



2019 Washington State

Farmland Preservation Indicators

In 2009, the Farmland Preservation Task Force adopted a series of indicators to track trends, conditions, and opportunities around farmland. Updated in 2019, these indicators offer perspective on the viability and future of agriculture in Washington and help answer the question, "Are activities helping to improve the condition and availability of farmland in Washington?"

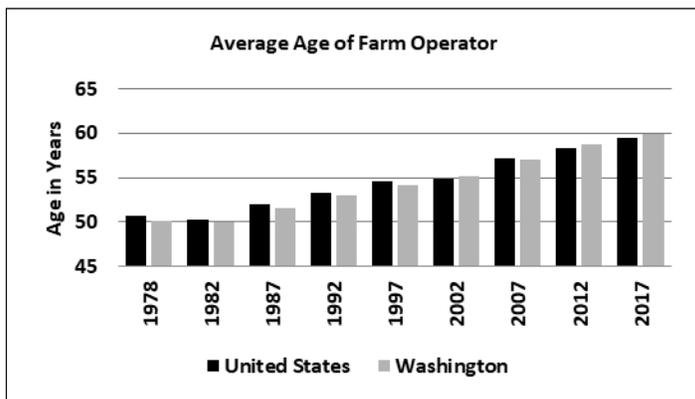
INDICATOR GROUP: MAKING AGRICULTURE A PRIORITY

The act of growing food needs farmland and farmers. Indicators under “making agriculture a priority” track issues relating to land availability and the farmers that use the land. Current trends reflect the need to help farmers plan to pass their operation to the next generation of farmers.

Who farms the land?

The average age of Washington farmers climbed to 59.9, mirroring what is occurring nationally.

Latinx principal farmers continued to be the strongest growth demographic, increasing 18 percent since 2007. The number of acres operated topped 1.5 million. Female principal operators (18,068) operated on 3.6 million acres.



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

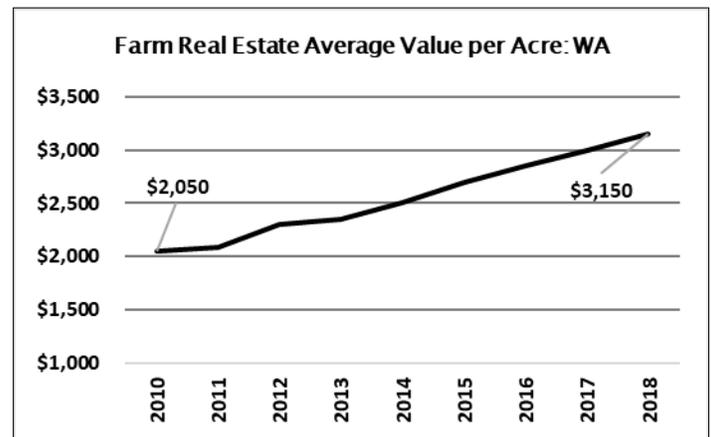
More Information:
The Farmland Preservation Indicators report is available online: <https://scc.wa.gov/ofp/>
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% of all principal farmers reporting occupation as Other			
2002	2007	2012	2017
42%	54%	53%	54%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Price of land

New farmers face challenges with access to affordable land. Farm real estate values (land and buildings) have increased consistently, and in recent years have exhibited above-average growth. Since 2010, the average price per acre of farm real estate has increased 54 percent. Access to capital for new and beginning farmers will continue to be a challenge.



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Opportunity Outlook

Two key opportunity areas for continued focus include, 1) estate planning education and outreach, and 2) support programs for new and beginning farmers, with an emphasis on access to capital for land. Estate planning helps families plan for the future of their farm, including keeping it available for agricultural production. Continued support and improvement for land access programs will work to bring in the next generation of Washington farmers.