



**Planning for Idaho's Agriculture, Not Just Around It**  
Addie Candib & Julia Freedgood

Idaho Planning Association Conference  
October 9, 2020

# Who We Are



**OUR MISSION:** To save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land

# Today's Agenda



- ✓ What's causing farmland loss?
- ✓ *Farms Under Threat* findings
- ✓ Planning for agriculture: tools and methods
- ✓ Self-reflection: Is your community farm friendly?
- ✓ Orientation to Farmland Information Center planning resources

# FARMS UNDER THREAT: THE STATE OF THE STATES

## What is Farms Under Threat?

AFT's multi-year initiative to document the status of and threats to America's agricultural land while offering policy solutions to save that land.

# Our Approach

Identify  
Threats to  
Agricultural  
Land



Inform  
Policymaking

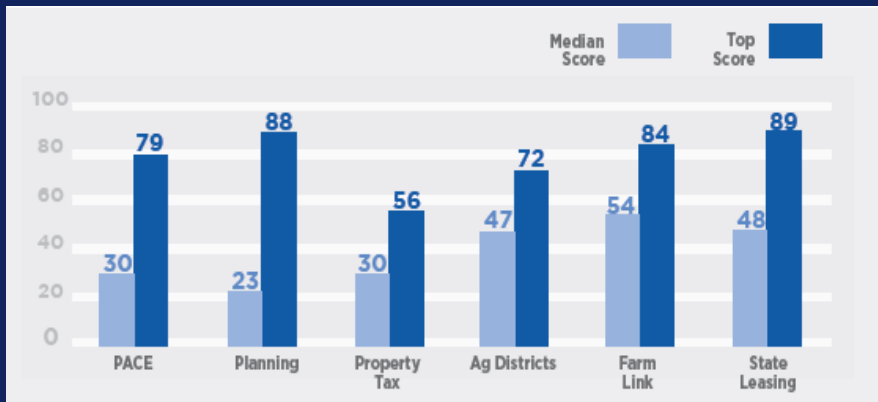


AND

Protect More  
Farmland and  
Ranchland



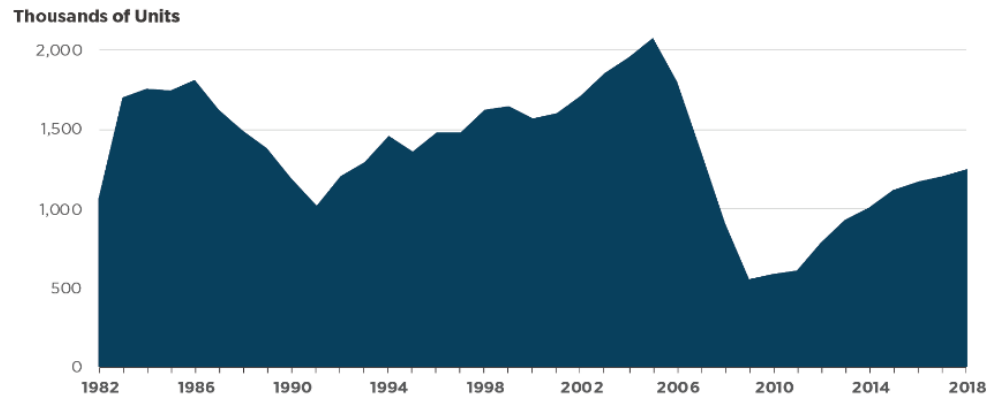
Analyze  
State  
Policy  
Responses



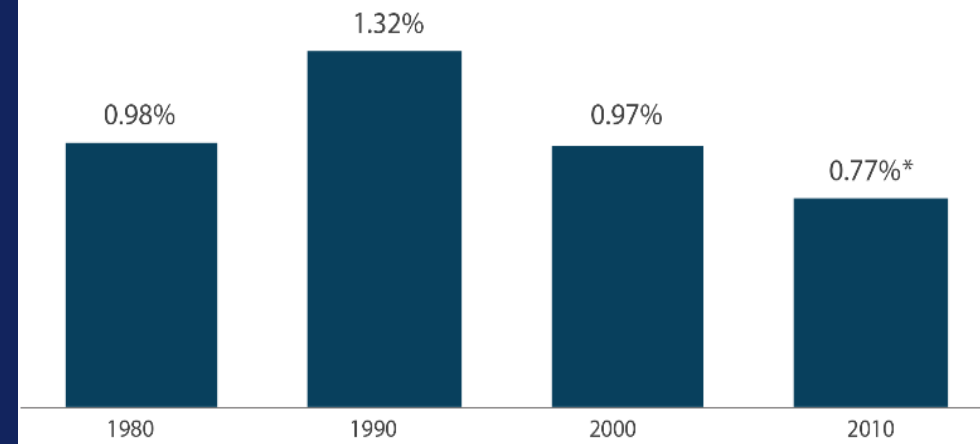


## Drivers of Agricultural Land Conversion

Annual Housing Starts  
1982-2018



Average Annual Population Growth by Decade  
1980-2016



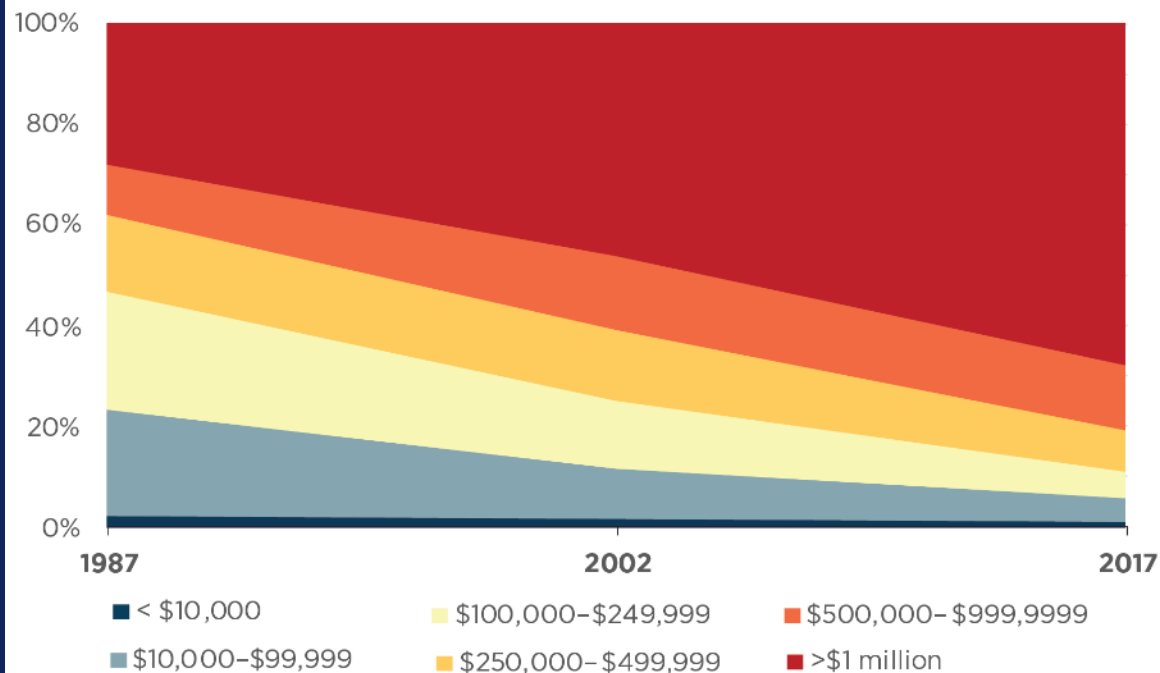
# Poorly Planned Development



Photo by Howard Owens/The Batavian

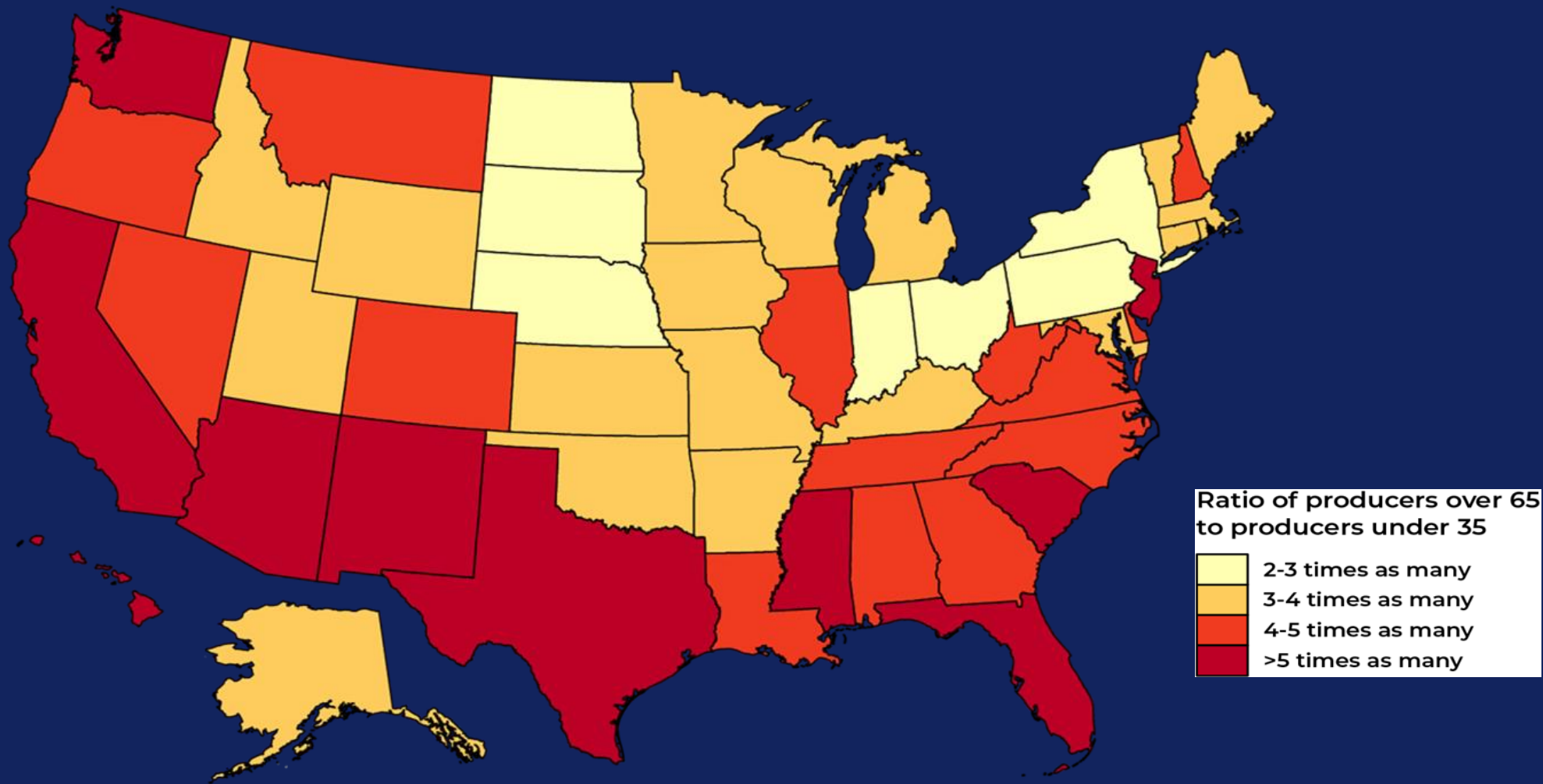
### The Shrinking Middle

Share of U.S. Production Value by Sales Class



# Weakening Ag Viability





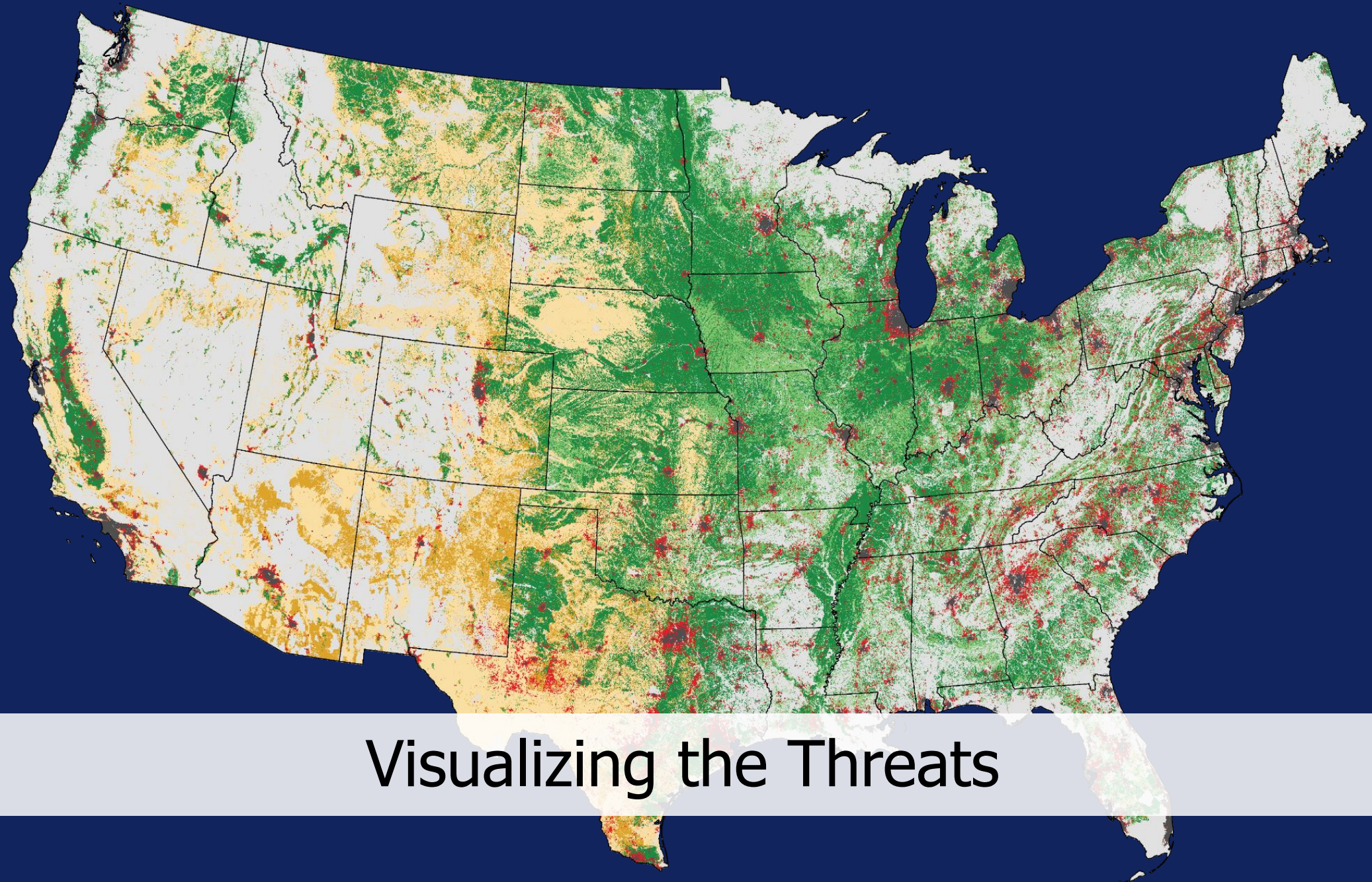
## Impending Transfer of Land

> 40% of U.S. ag land is owned  
by seniors aged 65 and older



# Climate Change

Questions?



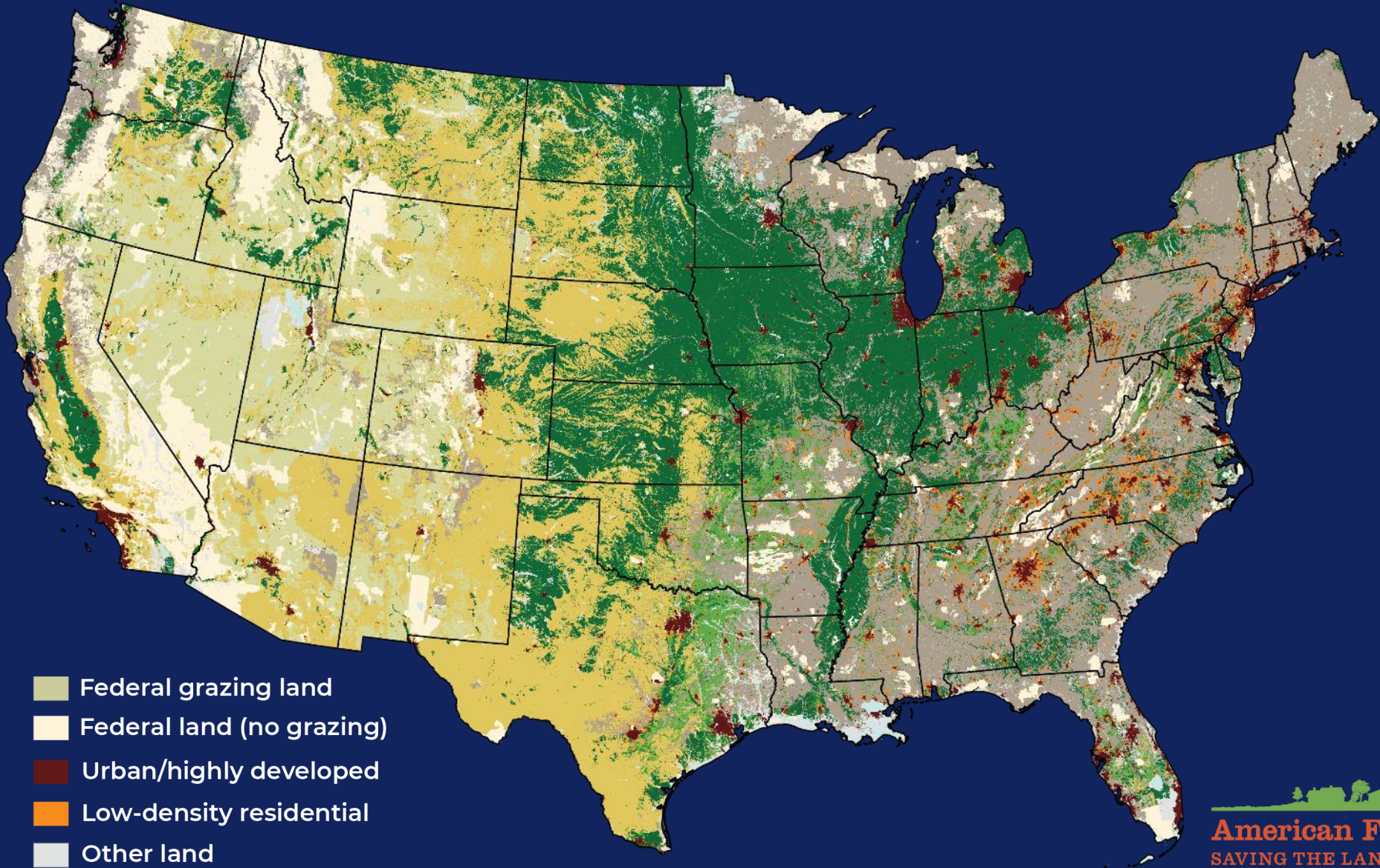
Visualizing the Threats



# Spatial Modeling Approach

1. Map land use, with a special focus on agricultural lands

# The Agricultural Landscape of the United States (2016)



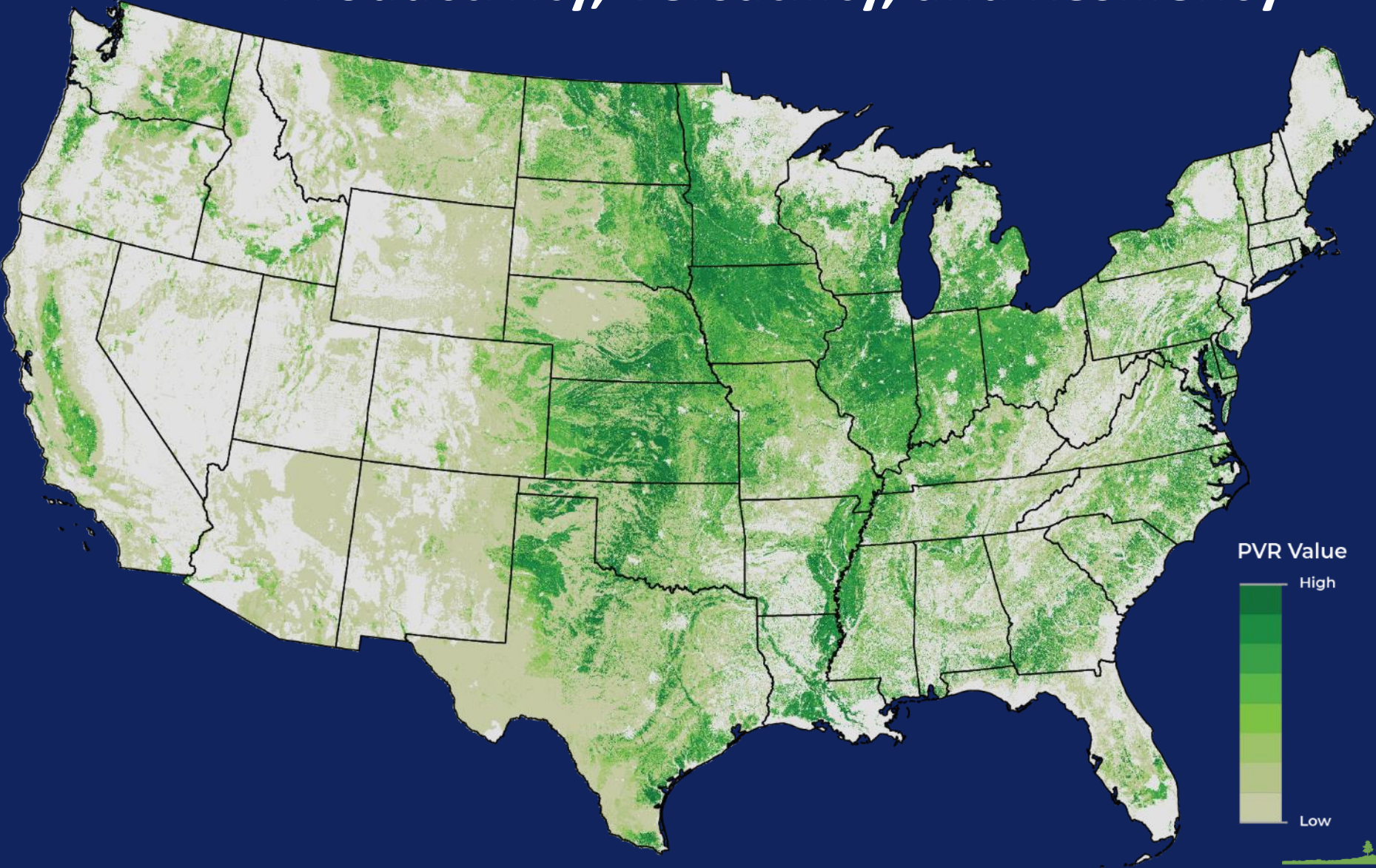
- Cropland
- Pastureland
- Rangeland
- Woodland
- Forest
- Federal grazing land
- Federal land (no grazing)
- Urban/highly developed
- Low-density residential
- Other land



# Spatial Modeling Approach

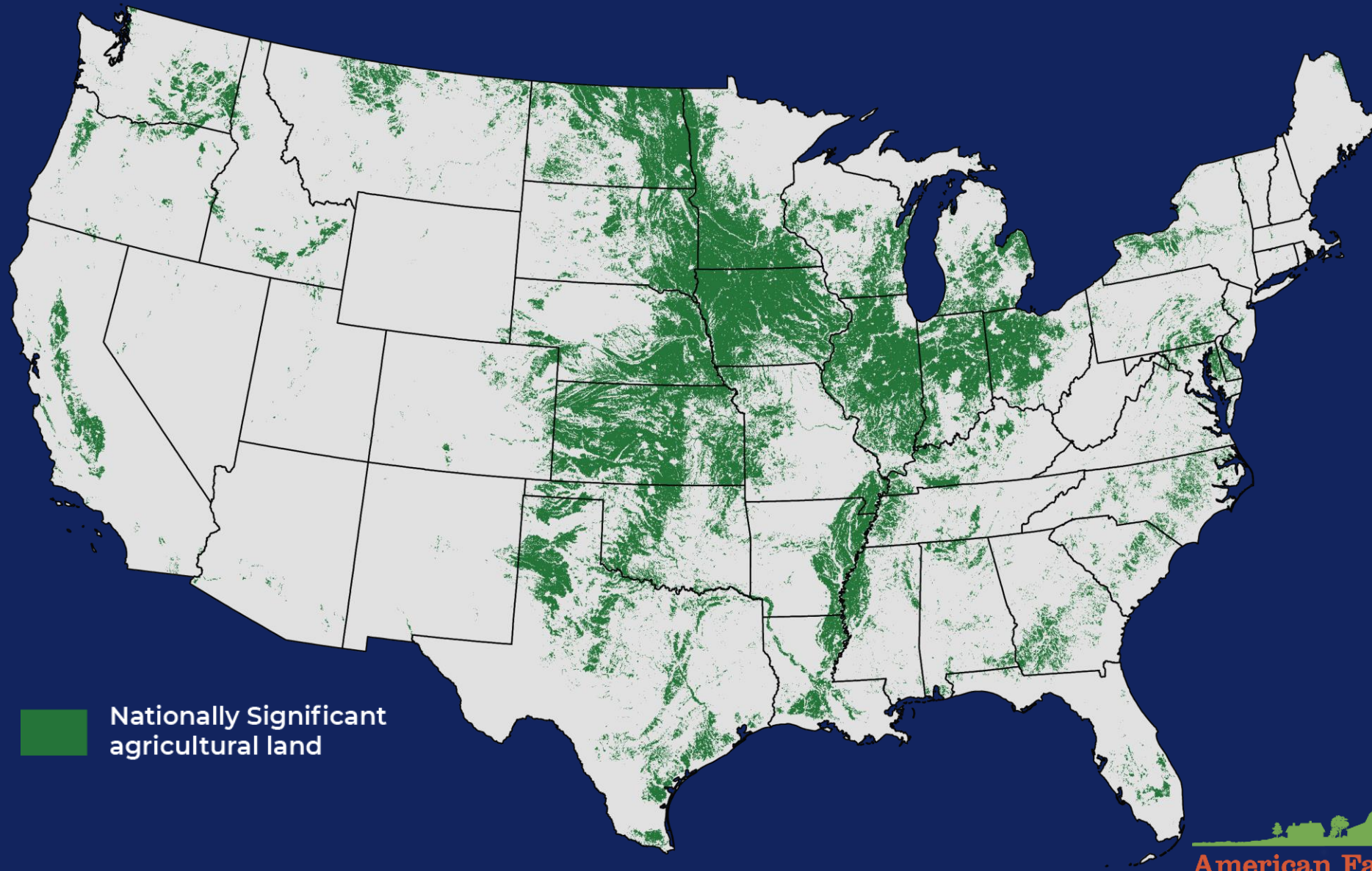
1. Map land use, with a special focus on agricultural lands
2. Identify the best agricultural lands

# Productivity, Versatility, and Resiliency





# Nationally Significant Agricultural Land



 Nationally Significant agricultural land



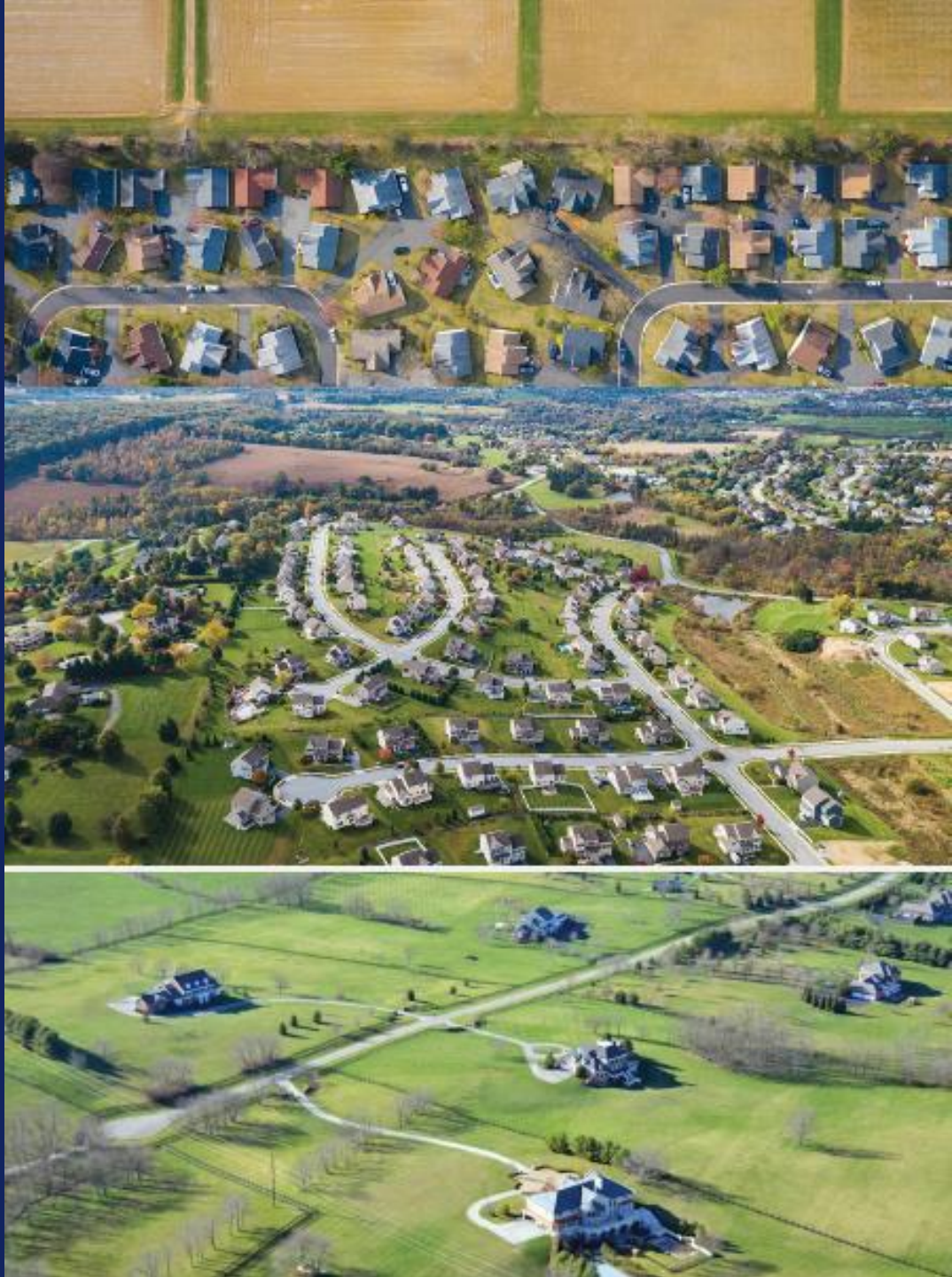
# Spatial Modeling Approach

1. Map land use, with a special focus on agricultural lands
2. Identify the best agricultural lands
3. Map conversion of agricultural lands, '01-16



# Urban and Highly Developed (UHD)

- “Built-up” or developed areas of residential, commercial, and industrial use
- Includes oil and gas well pads and solar panel installations



# Low-Density Residential (LDR)

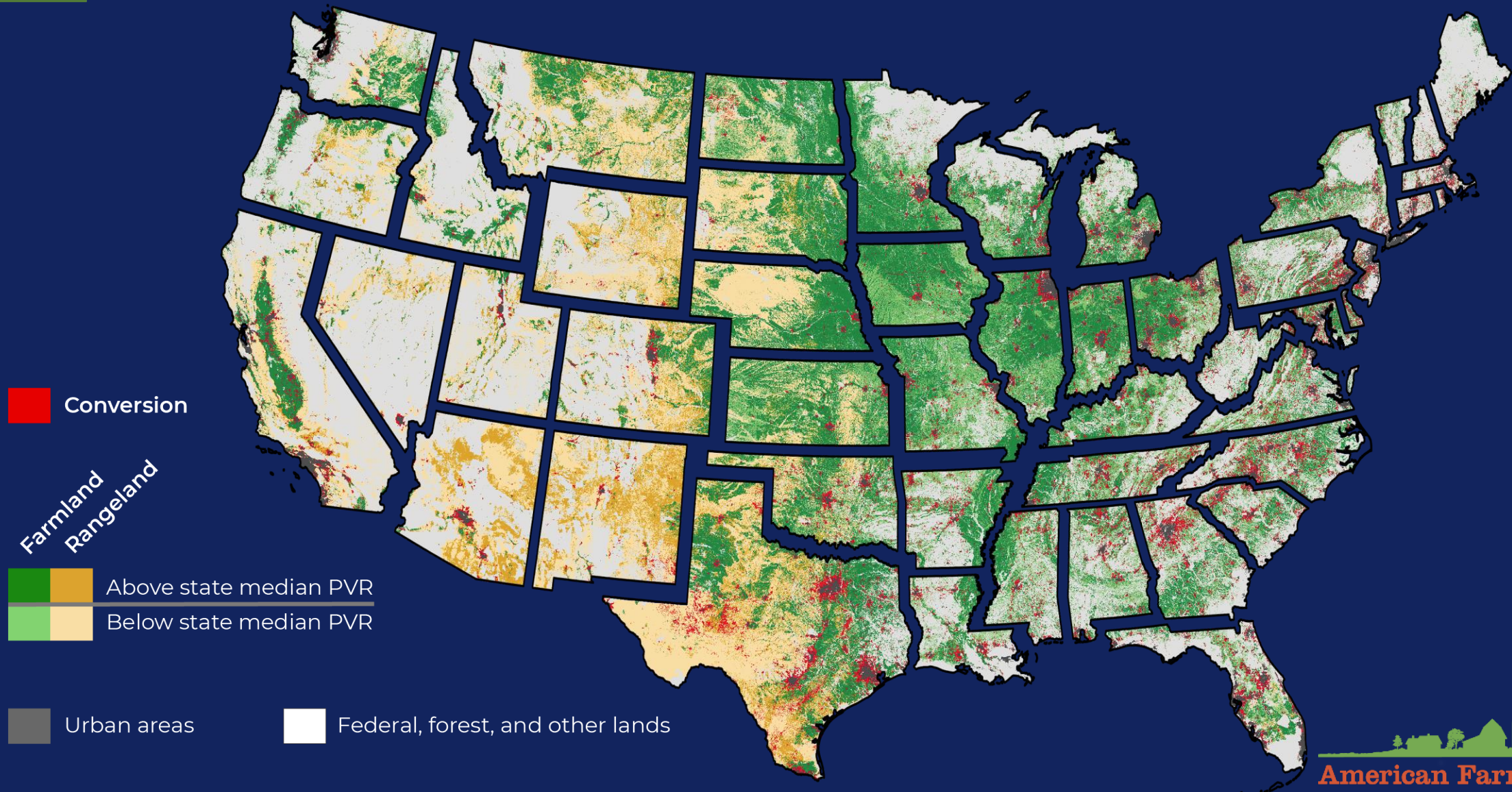
- New analysis developed for *Farms Under Threat*
- Ranges from less-dense subdivisions to rural areas where residential use is intensifying
- Fragmentation
- Limits options for working farms and ranches



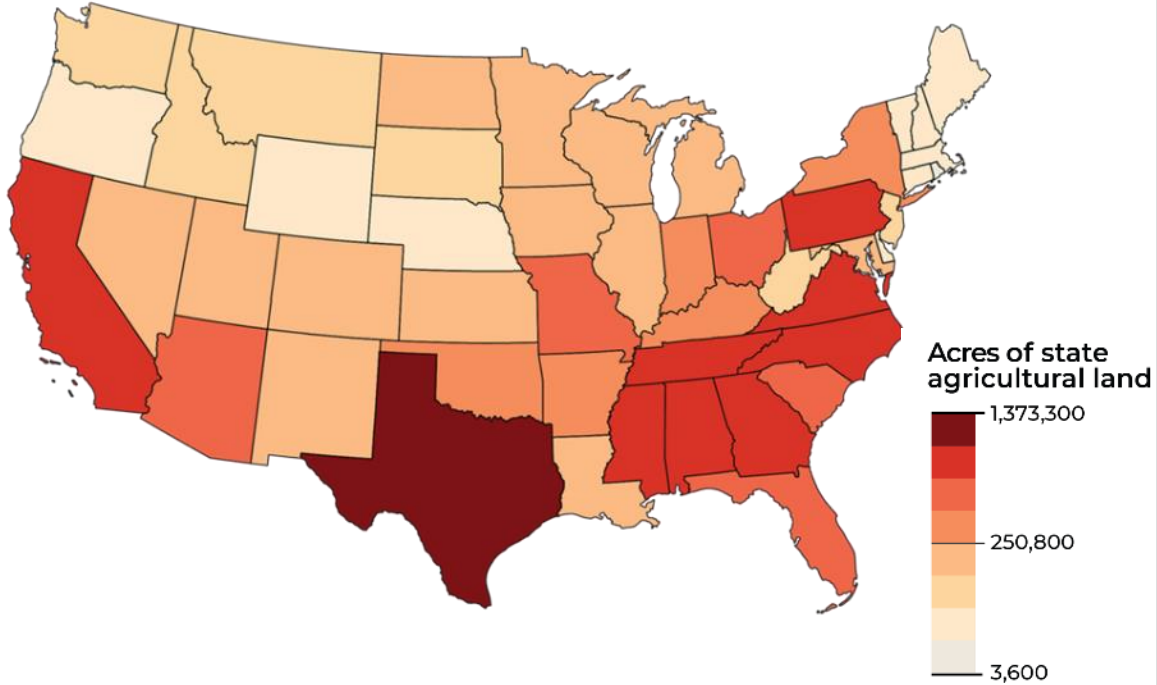
# Development Threatens Each State's Best Agricultural Land

- From 2001–2016, the U.S. converted 11 million acres of agricultural land
  - = all the land planted to fruits, nuts and vegetables in 2017
  - = 2000 acres/day
- Low-density residential land use is a major threat
  - 4 million acres → urban and highly developed land use
  - Nearly 7 million acres → low-density residential land use
- 4.4 million acres of the total conversion occurred on Nationally Significant agricultural land

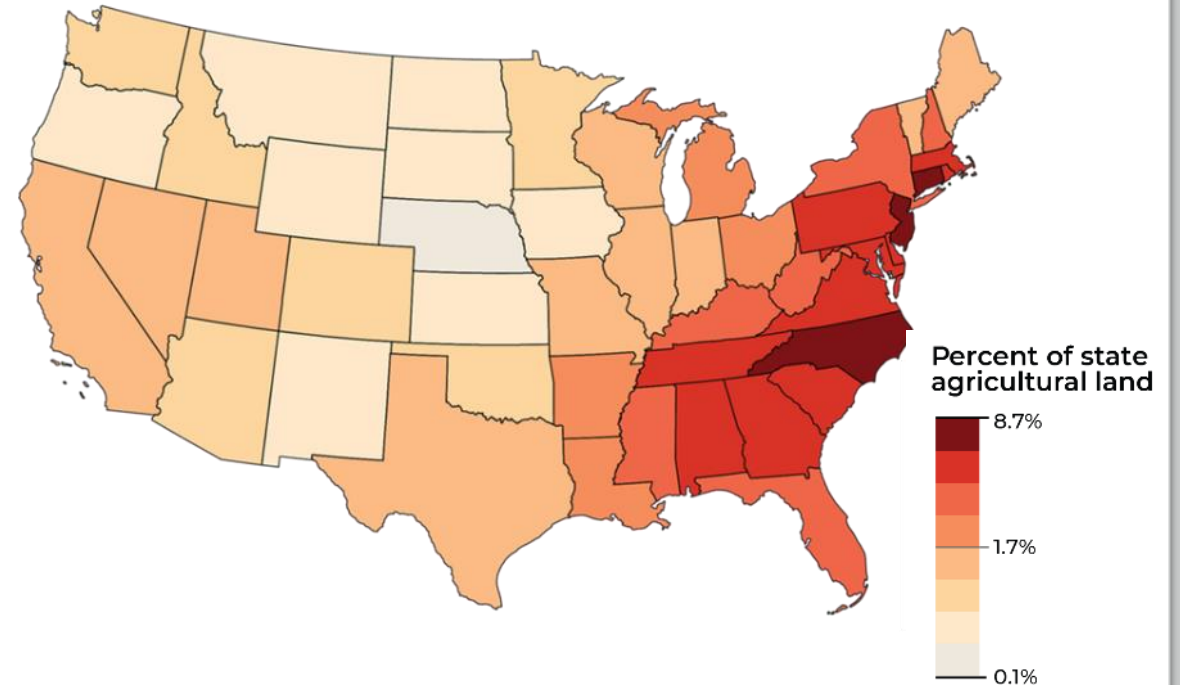
# Development Threatens Each State's Best Agricultural Land



## Acres Converted



## Percent Converted

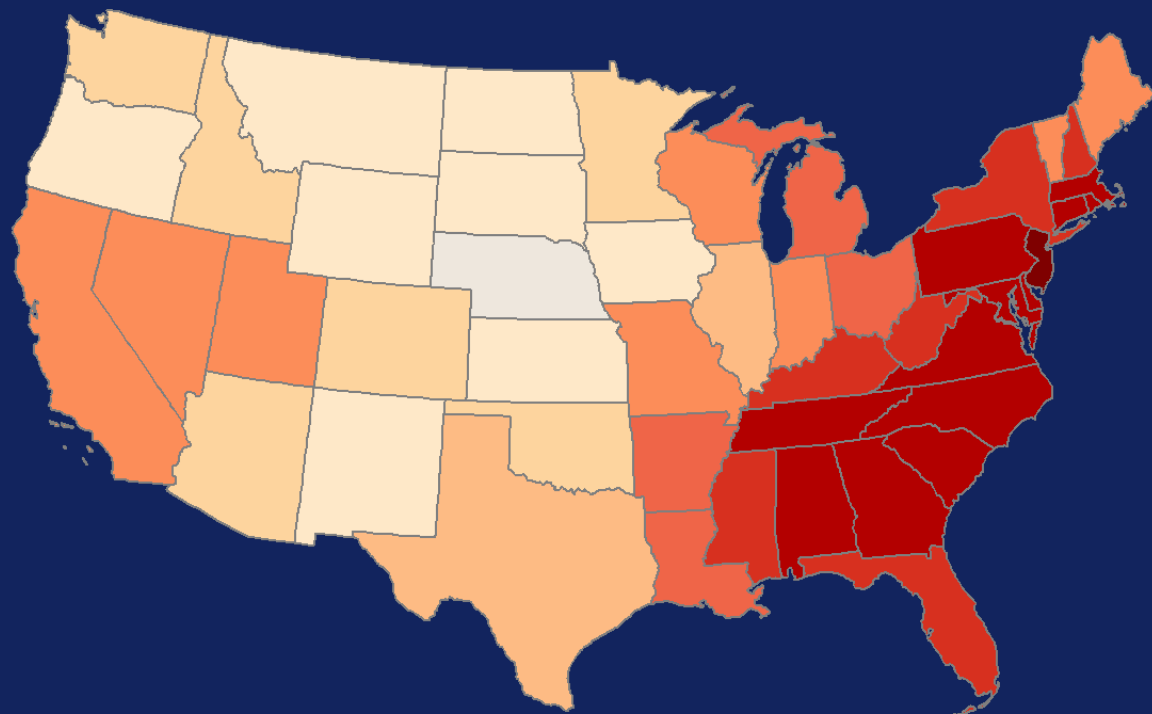
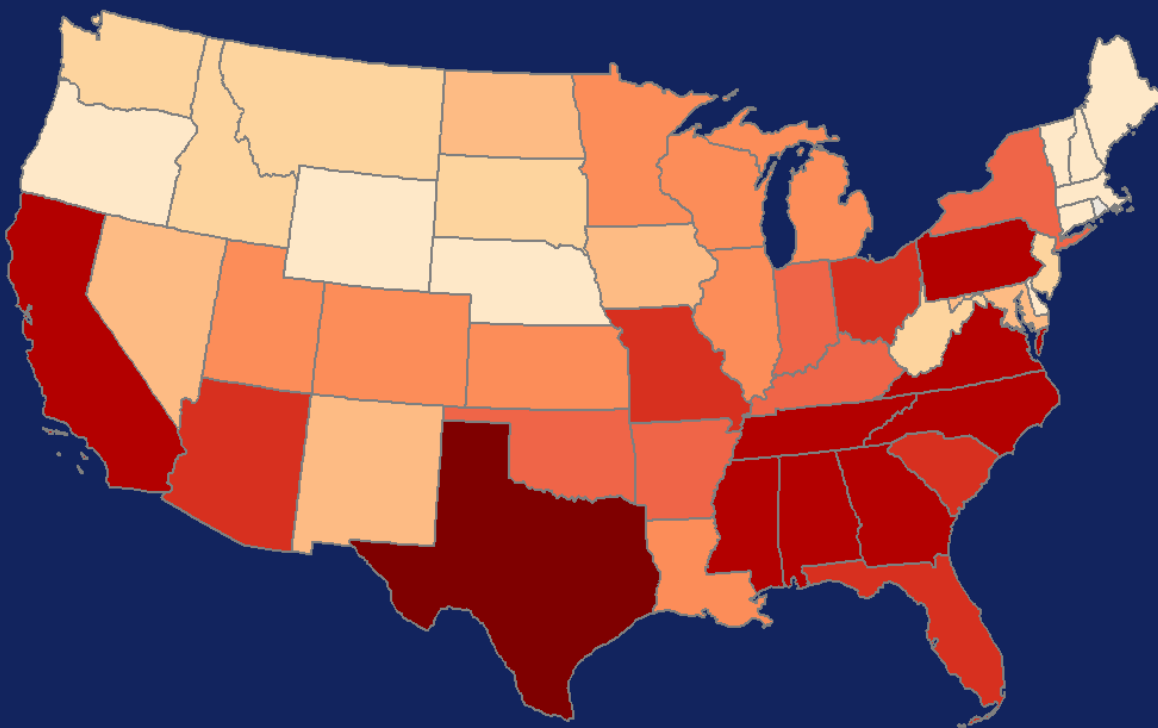


Total Conversion (2001-2016)

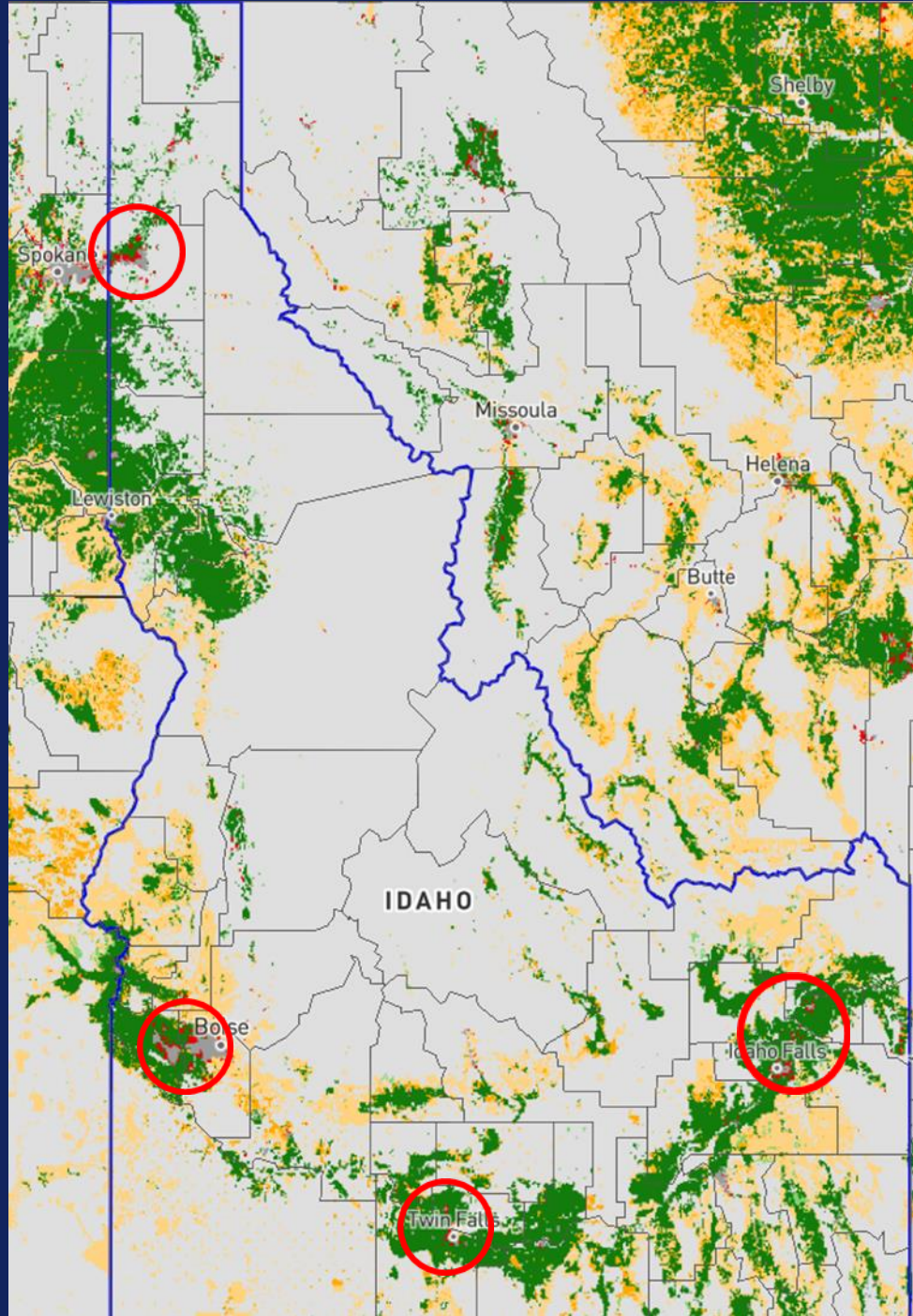
# Farmland Conversion in Idaho 2001 - 2016

68,823 acres of Farmland  
Developed and Compromised

.5% of Farmland  
Developed and Compromised

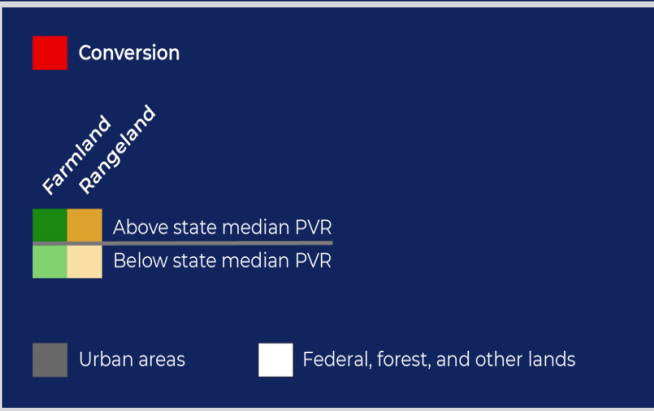






# Development Threatens Idaho's Best Agricultural Land

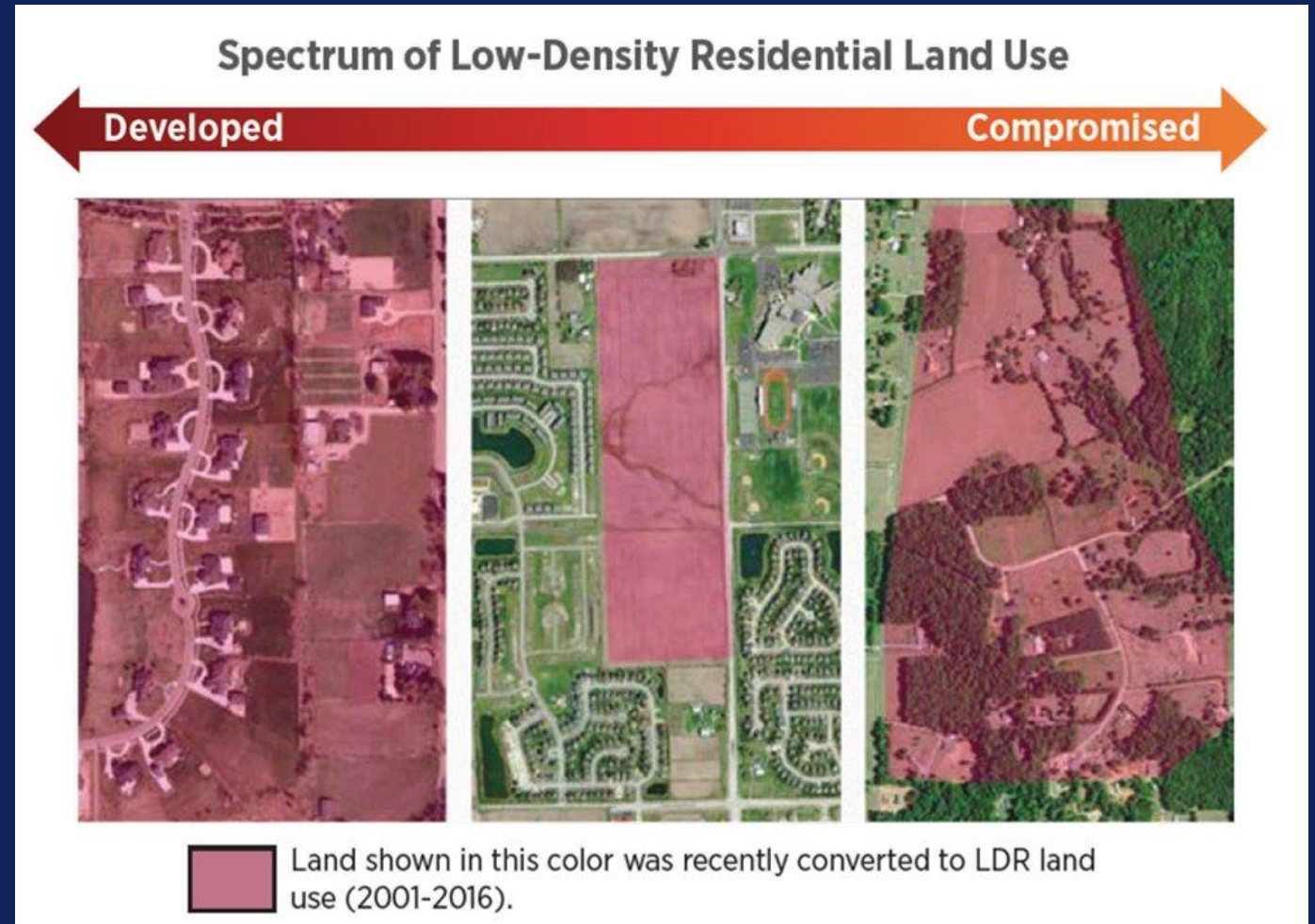
- 80% of ag land converted was Idaho's best quality farmland
- 26% was Nationally Significant
- Idaho's best land was 300 times more likely to be converted than other ag lands



# LDR Poses a Serious Threat

55% of Idaho land converted was converted to “Low Density Residential” (LDR) development -- 37k acres

Land in LDR areas in 2001 was *122 times* as likely to be converted to urban development by 2016



Questions?



Assessing the Policy Response



# Agricultural Land Protection Scorecard

- Assesses efforts to protect and retain agricultural land
- Focuses on 6 approaches
- Rates program performance and states' overall response



# Programs & Policies

- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)
- Land Use Planning (LUP)
- Real Property Tax Relief
- Agricultural Districts
- Farm Link
- State Leasing





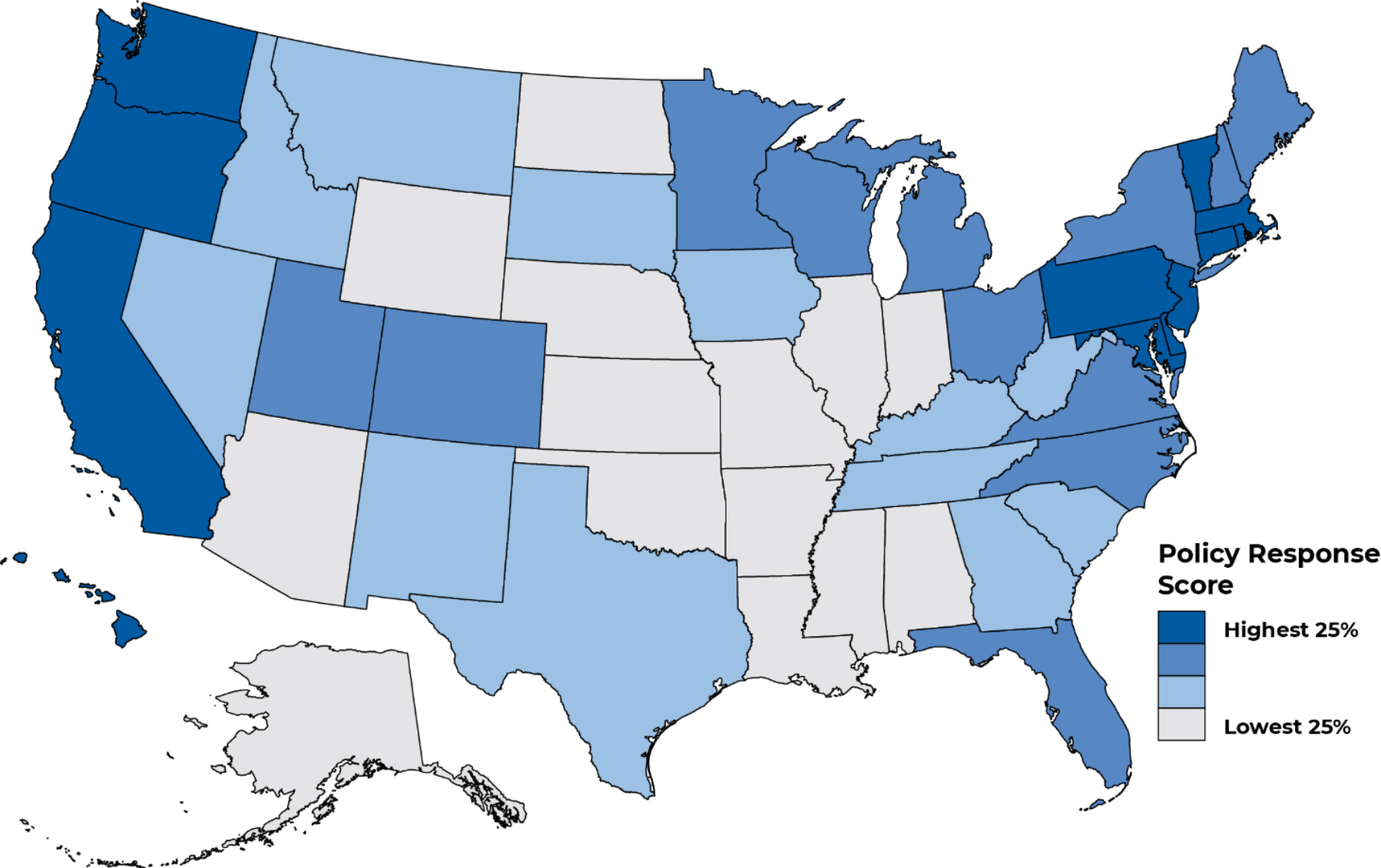
# Land Use Planning & Farmland Protection

- State actions to manage growth and protect agricultural land
- PACE Programs
- Agricultural Districts



Photo by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

# Every State Responded All Could Do More



Idaho's Score:  
15 out of 100

Highest Score:  
59 out of 100  
(New Jersey)



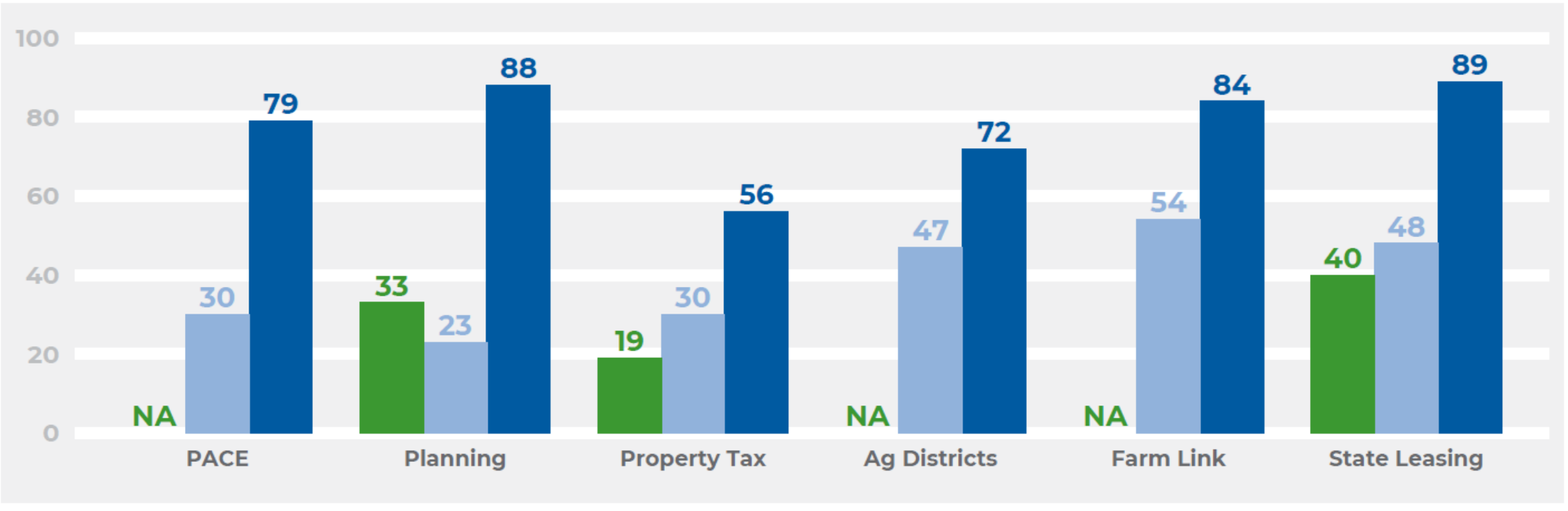
# Idaho's Scorecard

## HOW IDAHO STACKS UP

Idaho Score 

Median Score 

Top Score 





# The State of the States National Summary

Select a state... Reports and Data

Welcome

Spatial Mapping

Policy Scorecard

Call to Action

## National Findings

### Conversion of Agricultural Land (2001-2016)

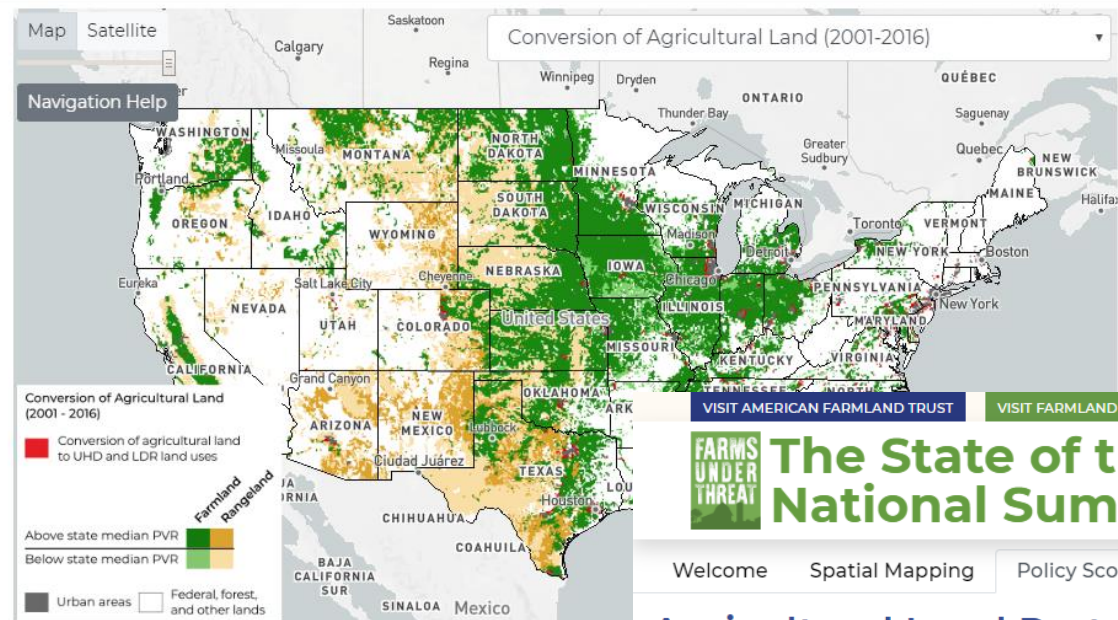
About this layer

**4,139,600 acres**

of the Conterminous U.S.' agricultural land were converted to urban and highly developed (UHD) land use

**6,792,800 acres**

of the Conterminous U.S.' agricultural land were converted to low-density residential (LDR) land use



VISIT AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

VISIT FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER



# The State of the States National Summary

Select a state... Reports and Data

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## Agricultural Land Protection Scorecard

Navigation Help

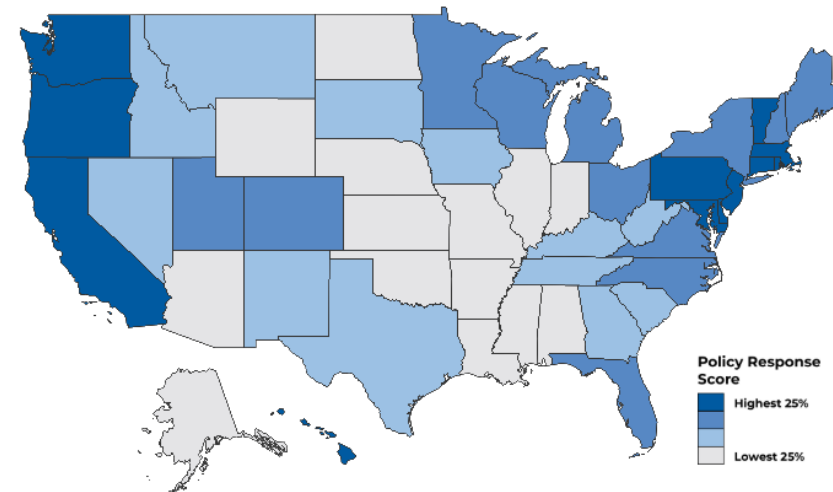
The Agricultural Land Protection (ALP) Scorecard is a state-by-state analysis of policies and programs that address the loss of farmland to development. Intended to inform decision-making and legislative action, it assesses state actions, measures their performance, and highlights effective aspects of the following programs and policies:

1. Purchase of agricultural conservation easement programs (PACE)
2. Land use planning and growth management
3. Property tax relief for agricultural land
4. Agricultural district programs
5. Farm Link programs
6. State leasing programs

We used quantitative and qualitative factors to compare approaches across 50 states. The results for each policy are summarized in the *policy scoresheets*. We rolled up the totals from each scoresheet to generate Policy Response Scores, which are presented in the *ALP Scorecard* and serve

## Policy Response Scores by Quartile

Click on the map to see the policy scores for the selected state.



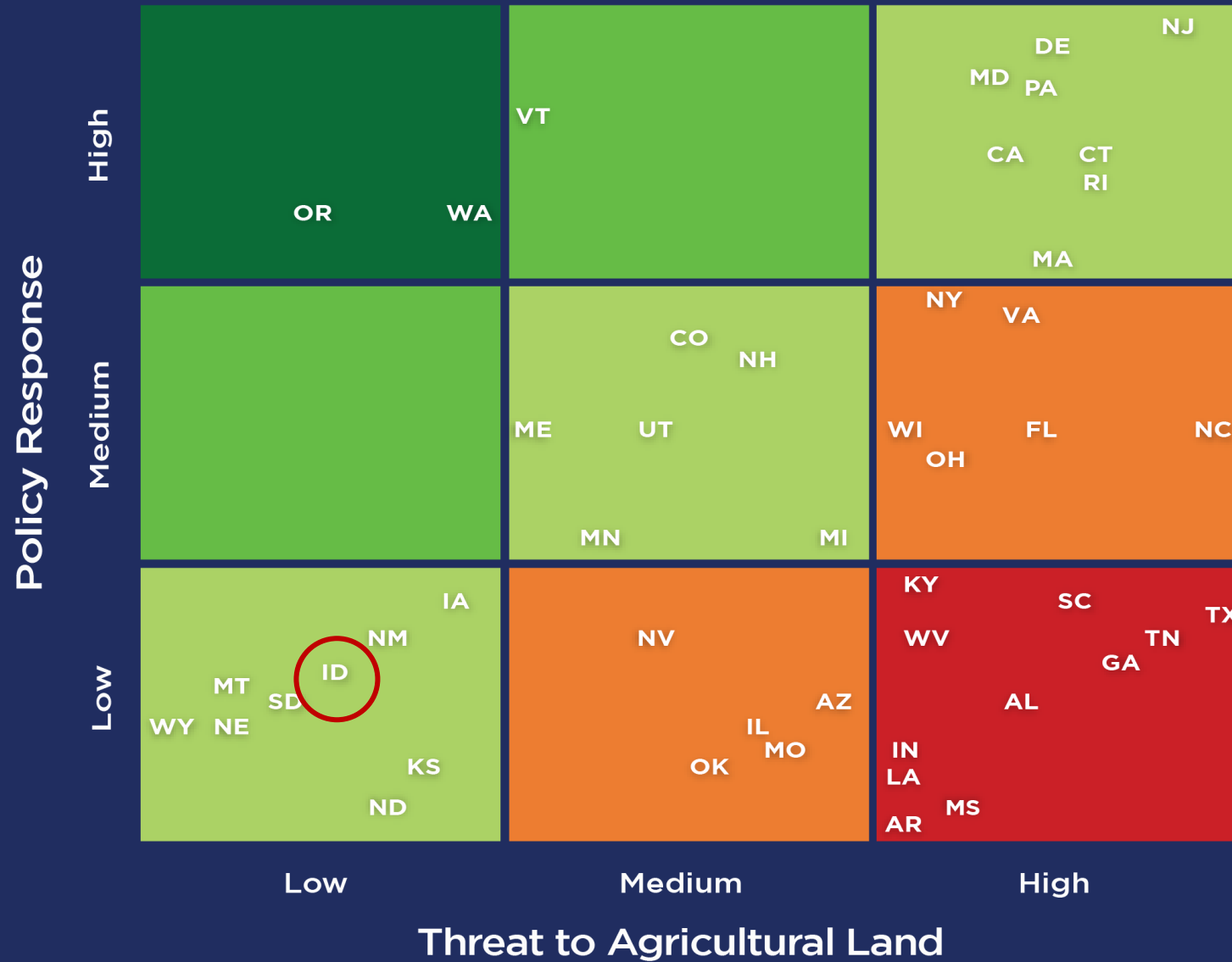
[www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat](http://www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat)

Questions?



Call to Action

# Conversion Threat and Policy Response



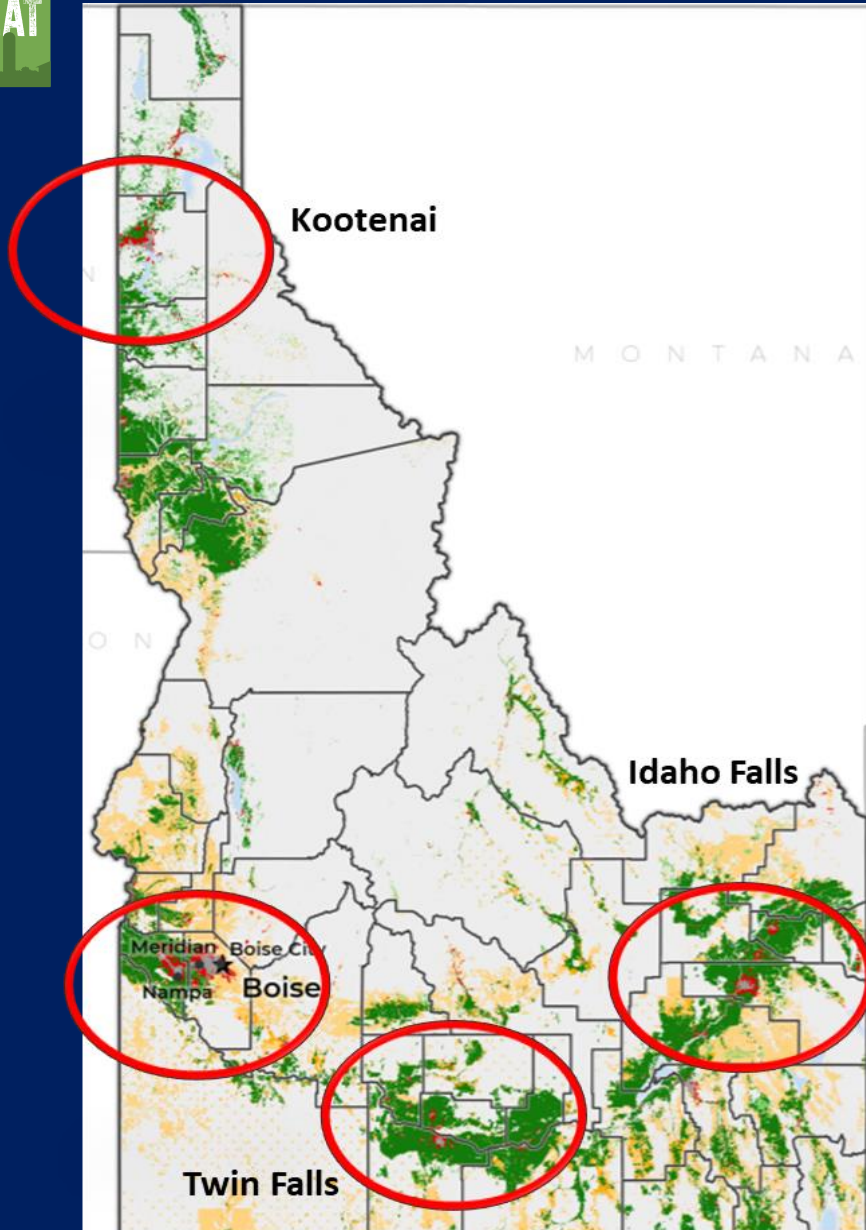
Comparing  
Threat to  
Response



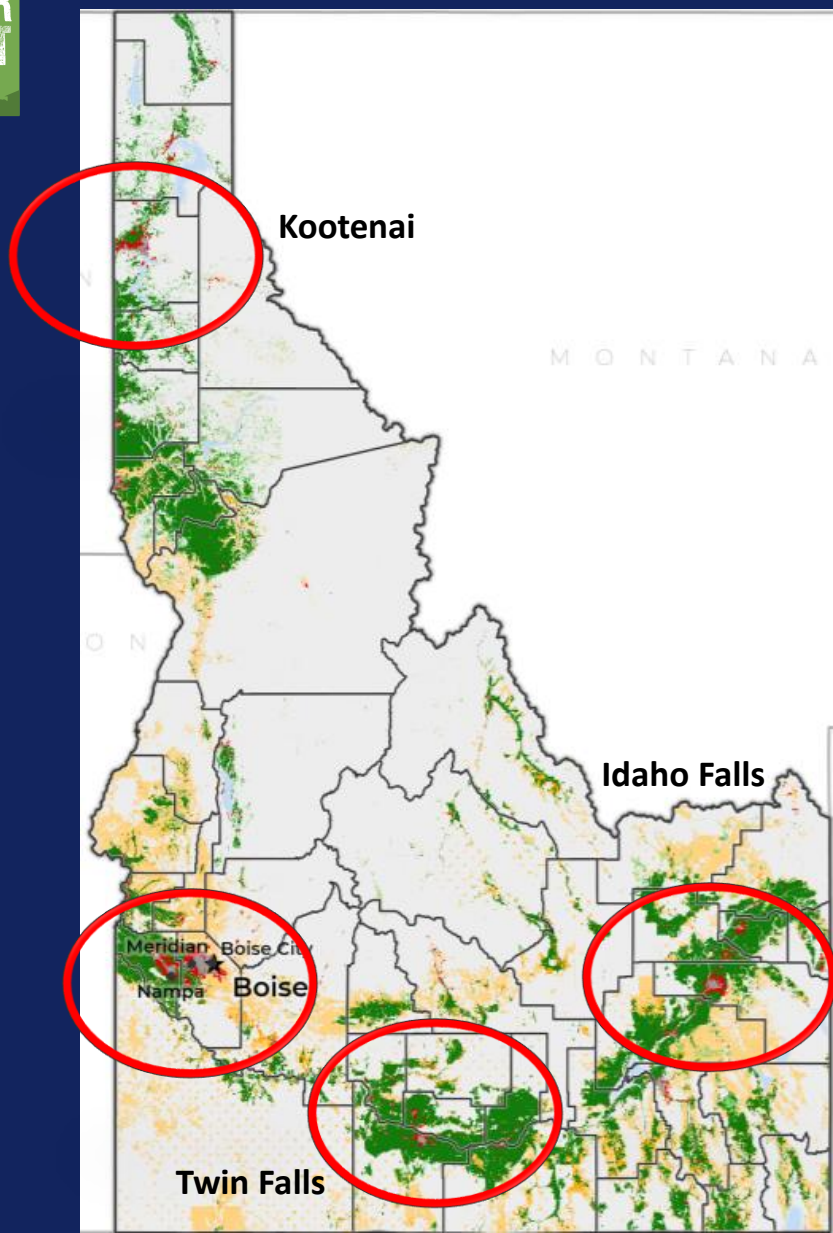
# What States Can Do

1. Analyze and Map Ag Land Trends and Conditions
2. Strengthen/Adopt a Suite of Coordinated Policies
3. Support Farm Viability and Access to Land
4. Plan for Agriculture, Not Just Around It
5. Save the Best, but Don't Forget the Rest

# Idaho's Hot Spots of Ag Land Conversion

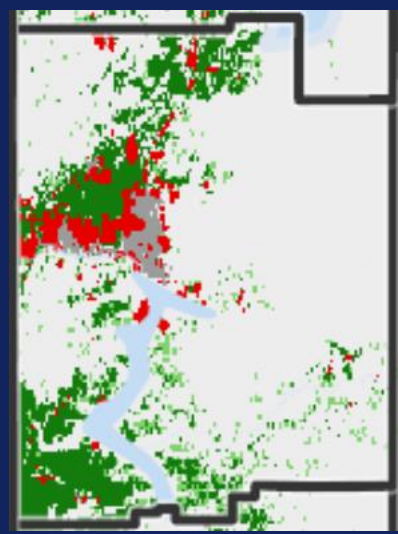


- 70% of Idaho's conversion occurred in four hot spots
- Spreading out from cities and towns, claiming the state's best farmland



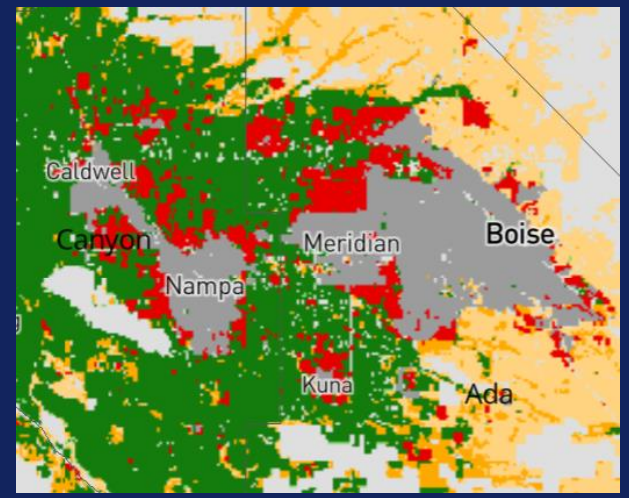
## Kootenai

9,500 acres converted ~15% of state total  
(Kootenai County)

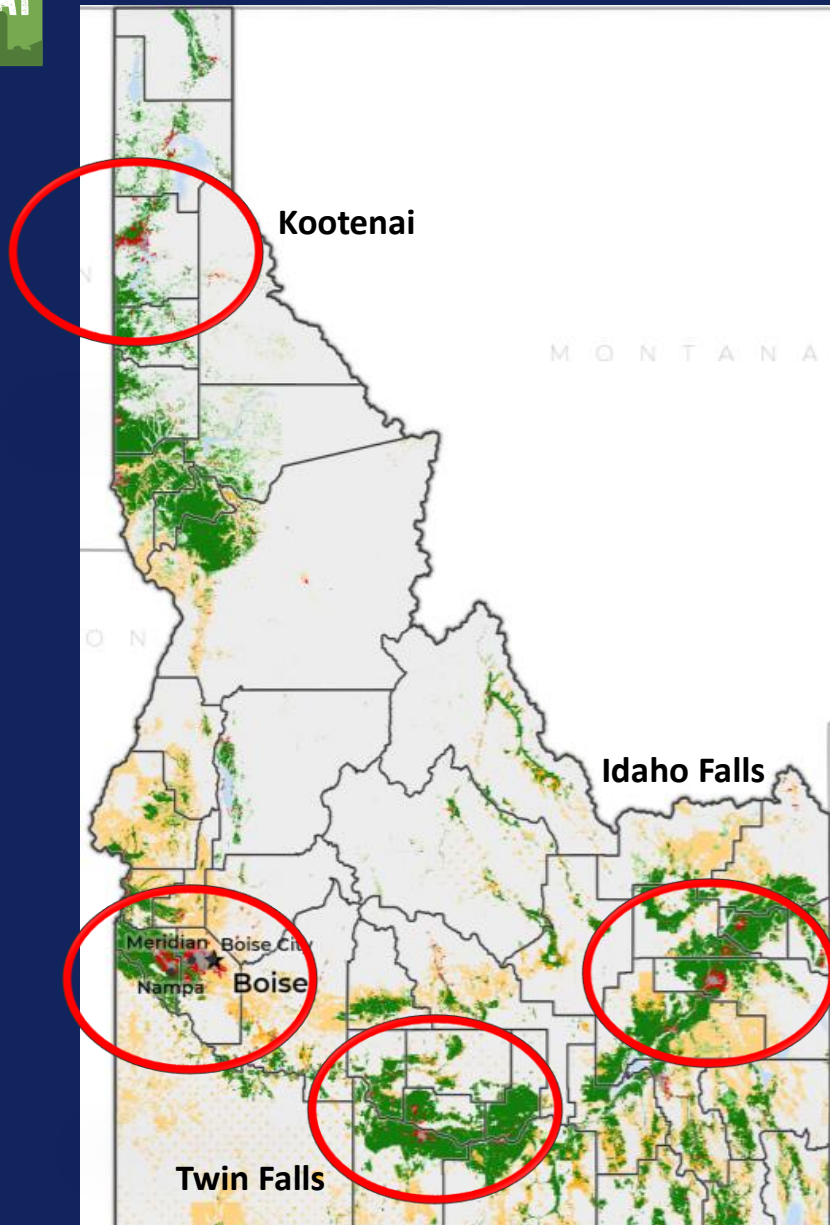


## Boise

24,300 acres converted ~35% of state total  
(Ada and Canyon Counties)

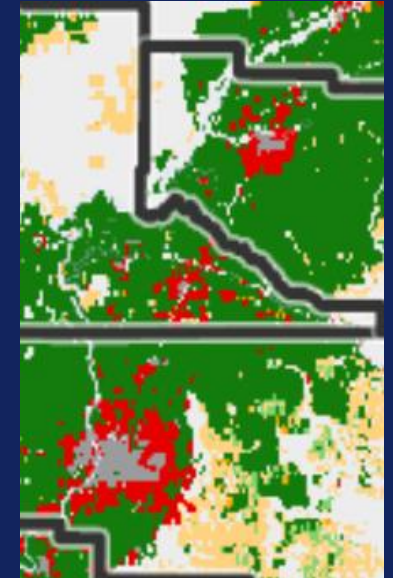






## Idaho Falls

9,400 acres converted  
**~15% of state total**  
(Bonneville, Jefferson, and Madison  
Counties)



## Twin Falls

4,100 acres converted  
**~5% of state total**  
(Twin Falls and Jerome Counties)



There are over  
**3.5 times**

as many senior producers  
as young producers in  
Idaho

**13,952**  
producers  
65 and older

**3,882**  
producers  
younger than 35





Plan for Agriculture, Not Just Around it!



# Why Plan for Agriculture?

**Create jobs and support local economies**

**Direct growth toward existing infrastructure**

**Save land for future generations of farmers and ranchers**

**Support ag viability and community food systems**

**Idaho's Agriculture =**

- **\$7.5 billion of ag products sold**
- **\$27.7 billion of direct economic output**
- **155,859 jobs in ag-related industries**



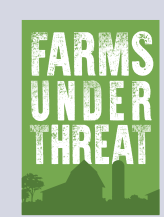
**Protect  
Ag Lands**

**Promote  
Conservation**

**Sustain Farming  
& Ranching**

# Protect Farmland

- **Address agriculture as a desired land use in your Comp Plan**
- **Implement your plans with ag-supportive zoning and local ordinances**
- **Permanently protect farmland and ranchland**



# Ways to Support Agriculture in your Comp Plan

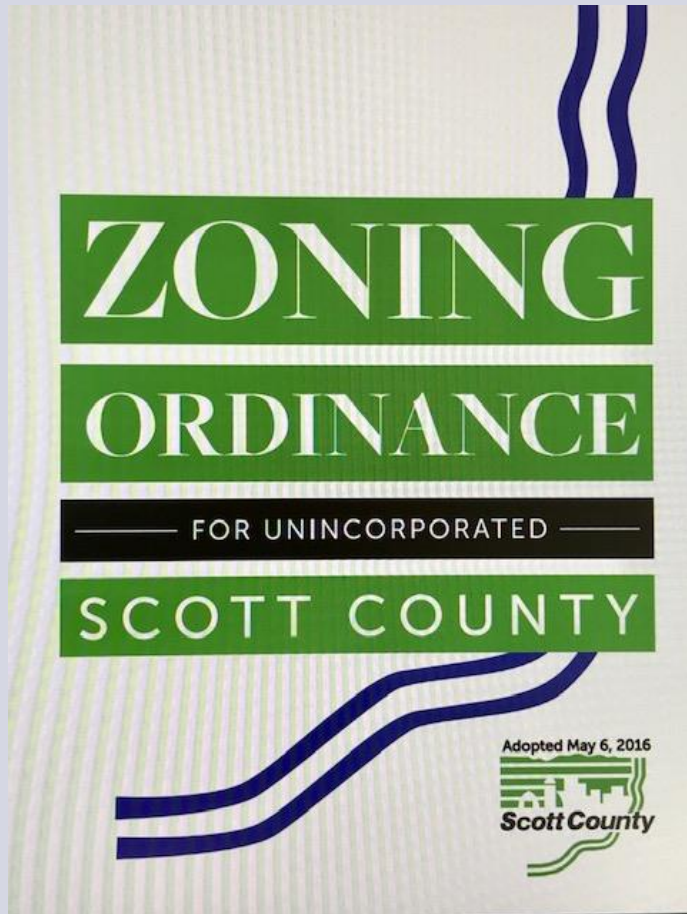
- Include farming and ranching in your vision and/or purpose statement
- Identify and map important ag lands and ag related infrastructure
- Ensure neighboring land uses are compatible with agriculture

“ ... Fremont County’s local economy is strong because the County recognizes its potential for economic development including recreation and tourism, businesses retention, entrepreneurship, *and value added agriculture.* ... ”

*Profitable family operated working farms and ranches* are essential to maintain the rural western heritage and culture of Fremont County ... “



# Types of Ag-Friendly Zoning and Land use Ordinances



- Ag protection or cluster zoning
- Ag overlay districts
- Right-to-farm and other ordinances to reduce conflicts between neighbors
- Urban growth boundaries



# Tools to Achieve Permanent Protection

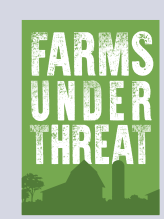
- Purchase of Ag Conservation Easements (aka Development Rights)
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Mitigation Ordinances



# Sustain Agriculture



- Address allowable/ accessory uses: agritourism, value added processing
- Engage experts to advise on ag economic development and/or support marketing and infrastructure development or participate in Farm to Institution
- Provide tax relief



# Promote Natural Resource Conservation

- Maintain integrity of natural systems keeping ag in mind
- Streamline regulations between federal, state and local authorities
- Support conservation districts, conservation planning and nutrient management to help producers steward their land



A landscape of rolling green hills under a clear blue sky. The hills are covered in lush green grass, and a dense forest of trees is visible on a ridge in the background. The word "Questions?" is written in white text across the center of the image.

Questions?

## Is Your Community Farm Friendly?

A Checklist to Gauge Local Support for Agriculture in Your Community

### DOES YOUR COMMUNITY...

#### Prioritize natural resource conservation

...have policies or regulations to support access to water for food production (e.g., traditional agriculture, urban agriculture, and/or community gardens)? YES  NO

...have policies to address food waste and recovery (through strategies such as composting, gleaning programs, and/or food product recycling programs)? YES  NO

#### Encourage agriculture and food production

...have a section on agriculture and food production in your comprehensive plan or other community plans (e.g., economic development, strategic, or sustainability plan)? YES  NO

... support agricultural leadership (e.g., an agricultural ombudsman, advisory board, or commission to represent farmers and ranchers in local decision making)? YES  NO

...provide public land for farming and food production (e.g., lease land to farmers, provide space for community gardens or urban agriculture)? YES  NO

...encourage connections between agriculture and residents (e.g., through agritourism, direct marketing, and/or promotion of local farms)? YES  NO

#### Protect farmland

...create agricultural protection zones specifically to support working farms and ranches? YES  NO

...purchase conservation easements (development rights) on agricultural land? YES  NO

...have urban growth boundaries? YES  NO

...have a transfer of development rights program or mitigation ordinance to engage private developers in protection activities? YES  NO

#### Improve agricultural viability

...have a local right-to-farm ordinance? YES  NO

...provide tax credits and exemptions (e.g., property tax relief, school tax credits, sales tax exemptions)? YES  NO

...have ordinances to support agriculture and food production (e.g., accessory use allowances, farm labor housing policies, setbacks and buffers, on-farm processing)? YES  NO

...create voluntary districts where agriculture is encouraged and protected? YES  NO

...have livestock regulations to address nuisance, environment, and welfare issues (e.g., regulate number of animals per acre, manure and nutrient management)? YES  NO

#### Support markets and infrastructure

...have regulations scaled appropriately to address on-farm marketing and direct-to-consumer systems (e.g., agritourism, CSAs, farm and roadside stands)? YES  NO

...support marketing infrastructure for local farmers (e.g., farmers markets, food hubs)? YES  NO

...support value-added processing (e.g., slaughter facilities, cold storage, packing sheds)? YES  NO

...support farm to school and other institutions' procurement policies? YES  NO

#### Promote local farms

...have a "Buy Local" campaign? YES  NO

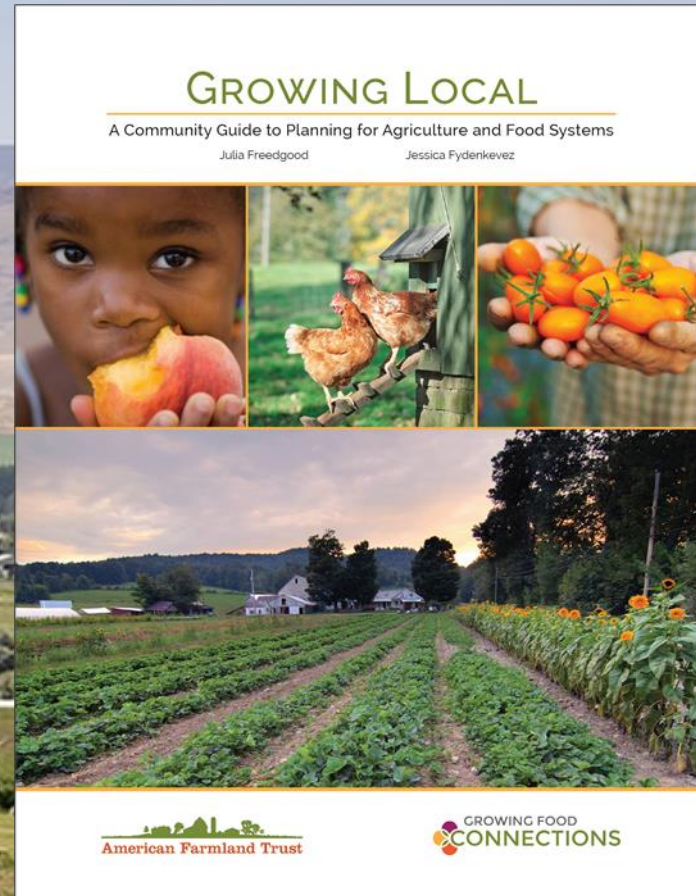
...provide promotion materials such as maps, resource guides, and interactive websites? YES  NO

CLEAR FORM

Adapted from New Hampshire Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture and UNH Cooperative Extension's "Is Your Town Farm Friendly? — A Checklist for Sustaining Rural Character"



<https://bit.ly/3nykf81>





# Saving the Land that Sustains Us



**American Farmland Trust**

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

[www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org)