

The Farm Transition Act of 2024

Currently, seniors aged 65 and older own more than 40% of the agricultural land in the United States. This suggests an impending transfer of more than 370 million acres of farmland in the next two decades. Despite the current and projected increase in transfers of agricultural land ownership, finding and affording it is still a major barrier for young and beginning farmers and ranchers.

Agricultural land loss and access to capital contributes to this challenge. Between 2001 and 2016, 11 million acres of land were paved over or converted to uses that threaten the future of agriculture – a rate of 2,000 acres of productive agricultural land a day. Additionally, most farmland is not sold on the open market, and is often sold only to well-capitalized, well-established buyers.

The Farm Transition Act of 2024 would address these barriers to farming and agricultural land ownership by reauthorizing the Commission on Farm Transitions included in the 2018 Farm Bill. The 10-member Commission is tasked with studying issues impacting the transition of agricultural operations to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, and making subsequent recommendations to address them, including:

- The availability of quality land, necessary infrastructure, affordable credit, adequate risk management tools, and apprenticeship and mentorship programs;
- The state of current agricultural asset transfer strategies and potential improvements;
- Incentives to facilitate agricultural asset transfers to the next generation of farmers and ranchers, including an assessment of how current federal tax policy impacts lifetime and estate asset transfers, and impacts individuals seeking to farm who do not have a farm family lineage, as well as recommendations for new or modified incentives;
- The effectiveness, and potential improvements, of transition assistance programs and incentives;
- Barriers faced by farmers and ranchers in the ability to transfer, inherit, or purchase agricultural assets, including land; and
- The impact of leasing and ownership trends by foreign persons or entities.

American Farmland Trust, National Young Farmers Coalition, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, and Wisconsin Farmers Union endorse the Farm Transition Act of 2024.