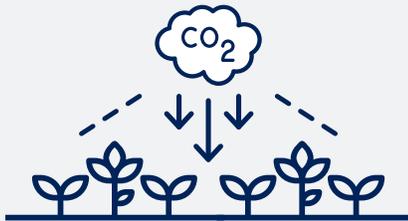


Transition Recommendations for USDA

AFT created this set of recommendations for the Biden Administration. They represent a small portion of the policies supported by AFT and were chosen because they could be swiftly implemented without congressional action. We hope they provide a starting point for further federal effort towards ensuring a bright agricultural future.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Our nation's farmers and ranchers can help us address climate change. Regenerative practices like cover crops sequester carbon in the soil while improving water quality, soil health, and a farmer's bottom line. These same practices will also make fields more resilient to climate change impacts such as flooding.



IF CURRENT COVER CROP ACREAGE WERE TRIPLED, IT WOULD BE EQUAL TO

removing 3 million

PASSENGER VEHICLES FROM THE ROAD FOR A YEAR

Develop a National Cover Crop Initiative.

- ▶ Establish a national goal for cover crop adoption such as tripling current acreage.
- ▶ Increase EQIP and CSP's focus on cover crops.
- ▶ Expand on-the-ground technical assistance and increase outreach to socially disadvantaged producers and non-operating landowners.
- ▶ Conduct further research into cover crop-related topics such as best practices, impacts, outreach, and market creation.
- ▶ Gather additional data and improve inter-agency information sharing on cover crop implementation.
- ▶ Study the role that crop insurance plays as a potential barrier to cover crop adoption.

READ MORE AT farmland.org/Transition2021/CoverCrops



COVER CROP ADOPTION
increased by 50%
FROM 2012 TO 2017



... BUT COVER CROPS HAVE ONLY BEEN
adopted on 6%
OF US HARVESTED ANNUAL CROPLAND

FARMLAND ACCESS

The U.S. is undergoing a seismic shift in farmland ownership. Public policy will help determine the future role and ownership of this land.



Over 40%

OF FARMLAND IS EXPECTED TO CHANGE HANDS IN THE NEXT TWO DECADES

Establish the Commission on Farm Transitions.

- ▶ Within the first 100 days in office, appoint and convene the Commission on Farm Transitions that was created by the 2018 Farm Bill.
- ▶ Encourage the Commission to place special emphasis on representation from, and research into, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

READ MORE AT farmland.org/Transition2021/TransitionCommission



Only 23%

OF FARMLAND IS SOLD ON THE OPEN MARKET

FARMLAND PROTECTION & VIABILITY

Our nation's agricultural land is a finite resource critical to our food security and our fight against climate change. Permanently protected lands represent an ideal investment for carbon sequestration and are more affordable for the next generation of farmers. Agricultural conservation easements can also provide vital capital for producers to reinvest in their operations.



2,000 acres

OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
ARE CONVERTED
EVERY DAY



Nearly 70%

OF FEDERAL AG LAND PROTECTION
PARTICIPANTS HAVE A CONSERVATION PLAN



AN ACRE OF URBAN LAND
IN CALIFORNIA PRODUCES

58-70 times

MORE GREENHOUSE GASES
THAN AN ACRE OF FARMLAND

Maximize the potential of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program's Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE).

- ▶ Consider a one-time investment of \$1.5 billion in ACEP as part of a relief and recovery proposal to Congress.
- ▶ Prioritize ACEP-ALE participants for conservation technical assistance and conservation programs such as EQIP, CSP, and RCPP.
- ▶ Increase overall NRCS staffing and provide additional easement expertise.
- ▶ Pursue program efficiencies to speed the time from application to close.
- ▶ Share additional program data such as unmet demand and demographics.
- ▶ Prioritize and provide clear guidance on Buy-Protect-Sell transactions and do not require additional justification for its use.

READ MORE AT farmland.org/Transition2021/ACEP



ACEP AND PRIOR
PROGRAMS HAVE PROTECTED

1.7 million acres

OF AG LAND SINCE 1996

Strengthen the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

- ▶ Set a goal for reducing farmland conversion from federally-funded projects.
- ▶ Task agencies with revisiting and revising their internal FPPA policies.
- ▶ Require agencies to report on actual farmland conversion, not just proposed conversion.
- ▶ In accordance with federal law, restore the practice of providing an annual report to Congress.
- ▶ Solicit stakeholder input on what constitutes farmland conversion.
- ▶ Develop a mechanism for identifying state and local farmland protection programs, policies, and plans.
- ▶ Provide additional assistance to state and local units of government and non-profit organizations to develop plans and policies to retain and protect farmland.

READ MORE AT farmland.org/Transition2021/FPPA



FROM 2001 TO 2016,

1.3 million acres

WERE PROPOSED FOR CONVERSION BY
PROJECTS USING FEDERAL FUNDING

Create a Debt for Working Lands Initiative.

- ▶ Expand FSA's Conservation Contract concept to offer relief on FSA loans in exchange for permanent or long-term farmland protection.

READ MORE AT farmland.org/Transition2021/DebtForWorkingLands

AFT is the only national organization that takes a holistic approach to agriculture, focusing on the land itself, the agricultural practices used on that land, and the farmers and ranchers who do the work. We look forward to serving as a resource to the Biden Administration. For more information about these recommendations, contact AFT Policy Director Tim Fink at tfink@farmland.org.