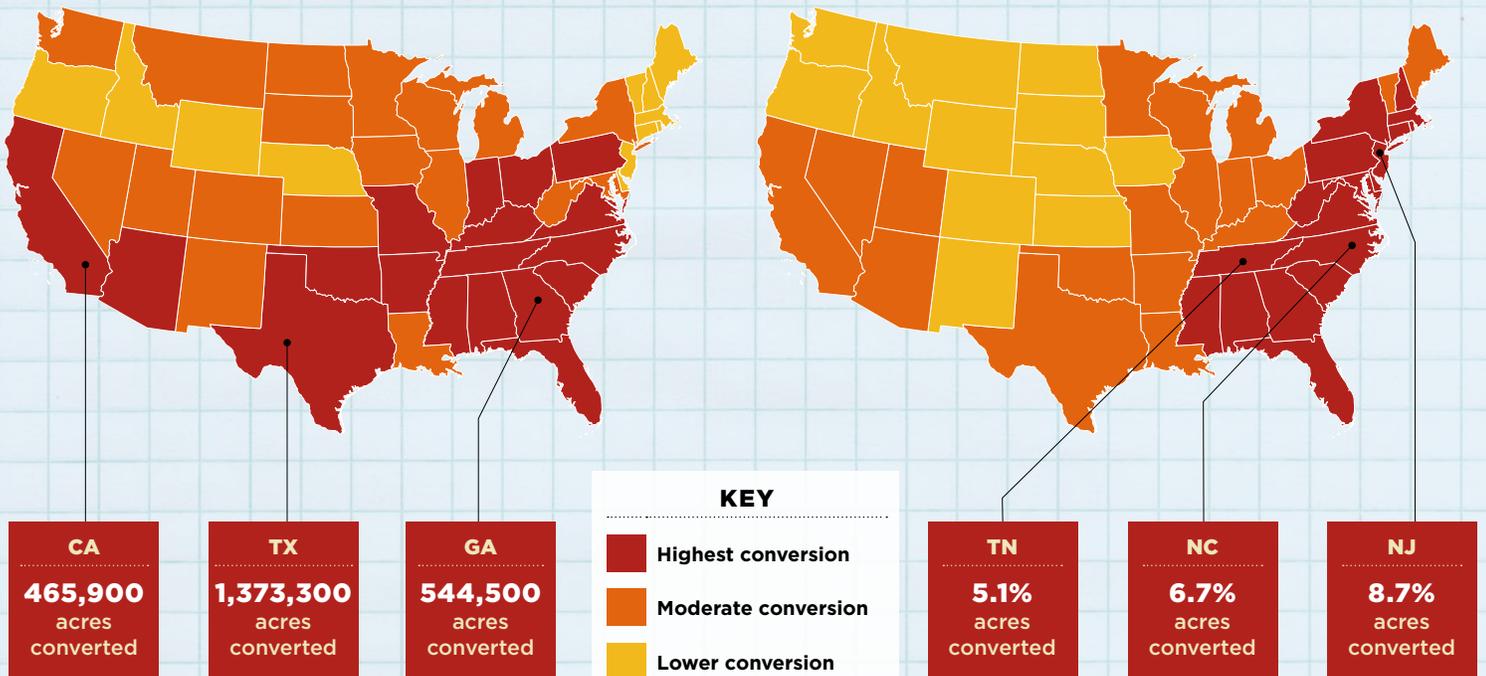
AFT Research: Good data driving action

Over 20 years ago, AFT released our first big mapping study, *Farming on the Edge*. It proved catalytic, spurring new investment in farmland protection. AFT’s current study takes earlier work to a whole new level. *Farms Under Threat* pulls together data from new sources and creates new analytical tools—tools that predict the impact of climate change on farmland and examine alternative scenarios of real estate development. *Farms Under Threat* also identifies which state-level strategies are most effective. It will propel a new wave of activity across the nation.

FARMLAND CONVERSION FROM 2001 TO 2016

TOTAL FARMLAND ACRES CONVERTED

% OF FARMLAND ACRES CONVERTED





**“ Other farmers
should think about
protecting their land.
Then they should do it.
They should do it NOW!**

ELEANOR CROTHERS

Michigan farmer who protected her
family farm with AFT's help

Priority #2

Regenerative Farming Practices



The future demands widespread use of advanced farming practices that build healthy soil, increase resiliency, and combat climate change.

What we've done

AFT has spent decades promoting environmentally sound farming practices—reduced tillage, cover crops, crop rotation, integrated pest management, and rotational grazing. Farmers and ranchers care

deeply about their land and want to do what's right by it. But they face challenges, both financial and cultural. AFT has approached these challenges head on. We co-developed the first regional water quality credit program, paying farmers to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus. We launched the “Best Management Practices Challenge,” incentivizing farmers to change what they do. And most recently, we began to help women landowners utilize USDA's conservation programs.

Mounting threats

From Puget Sound to the Chesapeake Bay, water quality remains at risk. The Gulf of Mexico dead zone continues to grow. And climate change threatens us all—especially farmers, who are increasingly hampered by extreme weather, new pests, and disruptions in pollination.

Farming's connection to climate change is complicated. On the one hand, U.S. agriculture produces 10 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, farms can capture more carbon than they emit if managed using regenerative practices. A recent international study



confirms that society can only meet Paris climate goals by pursuing the kind of “natural solutions” farming offers. Thus, while the threat of climate change intensifies, so does the need for farming to become part of the solution.

What we will do

AFT will apply our proven tools at greater scale to ramp-up environmental benefits provided by farmland. Building on past work, we’ve created three new national initiatives: one targeting water and soil, one combatting climate change, and one supporting women farmland owners—an underserved population with deep interest in better practices. And AFT will redouble efforts on federal policy, believing that the next Farm Bill could be transformational, the first built around farming’s role in restoring our planet.



WATER, SOIL, & ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

AFT will expand our traditional work helping farmers reduce erosion and rebuild soil, while crafting new systems that pay farmers for environmental improvements.

CLIMATE CHANGE

AFT will help farmers and ranchers reduce emissions and adopt advanced practices that capture carbon. AFT will also help states promote better practices—in partnership with the U.S. Climate Alliance.

WOMEN FOR THE LAND

Already in 12 states, AFT will continue to expand and refine this highly successful program that serves women, the fastest-growing population of farmland owners.

POLICY REFORM

Though the next Farm Bill will not reach Congress until 2023, AFT is already gearing up. AFT will conduct research, build coalitions, and pilot state-level programs that could be replicated nationally.



PRIORITY #2 IMPACTS

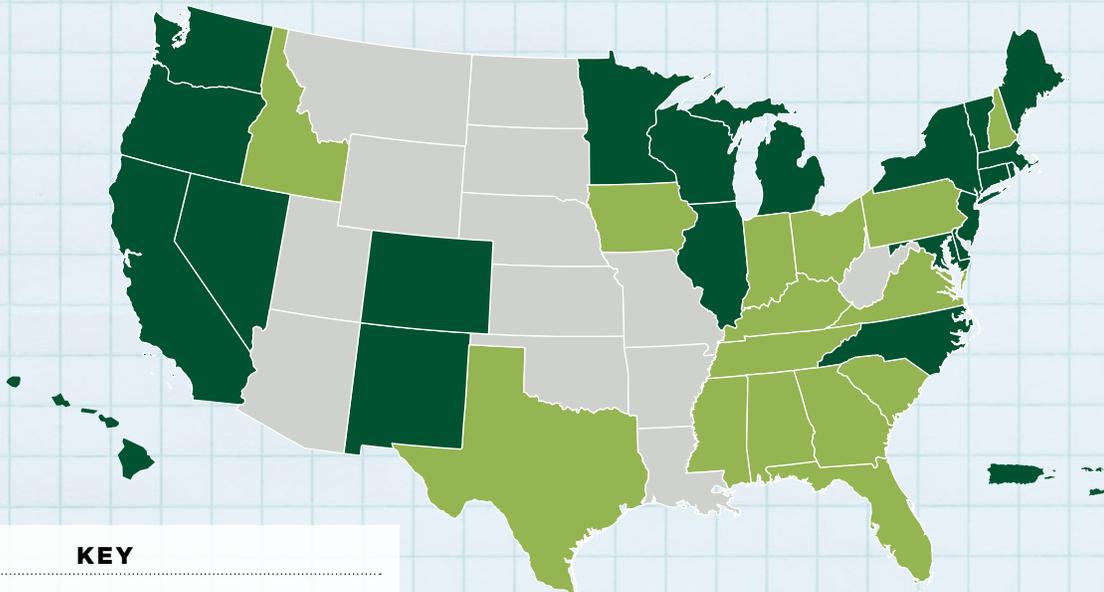
U.S. agriculture is climate neutral. By 2035, we reduce carbon emissions by over 650 million metric tons per year over current levels—a goal that is at once bold, achievable, and necessary.

Ahead of our time! AFT began actively encouraging new farm conservation practices to help reduce pollution and build soil health in the early 1980s.

AFT's Partnership with U.S. Climate Alliance

Given inaction by the federal government, 25 states have joined the U.S. Climate Alliance, committing to work toward Paris climate goals on their own. The Alliance invited AFT to take on a formal role advancing “natural solutions” that capture carbon in the soil. AFT will help states develop new policies and programs that combat climate change.

AFT'S FARMING PRACTICE WORK



KEY

-  Climate Alliance states where AFT will support Regenerative Farming Practices
-  Other states where AFT will offer Regenerative Farming Practices programming

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, dark blue body of water, possibly a pond or a small lake, surrounded by dense green trees and tall grasses. The middle ground features a vast expanse of green fields, interspersed with patches of forest. In the background, a farm is visible, including several large, silver, cylindrical silos and a few buildings. The overall scene is lush and green, suggesting a healthy agricultural environment.

“ For the Bay and water quality, farms are the best answer— as long as farms are following best practices. Development brings more pavement, roofs, trash, and pollution. But farms can heal the land.

YATES CLAGETT

Maryland farmer and county Soil Conservation District program administrator

Priority #3

Next Generation Farmers and Ranchers



We cannot retain and steward enough land to grow our food and heal our planet without a perennial crop of new operators. Yet the challenges have never been greater.

What we've done

AFT has always been committed to the people who steward the land. We protect land so it will be available for agriculture. We promote sound farming practices to help farmers and ranchers succeed. Beyond that,

AFT helps aging farmers and ranchers take steps to keep their land in agriculture. We also help new farmers find land and obtain critical services. We do this directly, through the nation's most successful "farm-link" program, and by training professionals from other organizations across the nation. Our



work also extends to tax policy, where we have successfully advocated for tax changes that help farms stay farms.

Mounting threats

American agriculture faces a demographic tidal wave unlike anything ever seen. A full 40 percent of U.S. agricultural land is now owned by people age 65 and older, while the number of beginning farmers is falling. Over 371 million acres of agricultural land could be in transition in the next 15 years, due to the age of farmland owners. There is not much time to ensure these farms and ranches pass on to a new generation.

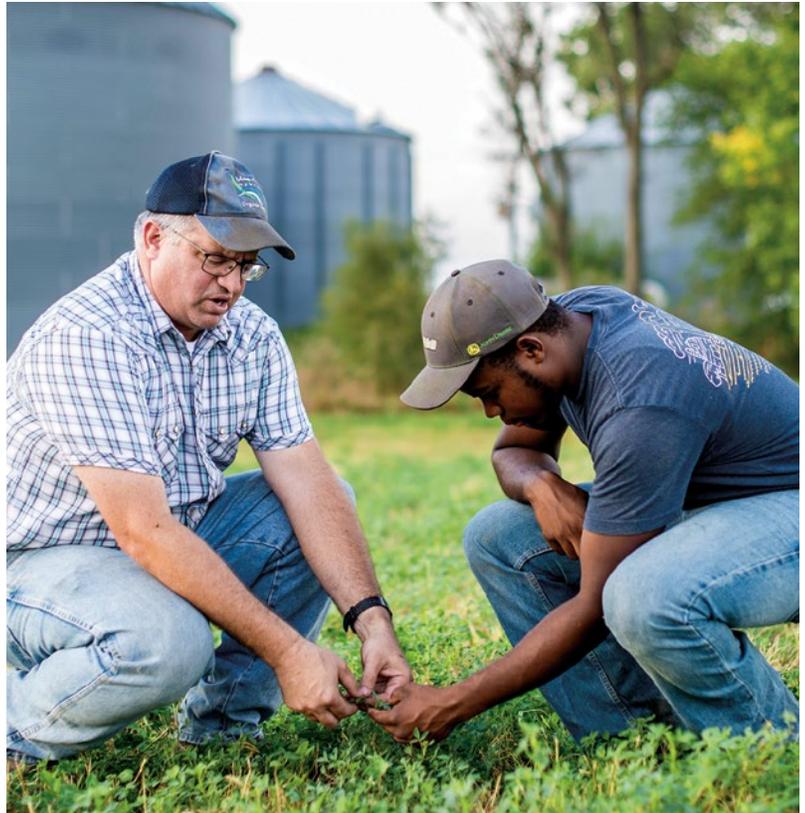
Plenty of Americans want to become farmers, both young people starting out and older people starting second careers. But farming has high barriers to entry, coupled with low financial returns. One of the big barriers is the cost of land—which can often be overcome if that land is protected with an easement. Yet there will never be enough funding to protect more than a small portion of the land about to transition. We need additional tools.

What we will do

AFT will ramp up proven programs and take on new initiatives. The impending transfer of farms and ranches is clearly a threat to agriculture. But it also represents an opportunity. With the right strategies, we can put this threatened land into the hands of new operators.

TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS

AFT will expand our program that trains and certifies staff within other organizations to help would-be farmers and provide these groups with ongoing support through a new national land access network.



DIRECT SUPPORT FOR FARMERS (OLD AND NEW)

AFT will continue to help beginning farmers find the right land and get started the right way, while helping aging farmers connect with this new generation.

LAND FOR NEW FARMERS

In a major new effort, AFT will sell or lease farms to new operators at affordable prices. AFT will obtain land by purchase or gift. (Gifts of land come through our Farm Legacy program.)

TAX CHANGES

AFT will continue to champion tax reforms, focusing on creating incentives and reducing barriers that landowners face when selling land to new farmers.

PRIORITY #3 IMPACTS

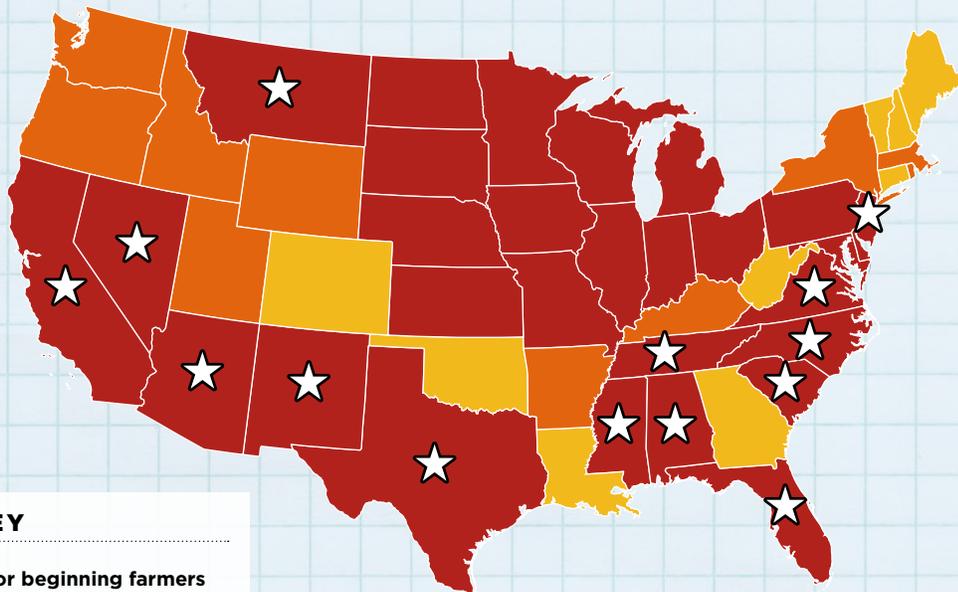
600,000 new farmers and ranchers added in a 10-year period from 2022 to 2032. This increases the number of beginning farmers to the highest level in 50 years.



AFT Farm Legacy Program: Land gifts that help new farmers and ranchers

For landowners considering donating property, AFT offers distinct advantages. We know agriculture. We guarantee the land will stay in agriculture. And we will use the land to help the next generation. Once AFT receives a property, we lease it or sell it to a qualified operator. And if a property is sold, we protect it with an easement, ensuring that the land will never be developed.

AGRICULTURE'S DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE



KEY

-  Very high need for beginning farmers
-  High need for beginning farmers
-  Moderate need for beginning farmers
-  14 states with the oldest farmers

No state is attracting new farmers as fast as needed, but the levels vary.



“ I’m from a fifth-generation farming family, but I wouldn’t be farming if Diana and Judson hadn’t worked with us. Our shared values for the land made it happen.

JAY THOMPSON

Oregon farmer who purchased an AFT-protected farm from neighboring farm landowners

Priority #4

Sustaining Our Efforts



AFT's success has always depended on three foundational elements—solid research, catalytic policy work, and reliable financial support. We must bolster these elements for the future.

What we've done

AFT's research changed how people view farming, food, and the environment. Our land-use datasets are the most comprehensive in the nation—a resource for government, academia, and industry. AFT's policy work advanced federal action in a new arena—conservation agriculture. While on the state level, our advocacy for innovative land-use and tax policies supported farmers and lessened sprawl. It's an impressive legacy, made possible because we've been able to rely on our membership

and endowment to sustain us regardless of the fundraising climate.

Mounting threats

Earlier pages summarized the threats to our land, our environment, and our farmers and ranchers. But AFT's ability to continue to do impactful work is also threatened. If we are to build upon the foundation we've laid over four decades to leverage future success, we need to raise more money than ever before.



What we'll do

To increase our capacity across the nation, AFT will raise funds to support operations through 2022. That's one goal of the campaign. Another goal is to provide reliable ongoing support long into the future, by growing AFT's membership and building our endowment to support general operations, research, and policy work.

MEMBERSHIP

AFT will double our membership during the campaign period. Doing so will increase membership revenue, while raising public awareness and enhancing our ability to secure corporate gifts.

ENDOWMENT FOR GENERAL OPERATIONS

AFT will increase our endowment by \$15 million, roughly doubling it. This will generate essential flexible revenue to support operations going forward.

ENDOWMENT FOR RESEARCH

AFT will raise \$5 million to permanently endow our research function. This will allow AFT to always retain a top-notch research director, essential to generate additional funding.

ENDOWMENT FOR POLICY

AFT will raise \$5 million to permanently endow our policy work. This will allow AFT to always retain a seasoned policy director, essential to effective advocacy.



PRIORITY #4 IMPACTS

AFT delivers as promised—halting the loss of farmland, restoring our planet, and supporting the next generation of farmers and ranchers on which we all depend.

PHOTO CREDITS: (from top, left to right) Front cover: Edwin Remsberg/SARE, Rebecca Drobis, Preston Keres/USDA, Preston Keres/USDA, Xavier Ascanio/Alamy; Inside front cover: curtoicurto/dreamstime, Lance Cheung/USDA, Design Pics Inc/Alamy, Lance Cheung/USDA, Cannon Photography LLC/Alamy, Dietrich Gehring; Page 1: LC Morris; Page 2: Lance Cheung/USDA; Page 3: NRCS/USDA; Page 4: Ag Stock Images Inc/Alamy, Lance Cheung/USDA; Page 5: Don White/Alamy; Page 6: Todd Parker (farmland); Page 7: Jim Newton; Page 8: Cavan Images/Alamy; Page 9: Edwin Remsberg/Alamy; Page 10: Preston Keres/USDA (sunflower); Page 11: Lance Cheung/USDA (soil); Page 13: Edwin Remsberg/Alamy; Page 14: Rebecca Drobis, Lance Cheung/USDA, Cavan Images/Alamy; Page 15: Preston Keres/USDA; Page 16: Preston Keres/USDA; Page 17: Della Huff/Alamy; Page 18: C12/Alamy, Kriss Russell/iStockphoto; Page 19: Sam Kittner; Page 20: Superstock/Alamy; Inside back cover: Lance Cheung/USDA, iStockphoto, Andrew Dierks/Alamy (girl with goat), Lance Cheung/USDA; Back cover: fancy/Alamy (vineyard)



How will **YOU** contribute to **OUR FUTURE?**

No farms, no food. No farms, no future! We need every acre of farmland and rangeland not just to feed us, but to sustain us and protect our planet.

Farming needs our help—desperately! We have a broken system—one where irreplaceable farmland is eaten up by sprawling development for no good reason. And where farmers and ranchers cannot provide the environmental benefits they want to—because the system is broken.

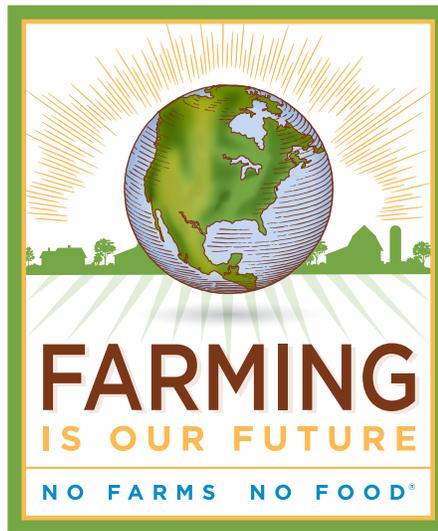
Until all that changes, the work of American Farmland Trust is essential.

Yet needed change *is* coming. Because AFT is confronting these issues strategically, *to reform the system*. And unlike other groups now working on agricultural issues, AFT has the experience, expertise, and grounding to make a real difference. We can do what others cannot.

But we do need you! Only with your help, will we drive transformational change.



Learn about how AFT's projects have benefited farmers and ranchers:
farmland.org/our-work/stories-of-success





Since 1980

American Farmland Trust launched the conservation agriculture movement. We have helped permanently protect over 6.5 million acres of farmland and rangeland, and reduced development pressure on over 300 million additional acres. We've championed environmentally sound farming practices that are now common on farms of all sizes across the nation. We've had a positive impact on over 500,000 farmers and ranchers. And on every American who eats!

Going Forward

American agriculture faces new challenges that dwarf those of the past—and American Farmland Trust is uniquely positioned to respond. No other group has worked at the juncture of agriculture and environment for decades. No other group has our research platform or political credibility. No other group takes our holistic approach to agriculture—connecting Land, Practices, and People. Our work is essential to the future of American agriculture. And what happens in American agriculture will determine the future of our planet.

Land
Practices
People