



2019 Washington State

Farmland Preservation Indicators

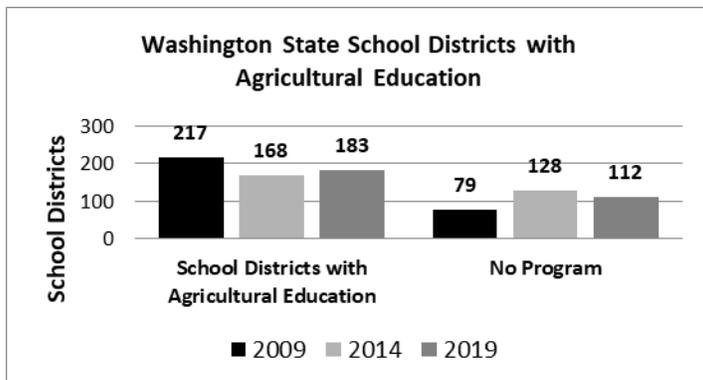
In 2009, the Farmland Preservation Task Force adopted a series of indicators to track trends, conditions, and opportunities around farmland. Updated in 2019, these indicators offer perspective on the viability and future of agriculture in Washington and help answer the question, "Are activities helping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

INDICATOR GROUP: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The prosperity of farming depends in part on a trained workforce and access to land. These indicators track protected landscapes through working land easements, primary schools that have agricultural curriculums, and secondary degrees in agriculture. Farms by organization track family farms and non-family farms and can be an indicator of the next generation of farmer and types of farm operations.

Agriculture Training

A trained workforce may indicate the interest and potential for new farmers. An important indicator is the number of public school districts and agricultural type degrees awarded in Washington. An increase may indicate a desire to learn more about farming, begin their own farm, or take a larger share of the management on the family farm. Farm internship programs are also gaining popularity. A state pilot program (expires 12/2019) has had 140 interns go through the program since 2015.



Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

More Information:

The Farmland Preservation Indicators report is available online: <https://scc.wa.gov/ofp/>

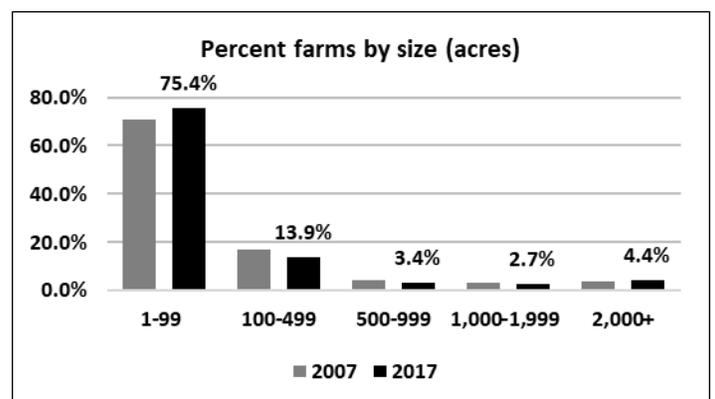
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	2002	2007	2012	2017
Individuals/family; sole proprietorship; familyheld corp.	33,085	35,516	33,324	32,228
Partnerships, Non-family corporations, Others - cooperative, estate or trust, institutional, etc	2,845	3,768	3,925	3,565

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Washington Farms

WA farms are diverse, ranging from very small retirement and residential farms to enterprises with annual sales in the millions of dollars. Farms owned by individuals or families accounted for 89.5 percent of total farms in 2017 - unchanged from 2012. Farms owned by individuals or families accounted for 31 percent of total farm acreage, a 4 percent decrease from 2012. The majority of farms are under 100 acres. This may indicate farms facing pressure to convert and a trend to increase size and consolidate.



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Opportunity Outlook

Efforts should focus on continued education for new and beginning farmers along with succession and estate planning resources.