



AMERICA'S AGING FARM WORKFORCE

**WHY VANISHING FAMILY FARMS ARE A GROWING THREAT TO
U.S. FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**



OVERVIEW

American farmers constitute the nation's oldest workforce, with a median age of 58 years, surpassing that of any other occupation. Notably, one-third of farmers and ranchers are over the age of 65, and their children are less likely to continue in their footsteps.

This demographic trend poses significant challenges to the continuity of agricultural production, U.S. food security, and the sustainability of rural communities.



UNITED STATES SENATE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE on AGING

CHAIRMAN RICK SCOTT



KEY CHALLENGES

Aging Demographics: Farmers aged 65 and older own approximately 40% of U.S. farmland. As these farmers retire over the next two decades, an estimated 350 million acres of farmland are expected to change hands, raising concerns about land consolidation and the potential loss of family farms, particularly to foreign and adversarial entities.

Declining Number of Farms: The U.S. has experienced a loss of 200,000 farms since 2007, with more than 40 million acres of farmland repurposed for commercial, residential, and industrial development since 2002. The U.S. has more than 800 million acres of farmland. Although this seems like a large amount, on average the U.S. loses 1.9 million acres of farmland annually, threatening domestic food production capacity.

Barriers for New Farmers: High operational costs, limited access to land, and access issues related to health care and retirement benefits deter younger generations from entering the farming profession. Additionally, over 80% of farmers work another job in addition to farming, highlighting the financial challenges within the industry. According to the USDA, the national average price for farmland is more than \$4,000 an acre. This is a 7.4% increase since 2022, which contributes to the lack of engagement in the industry among the younger generation.

Regulatory and Economic Pressures: Farmers face increasing regulatory burdens and economic stressors, including inflation and rising input costs, which strain profitability and sustainability.





POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1: Reduce Economic Pressures:

- Reduce inflation and input costs to ensure farmers can run a sustainable business.
 - President Trump has called on Congress to pass a balanced budget and reduce the reckless government spending which causes inflation. Congress must act and bring fiscal sanity back to Washington.
 - Energy costs are a major input for all producers so Congress should work to reduce the price of energy. President Trump's Executive Order on American energy dependence and dominance will lower the cost of energy for farmers and the entire food supply chain.
- Permanently repeal the federal estate tax:
 - Congress must pass the Death Tax Repeal Act. This bill would end surprise taxes on family businesses, farms, and ranchers when the owner passes away.

2: Promote Agricultural Innovation:

- Invest in research and development to enhance per-acre yields and sustainability.
 - Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) integration in production equipment and market tools. President Trump's Executive Order on American Leadership in AI will accelerate AI advancements in the U.S. agricultural economy.
- Support emerging markets, such as agri-tourism, organic farming, and farm-to-table.





POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Streamline Regulations and Protect Domestic Agriculture:

- Remove administrative burdens on farmers.
 - Congress must pass the Regulatory Decimation Act and the REINS Act to reduce the burdensome regulatory environment inhibiting success.
 - Fully implement President Trump's Executive Order which requires that whenever an agency promulgates a new rule, regulation, or guidance, it must identify at least 10 existing rules, regulations, or guidance documents to be repealed.
- Implement measures to prevent foreign adversaries, like Communist China, from acquiring U.S. farmland, ensuring national food security.
 - Include the Secretary of Agriculture as a permanent member on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS).
 - Supporting President Trump's commitment to protecting farmland and real estate from foreign adversarial influence.





POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pass the Farm Bill:

- The last time Congress passed a Farm Bill was in 2018, during President Trump's first administration. Under the failed leadership of President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress, America's farmers were ignored.

- With President Trump back in the White House and Republican majorities in the House of Representatives and Senate, Congress must work to pass the Farm Bill which will cut regulations, update funding models, and deliver for American farmers.

4. Protecting American Agriculture from Foreign Attacks:

- Ensure American farmers are on a level-playing field against countries who subsidize their industries in efforts to destroy the safer, more environmentally conscious American agricultural industry.

- Apply tariffs, where appropriate, to protect American industry from countries that seek to undermine it and ensure hardworking American farmers and ranchers are not penalized for following safe standards, being good stewards of the environment, and engaging in sustainable practices.



CONCLUSION

The aging farm workforce presents a critical challenge to the sustainability of American agriculture. By adopting comprehensive policies that address demographic shifts, economic pressures, and regulatory burdens, we can secure the future of farming and ensure the nation's food security for generations to come. As demands of a growing population continue, we must guarantee farmers and ranchers are able to foster sustainable production agriculture. Food security is national security.



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